

North Jersey Astronomical Group

The Dark Sky Observer

A Publication of the North Jersey Astronomical Group

February, 1997

★ Vol. X, No. 1

Annual Dinner March 14

Our Annual NJAG Dinner at the Russian Hall is being held this year on Friday, March 14 at 7:30. As in the past, the price is \$25.00 per person, with the profit going to the club treasury. Our guest speaker is Dr. Karen Magee-Sauer of Rowan College of New Jersey. This is our biggest fund raiser of the year and we always have an evening of eating, fun and a good speaker. We also judge the entries in the Astrophoto contest. If you are interested, contact Ruth Koenig at (201) 340-4640 or dkoenig@intercall.com. Ruth will also be collecting money at the the February meeting.

The Dark Sky Observer

is a publication of the North Jersey Astronomical Group (NJAG), whose purpose is to promote the study and knowledge of the science of astronomy. The Dark Sky Observer is produced monthly for NJAG members by NJAG members.

FROM THE EDITOR: Remember the Dark Sky Observer needs your input! Letters, comments, suggestions, and articles are welcomed and encouraged. Contact the editor at a meeting, at (201) 778 - 3038 or at this address:
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February Sky Preview

New Jerseyans had an excellent view of Comet Hyakutake last spring. This spring we may have yet another opportunity to view a bright comet. Comet Hale-Bopp (named for its discoverers Alan Hale and Thomas Bopp) is a much larger comet. Estimates put its diameter at over 20 miles. It will not be as close to Earth as Comet Hyakutake, but astronomers expect it to be as bright. Predicting exactly how bright it will be is always a risky business. As amateur comet-hunter David Levy says, a comet is like a cat: they both have tails and they do whatever they want! Though Comet Hale-Bopp is visible in the east before sunrise in late February, it will be at its best in the northwestern sky just after sunset in late March and through April.

Telescope Nights Resume

Thursday Nights are Telescope Nights through May 8 (except March 20). Telescopes will be set up on the south side of Richardson Hall 8:00 to 9:00 pm. Join us...and bring a friend!

The NJAG's StarLine is updated weekly with the latest astronomical information. Call (201) 614-9220 24 hours a day!



"You know Orion always comes up sideways. Throwing a leg up over our fence of mountains, And rising on his hands, he looks in on me Busy outdoors by lantern-light with something I should have done by daylight..."

—Robert Frost
The Star-Splitter

Celestial Coordinates for C/1995 O1 (Hale-Bopp)

Date (Month/Day)	Rt. Ascension (Hrs/Min)	Declination (Degrees)	Magnitude*
02 01.0	19 41	+15.5	0.9
02 06.0	19 53	+18.0	0.6
02 11.0	20 08	+20.8	0.3
02 16.0	20 24	+24.0	-0.1
02 21.0	20 44	+27.4	-0.4
02 26.0	21 06	+31.0	-0.7
03 03.0	21 33	+34.8	-1.0
03 08.0	22 06	+38.5	-1.2
03 13.0	22 45	+41.8	-1.5
03 18.0	23 30	+44.4	-1.6
03 23.0	00 19	+45.7	-1.7*
03 28.0	01 09	+45.6	-1.8 **
04 02.0	01 56	+44.2	-1.7 ***
04 07.0	02 38	+41.7	-1.6
04 12.0	03 13	+38.6	-1.5
04 17.0	03 42	+35.3	-1.3
04 22.0	04 07	+31.9	-1.0
04 27.0	04 27	+28.6	-0.7
05 02.0	04 44	+25.4	-0.5

* These brightness estimates may be too optimistic, other estimates project the maximum brightness at -0.5 instead of -1.8.

* closest to Earth
** maximum
*** closest to the Sun

March Meeting

The March meeting of the North Jersey Astronomical Group will be held Wednesday, March 12 at 8:00 p.m. in Richardson Hall, Room 226. Our guest speaker will be Jose Merzeau of Rutgers University. Mr. Merzeau will give a presentation on the history of astronomy.

Upcoming Events

Astronomy Day, Newark Museum:

The Newark Museum will present a "Mars Movie Weekend" on April 12 & 13. This free mini-film festival will feature the rare film, "A Trip To Mars," made in 1910 by Thomas Edison.

