

North Jersey Astronomical Group

The Dark Sky Observer

A Publication of the North Jersey Astronomical Group

January 1998

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Telescope Nights

The spring season of Telescope Nights will be held from January 15th through April 30th (except March 12th). Weather permitting, telescopes will be set up in front of Richardson Hall from 8:00 to 9:00 p.m. Telescope Nights are free and open to the public. Feel free to bring your friends and your children. If Telescope Night needs to be canceled due to the weather, a message will be left here on Starline (973-614-9220) after 6:00 p.m.

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 (973) 778 - 3038 or at this address:
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January Sky Preview



The planet Venus is aptly named for the Roman goddess of beauty. Also known as the evening star, Venus has been a spectacular beacon in the southwestern sky at dusk since October. The first two weeks of January is your last chance during 1998 to see this planet in the evening sky. Thursday, January 1 (New Year's Day) and Friday, January 2, are particularly good times to look for it as

January 1999, Venus will reappear as the morning star next month. Look for it during February in the southeast in the early morning hours before dawn.

During the last half of January, keep an eye on Jupiter and Mars. Starting Thursday, January 15, the two planets can be seen close together low in the west southwest from 5:30 to 6:00 p.m. Over the following five days the two will get

closer and closer together. When two planets are very close it is called a conjunction. On Tuesday, January 20, Mars and Jupiter are only 0.2 degrees apart. They are

“Her blue eyes sought the west afar,
For lovers love the western star.”

Sir Walter Scott

the Moon, Jupiter, Mars, and Venus will all be together in the southwest around 6:00 p.m.



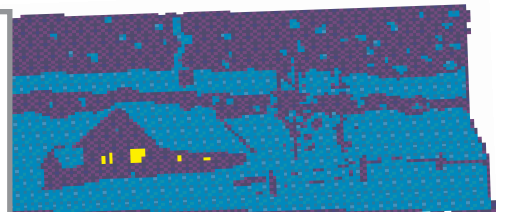
so close that you won't be able to fit a pencil held at arm's length between them!

As the second planet from the Sun, Venus moves faster than the Earth and passes us on January 16. Unfortunately, as it does so it will disappear from the night sky into the glare of the Sun. Though it will not be visible after sunset until Jan-

Orion, the hunter, is one of the most well-known constellations. His stars are bright and have an easy to find pattern. You can look for Orion rising in the southeast around 7:00 p.m. You will recognize him by the three stars which make up his belt. ☆

Call the NJAG's StarLine for a weekly update on celestial events.

(973) 614-9220
24 hours a day!





U P C O M I N G E V E N T S

February Meeting

The next meeting of the North Jersey Astronomical Group will take place on Wednesday, February 11 at 8 p.m. on the campus of Montclair State University, in Richardson Hall, room 226.

A Class Act

Astronomy Course
Offered by Newark Museum/Dreyfuss Planetarium
The Newark Museum's Dreyfuss Planetarium will offer "A Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy," an introductory astronomy course starting March 11. Constellations, telescopes, galaxies, and the Solar System will be covered in this seven week course.

Wednesday nights, March 11 - April 22, 7:30 - 9:00 p.m. Fee: \$65. To register call (973) 596-6607. Registration deadline is February 1.

Magazine Discounts

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 (973) 340-4640.

Rutgers Annual Geology Day

Saturday January 31, 1998 at the Rutgers University Geology Museum on the New Brunswick campus.

- Life on Mars? Dr. Matthew Golombek of JPL, Chief Pathfinder Scientist, and Dr. Allan H. Treiman of LPI, Martian Meteorite Expert.
- N.J Fossils, Asteroids, and Global Extinctions, Dr. Richard K. Olson, Rutgers Dept. of Geo. Sciences
- Deep Sea Hydrothermal Vents: Exciting New Discoveries, Dr. Richard Lutz, Rutgers Institute for Marine and Coastal Sciences
- Martian Meteorite Exhibit

East Orange Star Party

Saturday, January 31, 6:30-8:00 p.m.

The NJAG will be hosting a star party at the Jewish Community Center in East Orange. This event will be for pre-school and kindergarten students, so bring small telescopes and stools or milk crates for the kids to stand on. Volunteers need, call Mary Lou West at 973- 744-3221. Directions: take Bloomfield Ave west. Make a left onto Pleasant Valley way (along Verona Park). Make a right at the light onto Northfield Rd. The Jewish Community Center (JCC) is on the left.

Fair Lawn Star Party

February 2, 1998

(if it snows - February 4, no matter what the weather)

A Star Party for Lincrest School in Fair Lawn. This will be from 7PM

to 9PM with the possibility of over 100 elementary school children and their parents. We need as many telescopes as we can get.

This is in conjunction with a special reading program taking place during January and February. More details as things progress. If you would like to help out in any way, contact Jim Piombino at 201-794-8590 or Ruth Koenig at 973-340-4640.



Weather Lunacy
by John Miksits

The phase of the moon does appear to have some impacts on terrestrial weather. Statistical analyses have suggested the moon phase is correlated to such phenomena as the number of thunderstorms, pressure changes, cloudiness and even the concentration of ice nuclei. By why? More recent work at Arizona State University has found the earth's lower atmosphere is warmest during the full moon. The increase is only 0.02 degrees Celsius, but it may help to unravel the lunar influence puzzle. *Accord Publishing Weather Calendar, December 8, 1997 ☆*

Committees

Volunteers are needed for the following committees (most are self-explanatory, except where noted):

Membership

Newsletter

Public Night

Observing (arranging observing sessions)

Library

Computer

Education

Program (making arrangements for guest speakers)

Astrophotography/

Darkroom

Project
(telescope building, etc.)

If you are interested, or have any questions, please contact Joe Marzullo, 857-1678 or marzullo@saturn.montclair.edu, or Gene Faulkner, 779-7932 or wizbang@intercall.com

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AVAILABLE FROM THE MIDDLE ATLANTIC PLANETARIUM SOCIETY

Copies of Under Roof Dome and Sky are available for \$15.00 from the MAPS Education Committee. Under Roof Dome and Sky is an activity book containing 45 astronomy activities and experiments suitable for use in the classroom or planetarium with grades 5-12. Send checks, payable to MAPS, to:

Francine Jackson
P.O. Box 353
Providence RI 02901

**DAFFYNITIONS...
... GET 'EM?**

- AFFORD: A car some people drive
- DENIAL: Where Cleopatra lived
- ELLIPTICAL: A kiss
- KINDRED: Fear of relatives coming
- CONCEIT: I strain
- PARADOX: Two doctors
- RACETRACK: The only place windows clean people

NJAG E-Mail Directory

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If you'd like to be on this list, contact Kevin at: kconod@easyway.net

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Sky Calendar

- 1 Moon 0.6° S of Saturn, occultation
- 3 First Quarter Moon
- 5 Venus stationary
- 11 Full Moon
- 11 NJAG Business Meeting, 8pm
- 14 Valentine's Day
- 15 Moon at apogee
- 16 Presidents' Day
- 19 Last Quarter Moon
- 19 Venus at greatest brilliancy (-4.6 magnitude)
- 24 Moon 3° N of Neptune and Uranus
- 24 Mardi Gras
- 26 New Moon
- 26 Solar Eclipse in Caribbean
- ★ NJAG PUBLIC NIGHTS
 Montclair State College
 8 - 9 p.m.

 February						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10 D	11	12	13	14
15	16 🍷	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24 🎭	25	26	27	28
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