



FOCUS

Editor, Diane Jeffer, astrodiane@gmail.com

October 2013

ANOTHER SUCCESSFUL SYMPOSIUM

Diane Jeffer, NWJAA

Our annual symposium is an important fundraiser as well as a great community outreach for UACNJ. This year's event, held on October 5, was a great success on both counts. Although clouds moved in just in time for our Star Party, the day was unseasonably warm and sunny, bringing out lots of folks who were new to our facilities. Many people arrived early and stayed until we closed up shop.

Attendees enjoyed speakers including NASA Ambassador Richard Dean Lewis and Dr. Gary DeLeo of Lehigh University as well as UACNJ Observers Tony Sharfman, Alan Midkiff, and Jim Norton.

Many thanks to all the volunteers who helped make this event a success, especially Karl Hricko who planned the program and kept everything on schedule, Marcus Valdez and Frank Wolf who planned the food and manned the grill. A financial report of the event will be presented at the November board meeting.

SAVE THE DATE!

**Saturday
November 9**

Board meeting, noon

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WHO ELSE IS OUT THERE?

Karl Hricko, AAI

Do you recognize the name Epicurus? He was the ancient Greek philosopher who taught that happiness was the ultimate goal in life, and that it could be achieved by seeking moderate pleasure and minimizing pain. But how about if I told you that he was also the first to seriously propose the existence of other worlds like our Earth.

It was in the fourth century B.C. that Epicurus wrote, "There are infinite worlds both like and unlike this world of ours ... We must believe that in all worlds there are living creatures and plants and other things we see in this world...."

So, even at the time of the ancient Greeks, there were those who seriously pondered the existence of other worlds, and believed that living creatures must exist there.

Amazingly, astronomers have now discovered nearly a thousand extrasolar planets. Just as Epicurus did, we can see the potential of life existing on these other worlds.

It's intriguing to imagine what types and forms of living things might even exist in our Solar System. You might contemplate these things as you watch the passage of our own planets across the night sky.

In the meantime, there are infinite worlds both like and unlike this one. If they harbor intelligent life, may their inhabitants be wondering whether life exists on the third planet from the Sun?



The AAAP (above) and Barker (below) Observatories get the Eagle Scout treatment.
Photos provided by Paola Prudden.



SEPTEMBER WORKDAY

Gil Jeffer, NWJAA

Stephano Vargas coordinated a team of more than 25 volunteers to help spruce up several of the observatories at UACNJ as part of his Eagle Scout project. Rotting boards were replaced, rails were reinforced and repaired, four observatories were painted, and new external bay doors were constructed and installed on the lecture hall. In addition to their time, the Scouts donated all of the materials needed for this project and even provided lunch for several UACNJ Observers who cleared brush and repaired the roof on the Greenwood Observatory. Stephano is a Life Scout with Troop 6 from Long Valley.

OBSERVERS IN PRINT

Allen Malsbury (AAI, MMAS, NWJAA), was published in the July 2013 issue of the University of South Alabama *Journal of Double Star Observations*. You can read his article [here](#).

Ken Taylor (NWJAA), was interviewed for an [article](#) featuring UACNJ in *Inside New Jersey*.

PLEASE SIGN IN!

Please be sure to sign in whenever you visit the observatory. If you are a UACNJ Observer, use the upstairs log book. A separate log book for guests is located in the downstairs lecture area.

The Superintendent of Jenny Jump State Forest asks for this information for an annual report to the state. The number of UACNJ visitors and volunteers impacts how state funds are allocated.

LOOKING AHEAD TO 2014

Diane Jeffer, UACNJ President, NWJAA

Did you know that 2014 will mark the 25th anniversary of United Astronomy Clubs of New Jersey? Our weekly programs continue to provide opportunities for the public to learn about astronomy. In addition, many special sessions are held for various school and Scout groups each year. UACNJ Observers who help out at these public and special events enjoy sharing their love of astronomy with each other and the public.

As the 2013 public season comes to a close, now is the time to think about what topic you would like to present to the public in 2014. Contact Karl (hrickokj@embarqmail.com) with program and speaker suggestions or to reserve a Saturday in 2014 to present your topic.

2014 CALENDAR

The 2014 edition of the UACNJ calendar will make a great Christmas present. They will be ready for purchase at our sales desk soon. The calendar, which includes notations about astronomical events and information about UACNJ, is intended to be a fundraiser and public relations tool.

Observers and member clubs can obtain multiple calendars for resale or purchase a calendar after the public season ends by writing to info@uacnj.org.

