

# THE SPECTRUM

Volume 1, Issue 6

1999 STAR PARTY EDITION

July / August 1999



## SUMMER STAR PARTIES

Page 3

## SCIENTIFIC FLEXIBILITY

Page 3

## ANCIENT CONSTELLATIONS

Page 4

## SPY & TELL

Page 5

## BAA ANNALS

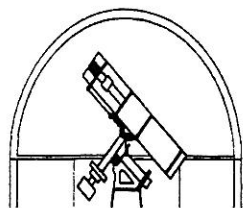
Page 6

## OBSERVATORY NEWS

Page 9

## OBSERVATION REPORT

Page 9



## INTERNATIONAL ASTRONOMY DAY WAS BAA'S BEST IN EIGHT YEARS!!

John Dobson is right, if you bring an astronomy event closer to where the public and members live, you will see large crowds.

In spite of it being a rainy day, over 600 public and 32 BAA members came out to help out and learn about amateur astronomy. In addition, we received the help from eight staff people from Tifft and the Science Museum. Tifft even provided a meal to all of us who volunteered that day. Among the visitors were even the Science Museum's

President Michael J Smith.

That day eight of our club members gave talks and almost every topic was about amateur astronomy. The following members came out to help at BAA's astronomy day and deserve a big round of applause and thanks for making it a success: **Bud and Ella Abate, Marilou Bebak, Gene Belstraz, Tom Bemus, Frank Chalupka,**

**Anthony Davoli, Alan Friedman, Jeff Gardner, Edith Geiger, Fred Gordon, Augy Grillo, Bob Hughes, Don Knecht, Steve Kramer, Jack Mack, Dan Marcus, Melissa Marcus, Carl Milazzo, Anthony and Ruth Mohler, Stephen Oross, Joe and Bev Orzechowski, Mark Reville, Rowland Rupp, Lynn and Wade Sigurdson, Bill Smith, Bob Titran, Ed Cerasani, Gene Witkowski** and possibly some others that I didn't notice.

I didn't have the time as I hoped to have, to wander around and talk to the members because of the never ending flow of children wanting to make a sundial.

As great as this years Astronomy day turned out, next years which is April 8, 2000 could be even better.

— Carl Milazzo —

## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

In the last issue of the Spectrum there appeared a "Message from the "Board of Directors." Among other things said, Bill Smith wrote: "Agenda items during the past several board meetings where the President and Board agreed went for the most part smoothly. Areas where we differed were often protracted sessions causing a lot of dark tension among all parties."

When asked for my resignation I said I would if we all would [ and let the club start fresh ] or I was willing to let the members be informed of the facts and then vote me in/out at the May meeting. These were turned down and the Board proceeded to expel me.

Continued page 2 "president"

### Officers

President — Gene Witkowski  
phone 876-4301  
Vice President — Bob Hughes  
phone 833-2407

Steve Kramer — Secretary  
phone 634-7694  
Bev Orzechowski — Treasurer  
phone 839-9109

### Board Members at Large

Joe Orzechowski, phone 839-9109  
Bob Titran, phone 774-2742  
Bill Smith, phone 664-0841  
Rowland Rupp, phone 839-1842  
Tim McIntyre, phone 632-3172

### Museum Representative

Dr. Jack Mack — phone 632-6210

### Observatory Directors

Neil Dennis — phone 322-7596  
Open Position

### Membership Director

Joe Orzechowski — phone 839-9109

### Spectrum Staff

Tim McIntyre — Editor  
Bud & Ella Abate — circulation  
phone 773-2398

President continued from page 1

At the May meeting a motion was put on the floor to reinstate me to my lawfully elected position as President. [ The general feeling was that the Board had no right to overturn a legal election [since I violated no By-Laws]. It passed. Enough said. At the April Board meeting I proposed that we as Board Members establish a voting history by voting by name on issues. By doing so we would be accountable to you, the members at the June elections. This was defeated. However the " new " Board seems willing to pursue this.

We should be open to new ideas and we should encourage new members to get involved, especially in the running of the club where new blood is needed. I am looking forward to working with the newly elected Board Members : Treasurer - Bud Abate . At Large : Dan Marcus, Bill Smith , and Gene Belstraz [new member]. Congratulations!

