

JULY - AUGUST 1997

THE

SPECTRUM



NEWSLETTER OF THE BUFFALO ASTRONOMICAL ASSOCIATION, INC.

STAR PARTY ISSUE

***Members + a picnic + the sky (cloudy or bright) + fun
= a BAA star party ... an irrefutable equation of nature***

You're invited to be a part of perhaps the biggest benefit of BAA membership — the summer star parties. What are these things? They are not a biker booze fest — quite the opposite. Start with a picnic cookout, meeting other members, equipment tryouts and general yakking and shop talk and you have yourself about as great an astronomical experience as is possible.

Should the night be clear then a whole zoo of objects beckon you to look at them. Start with man-made satellites and constellation identification. Perhaps some bright meteors then a few Messier and NGC objects. Don't forget Jupiter!

Have you seen a planetary nebula as blue as turquoise? How about spiral arms on a galaxy other than the Whirlpool, M51? If not, take advantage of the club's public events and members-only star parties.

Did you know that there is members only viewing after every public event?

Yes, public events are for members too. Showing off a few bright objects, pointing out some of the more prominent constellations, explaining some of the basics of astronomical objects, answering a few questions and educating our visitors on how they can get started are the 'official' duties of public events. After that, it's time to unwind with some casual stargazing. Come early, come late but do come!

Are you a member and new to astronomy? Attend a few star parties/public events as a 'visitor' and you'll quickly come up and find your own level of interest and might just find it fun to help public night visitors too. Going to that first event/star party is all that is required. Sometimes that first step can be daunting. We

all had to make that step ourselves at one time too. Don't delay — do it today! We can talk and write about the benefits until the sun rises but to experience it you have to make the effort and take that first step.

MEMBERS HELPING MEMBERS

Members have different interests in observing so there's always some member who wants to 'show off' their latest finds or favorite objects. Do you have trouble finding M104? Probably there is someone who views it often and has a short-cut way of finding it. Star parties are a great place to trade ideas. Fun too.

Is there a object you would like to see, one perhaps you heard about, tried to find, saw perhaps a ghostly blur in a small scope or under city lights? Have you ever wondered what different eyepieces, finders, filters and observing techniques can show? What books are best? Why look at the Moon? Where's Draco? Nervous about trying out the club's big scopes? Have an equipment problem or question? All these doubts, fears and questions are easily solved and resolved at star parties! Use the seasoned members' experience to advantage. We want you to have fun with astronomy — not struggle along a solo learning curve!

The "Summer Star Parties" are your best, most enjoyable and easiest route to visual, hands-on astronomy imaginable.

Do yourself a favor and don't pass them by!

- Bill Smith

MEETINGS CANCELLATION POLICY

If, for any reason, (most likely snow or ice storms), there might be cause for cancellation of the meetings of the B.A.A., tune your radio to either WBEN (930) or WGR (550). Also if Buffalo State College has been closed due to inclement weather, so will the meeting of the B.A.A. be cancelled.

BEAVER MEADOW TELEPHONE

The telephone at Beaver Meadow, 716-457-3104, is for emergency use only at no cost. Local calls may be placed for a small charge - see the collection box by the phone. This phone cannot make long distance calls.

REPRODUCTION NOTICE

"The SPECTRUM" is the official newsletter of the Buffalo Astronomical Association, Inc. Permission is hereby granted to any non-profit astronomical society, to reprint, in whole or in part, any article in this, or any other issue of "The SPECTRUM", provided credit is due this newsletter, the Buffalo Astronomical Association, Inc., date of issue and author of said article.

TAXACOM computer bulletin board - 716-896-7581
for more information call Jack Empson at 716-745-3138

Star Parties

Well it's that time of the year again! We can now forget about getting frostbite at the Observatory! So come on out and join in the fun.

Our Star Parties are for FUN!!!! Dress is casual, the perfume of choice is Ode Deep Woods Off. **All** are encouraged to bring their favorite astro toys. If you have a 50mm refractor, binoculars, eyepieces filters, cameras, photos, charts, led flashlights, and all the gadgets you got for Christmas, but it was too miserable to go out, now is the time to use them. If you are disappointed in a toy's performance there is usually someone there who can assist you. If the toy doesn't work for you, it maybe perfect for someone else!

Star Parties are great places to learn about astronomy, and how to use astro tools. If you are looking to buy astro toys, star parties are a great place to try out and get info on astro toys before you buy an expensive pig-in-a-poke job from some mail order company! Have children? Bring them along!! Haven't seen an astronomer yet who didn't enjoy showing kids the universe.