Saturday, April 12 1 - 4 p.m.

A Trip To Mars

Invaders From Mars

War of the Worlds

Children's Workshop:

My Favorite Martian

Sunday, April 13, 1 - 4 p.m.

A Trip To Mars

Robinson Crusoe on Mars

The Martian Chronicles

Children's Workshop:

Make a UFO!

Dr. Bruce Franklin, a science fiction expert and professor at Rutgers University, will introduce the films.

Call 596-6529 for more info.

Astronomy Day, Montclair

The Glenfield Middle School will host an Astronomy Day on Saturday, April 19. There will be a speaker, planetarium programs, and children's workshops. The NJAG and Montclair State will host a Telescope Night from 8-9 p.m. in front of Richardson Hall (as usual).

Elections

Elections were held in February this year because we did not reach a quorum at the January meeting.

The Results::

President: Joe Marzullo

Vice President:

Gene Faulkner

Treasurer: Ruth Koenig

Recording Secretary: Jim Piombino

Corresponding Secretary:

Dennis Koenig

Trustee: Angelo Restivo



New Members!

We would like to welcome the following to the NJAG:

Lisa Heyden, Nutley NJ

Anthony Cicerale, Lyndhurst NJ

Theresa Whitehead, Clifton NJ

New members should note that directions and maps of Montclair State are available.

NJAG Hats For Sale

NJAG hats are still available. They sport the nifty NJAG logo in white on a navy baseball cap. Only \$10.00. Contact Ruth Koenig at (201) 340-4640 or dkoenig@inter-call.com.

Reminder

Remember that NJAG members get a discount on Astronomy and Sky & Telescope magazines. If you are a subscriber, or would like to subscribe, contact Ruth Koenig at (201) 340-4640.

North Jersey Astronomical Group Minutes of business meeting December 11, 1996

Meeting called to order by President Kevin Conod at 8:50 P.M.

President: Kevin reported work is being done on the club's web page on the Internet. A calendar of club meetings was passed out to all members.

Treasurer:

Ruth Koenig reported the club's balance. Hats and astronomy calendars are for sale. The club was joined by three new members bringing the total to 40. Ruth handed out an updated phone list.

Observation:

Members reported on their trip to Jackie Perkins' house in Ocean City. Viewing was done on the beach and from Jackie's back balcony. Joe, Mark, and Gene were at work using their new CCD camera and got a picture of the iBlue Snowball in Cygnus.

Public Nights:

Dr. West reported fine views of the Moon, Saturn and its moons and some double stars.

Library:

John Miksits reported that the library has too many old magazines. It was suggested that they be given away at public nights.

Astrophotography:

The astrophotography contest will be held at our annual club dinner. It was suggested that the winner's name and picture be placed on our web page.

Old Business:

It was reported that members enjoyed a field trip to the new Star Trek movie.

New Business:

A speaker is needed for the club's dinner. Gene Faulkner's camper park would like us back for another public night.

Electrions are to be held in January. Meeting adjourned at 9:20 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jim Piombino

Recording Secretary

**Spring
Lecture
Series**

MARCH 12 8p

Jose Merzeau
Rutgers
University

**History of
Astronomy**

APRIL 9 8p

Dr. Stan Piatek
NJ Institute of
Technology

Dwarf

**Galaxies:
More Mass
than Light**

MAY 14 8p

Dr. Michael
Richmond
Princeton
University

**Digital Sky
Survey**

Dr. Carl Sagan

1934-1996

Carl E. Sagan, the David Duncan Professor of Astronomy and Space Sciences and director of the Laboratory for Planetary Studies at Cornell University, died Dec. 20, 1996, in Seattle, Washington, after a two-year battle with a bone marrow disease. The cause of death was pneumonia.

Astronomer, educator and author, Sagan was perhaps the world's greatest popularizer of science, reaching millions of people through newspapers, magazines and television broadcasts. He is well-known for his work on the PBS series *Cosmos*, the Emmy- and Peabody-award-winning show that became the most watched series in public-television history. It was seen by more than 500 million people in 60 countries. The accompanying book, *Cosmos* (1980), was on *The New York Times* bestseller list for 70 weeks and was the best-selling science book ever published in English.

