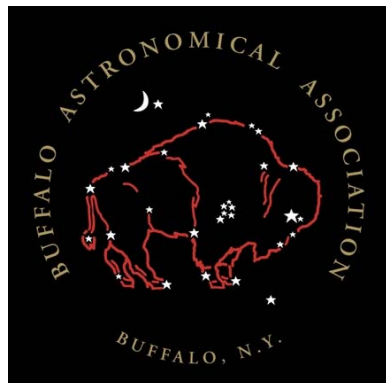


The Spectrum

Volume 10 Issue 5

Summer's Over Edition ☺

September/October 2008



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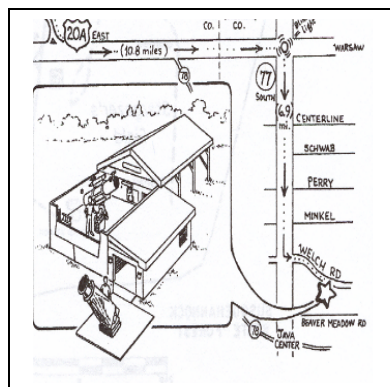
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From the Editor's Desk...

Well folks, summer is over. I always dread the end of summer since it is my favorite season. There just seems to be so much more to do in the summer. On the other hand, the long days and subsequent late end to twilight makes weeknight astronomy rather difficult for those of us that work day jobs. The nice thing about autumn is the skies tend to be clearer. But remember, lake effect season is right around the corner so enjoy the crisp clear nights while you can!

I am looking forward to the autumn foliage and the fall constellations. What is your favorite fall constellation? How about writing an article about it?

Let's all look forward to a new BAA meeting season (if you can call it that) and welcome back everyone. A special welcome is in order to any new members that may have joined since the last business meeting in June.

Rick Fusani, Editor

Rise and Shine

by Jack Mack

The speaker for the October meeting is you! Oct. 10 is the annual "What I Did Last Summer" short topics presentation.

We have never been much constrained by the title. The time frame is (roughly) the period starting last Fall, the last such event. If you should have presented then, but didn't, this is your chance for redemption; just do it now.

Fair game is a short talk on any interesting observation, imaging, traveling, tinkering, inventing, construction, presenting, writing, publishing, conference attending, star partying or other activity involving Astronomy. The MC will be myself. I have prepared a 47 minute refutation of the biannual full moon sized Mars prediction. Don't make me use it!

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Location/Time of Meetings:

BAA meetings are held on the **2nd Friday of the month** from **September to June** in the **Science Building on Buffalo State College Campus** (Except the March Dinner Mtg). Meetings start at **7:30 P.M.**, in the first floor auditorium near the entrance. See above web site for a map of the location. **Non-members are encouraged to attend.**

Spectrum Deadline:
Articles for the next Spectrum are due by:
October 21st

BAA Webmaster
Mike O'Connor

BAA Yahoo E Group
Coordinators
Dennis Hohman
Mike O'Connor

President's Message

I am writing my first column as President of the BAA with the bleary eyes and fuzzy mind that come from too many clear nights in a row. We have so few of these clear mild nights with the jet stream on vacation up in northern Canada. And it's summer – no conflicts with kid's busy school schedules. Sleep? It can wait!

Life is packed – there is precious little space to add more responsibilities. But when Roland called me in his annual mission to look for candidates for BAA office, it didn't take me long to say yes. This is an exciting time. The International Year of Astronomy 2009 has the potential to bring a lot of public attention to our normally quiet pastime. Although I love the solitude of observing in the quiet hours of early morning, I also love sharing the wealth. There is nothing quite like the excitement of a kid getting to experience a seeming star transform into a globe with a ring surrounding it... or seeing an adult melt into a child observing something they had heard about but never seen. As BAA members we have a 70 year tradition of sharing science and discovery with the public in Western NY. With media interest in IYA 2009, I expect we will see an increase in the lines behind our telescopes – at BMO, at the Museum of Science, on Elmwood Avenue, at the Williamsville North Planetarium, at Buffalo State College. It's going to be a great time to strengthen our partnerships and collaborations with other organizations. We might also experience some growth in membership too.

