

North Jersey Astronomical Group

The Dark Sky Observer

A Publication of the North Jersey Astronomical Group

June, 1998

Vol. Xi, No. 6

June Meeting

The next meeting of the North Jersey Astronomical Group will take place on Wednesday, June 10 at 8:00 p.m. on the campus of Montclair State University, in Richardson Hall, room 226. This is the night of the full Moon. Please join us for full Moon observing, weather permitting.

Telescope Nights at the Iris Gardens

The spring season of Telescope Nights ended April 30th. Public Telescope Nights will resume in the fall, however we will hold "members only" Telescope Nights at the Iris Gardens in Montclair on Wednesday nights through the summer (weather permitting). Contact Ruth Koenig at dkoenig@intercall.com or 973-340-4640 for more information.

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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JUNE SKIES

The Summer Solstice, the point at which the Sun is at its highest in the sky, marks the first day of summer. It occurs this year at 10:04 a.m. on June 21.

The month begins and ends with a first quarter Moon. The Moon is at first quarter on June 1 at 9:45 p.m. It lies near Regulus, the brightest star in the constellation Leo, the lion.

Unfortunately none of the five planets visible to the naked eye can be found in the evening sky through the spring and summer. However, there will be several nice views of the Moon and the planets in the early morning hours before dawn during the latter half of the month.

It begins with a line-up on June 16. The Moon lies in the southeast between 4:30 and 5:00 a.m. To the left of the Moon stretch the planets Jupiter, Saturn, and Venus in a line reaching towards the eastern horizon.

The next morning, June 17, the Moon is closer to Jupiter. You will

find Jupiter above and to the left of the Moon.

On the 18th and 19th, the Moon is between Jupiter and Saturn. Jupiter is to the right and Saturn to the left of the Moon.

By the 20th the Moon reaches Saturn. Look for Saturn to the left of the Moon. As the Moon's orbit around the Earth carries towards the east, it is waning — in other words shrinking to a crescent.

The morning of the summer solstice (June 21) finds a beautiful the crescent Moon near Venus. Venus is above and left of the Moon. Meanwhile the Pleiades star cluster (the seven sisters) is located to the left of Venus.

The Moon finally turns its daytime side away from us and disappears into the glare of the Sun. It is new on the 23rd. It then moves back into the evening sky. It should be visible as a thin crescent on the 25th between 8:30 and 9:00 p.m. The planet Mercury is to the right of the Moon, but will most likely be too low and the sky too bright to be visible.

The end of the month finds the Moon in Leo, the lion again. On June 27 and 28 look for Regulus near the Moon. It is here that the first quarter Moon occurs again on July 1.

Call the Star-Line for the latest on the night sky.

973-614-9220



“In the beginning of all things, wisdom and knowledge were with the animals...and that from them, and from the stars and the sun and the moon should man learn...”

— Eagle Chief (Letakots-Lesa)
19th Century Pawnee

Members Enjoy

Field Trip

On Saturday, May 23, Ruth & Dennis Koenig, Dennis Barlow, Kevin Conod, and Mary Lou & Roger West visited the planetarium at the Newark Museum. We saw the show "Stars of Jade" in the planetarium, visited the "Chinese Silk & Ceramics" exhibit, then enjoyed coffee & conversation in the Museum cafe. For those who missed our field trip, note "Stars of Jade" is running at the planetarium through June 28. Call 973-596-6529 for more information or directions.

Membership

Renewals

If there is a red circle on your mailing label on the back page you need to renew your membership dues! Remember that a one year membership costs only \$15 per year for an Individual Membership, \$20 per year for a Family Membership, and \$10 for an MSU student. Family memberships cover spouses and all children 18 and under. Make your check out the North Jersey Astronomical Group and mail to:
NJAG, PO Box 1472, Clifton, NJ 07015.

Astrophotography Contest

I would like to take this time to congratulate all the winners of the 1997 Astrophotography contest and also to thank all those who entered. We had quite a variation of pictures this year ranging from our closest star, the Sun, to the deepest heavens using a CCD imaging camera.