Do you have fond memories of going out on a dark starry night looking for satellites and meteorites, or your first look at the moon? If you intend to stay late, you might think about bringing a sleeping bag so when the kids are tired they have a place to crash, while you are still having fun. One word of **caution** — telescopes are **EXPENSIVE!!** So the only kid rule we enforce is NO running or playing around the telescopes!!

BEAVER MEADOW OBSERVATORY

At the Beaver Meadow Observatory there are nature trails, an active beaver pond, and all sorts of wild life. Once it gets dark we can play with the 6" refractor, 8" reflector, 20" dobsonian, and fool with the CCD camera on the 12".

STAR PARTY LIST

All Star Parties and Public Nights are held rain or moonshine. There are no rain dates as it gets too confusing. I encourage all to give some notice to the star party host so they know approximately how many to plan for. Now here is this years list of Summer star parties.

July 12 Irene, and Rowland Rupp invite you to their cottage #316 at Lime Lake starting at 1pm. This is a bring a dish to pass picnic. The Rups will provide the drinks, and the hot dogs. If Rowland's arm feels up to it, he will be happy to take on all comers in horse shoes, so bring your lucky set. There will also be volley ball, swimming, tennis and the romantic early

evening boat ride around Lime Lake. There phone there is 353-4636, and their home #839-1842.

July 19 Bob Hughes will be hosting a bring a dish to pass star party at Beaver Meadow Observatory starting at 5pm. Public Night will follow.

July 26 Larry Carlino invites you to his home at 7118 Kinne Road, Lockport from 8pm to 1am. Phone #433-3432. Come check out the 6"refractor and the new 28" scope. It should be nice and dark with no moon in the sky. Larry is a keen deep sky and planetary observer. Since Larry is an avid gadget user, this is a great place to check out equipment. If Larry hasn't got it he probably has tried it out, and he is always on the prowl for better observing equipment.

August 2 Public Night @ Beaver Meadow

August 9 Jack and Jayne Mack invite you to their home at 1 Hunters Lane, Williamsville starting at 7:30pm. Phone #632-6210. The First quarter moon will be up, so bring your scopes for some lunar viewing.

August 16 Lynn and Wade Sigurdson invite you to Beaver Meadow Observatory for a bring a dish picnic starting at 5pm. Public Night to follow. Phone #875-2161.

August 23 Bob Hughes is organizing a field trip to the Ontario Science Center and the Dunlop Observatory. Meet at Ontario Science Center at about 1pm, dinner at a location to be announced, and then on to the Dunlop Observatory for a viewing session. Contact Bob Hughes for arrangements. Phone #833-2407.

YOU'RE INVITED!!

Star parties for this year, and several past years, have been organized by Dan Marcus. Thanks Dan!

- editor

Officers

Bob Hughes - President
Gene Witkowski - Vice President
Lynn Sigurdson - Secretary
Bev Orzechowski - Treasurer
Dr. Jack Mack - Museum Representative