All this public theater can be exhausting. This may be our passion, but it is also a hobby. We have to remember to keep some private time for ourselves – time for taking pictures or for just enjoying some low impact observing with good friends. While the lack of sleep that comes with being an amateur astronomer is draining, it somehow also helps to recharge the batteries. I think we are going to need some fresh batteries for the year ahead. I'm looking forward to IYA 2009 and to the projects and parties that we will work on together. Here's to sunny days and starry nights!

Alan

BAA ANNALS

5 YEARS AGO - Bill Aquino hosted our “what I did last summer” revelations at the September 2003 meeting. For October, Alan Friedman and Thom Bemus held a special public meeting on how to shop for a telescope, and what to expect from one once you have it. President Joe Orzechowski noted that after a year of fund raising and hard work we were well on our way to having our robotic telescope in operation. Joe pointed out that it was generating interest among BAA members and also from visitors on public nights.

A report by Eastman Kodak, copied in *The Spectrum*, advised travelers on how to protect their film from X-ray machines at airports. The report is fairly long, but the most significant piece of advice they gave was not to pack unprocessed film in checked luggage. (That may be changed by now - so check before you travel.) There were no articles in this *Spectrum*.

10 YEARS AGO - For September 1998 we also had a talk for the public - this time on how to get started in amateur astronomy. Here is the notice for the October meeting: “George Fazekas, a professor at Monroe Community College and CCD guru Gregory Terence will give a talk on CCD imaging.”

This *Spectrum* did have articles. Edith Geiger led off with a profile of Tim McIntyre, who had just become editor of our newsletter. Halina Biernacki wrote somewhat esoterically about what factors shaped the development of members of the animal kingdom - humans in particular. She wrote especially about vision and how the environments of different worlds might influence how “clear vision” could be obtained. The lunar crater Plato was the topic of an article by Fred Price. There was an observation report by Frank Chalupka, Bill Aquino and Rowland Rupp on viewing the Cat’s Eye nebula in Draco. Members of Rowland’s astronomy class from Genesee Community College were at BMO for these observations. Tim McIntyre reported on a series of deep sky observations he made in Sagittarius, Scutum and Scorpius using the 20-inch Obsession at BMO. He observed an amazing (at least amazing to me) number of objects in just three hours.

15 YEARS AGO - Fifteen years ago in September, Ernst Both spoke on 50 years of Mars research. I’m not sure if this was Ernst’s personal research (he *is* an expert on Mars), or if it included the works of others. In October we heard from Dr. James LoPresto on the “Sun’s Variable Luminosity”. President Bill Smith reported that the Board had determined that meetings for the coming year would be broken into three segments: business, short talks and observations, and main speaker. Moreover, “*times will be adhered to*” (my emphasis). We can all guess how that idea worked out!

Observatory Director Dan Marcus thanked Joel Stuckey, Bruce Newman, Bob Hughes, Bill Halbert, and Terry Radder who volunteered their time to host an unscheduled event at the observatory to let the public view the Persied Meteor shower. More than 80 members of the public signed in. Dan estimated that there may have been as many more who didn’t sign in..

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Joe Orzechowski reported on his observations of Jupiter with his 3-inch telescope. He was particularly interested in the transits and occultations of the four Galilean moons. There was an article on exit pupils by non-member Dr. Rick Letherer

25 YEARS AGO - In September 1983, Clifford Cunningham from Kitchener, Ontario, spoke on "Amateur Photoelectric Photometry of Asteroids". He was an expert on asteroids and was planning to publish a book on the subject. BAA member Dr. John Raymonda spoke in October on "Spectroscopy and Chemistry". Here are some names from the past: Observatory Director John Riggs thanked John Yerger and Michael Idem for assisting him on public nights during the summer. We received two gift telescopes from Mr. and Mrs. Charles T. Coons, both having been made by their son Timothy.