Since Dan Marcus won the At Large position, a seat opens for a new Observatory Director. Please call me if interested. Clear skies and good seeing to all.

———— Gene Witkowski ————

### New Membership Chairperson

As I have mentioned at recent general meetings and in one or two of my "Membership Corner" articles (that I used to have time to write), my work keeps me extremely busy and it also requires that I be out of town frequently. This makes it difficult for me to adequately perform my duties as Membership Chairperson. After issuing a few requests, I am happy to report that Mr. Tristan Dilapo has stepped forward and agreed to take over the position of Membership Chairperson with assistance from Mr. Alan Friedman. Tristan may be reached at 941-5613 and Alan's telephone number is 881-4310.

This means that if you wish to renew your membership by mail, please submit your payment and any changes to your address, phone number, e-mail address, astronomical interests, etc. to:

Tristan Dilapo  
8715 Cole Road  
Colden, NY 14033

As always, you may also renew in person at one of our general membership meetings starting in September. Renewals are due on September 1, 1999 for the 1999 - 2000 membership year. The dues are \$20 for an Individual member, \$25 for a family member, \$15 for a Senior member (age 60 and above) and \$15 for a Student member (up to college undergraduate level). Please make your checks out to the Buffalo Astronomical Association or just to the BAA.

I would like to personally thank both Tristan and Alan for taking

over the membership task. I will be available to assist them during the transition period and especially during this Fall's general meetings when many of our members submit their renewals in person. I ask that the members please be understanding especially during their first year while they become familiar with procedures and begin to establish their own routines for getting things done. Please remember that to you it's a simple transaction: I hand him or mail him the money and I get a membership card in return. But it's not so simple for them since they have to handle and record over 120 of these transactions per year and most of these occur during the first 3 or 4 months of the membership year. Now add to that the processing of new member applications, address changes, the Membership Directory, etc. and you can see why your patience and understanding will be greatly appreciated. Gee ... I hope I haven't scared off Tristan and Alan.

———— Joe Orzechowski ————

## SPECTRUM EDITOR WANTED

**THE BUFFALO ASTRONOMICAL ASSOCIATION NEEDS YOUR HELP TO FILL THE POSITION OF SPECTRUM EDITOR. IT IS NOW THE 6th ISSUE OF THE SPECTRUM IN MY CONTROL AND THE ONE THING THAT I LEARNED FROM THE PAST YEAR IS THAT I REALLY DO NOT HAVE THE TIME TO CONTINUE MY EFFORTS IN THIS PROJECT . LONGER WORKDAYS A NEW HOUSE AND OTHER ORGANIZATIONS IN WHICH I BELONG TO LEAVE ME NO OTHER ALTERNATIVE BUT TO RESIGN MY POSITION AS SPECTRUM EDITOR. THIS WILL BE MY LAST ISSUE. SO FELLOW MEMBERS STEP RIGHT UP AND VOLUNTEER TO BE THE NEW EDITOR. IT REALLY IS NOT HARD TO DO AND IS KINDA FUN TOO .**

**BEST REGARDS , TIM MCINTYRE**

#### 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.

# SUMMER STAR PARTIES 1999 !!!

## JULY 10

Neil/Carol Dennis @ Beaver Meadow Sat, July 10th 7 PM

home phone: 322-7596

Beaver Meadow: 457-3104

We'll supply hot dogs, hamburgers and rolls. Please bring a dish and drink to pass.

## JULY 24

Jack/Jayne Mack @ #1 Hunter's Lane, Williamsville Sat, July 24th 7:30 PM

home phone: 632-6210

Call for more info.

Directions: travelling East on Sheridan Drive, make a left on VillageGreen (between N. Forest and Evans/Hopkins). Make a left onto BridalPath, then left onto Hunter's Lane. The house is the first one in the circle.

## JULY 31

Dennis/Colleen Hohman 4056 N. Freeman Road, Orchard Park Sat, July 31st 7:30PM

home phone: 662-2904

Bring your own lawn chair.

Directions: Take Rt. 219 to exit for 20A, make a right (towards the village of OP). 20A is Quaker Road. Cross main intersection (Buffalo St.), continue and make third left onto N. Freeman. It's 6th house on the left (a brick cape with wide open front.)