Board members at large

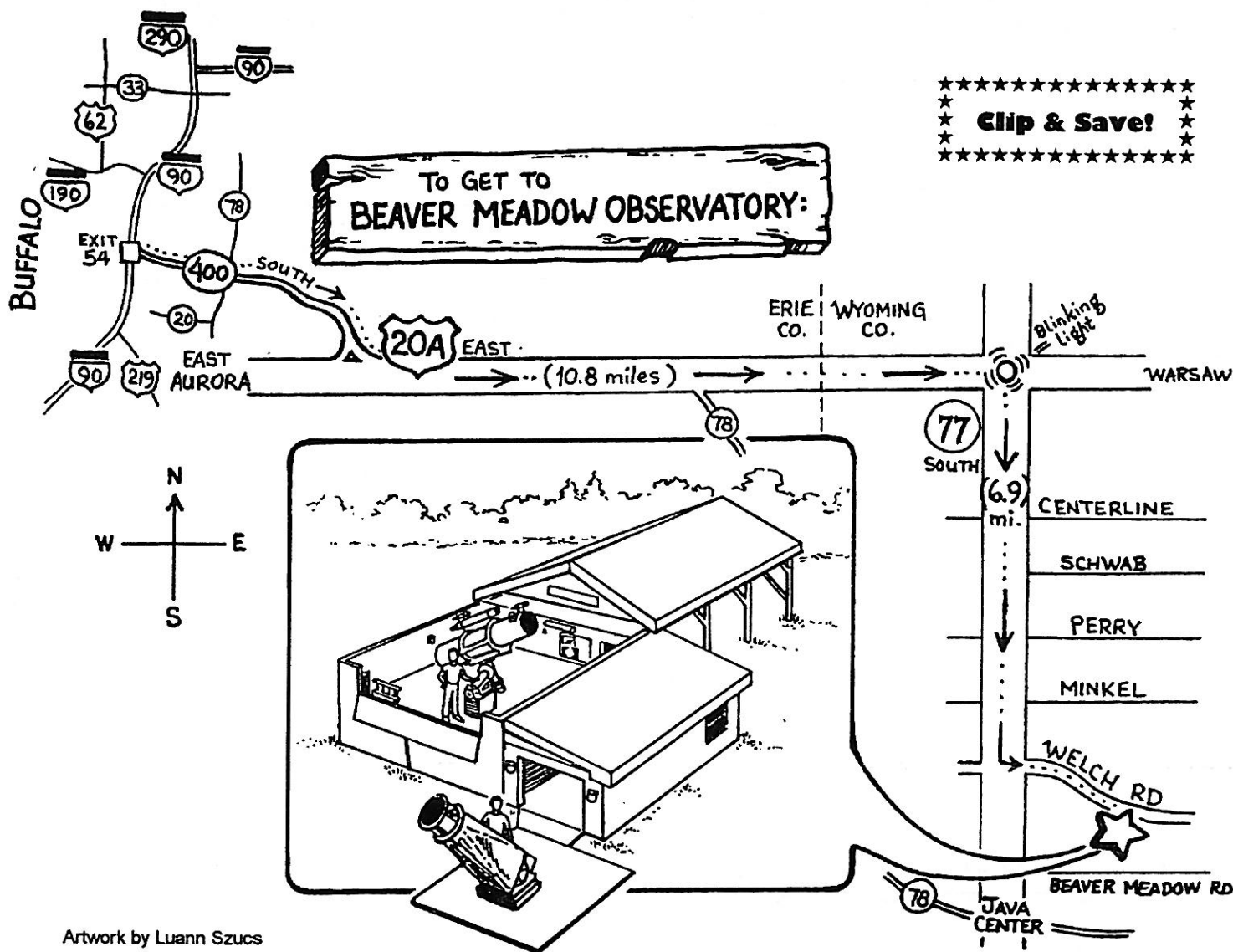
Joe Orzechowski - Bill Smith
- Bob Titran
Rowland Rupp - Fellow Representative
Joe Orzechowski - Membership

Observatory Directors

Neil Dennis & open

SPECTRUM STAFF

Bill Smith - Editor / Layout
Bev Orzechowski - Circulation



Enjoy life's smaller delights

Have you missed out on an Oscar, Emmy, or Pulitzer? Not even a Nobel prize or major Lottery winning? Don't fret — life's smaller pleasures are accessible to all. Besides a pat on the back or getting that last parking spot, which just happens to be in the front row, there is a whole universe out there above the horizon. Be it a glorious sunset, the full moon rising or your first view of the Ring nebula in Lyra. Astronomical happenings are indeed one of life's smaller delights. They are much more delightful when done in a group, such as our summer star parties!

Winning a grand award is nice but life's smaller delights are, in the long run, better, free and come under your control. All you need to do is take part.

- Bill Smith

We're always looking for your submissions of...

articles	quotes
artwork	more!
book reviews	
CCD images	<u>plus</u>
comics	
equipment reviews	comments
for sale items	suggestions
observations	your ideas
photographs	
poetry	

SPECTRUM DEADLINE

The deadline for the Sept-Oct issue is
Aug 15th.

Send all submissions to Bev Orzechowski
125 Roycroft Blvd., Buffalo, NY, 14226.

Preferred format is typed or PC readable WordPerfect for DOS 5.1 or earlier, MS Word for DOS or ASCII.

- scanning available -

Handwritten or other formats are fine too - we really like submissions!

ASTRONOMICAL HAPPENINGS

TIME WELL SPENT IN ASTRONOMY

Moon

New July 4	1st Qtr July 12	Full July 19	Last Qtr. July 26	New Aug 3	1st Qtr Aug 11	Full Aug 18	Last Qtr. Aug 24	New Sep 1
---------------	--------------------	-----------------	----------------------	--------------	-------------------	----------------	---------------------	--------------

NOTE: After midnight events are listed for the proper day! Thus 1 am on the 10th means you must be prepared be up late on the evening of the 9th.