Our winning pictures this year were from the following people. For Wide Field, we had Dennis Barlow with a seven minute exposure of the Milky Way. Solar System was won by Angelo Restivo for our first time visitor, Comet Hale Bopp, over the Throgs Neck Bridge in New York. For Deep Sky the ribbon goes to Joe Marzullo for his image of M-82. This was our first year to accept CCD images — congratulations Joe. Our General Topic was won by Dennis Barlow, a second time winner of this year's contest for a striking picture of Comet Hale Bopp.

Thank you for all entries this year. We had a total of eleven entries which showed a nice variety of talent. Other entries were made by Mark Ivanovic, Don Polzo, and Mija Britton. They were all spectacular.

The prize for Best of Show is awarded a free membership to the NJAG. This year it looks like the club will be losing money because of a three way tie. The winners are: Dennis Barlow, for the Wide Field Milky Way; Grace Casalino, for a picture post card of the Sun in a forest haze; and Angelo Restivo for Hale Bopp over the bridge. Congratulations to all the contest winners, and as you look up into the sky, remember to keep an open mind about our universe and an open shutter to capture it on film.

Keep snapping,
Angelo Restivo

North Jersey Astronomical Group Minutes of business meeting May 13, 1998.

Meeting called to order by President Joe Marzullo at 8:30 pm.

TREASURER:

Ruth Koenig reported a Treasury balance of \$661.71.

CORRESPONDING SECRETARY:

Dennis Koenig reported receiving 2 e-mails, one regarding a new web site about used telescopes and the other from the New England Light Pollution Action Group about a symposium on light pollution to be held on June 6 in New Haven, Conn.

OBSERVATION:

Mary Lou West reported that the past few public nights went well and that public nites are over until next semester. Gene Faulkner reported finding some dark sky objects in an excellent observing site in New York state.

Tony DeClemente showed the group a picture of comet Hale Bopp taken by his daughter's school principal.

PROGRAM:

Kevin Conod reported that Astronomy Day has been changed to Saturday, May 30 at Riker Hill Park. Kevin also announced that there will be a meteor watch on Tuesday, August 11 for 8 to 10 pm at Riker Hill Park for the Perseid meteor shower. Kevin announced that there will be a field trip to the Newark Museum Planetarium on May 23 at 2 pm.

VICE PRESIDENT:

No Report

ASTROPHOTOGRAPHY:

No Report

LIBRARY:

John Miksits reported that a new book has been donated to the club library by David Lambert entitled "Stephen Hawking's Universe".

OLD BUSINESS:

No Old Business.

NEW BUSINESS:

Kevin announced there will be activity and observing at Jenny Jump on May 16.

Mary Lou West reported that our e-mail address now appears on the web page of the University of Strasberg, France.

Joe Marzullo stated that our club web page is being upgraded and contributions are needed. Joe also asked for more contributions to our newsletter.

Joe introduced new member Jim Clark.

Joe announced to the group that our recently refurbished 8" Dynascope is now available for use.

Gene Faulkner discussed having another public nite at the Elks Lodge in Clifton. Date to be announced.

Ruth Koenig stated that the club will be doing a public nite at Skylands Manor sometime in September or October.

Joe Marzullo announced that observing nites will start at the Iris Gardens on Wednesday, May 20 at 8:30 pm, weather permitting.

Meeting adjourned at 9:05 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Dennis Koenig
for Jim Piombino
Recording Secretary

The Moon

Musicologists claim over 2,500 songs have been published with "moon" in the title or the lyrics or both. McDonald Observatory at the University of Texas, however, recognizes only 26 names for the moon of a given month:

January

Old Moon or Moon After Yule

February

Snow, Hunger or Wolf Moon

March

Sap, Crow or Lenten Moon

April

Grass or Egg Moon

May

Planting or Milk Moon

June

Rose, Flower or Strawberry Moon

July

Thunder or Hay Moon

August

Green Corn or Hay Moon

September

Fruit or Harvest Moon

October

Hunter's Moon

November

Frost or Beaver's Moon

December

Long Night or Moon Before Yule

(SOURCE: Accord/Weather Calendar 1997, Denver, CO)
Submitted by John Miksits

NASA CORE

NASA's Central Operation of Resources for Educators provides videotapes, slides, filmstrips, and space memorabilia for a small fee. Most of these focus on the space program, but also include some astronomy items.