## SEPT 11

Bill/Carol Smith 1880 Thornton Rd. Cherry Creek Sat, Sept 11th 4 PM

home phone: 962-3412

Bill will bring a map to the Friday meeting.

Dogs and burgers and rolls provided. Bring a dish to pass. Bring kids. We have farm animals, hiking trails, and can tour a neighbor's dairy farm. Overnighters can tent and we have some room inside.

## (SF) SCIENTIFIC FLEXIBILITY

by Halina Biernacki

Everything is held together by something. Depending on the scientific discipline this chain or glue assumes different properties and has many names.

In astronomy dark matter is thought to make up 90% of the mass in the universe. Many theories have been proposed about the composition of dark matter. Among the candidates are the cooling shrunken cores left when stars extinguish themselves, called white dwarfs, and the bodies left when white dwarfs cease to glow are called black dwarfs. There are also the barely detectable objects that never quite become stars, referred to as brown dwarfs. Another possible source of dark matter are black holes - the remains of massive stars with infinite gravitational fields. MACHO's and WIMP's are also on the list of candidates for the composition of dark matter. Massive compact halo objects (MACHO's), includes black holes, large planet's and brown dwarfs. Weakly interacting massive objects (WIMP's), comprises particles of elements that are thought to have very little effect on ordinary matter. Vera Cooper Rubin an American astronomer is credited with her 1970's deep investigation of large

Cont. page 4 "flexibility"

amount's of dark matter in our area of the universe. Vera Rubin picked up, where Swiss astronomer Fritz Zwicky (1898-1974) left off.

Another scientific possibility of cosmic glue was proposed by the Swedish astrophysicist Hannes Olof Gost Alfvén. His theory argues that 99% of the universe is composed of plasma, and discusses that electrical currents in plasma interact with each other to produce swirling strands which initiate a chain reaction. The strands cause matter to clump together which produces greater swirling followed by more matter, and so on. Plasma is not a liquid or gas in this reference. It is made of ions, electrically charged atoms, and electrons. According to plasma theory stars, planets and other celestial objects were formed by this process.

In 1687 Isaac Newton postulated the Three Laws of Motion theory in his book *Principie*. With this he revolutionized the foundation of what was held firmly. Up to that point Aristotle's laws of the universe were held in place, mostly because there wasn't much of a boundary between religion and science. Galileo (1564-1642) experienced the Church's persecution because he upheld a heliocentric theory introduced by Copernicus (1473-1543). Newton introduced his views years later and his first law of motion can be stated simply-

*A body at rest or, (if already in motion), remains in uniform motion with constant speed in a straight line, unless it is acted on by a unbalanced external force.*

In Aristotle's time the Earth was considered a motionless body fixed at the center of the universe. But Copernicus knew, as did Newton, and we know today that Earth is in motion about the Sun and about its own axis. As you can see this first law runs counter to the Aristotelian assumption of "natural place" with its corollary that the natural state of an object is to be at rest in its natural place.

The Newtonian view is that there is no natural place for any object. Wherever an object happens to be at rest without any force acting upon it, it will remain at rest. If it happens to be in motion without any force acting upon it, it will remain in motion forever and show no tendency at all to come to rest.

If Newton is right, the only assumption which can be made if we are motionless is ... we will continue to be so. The above examples discussed the progressive development of cosmic evolution theory and how individual scientific thinkers bridged their independent research to advance a concept. Had human thought been at rest and motionless, no theory would have ever evolved. Science in its accurate assessments is not always correct. But unlike relig-

ion, science does have the ability to adjust its research. Metaphorically speaking science is a body which is in motion, where as, religion rests its belief on tradition which is often motionless. Belief may be a touchy issue for some, than think of it this way: traditionally science is never at rest which gives it the capacity to be flexible.

Individual belief levels can cause *inertia*, which introduces a factor that can render a group such as the BAA ineffectual, as a science club. *Inertia* comes from a Latin word meaning "idleness" or "laziness". When we continue doing things just like we used to, this becomes a tradition. Self-imposed importance obtains its strength from the security in delighting doing things the same way. Fresh ideas introduce another subtle force called *friction*.