CELESTIAL DELIGHTS

Many thanks to Bill Aquino for volunteering to put out this year's issue. Pick up a copy at any meeting or at the observatory.

Don't miss the club's star parties!

Beaver Meadow Observatory

The observatory is open to "checked out" members anytime. Call Neil Dennis or Bob Hughes (833-2407) to get "checked out".

Public nights are the 1st and 3rd Saturday nights April through October. There is members viewing after every public event.

Help is always needed and appreciated for our public events. You don't need a lot of experience to help out. Stop by and be an "observer" and see how easy it is. The 'vets' will show you how.

Date	Event, elevation above noted horizon @ time listed [binos or small scope helpful]
July 11	Mars is 1.8° below the moon, 24° above SW @ 10 PM
July 15	Try to catch Mercury setting, 7° above WNW @ 9:15 PM
July 19	PUBLIC NIGHT @ Beaver Meadow Observatory — stop out!
July 22	Venus passes within 1.2° of bright star Regulus, 7° above W @ 9:30 PM
July 22	Jupiter is within 7° of the Moon, 24° above SE @ midnight
July 25	Moon passes close to Saturn, 45° above SE @ 4:30 AM
July 28	Delta Aquarid meteor shower — crescent moon — fair prospects
July 29	Thin moon passes within 1° of bright star Aldebaran; 29° above E @ 5 AM
Aug 2	PUBLIC NIGHT @ Beaver Meadow Observatory — stop out!
Aug 4	Mars is 2° above bright star Spica, 15° above SW @ 10 PM
Aug 6	Venus is within 2° of the Moon, 10° above W @ 9:20 PM
Aug 9	Mars is 3.5° below the Moon, 15° above SW @ 10 PM
Aug 12	Perseid meteor shower — gibbous moon — good prospects
Aug 15	Neptune is 5° below the Moon, 21° above SE @ 10 PM
Aug 16	PUBLIC NIGHT @ Beaver Meadow Observatory — stop out!
Aug 17	Jupiter is within 3° of the Moon, 23° above SE @ 11 PM
Aug 22	Moon is within 2° of Saturn, 53° above S @ 4:45 PM
Aug 25	Moon is within 3° of bright star Aldebaran, 30° above E @ 4 AM
Sep 5	Venus, the Moon and bright Spica are very close together, 10° above SW @ 8 PM
Sep 6	PUBLIC NIGHT @ Beaver Meadow Observatory — stop out!
Sep 7	Mars is 5° below the Moon, 14° above SW @ 8:15 PM

MEMBERSHIP CORNER

Joe Orzechowski

Summer star parties are for members like you!

If you bump into any of our newer members at the observatory, at a meeting, or at a star party, be sure to introduce yourself and make them feel like part of the gang. I've occasionally heard comments from some of our newer members which go something like this: "I don't come out to the observatory (or star party or Messier marathon or whatever) because I'm not really an amateur astronomer. Astronomy is just a hobby for me and I wouldn't fit in with all you experts." Had these same people been out at the observatory on any public night they would have seen several such experts (including myself) attempting to locate various objects with the 20". We're not all experts. And we have simple goals: enjoy our astronomical pursuits, learn something along the way, and share that knowledge with others so that they may understand why we find the night sky so fascinating. If you're just starting out, there's no better place to learn than among the members of a group like the BAA.

STARFEST CONVENTION

It looks like the BAA will again be represented at the **Starfest Convention, AUGUST 7-10**, up in Ontario. I plan on attending and I understand that at least two or three other members are also planning to go. If you don't know what Starfest is, see the article elsewhere in this issue. And in keeping with my earlier pitch to make new members feel welcome, I'd like to issue an invitation to any member who considers himself or herself a novice observer and who is interested in attending Starfest. Join us at Starfest and

I'll do my best to give a basic observing course for beginners only; no experts allowed. Since I myself am no expert, the course may be quite short but we'll take a stab at setting up and using a telescope, identifying constellations, finding objects using a star chart, and we'll cover any other topic of interest. We can use your scope or mine. And if it's cloudy you'll still learn a lot from the talks being presented by some nationally renowned speakers. If this all sounds like a good deal, give me a call at 632-7091 (days) or 839-9109 (evenings) for more details. Carpooling possible.

And, finally, for those members who did not receive a 1997 **Membership Directory** at one of the recent club meetings, please contact me and I'll get one out to you right away.