Sagan has published more than 600 scientific papers and popular articles and is author, co-author or editor of more than 20 books, including *The Dragons of Eden* (1977), for which he won the Pulitzer Prize in 1978. The U.S. paperback edition of his book *Pale Blue Dot: A Vision of the Human Future in Space* appeared on best-seller lists worldwide and was selected

as one of the "notable books of 1995" by *The New York Times*. His reading of an abridged audiocassette version was nominated for a Grammy and was cited by *Publisher's Weekly* as one of the "two best audiobooks of the year."

Sagan played a leading role in NASA's Mariner, Viking, Voyager and Galileo expeditions to other planets. He has received NASA Medals for Exceptional Scientific Achievement and twice for Distinguished Public Service and the NASA Apollo Achievement Award.

Sagan was the recipient of numerous awards in addition to his NASA recognition. He has received 22 honorary degrees from American colleges and universities for his contributions to science, literature, education and the preservation of the environment and many awards for his work on the long-term consequences of nuclear war and reversing the nuclear arms race.

Donations can be sent to:
The Carl Sagan Memorial Fund
The Planetary Society
65 North Catalina Avenue
Pasadena, CA 91106-2301

Clyde Tombaugh

1906-1997

Born in 1906 in Streator, Illinois, Clyde became interested in astronomy through his uncle. In 1928, armed with a home made 9-inch f/9 reflector of superb optical quality, he made sketches of the planets, particularly Jupiter and Saturn. He sent copies of these sketches to Lowell Observatory, just to get their comments. In reply, V.M. Slipher, then Lowell's director, offered him a position at the observatory with the new 13-inch f/5 photographic camera. His mission: to take photographs of the sky in search of Percival Lowell's elusive Planet X. A few months after he centered on Delta Geminorum, when he noticed a 17th magnitude speck of light shifting from plate to plate exactly as a trans-Neptunian planet should.

On March 13, 1930, Lowell Observatory announced the discovery of the planet that would eventually be named Pluto to the world. But far from the ending, the discovery was only a beginning for Clyde. He continued the search for another 15 years, discovering a comet, five open clusters, a globular cluster, and a super-cluster of galaxies stretching from Andromeda

to Perseus. In 1932 he discovered a nova in Corvus that had exploded a year earlier.

After Clyde took a leave of absence for war-related navigation teaching, he was dismissed from Lowell in 1945, ostensibly for financial reasons. He began work in 1946 at White Sands Proving Grounds to develop the optical tracking telescopes for the fledgling space program. Some ten years later he founded the Astronomy program at New Mexico State University. After retiring in 1973, Clyde maintained a very active profile, giving lectures frequently. Between 1985 and 1990 he crisscrossed the continent, giving lectures to raise funds for the Tombaugh Scholars program at New Mexico State.

So much for Clyde's accomplishments. Until the end, Clyde was an incredibly interesting person to be around. Famous for his puns, his command of the intricacies of the English language was astonishing. On January 17, 1997, astronomy lost one of its most colorful figures. If planet Pluto were sentient, it would take note of the loss of the man who unveiled its existence to our world almost 67 years ago.


by David Levy

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Sky Calendar

- 2 Look ENE for Hale Bopp in Cygnus and Pegasus, 1.47 A.U. from Earth
- 8 New Moon
- 12 NJAG Business Meeting, 8pm
- 28 Look for Hale Bopp in the NE approaching Andromeda, 1.36 A.U. from Earth
- 14 NJAG Annual Dinner
- 15 First Quarter Moon
- 18 Venus 6°S of crescent Moon
- 23 Full Moon
- 23 Partial eclipse of the Moon
- 25 Best comet viewing begins tonight!
- 28 Look for Hale Bopp just above the Andromeda Galaxy in the NE, 1.32 A.U. from Earth
- 31 Last Quarter Moon
- ☼ NJAG PUBLIC NIGHTS - Thursday nights at Richardson Hall, Montclair State College. Call 201•614-9220 for info.

 <h1 style="margin: 0;">March</h1>						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
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