Edith Geiger wrote a profile on BAA member Jim Russell.. Darwin Christy reported on his recent weekend at Stellafane. There was an observation report on several objects seen by Carl Milazzo including Comet Sugano-Saigusa-Fujikawa (6.1 magnitude), Rowland Rupp reported on an aurora while he was observing at Lime Lake, and Shaun Hardy noted the improvements obtained at the Lockport Astronomy Association facility by using nebula filters for deep sky observing in light polluted conditions..

35 YEARS AGO - In September 1973, BAA President Darwin Christy spoke on meteorites, his favorite topic. The next month we heard from Dr. Fred Price on "Amateur Lunar Observations" (his favorite topic too). It was noted in *The Spectrum* that this marked the tenth anniversary of Fred's first talk to the club, given shortly after his arrival in the U.S. Déja vu (in reverse) - Darwin commented that meetings were starting late, and proposed "we shall make a determined effort to start promptly at 8:00 p.m." We can guess about the outcome of that proposal too! In those days we met at the Buffalo Museum of Science. The Lockport Astronomy Association was to host the Fall meeting of the Niagara Frontier Council of Amateur Astronomical Associations. This was a group, largely organized by BAA member Ed Lindberg, designed to establish communication between nearby astronomy clubs and to establish a shared speaker pool.

Ernst Both had an article "About Distances in the Solar System". John Riggs contributed another in his series of guides on deep sky observing.

Rowland A. Rupp

***Dark Energy**

**Laboratory Simulations Lead To Predictions Of: Star Accelerations;
Formation Of Spiral Galaxies; Creation Of Voids, Walls, And Clusters
(second edition)**

August A. Cenkner Jr.

B.A., B.S., M.S., Ph.D.

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FREE TO BAA MEMBERS

A limited number of free copies of the book are available to current BAA members. To reserve a free copy, notify the author at:

jandgr2 @verizon.net or 625-8343

These copies will be distributed at an upcoming Friday night BAA meeting; the exact meeting date will be announced at a later time.

* Introduced by the author at the "Origins of Dark Energy" conference, McMaster University, Hamilton Ontario
Canada, May 2007

Uranus Revealed

Sometimes when I write the BAA Annals I recall an experience of my own from the past. Often I'm not sure if I've written about it before, but in this case I'll take the risk of repeating myself.

In the November/December 2007 Annals I commented on Bob Titran's article on searching for Uranus and Neptune. It reminded me of an experience, both humorous and enlightening, that I had several years ago when I sought Uranus one night at BMO. I had looked up a finder chart and discovered that I could be guided by three stars, equally separated, in a nearly vertical orientation. Uranus was supposed to be in line with the three stars, and below the bottom one by about the same distance that separated the adjacent stars in the line up.

I searched at the right distance below the bottom star with my six inch telescope that I had used before to find Uranus. I had no luck despite repeated tries. There was nothing there that was even a reasonable candidate. It was frustrating! How could I miss an object so easily seen and so unmistakable?

Then I realized my error. There were *four* stars in line, equally spaced. The bottom most star *was* Uranus. Despite never exceeding 5.7 magnitude, Uranus was clearly visible without optical aid that evening. I had been misled into thinking the bottom most object was a star - not so. I doubted I had especially acute vision, so I asked several other observers if they could see that fourth "star". They all could and were quite surprised to find that Uranus is an easy naked eye object.

Rowland A. Rupp

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

Sometimes newer members ask what the purpose of the BAA is. It may surprise many of you that the BAA has a Statement of Purpose. It was written by the late Bob Kartyas, and adopted by the association in 1973, about the time we began our relationship with the Audubon Society. Here it is:

The Buffalo Astronomical Association, Inc. traces its beginnings to the early 1930s, when a small but eager group of amateurs formed the "Buffalo Astronomical Society". In 1934 the "Buffalo Amateur Telescope Makers" was born from the original group and continued to flourish while the parent club waned. After many years of happy and constructive association, through the medium of instrument making, the interest of both old and new members alike began to widen into other areas of astronomical inquiry, such as observation and theory. In keeping with this new spirit, and in hopes of encouraging a more diverse membership, the organization decided to change its name. Thus, the "Buffalo Astronomical Association" was born. After many years of successful operation, the group, in 1960, sought and received corporate status under the laws of the State of New York. In 1975 the association was recognized as a non-profit corporation entitled to tax privileges.*

The objectives and goals of our association are both numerous and varied.