Remember that a body at rest wants to remain motionless ... its comfortable that way. The only resolve to this predicament is to advance novel ideas within BAA which will keep "SF" science flexible. We need to get past the first law of motion to remain a science club. Let's boost personal levels of belief so we can displace complacency and acrimonious discussion ... and gravitate towards a meaningful positive force.

@

## ANCIENT CONSTELLATIONS

### CYNOSURE the DOG'S TAIL

Actually, this ancient constellation is one of our well known ones, Ursa Minor. This early and universal title, which was translated as the 'Dog's Tail', continued as "Cynosura" down to the time of the Rudolphine Tables. Although it is known among us as Cynosure, it is really applied only to Polaris, the Pole Star. The true meaning of 'Cynosure' as drafted into the English language, as the focus of attention. It was the focal point of the skies, where all eyes eventually turned. As it might be noted in a figurative sense, it was used as equivalent to something which attracts general attention, drawing all eyes toward it. The Pole Star attracts attention of all the mariners. Perhaps, even the Nomads of the deserts used this very sense to follow over the sands of time, as the mariners follow their travel over the seas. The origin of the word is uncertain, as the star group does not answer to its name unless the dog, itself is attached. Still, recalling a variant legend of Kallisto and her Dog, there have been thoughts that here lay the explanation.

Ovid and Germanicus, both presented a name of 'Cynosuris' for this Lesser Bear; both construed it as a dog, rather than a bear, but many of the records are lost pertaining to the constellation of old.

————— Darwin Christy —————



# Spy and Tell

by Edith Geiger

On May 8th, **Ed Ratajczak** led a Buffalo Audubon Society ornithological trip at Tift Nature Preserve starting at 8:30 AM. **In early June Wade and Lynn Sigurdson** went to Belgium to attend a wedding, after which they spent two weeks in Europe. **Marilou Bebak** continues to teach at Nardin Academy, and also spends 10 hours a week at the museum where she has help from her staff of four.

**Elaine Knecht** will be introducing "Morning Classics" Monday through Friday on WNED-FM during June and July. She will also host a "Music from Chautauqua" series produced by WNED-FM for Public Radio International beginning July 4th at 3:00 and continuing through September.

**Bud Abate** has been excited over his observations of Mars using up to 160x. He could see the polar cap clearly. On Sunday, May 30th, he counted 33 sunspots.

**Ernst Both** who along with many other interests, is an animal lover. Two adorable baby kittens left on his doorstep have been welcomed into his home. Ernst is sometimes referred to as Saint Francis.

**Anthony Davoli** has been teaching Earth Science in the Clarence schools for 5 years. He is one of our enthusiastic members, and is looking forward to attending as many of our Star Parties as possible this summer.

**Mark Doerr** is working in cancer research at Roswell, through UB, and will be receiving his Masters next May.

**Roger Leyonmark** joined the BAA because of his 15 year old son's interest in astronomy. Andrew received his first telescope, a Celestron 4" reflector, two years ago in early June when he was 13 years old. He has upgraded his observing with a Star Hopper. Roger is interested in astronomy, especially historical astronomy. The 19th century is of particular importance to him as he is a free lance writer and illustrator and is writing a Jules Verne type space novel.

**Gary Halter** is a RN at Children's Hospital, where he has worked for 19 years. He is interested in the sky and owns a Meade ETX, and is looking into the possible purchase of a 10" LX50.

**Louis Borkowski** retired June 4th as a toxicologist from Mediab, Inc. on Cayuga Rd. in Cheektowaga. Before working at Medlab, he was employed at ECMC for 25 years in the same capacity.

**Have a happy summer!**

## CYGNUS

Those deathlessodalisques of heaven's hareem,

The Stars, unveil; a lonely cloud is roll'd

Past by the wind, as bears an azure stream

A sleeping swan's white plumage fringed with gold.

Adam Mickiewicz's Polish Evening Hymn.

Cygnus, the Swan, lies between Draco and Pegasus. It is also referred to as the Northern Cross. it does not take much imagination to see it as a swan, with its short tail and long slender neck. Even the widely spread wings can easily be imagined. Just think in the days of the ancients when they looked up through unpolluted skies and saw this beautiful bird. The Arabs described it as an Eagle, and at other times, descended to the prosaic figure as the figure of a Hen. When the Swan had been established, Cygnus became almost every famous swan in history. Even the swan form which Jupiter assumed when he made his famous conquest of Leda.

