

SIDEREAL TIMES

*The Official Publication of the
Amateur Astronomers Association of Princeton*

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From the Director

Nov. 11 AAAP meeting. Be sure to get a good seat for the next meeting (8:00 PM). You'll get a chance to see some of the best deep sky photos taken from this planet when noted Philadelphia astrophotographer **Jerry Lodriguss** comes to Peyton Hall. See elsewhere in this edition for more background on the presentation.

Aurora over New Jersey! Those of us lucky enough to get a view of the northern sky on Thurs evening Oct 30 at approx 6:30 to 7:15 were able to witness first hand the Aurora Borealis resulting from the dramatic X-class solar flare activity last week. The network of AAAP members, through timely telephone calls, helped alert many of us to see this rare and transient event. The red sheets with shimmering vertical lines dancing across from N to NW and back to NE, extending briefly to nearly zenith, is something that I personally had never seen. Totally amazing! For future solar activities and some great pictures from this one, check out the website spaceweather.com. And remember to call your fellow AAAP friends when opportunity knocks.

New Paramount installed at WC Observatory! The observatory work party on Sat Nov 1 (a beautiful spring-like day) accomplished its goals. See elsewhere in this edition for more pictures taken during the installation of the new mount. To start the day's events, the C14 was removed and the old Paramount was taken down. Being in very good condition, it has already been sold to a fellow NJ astronomy club. The new Paramount ME was then installed, carefully and with TLC. While fine tuning such as polar alignment is still needed, the new Paramount ME is now operational. And it is a thing of beauty too, as the picture below shows. We will announce some training sessions for Keyholders soon, although basically the mount operates like the previous version using The Sky software. All will appreciate the enhanced precision and robustness, including significantly increased slewing speed (up to 5 degrees per second!). In addition to the mount, on Nov 1 the team put on the work gloves and accomplished some much needed property maintenance on the grounds of the observatory. I'd like to especially thank members **Ron Mittlestaedt, Gene Ramsey,**

Simpson Observatory (609) 737-2575

Saul Moroz, Brian Van Liew, Larry Kane, John Miller, Nick Hillman, Jane Lanahan, Manick Rajendron, and Bryan



Hubbard for making this such a successful day.

Looking for a few good people... The commitment and participation we have been getting in the club recently is a very good sign for our future. One of the key objectives for this year is to identify people able to share their talents, abilities, and enthusiasm for astronomy by stepping up to a higher level of participation in AAAP. In addition to committees, public nights, and observatory participation, an important part of this goal will be establishing a viable slate of candidates for offices for next year. We are seeking two individuals to serve as Co-Chairs of a Nominating Committee to work toward this goal. If you are interested please give me a call or email (drexparker@aol.com).

Dark Skies! -- Rex

Deadline for the December Issue

November 28, 2003

From the Treasurer:

We have about five calendars left . Selling at our cost of \$7. The treasury balance is \$xxxxx. There are 127 paid members. New members this month are: Emilio Deltoro, Jerry Hedden, and Renee' Stein.

As I write this I am preparing to join Gene and Rex at the observatory for the installation of our new mount.

Michele, our publisher, will continue putting the dues renewal date on the upper right corner of each Sidereal Times address label. This is the date that your renewal membership is due with the AAAP. Those with club magazine subscriptions to Astronomy or Sky and Telescope or both would want their subscriptions renewed about three months prior to the date of your club renewal. Please act accordingly, for if you wait until your club dues are due to pay for your magazine subscription you may miss one or two issues.

I am not going to send out renewal notices to members who get magazines; they get enough notices from their respective publishers. If I don't receive you renewal on the date indicated on your address label you will be dropped from the roster. If you are a keyholder, the respected observatory chairman will be notified and you will be asked to return the key.

Note! The dues structure is a follows:

- \$30 basic membership,
- \$60 for membership and subscription to Astronomy magazine,
- \$63* for membership and subscription to Sky and Telescope magazine,
- \$93 if both magazines are desired with membership,
- *Recent Increase of Sky and Telescope magazine.

If you have a Sky and Tel subscription please send the subscription notice and the postage paid envelope when renewing your membership.

Ron Mittelstaedt

Letters to the Editor

[I just received this late breaking news flash from Boca Raton, Florida – ed]

Greetings! From Florida Joan and I are happy to announce that we are grandparents at long last! Our daughter Haylee gave birth to Ashley Marie O'Dowd at about 9pm Friday, October 24th. Ashley weighs 7lbs 8oz and is 19.5 inches long. She has dark brown hair, a peaches & cream complexion, deep blue eyes and a sweet disposition. Needless to say, Joan and I are ecstatic!

Regards, Jay Albert
Past Director

[The editor wishes to thank Barlow Bob Godfrey for the following events schedule. This will be of great interest to those of you that chase the Star Party circuit.]