Of prime importance is the encouragement and promotion of amateur astronomy as a useful adjunct to the field of professional astronomy. We subscribe to the goals of the amateur astronomer everywhere: To explore the universe to its limits with our minds and instruments in hopes of establishing our own place in the scheme of creation.

In common with other amateurs, we recognize and appreciate the beauty and wonder of the universe for its own sake, apart from any other utilitarian considerations.

We, as an association, will endeavor to lend our services to any person who feels that he or she can make a contribution to astronomy, and to a better understanding of the universe as a whole.

We encourage continued interest in and exploration of the universe, and serve as a source of pertinent information to the community at large.

In addition to these goals and purposes, the Buffalo Astronomical Association, Inc., recognizes the need for concern for all aspects of our environment. With this in mind, the Association joined with the Buffalo Audubon Society, Inc., to establish an environmental education center. Here the Earth and surrounding universe can be studied together in hopes of teaching that conservation is everyone's concern, and that together we can preserve the world of nature for posterity.

Robert Kartyas

1973

*Sentence added after the original draft.

Buffalo Astronomical Association Members Astronomy Websites

Compiled by Tom Bakowski

- Tom Bakowski -- www.tomeyeonthesky.com
-- Wide Angle images of the sky thru the seasons, from dark skies of PA, using a dslr camera and lens.
- Thom Bemus -- www.upstateastro.org/stars/index.html
-- Astronomy resource site.
- Anthony Davoli -- www.astro.premcom.com/ADM/index.htm -- www.admaccessories.com
-- Images of deep sky objects using a Takahashi FSQ-106 and a dslr camera.
- Tristan Dilapo and Mike O'Connor -- www.orbitjetobservatory.com
-- Images of deep sky objects and transient events.
-- Tristan uses a fully robotic Meade 12" LX200 and CCD.
-- Mike uses a fully robotic Celestron 9.25", Takahashi TOA-130 and CCD.
- Alan Friedman -- www.avertedimagination.com
-- Highest resolution images of the solar system using a Astro-Physics 10"- 6,5,4" refractors.
- Mike Israel -- <http://poochpa.myalbum.net/>
-- Images of solar system and deep sky objects using a TeleVue NP101 and Meade 8" LX200GPS with a webcam or DSLR camera.
- Dr. Jack Mack -- <http://facstaff.buffalostate.edu/mackje/>
-- Astronomy resource page.
- Mark Percy -- www.williamsvillek12.org/planetarium
-- Williamsville Planetarium schedule.
- Peter Proulx -- www.gotastronomy.com -- www.ip4ap.com
-- Images of deep sky objects using a Meade 10" RCX and CCD camera.
- Derrick Bill -- <http://homepages.roadrunner.com/astropics/>

If you're a BAA member, and not on the club's message board, then you're missing out on communication and current events. This message archive, started in 1999, has 134 members and had over 12,130 messages!
-- http://groups.yahoo.com/group/buffalo_astro_assoc/

For Sale

I have a couple of things for sale:

Stellarvue 15x63mm Binoculars:

These are in great condition and come in a hard metal padded case and caps. Excellent optics. I don't use them anymore since I bought some Canon IS binos. \$145

Heavy-duty wooden surveyor's tripod:

This is an excellent tripod that I used for both my Super Polaris and Unistar mounts. It also comes with an adapter that allows attachment of a Vixen GEM. This is in excellent condition and is sturdy enough to hold a C11 on a Unistar. \$ 135

If interested in any of these, call Rick Fusani at 432-3819

The Spectrum
The Newsletter of the Buffalo Astronomical Association

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