



THE FOCUS

NEWSLETTER OF THE UNITED ASTRONOMY CLUBS OF NEW JERSEY

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UACNJ, P.O. Box 150, Hope, NJ 07844

Karl Hricko UACNJ Community Liaison

UACNJ Joins Chamber of Commerce

In the last Focus, I announced the formation of a UACNJ Community Liaison post. The idea is to create a more positive interaction with the communities surrounding Jenny Jump. This will enable us to better fulfill our mandate to help educate the public in astronomy through direct programs with schools and civic groups. If we can be an asset to these communities, they might be more willing to listen to us when we talk about light pollution or need help promoting our events and fundraising.

I am pleased to announce that Karl Hricko (AAI) has agreed to take up this important position. Karl comes from an educator's background and co-hosts a public access astronomy forum on Staten Island television. He has recently moved to Belvedere, NJ just down the road from Jenny Jump.

In an effort to make contact with community leaders, the UACNJ has joined the Hope Chamber of Commerce and will be hosting a meeting at Jenny Jump on the evening of June 22nd (organized by Karl). Chamber members seemed eager to visit us and we hope this will be the start of mutually beneficial cooperation in the future!

You can check out the Hope Chamber's website at <http://hopenj.org>

Check out the UACNJ website at:
<http://users.erols.com/njastro>

Notes from the President

UACNJ Delegates

Communication: that's what the UACNJ is all about. Clubs and amateurs keeping in touch with each other, sharing ideas and collaborating on projects which are beneficial to our hobby. The UACNJ delegate's main function is to communicate what is going on at UACNJ back to their club but also to bring information back to the UACNJ.

To further aid communications between clubs, the UACNJ provides:

★ This newsletter – please make sure a copy gets posted or distributed to your club's officers. We encourage clubs to enclose copies with their regular newsletter (or perhaps make some copies for your next club meeting). We've had trouble keeping the newsletter on schedule in part due to lack of material. Please consider sending info on your upcoming events to Gordon Bond at tpoastro@hotmail.com. I hope we can get copies posted on the UACNJ web site as well.

★ E-mail List – The UACNJ's e-mail list moved to Yahoo groups in October 2000. About 60 amateurs are members. Make sure your club and/or club delegates are subscribed. See: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/UACNJ/> for more info. I hope to get minutes of the Board Meetings posted here for delegates to refer to.

★ E-mail address – we've established a general e-mail address for the UACNJ as an electronic P.O. Box (so to speak). If you need to reach the UACNJ or one of the officers, e-mail us at: uacnj@yahoo.com.

★ Web Page - the UACNJ web page has a wealth of useful material for clubs and observers. Some of it is out of date, but Barry Malpas has had little time to devote to the project. If anyone would like to help

out, please contact him at:
njastro@erols.com.

Bringing Astronomy to the People

Now that the weather has warmed up a bit, another season of great public programs is under way thanks to the state's astronomy clubs. I was up at Jenny Jump on the first public event of the year back in April. It was nice to see two scout groups enjoying the view through the telescopes assembled on the field. One group had come all the way from North Arlington! It was a bit windy at first that night, but the breeze died down after dark. We had a nice view of Comet Ikeya-Zhang and a beautiful clear sky. The comet was not hard to find in binoculars (certainly easier than from the roof of Science Hall at Montclair State!). The first two degrees of the tail were easy to see.

On March 23, Astro2002 was a big success for the Morris Museum Astronomical Society (MMAS). More than 400 people turned out at the Morris Museum for solar observing, moon phase activities and a lecture on meteorites by Derek Yoost. My own club, the North Jersey Astronomical Group (NJAG), helped present a "Skywatch" event with the Dreyfuss Planetarium on April 18. Despite the clouds, well over a hundred people showed up to look at the gathering of planets in the western sky. Meanwhile on April 20, the UACNJ's Astronomy Day was held at the Warren County Branch Library near Hackettstown. The day featured presentations by Dr. Carlton Pryor, Al Witzgal, and Joe Molnar. Evening activities included a presentation on space colonization by Dr. Karl Hricko.

