



# THE FOCUS

NEWSLETTER OF THE UNITED ASTRONOMY CLUBS OF NEW JERSEY

Fall 2003

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

## Board of Directors Meeting Highlights

(Held at Jersey StarQuest, June 28, 2003)

- The UACNJ will be examining ways to streamline the membership process to insure new members and renewals are processed efficiently and in a timely manner. We hope to have a system in place for next year which will allow such matters to be handled on the web-site.
- UACNJ President, Kevin Conod (NJAG) has been invited to give a talk to The Sierra Club in the fall. He will be focusing on the issue of light pollution.
- The new backlit display entitled, "New Jersey's Astronomical Heritage" has been installed. Created by Gordon Bond (AAI), this features the people and places which make up the rich history of astronomy in the Garden State. This also reflects on the history project of Barry Malpas (AAI) to collect information pertaining to this subject.
- Speaking of Barry's History of Astronomy in NJ project, meetings will be scheduled for September.
- A display is being planned which will feature Ken Miller's work with the KT Boundary in New Jersey. This is the boundary between geological strata layers of the Cretaceous and Tertiary where dinosaurs disappear from the fossil record. Evidence has been found in material from this layer supporting the idea that a major meteor impact in the Gulf of Mexico may have contributed to the end of the dinosaurs' reign.
- Documentation has been located which gives information about the coronagraph to be installed in the planned UACNJ Solar Observatory.

Check out the NEW UACNJ website at [uacnj.org](http://uacnj.org)

Thanks to [Accessgate.net](http://Accessgate.net) of Hope, NJ for offering to host this new site!

## Hope Chamber Presentation a Success

On January 14, 2003, Karl Hricko (AAI), Kevin Conod (NJAG) and Gordon Bond (AAI) made a presentation before members of the Hope Chamber of Commerce.

The emphasis of this talk was on the economic impact of light pollution as well as the environmental and safety issues. This was well received by the Chamber and they made several good suggestions. We have been trying to keep in contact with them and hope to be able to work with them on this issue. However, this was a great start to a mutually beneficial relationship. We hope to be able to do the same with the other communities around Jenny Jump.

This meeting was set up by our

Community Liaison, Karl Hricko and he is working to further our friendship with Hope and seek similar situations in other towns.

The UACNJ has already benefitted from this kind of interaction. Among those attending the meeting was a school teacher who came to Jenny Jump with a bus load of students who packed our facility! And they even covered their flashlights with red cellophane!

Members of the Chamber were invited to a special Mars Night on September 5th along with various people from White Township. We had over 100 people show up for a presentation by Al Witzgall (AAI, NJAA) and to see the Red Planet for themselves.

## UACNJ Constitution and Bylaws Amended

The UACNJ Board of Directors approved several important changes to our Constitution and Bylaws. The substance of these changes are:

- That no entity may use the UACNJ name without permission from the UACNJ.

- That membership is only open to non-profit astronomical organizations not affiliated with any for-profit businesses.

- That the Trustees must report to the Board of Directors by April 15 with the status of UACNJ assets.

- That the Board of Directors consist of the Executive Committee and one delegate (or alternate delegate) from each member club.

- That the election of officers take place at the last meeting of the year in November.

- That facilitating awareness of light pollution be moved from the Observatory Committee to the Communications Committee.

A copy of both is available on our website, [uacnj.org](http://uacnj.org).

# Star's Eye View!



Jenny Jump



Alan and Mary Lou



Jersey StarQuest

Ever wonder what Jenny Jump would look like looking down at it instead of up from it? Professional pilot Alan Midkiff gave Barry Malpas and Dr. Mary Lou West a chance to find out last July 28th when he flew them in his private plane over both Jersey StarQuest and Jenny Jump. Barry took the images shown here and they can be seen in color on the UACNJ website. Progress at JJ may seem slow sometimes, but this overview shows just how much we've accomplished!

## The Deal on the Deal Meteorite

Digging through the books at The Book Cellar in New Hope, PA, Gordon Bond (AAI) came across a copy of the *Proceedings of the New Jersey Historical Society* for July, 1941. Among the articles was "The Deal Meteorite" by Henry Herpers of the Field Museum in Chicago.

This piece featured a meteorite which fell on Deal, NJ in Monmouth County on August 15, 1829. While there have been other meteorite falls in NJ claimed in subsequent years, this remains the sole documented event in the state's history. The New Jersey Eagle newspaper, printed in Newark, gave this account:

"About 1 o'clock, on Friday morning last, when the sky was perfectly clear, a meteor of unusual and intense brightness was observed in New York. It shot up from the west and illuminated the city with excessive light. A stream of fiery particles followed in its train, tapering off to a point like a cone. After transversing about 20 degrees of the horizon with prodigious swiftness, it disappeared as suddenly as

it had blazed upon the sight."

*The Morristown Jerseyman* of August 16 described: "About twelve o'clock last night many of our citizens were roused from their slumbers by a report similar to the discharge of a piece of heavy artillery succeeded immediately by a whizzing noise resembling that made by a cannon ball passing through the air. Some two or three persons who saw the meteor described it as being a large ball of fire passing rapidly through the air a little south west of this village."

According to the article, the bulk of the recovered meteorite (20.80 grams) resides in the Academy of Natural Sciences in Philadelphia. Bits of it were also sent to what is now the Smithsonian, The Field Museum, Paris, New York, Calcutta, London, Berlin, Rome and Vienna - everywhere, it seems but New Jersey! However, the State Museum in Trenton would appear to have procured a nice piece since then.

A copy of the article has been given to the History of Astronomy in NJ project.

## PROJECTS UPDATE

### THE WANDERER'S HEART

The Physics Department of Fairleigh Dickinson College (Teneck, NJ) have offered to donate a 12.5" telescope mirror to the UACNJ with a rather interesting history.

It had formed the heart of a telescope built in the 1930s for Fairleigh Dickinson University. The instrument weighed in at some 2,500 pounds! When the Rutherford Campus closed, it was destroyed along with the observatory. Fortunately, a physicist from the college had rescued not only the mirror, but much of the instrument's documentation!

More information will be made available

### GREENWOOD MAINTENANCE

The drive has been removed from the 16" Greenwood telescope for maintenance. A new Feather Touch focuser and Telrad have been purchased and have been installed by members of AAAP. Kevin Conod has donated a new finder scope.

### TUTHILL SCOPE

It has been estimated that the cost of refurbishing the trailer-mounted Tuthill telescope will be \$1,000.

### WORK SESSIONS

Work sessions are being planned for late August to September to complete the last two observatories. New doors are needed and the tracks for the roll-off roofs need to be installed.

### DISPLAYS

The "New Jersey's Astronomical Heritage" backlit display has been installed and work has begun on the display containing a microscope and video monitor for getting a close up look at meteorites. Alan P. Witzgall (AAI, NJAA) has donated specimens including bits of the Moon, Mars and asteroids Eros and Vesta.

Track lighting has also been installed by Dave Malpas in the displays room which help give the facility a nice look!

Thanks also to Walt Rauthog for his donation of an Eisenhower silver dollar which includes lunar design elements.