And now, for something a little bit different...

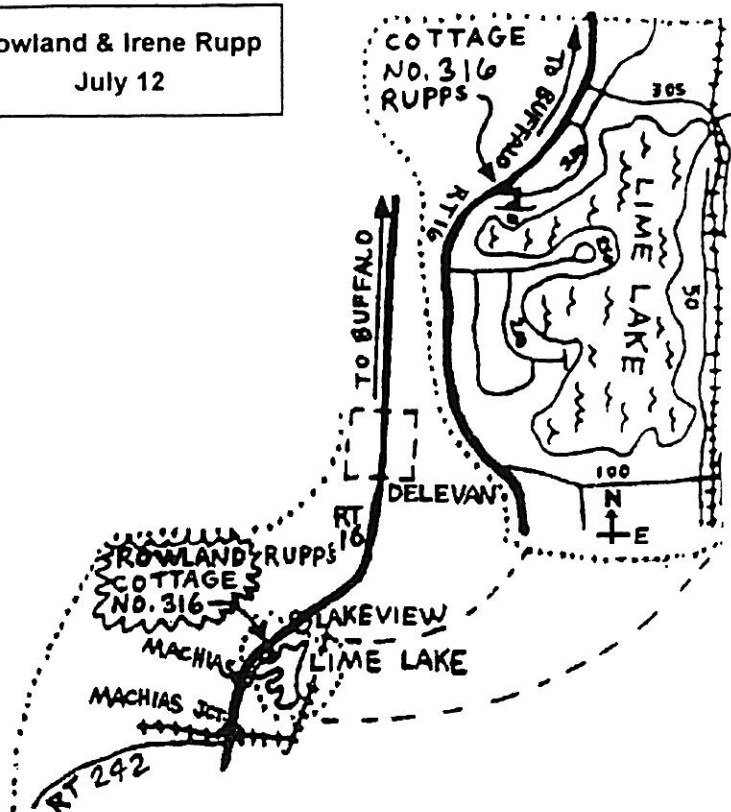
If this SPECTRUM looks a bit unusual, it is. Our full-time jobs have taken their toll this past 4-6 weeks. Your editor has spent 4 days in Indiana and 10 days in France (with 10 more starting July 5). Bev, our scanner and circulationist has been travelling even farther, to China for 8 days and closer ports of call as Washington D.C., Las Vegas and who-knows-where.

Sadly, in order to get the star party list out, we are sending this abbreviated SPECTRUM. Articles and such sent to Bev will appear in the next issue. Perhaps there may be an intermediate issue before the regular Sept-Oct. Maybe, and then again maybe not!

- your (harned) editor

Rowland & Irene Rupp

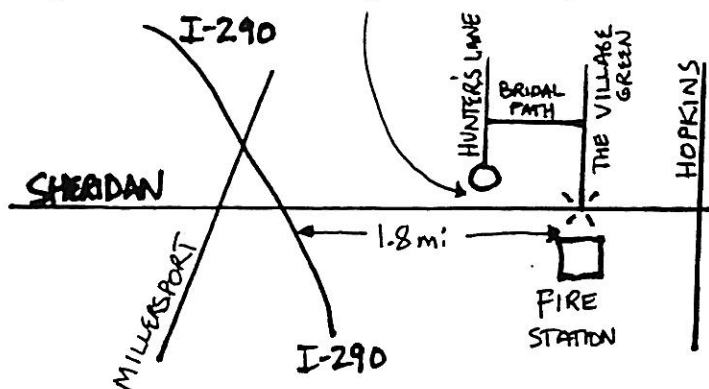
July 12



Jack & Jayne Mack

August 9

Map to Jack and Jayne Mack's



- 1.8 miles east on Sheridan Drive from I-290.
- At blinker light by fire station turn onto "The Village Green".
- Take next left onto "Bridal Path".
- Left on "Hunter's Lane" -- green house at end of circle.

Cloudy Nights

by Bill Aquino

On endless cloudy nights, and we seem to have our fair share in Western New York, astronomical observations are just not possible. These are the nights when most amateur astronomers will either work on their equipment or read. However, when you are clouded out for more than a week and a half at a stretch, as we often can be, there is only so much tinkering and reading you can do. I have found a refreshing break from this routine is watching television documentaries related to astronomy. These type of documentaries have been made over the years, but it seems more are being produced lately. This may be due in part to the growing public interest in astronomy, or perhaps the over abundance of television channels that are now available. Over the past 8 months there must have been close to a dozen astronomy related documentaries shown on various channels of my local cable network.