On May 5, Ray Shapp, Don Kruse

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Space Day 2002

Ray Shapp, Don Kruse and Kevin Conod represented AAI and the UACNJ at the Liberty Science Center's Space Day event on May 2, 2002.



Don Kruse (above picture, top right) and Ray Shapp (right picture, lower left) used binoculars and small telescope to demonstrate what such equipment could do at Liberty Science Center.

Organized by Carmen Borzelli, an amateur astronomer from Bayonne, a couple of telescopes and binoculars were set up to teach students about optics. Solar observing was also planned if the weather permitted, but unfortunately it did not. The day was wet and foggy, but visitors seemed happy with a view of the New York City skyline. Attendance was high, with many enjoying the rocket building workshops and other exhibits at the science center.



From the President

(Continued from the front)

and myself attended Liberty Science Center's National Space Day event (see above photos). Attendance was good, but the weather was bad! The Northeast Astronomy Forum was a big hit. The Rockland Astronomy Club did a great job again this year. There were some great speakers including David Levy and astronaut John Grunsfeld. There was an inspirational talk and exhibit of some spectacular astrophotos by Rob Gendler. Dr. Mary Lou West's presentation on the Sun was very appropriate given the spectacular views we had outside.

By the time you read this, the Amateur Astronomers Association of Princeton's Jersey Starquest will have taken place. This annual event has been a fixture on the New Jersey astronomy scene for the last thirteen years. Speakers included Mary Lou West (Montclair State) and Bob Vanderbei (Princeton University).

Looking to the future, Rockland Astronomy Club will hold their tenth annual Summer Star Party August 2-11 in Savoy,

Massachusetts. The UACNJ's ninth annual Symposium will be held September 28 at Jenny Jump starting at 1:30 p.m. The South Jersey Astronomy Club will host the sixth annual South Jersey Star Party. Although this is a relatively new event, it is quickly building a following. I have had the pleasure of attending a couple of times. I've always had a good time and great observing! This year's event will be held October 4-6, 2002. I hope to see you there!

Our Pennsylvanian brethren will be hard at work getting ready for their fall events as well. MegaMeet will be presented by the Lehigh Valley Amateru Astronomical Society at Pulpit Rock north of Hamburg, PA. Bucks Mont Astronomical Association's Stella Della Valley event will be held in Ottsville, PA.

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LIGHT POLLUTION UPDATE

HELP!!

I would love to be able to devote more of my time to supporting the UACNJ. But the reality is that, like many of you, demands for my time (my day job, my freelance job, doing TPO, writing a full scale book for an historical association and trying to find at least some time for a social life!) have limited my ability to do as much as I would like to.

One of the key areas I find myself unable to fulfill my duties is the light pollution arena. I need people to help! I have ideas but lack the time to implement them. Anyone interested in this important issue with a little time to spare is encouraged to contact me. In the mean time, here are three immediate areas of concern...

RODGER'S RENTAL LIGHT

We have had permission for some time to re-aim the offending fixture at Rodger's Rental which has been the bane of so many observers for so long. That was the easy part! Figuring out how to get up the 60 foot pole to do it is the trick! After several false starts, we need someone with equipment to get up there and finish this long overdue job!

COMMUNITY LIAISON

Karl Hricko is off to a great start (see front), but he's only one man. Anyone interested in helping, please contact me!

GOOD LIGHTING FORUM

Kevin Conod, Fred Schaaf and I have been discussing a renewed light pollution campaign. To that end we've set up an e-mail list on Yahoogroups. It's called the New Jersey Good Lighting Forum (NJGL for short) and we hope you will join us in this important dialogue.

To subscribe, simply send a blank e-mail to: njgl-subscribe@yahoogroups.com

DARK SITE SURVEY

I need people to follow up on our mailings of this report to various environmental organizations.

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