Request a catalog from:

NASA CORE

Lorain County JVS

15181 Route 58 South

Oberlin, OH 44074

(216) 774-1051 Ext. 293, Fax:

(216) 774-2144

or

<http://spacelink.nasa.gov/CORE>

The Universe in the Classroom: A National Workshop on Teaching Astronomy in Grades 3-12

A national workshop for elementary and secondary teachers (and those who work with them) is being offered by the non-profit Astronomical Society of the Pacific Thursday through Sunday, June 25-28, 1998. The workshop is part of the 110th Annual Meeting of the Society, being held at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in Albuquerque, New Mexico. We especially want to encourage any teachers who are new to (or a little nervous about) teaching astronomy to attend.

The focus of the first two days will be on hands-on, classroom-ready activities, ranging from simulating the phases of the moon to making your own comet, from sorting planets to becoming familiar with stars whose brightness varies. (There will be separate strands for beginning teachers and for seasoned "classroom veterans", and everyone will receive a thick package of activity hand-outs and

resource materials.) Other sessions will focus on debunking astrology, understanding recent and upcoming NASA missions, and using computers and the web.

The second two days will feature non-technical talks by noted astronomers from around the country, focusing on such topics as the latest discoveries from the Hubble Space Telescope, our exploration of Mars, and the search for life elsewhere.

Registration for the workshop is limited, and open on a first-come, first-served basis. For a registration packet (and more information about the full meeting, which includes other sessions and tours), you can:

* e-mail Laurie Keechler at:

lkeechler@aspsky.org

* fax 415-337-5205

* call 415-337-1100 ext. 100

* see the web at: www.aspsky.org

Astronomy Web Site Wins National Education Award

Starchild, an astronomy-oriented website for children is the winner of the 1998 Webby award for education. The Webby awards are presented yearly, and are sponsored by Web magazine. Starchild was nominated from over 6000 web sites reviewed by the magazine, and was one of five semi-finalists in the education category. Starchild was developed at NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center, by scientists from the Laboratory for High Energy Astrophysics (LHEA), working in collaboration with two middle-school teachers. It is designed to function as an instructional tool which will both educate and excite elementary and middle school students about a variety of astronomy topics. The site can be found at <http://starchild.gsfc.nasa.gov/>. ☆

ASTRO-Poetry

Stars

by Doug Kittredge

They sing with silent voices,
An infinite chorus of light,
Mocking those who choose to listen,
But are left only with their sight.

Lose yourself in the harmonies
Of the infinite wisdom of the spheres,
And know that the music is written
For our souls and not our ears.

The theatre is open to anyone
Who is willing to give up the right
To believe that ours is the only world
In the starry firmament of night.

Go forward now and don't forget
To leave the Earth behind,
And listen to the music
Somewhere deep within your mind.

Editor's Note: Doug's poem appeared on the back page of last month's issue, but we printed the lines out of order! Our apologies to Doug and the readers.



Send Your Name To Mars!

On December 3, 1999 the Mars Polar Lander will enter the Martian atmosphere encased in a protective shell and travelling at hypersonic speed. Its parachute will open and it will rendezvous with the planet's surface at a predetermined spot within 500 miles of the Martian south pole. NASA invites you to be a part of this historic event. This website's goal is to collect 1 million names of school children from around the world, and combine these names on a CD-ROM that is going to be included in the payload of the Mars Polar Lander.

Amazing! You become part of history and at the same time a little bit of yourself becomes part of Mars!
So how do you become part of history? To find out, visit:

<http://spacekids.hq.nasa.gov/mars/>


Your Name Goes Here!

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Sky Calendar

- 1 First Quarter Moon
- 9 Asteroid Vesta in conjunction with the Sun, 3 p EST
- 10 NJAG Business Meeting, 8pm
- 10 Full Moon - Full Moon viewing after NJAG business meeting
- 17 Third Quarter Moon
- 17 Moon passes 0.8° south of Jupiter, 7 a EST - a good time to look for Jupiter in daylight!
- 14 Flag Day
- 21 Summer Solstice at 10:03 a EDT
- 21 Father's Day
- 23 New Moon
- 25 Moon passes 5° south of Mercury
- ★ NJAG PUBLIC NIGHTS - on hiatus
- ☆ Members Only Telescope Nights: Iris Gardens, Montclair

						
June						
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