Of the ones I managed to see, some were a little boring but others were quite entertaining. One in particular, I thought was exceptionally good, is a documentary about the Hubble Space Telescope titled "Hubble Secrets from Space", shown on the Discovery channel. Most of Hubble's best known photographs were shown at various times throughout the hour long show. Including the famous "Deepfield" photo. What set this documentary apart from others was the up-close interviews with astronomers describing the photos. Their explanations, which included facial expressions and intonations, gave me a much deeper appreciation for the significance of Hubble images. This kind of an impression is difficult to get from reading a magazine article or book. Also included in the documentary is an animation of wispy-like waves of energy in the Crab Nebula (M1), created by splicing together sequences of Hubble photographs. Such animation's are only possible in a video presentation. A still image of this phenomenon appears on page 49 of the July 1997 issue of Astronomy magazine.

The problem I have, and I am sure that most amateur astronomers have, is that I am usually too busy to watch television when the documentaries are being aired, mostly during prime time hours. Fortunately, my wife insisted we get a VCR for "her" shows, and using it allows me to catch the documentaries that normally would have been missed. Once I have seen the show, it seems a crime to erase the tape, especially if the program was a good one. So over the course of the last 8 months I have managed to put together a small collection of tapes. Most club members probably have a VCR, or at least access to one. If you would like to view some of my tapes, let me know, I would be more than happy to loan them to you. In fact, there might be members out there that have a few tapes of their own? Could I borrow them? As a final thought; perhaps the club can start a loaning library of tapes, made up of members donations and housed out at the observatory, similar to our book collection? It would certainly help pass those endless cloudy nights.

OBSERVATORY CO-DIRECTOR OPPORTUNITY

Someone is needed to help co-director Neil Dennis with public events and observatory needs. Neil is our equipment guy who often helps with public events but we need to fill our open observatory public event post. To get a briefing call Dan Marcus, 773-5015. Be a hero, be a volunteer!

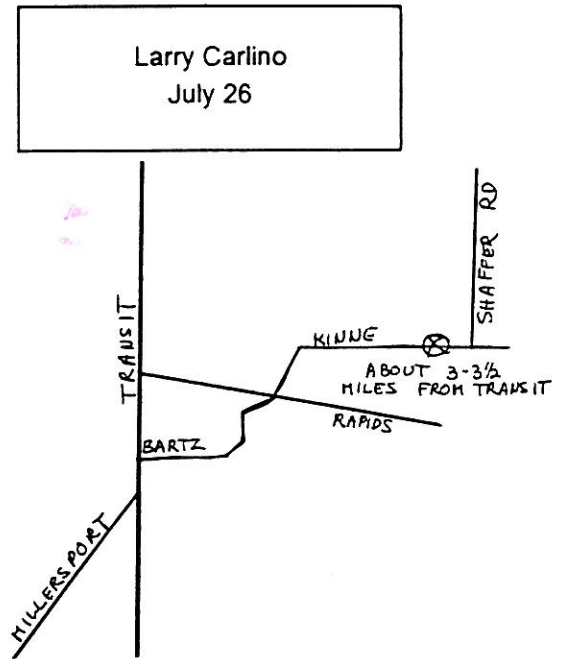
General Meetings Ideas

We need help in two areas:

1) Make more meaningful and efficient meetings. What should be covered during the business portion; is there a need for a break between the business portion and the main speaker ...

2) Main meeting topic and speaker ideas. Do you know someone who would like to address our group. Perhaps that is you. Short (5-15 minute) talks are also needed.

Contact any board member with your thoughts.



Inside:

- 1 STAR PARTY ISSUE
- 2 Star Party Listing
- 3 BAA Annals
- 3 Beaver Meadow Observatory Map
- 4 Enjoy Life's Smaller Delights
- 4 Astronomical Happenings



Beaver Meadow Observatory
Membership corner
A different SPECTRUM
More Star Party Maps
Cloudy Nights
Observatory Co-director Needed
Call for General Meetings Ideas
Bev's Taped-on Contribution

The SPECTRUM

BUFFALO ASTRONOMICAL ASSOCIATION, INC.

Beverly Orzechowski, Circulation
125 Roycroft Blvd.
Buffalo, NY 14226



ROWLAND RUPP
c/o ARCHIVES
132 BURROUGHS DR
SNYDER NY 14226

FIRST CLASS