2004 Events

Apr. 14 – 18 Delmarva Star Party

Tuckahoe State Park, Maryland

Apr. 17 – 18 Neaf
Suffern, New York

June 18 – 20 Jersey Starquest
Hope, New Jersey

Jul. 9 – 18 Rockland Summer Star Party
Savoy, Massachusettes

Jul. 16 – 18 Rochestar Fest
Rochester, New York

Aug. 13 – 14 Stellafane
Springfield, Vermont

Sep. 10 – 12 Black Forest Star Party
Pennsylvania

Sep. 10 – 12 Connecticut Star Party
Colbrook, Connecticut

Sep. 15 – 19 Delmarva Star Party
Tuckahoe State Park, Maryland

No Date Yet The Conjunction
Northfield, Massachusettes

No Date Yet Arunah Hill Days
Cummington, Massachusettes

Hi Vic,

M42 and M45 are attached. Feel free to select whichever one you prefer. *[The decision was too tough for this editor to make so both are included. Everyone is invited to visit our website where these and all other images may be viewed in living color. – ed]*

Both were taken on the night/morning of October 24/25. The Pleiades shot was a 5.3 hour sequence of 6-minute shots that I started at about 11pm and stopped at about 4:15am. During the 5.3 hour sequence there was an interval of about two hours where the guiding was poor. So, I stacked just the 3.3 hours of good images to make the final picture. The image was b&w. I added the blue coloring later. At about 4:42 I started the Orion images. I first collected six 6-minute images using an H-alpha filter and then seven 6-minute images using an O-III filter. The resulting color image was assembled using AstroArt, MaximDL, and Photoshop.

Cheers, --Bob Robert J. Vanderbei <http://www.princeton.edu/~rvdb>

(Vanderbei photos, see page 3)

From the Program Chairman

Thanks to Michelle and Val, we have a speaker for November. Jerry Lodriguss, a member of the Willingboro Astronomy Association, has graciously agreed to give a presentation on Tuesday, November 11. Jerry is an excellent astrophotographer and he will be presenting a sample of his handiwork next month. Many thanks to the Dynamic Duo of Michelle and Val.

Check out Jerry's website if you would like to know more about Jerry and see some of his work. <http://www.astropix.com>

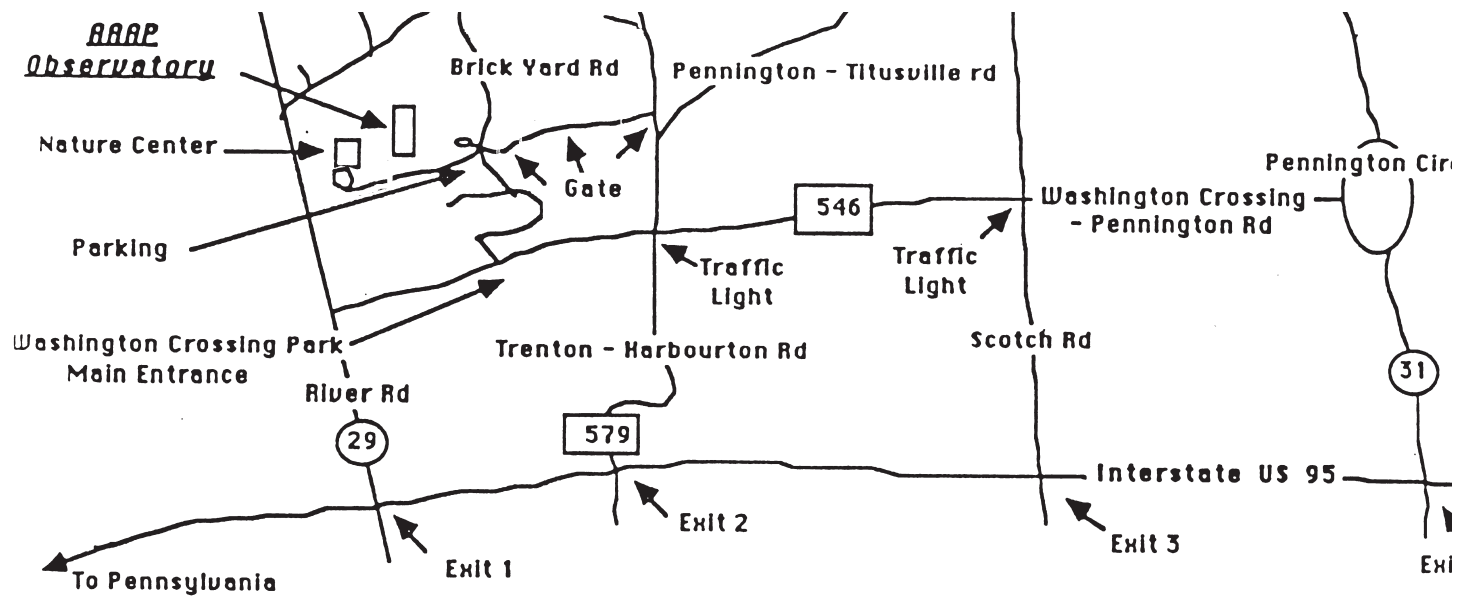
Mark



Bob Vanderbei's Images of M-42 and M-45



Ron Mittlestaedt's photos from the November 1, Workparty, where the new Paramount ME was installed on the pier and C-14 was mounted, aligned, and tested. For full color renditions of these photos, go to our website and view the PDF edition of the Times.



The best way to get to the observatory is to take Interstate 95 South towards Pennsylvania. Then take Scotch road at Exit 3 and proceed north (this amounts to right). Then, at the third traffic light take a left onto the Washington Crossing-Pennington road (County Route 546). Take this road to the first traffic light and take a right onto Trenton-Harbourton road (County Route 579). Take this road to the first driveway on the left, this is the Phillips Farm/Soccer Field entrance to the park. There is a series of three gates with club combination locks. If the gates are not open, you will need the lock combination to open the gate or be accompanied by a Keyholder member.

November 2003

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See us on the Web: www.princetonastronomy.org