



FOCUS

The Newsletter of United Astronomy Clubs of New Jersey, Inc.

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SPRING/SUMMER 2021

A Few Steps Forward

Last year in the middle of a cloud of uncertainty and new challenges, UACNJ remained closed until July. And, to protect the health of our Observers and the Public, when we did reopen our typical Saturday Public Nights instead looked quite unfamiliar. There were new governmental requirements to observe, new systems to test, a new schedule to stitch together, and new health and control features to implement.

Not surprisingly, our Observers rose to the challenge. We planned, we worked out any kinks we found, and UACNJ ended the season with newly-minted Public Nights that ran more like a reliable, well-oiled machine.

And, our fellow astronomy fans, our attendees, campers, regulars, and first-timers adjusted well too. They took our new safety measures, lines at the gate, and the vagaries of outdoor weather all in stride. Their patience and forbearance was a major contribution to our success in 2020.

And in 2021, although we reopened with some confidence we had a good working model, change remains our constant companion and adaptability is our bedrock for building another successful season.

We opened promptly in April with a full season ahead of us. We are cross-training Observers to fill key positions and systems. The numbers of Observers participating in Public Nights this year are way up. In fact, we're back to organizing our Observers' schedules into our standard rotation of six teams.

We've begun receiving Outreach requests which we consider on an individual basis. And we've already hosted our first scout troop in May.

Our latest bump in the road, a repeal of New Jersey's outdoor mask requirements with little prior notice, tested our ability to adjust. But, we had a procedure in place. A report was presented to the Board and to our Observers. Commentary was gathered. And, we quickly decided the matter required the full consideration of our Board of Directors.

The Board met on Friday, May 28th. Our Observers, Club Delegates, Chairs, and Officers all had a full opportunity to speak. We heard, from every contributor, thoughtful ideas and opinions.

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2021 Executive Committee

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Ken Taylor (NWJAA)

Trustee 2021-2023

Eric Leonard (MMAS)

A Few Steps Forward

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And, we voted. The motion to modify our mask policy carried 13:1.

Outdoors at UACNJ, masks are now optional. Importantly though, we will continue to promote a space where people feel safe to take the precautions they need to protect their health.

These additional changes for Observers who are vaccinated are being considered for July 3rd:

Indoor Masks. Masks for fully vaccinated Observers and Board Members are now optional in all indoor locations at UACNJ. We are still asking for unvaccinated individuals to wear masks. The public will still not be allowed in covered, indoor areas. (Open observatories will be considered outdoor locations. See the next recommendation, below.) This change is consistent with New Jersey's face covering policy.

Eyepieces. Fully vaccinated Observers and Member Clubs with fully vaccinated members running their scopes may choose to use their own eyepieces and allow the Public to use them for direct observing on Public Nights and for Outreach. The use of any UACNJ eyepieces will still not allowed.

And, we will continue to move forward, step by well-considered step.

Paul Fischer
President
United Astronomy Clubs of New Jersey

WAYS TO SUPPORT UACNJ

UACNJ is an all-volunteer nonprofit 501(C)(3) organization. We are always grateful for your donations of time and treasure, but did you know about these other ways to support UACNJ?

- UACNJ participates in the Amazon Smile program. Bookmark the link at the bottom of our homepage to use whenever you shop online at Amazon. You can also choose UACNJ as your charity to support in the Amazon app.
- You can donate your car, boat, trailer, or other vehicle to UACNJ; a link to Donation Line can also be found at the bottom of our home page.
- Don't forget to ask your employer to match your cash donation.

You can drop your cash donations in one of our lecture hall jugs when you visit, [donate via credit card from our website](#), or mail a check to UACNJ at P.O. Box 150, Hope, NJ 07844. Donations of any amount are always greatly appreciated and receipts are provided for income-tax purposes.



UACNJ is an all-volunteer non-profit organization. Volunteers like Matt Heiss make our public programs a success!

PUBLIC PROGRAMS



We have some nice public programs scheduled in the coming months on a variety of topics from NASA's new space telescope and night sky updates to time travel and a presentation about "Space Careers" for kids. Upcoming presentations are [listed online](#). You will also find links to view past programs here too.

Note: you can subscribe to our YouTube channel (youtube.com/UACNJ) to receive notifications when our presentations go live.



BOARD MEETING ANNOUNCEMENT

The next Board meeting will begin at 2:00 p.m. on July 17. Please ensure that your club is represented at each meeting of the UACNJ Board of Directors.

OUR MEMBER CLUBS

Amateur Astronomers Association of New York
(AAA)

aaa.org, New York, NY

Amateur Astronomers Association of Princeton
(AAP)

princetonastronomy.org, Princeton, NJ

Amateur Astronomers, Inc. (AAI)

asterism.org, Cranford, NJ

Lehigh Valley Amateur Astronomical Society

(LVAAS)

lvaas.org, Allentown, PA

Morris Museum Astronomical Society (MMAS)

mmastro.org, Morristown, NJ

New Jersey Astronomical Association (NJAA)

njaa.org, High Bridge, NJ

North Jersey Astronomical Group (NJAG)

njastro.org, Montclair, NJ

North West Jersey Amateur Astronomers (NWJAA)

nwjaa.org, Blairstown, NJ

Skyland Stargazers (SSG)

skylandstargazers.org, Morris County, NJ

If your club is not listed and you'd like to be part of the UACNJ, have your club leadership contact the Membership Committee at: membership@uacnj.org.

NOT A VOLUNTEER YET? HERE'S HOW TO GET INVOLVED

Have you joined your local amateur astronomy club? Members of clubs that participate in UACNJ are eligible to become volunteers at UACNJ. Volunteer Observers help with public programs and have access to the UACNJ facilities 24/7 for personal observing and astrophotography. Write to membership@UACNJ.org for more information about joining our community of amateur astronomers.

Please see our website for a [list of our Member Clubs](#) with links to their websites. Also check out these features on our website:

- A [locator map](#) to find where our Member Clubs meet.
- A [list of upcoming events](#) at our Member Clubs.

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