When the Romans adopted its title, we now know, the constellation became the mythical swan identified with Cynus, the son of Mars, or of the Ligurian Sthenelus; or the brother of Phaethon, and transformed at the river Padus, from there being trans-

Continued back page

### SPECTRUM DEADLINE

The deadline for the September/October issue is

**August 15 NO EXCEPTIONS**

Preferred format is typed or PC readable WordPerfect for DOS 5.1 or earlier, MS Word for DOS Scanning available

-- scanning available --

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

# BAA ANNALS

by Rowland A. Rupp

This time there will be a departure from the usual format of the BAA Annals. The July-August offering generally is a record of star parties held in the past. I hope the hosts of star parties 5, 10, 15, 25 and 35 years ago will excuse the omission.

While rummaging through old documents I found two interesting, and somewhat related, items. The first was a BAA Membership Directory for 1972-1973, a year before I joined the association. There were 89 members that year, substantially less than the 149 members listed in the 1998-1999 directory.

That's an increase of 67% in a 26 year period. I couldn't resist calculating the compounded annual growth rate - it turns out to be just over 2%. Now that isn't very much compared to, say, putting money in the bank (actually it is these days) but, for a community that may well have lost population over this interval, it isn't too shabby.

And that brings me to the second item. According to a Buffalo News article, dated December 18, 1997, an AARP survey of Americans eighteen and older shows there has been a 50% decline in club meeting attendance in the preceding quarter of a century. A quarter of a century before 1997 puts the starting point of this statistic squarely in the time frame of the old BAA directory. If the BAA followed this national trend (and if a decline in club membership is directly related to club meeting attendance), our membership should have dropped in half, down to 44.5 members, for a relatively stable local population. Instead we have reversed the national trend and have actually grown. Not bad!! In fact, if club participation had not declined to the extent that the newspaper article indicated, our membership might hover around 300 now.

It's just as well we had only 89 members in 1972. We used to meet in the old Club Room of the Buffalo Museum before it was expanded in a series of renovations. If many more than half of our past membership attended meetings, we would have been unable to accommodate them in such confined quarters.

By the way, ten of those 89 members appear in both the 1972-1973 and 1998-1999 directories. They are: Ernst Both, Darwin Christy, Orrin Christy, Edith Geiger, Richard Janas, Olga Lindberg, Carl Milazzo, Fred Price, Vern Siegel and Dan White. Officers then were: President - Darwin Christy, Vice-President - Tom Dessert, Secretary - John Riggs, Treasurer - Robert Kartyas.

What else was going on in the BAA in that distant year? Well, our President suggested we needed more publicity and more articles for the SPECTRUM. Membership may change but, evidently, needs do not. We were also preparing for our third annual astrophotography exhibit at the museum. Darwin suggested we might take our exhibit to one of the malls where we could reach a larger, and different, segment of the public. Eventually, Gretchen Shork chaired our exhibit at Eastern Hills Mall, which was heralded as a great success.

The BAA was gearing up to support the Buffalo Audubon Society's Environmental Education Center in Java, NY by joining them in a fund raising program. We had already decided to move our 12-inch telescope from the Cornell Aeronautical Laboratory (later, CALSPAN) site in Newstead to the new BAS center. A liaison committee, consisting of Ernst Both and Bob Kartyas, was negotiating with the BAS. When the complex was built, Dave Bigelow became the BAS's first resident naturalist and Tom Dessert became our first Observatory Director.

Speaking of Tom, he brought his newly purchased 10-inch Dynascope to the September meeting of the Instrument Section. That was the instrument he used to do so much fine astrophotography in the late 1970s. Mike Dlugosz brought his brand new 16-inch, f/4.5 mirror for testing at that same meeting. It was to be the largest telescope in the area, according to the SPECTRUM. Sixteen members showed up for that instrument Section meeting.

A few tidbits from 'Spy and Tell': Rick Janas was serving with VISTA in Huntsville, AL, Orrin Christy was teaching electronics at Niagara College for Arts and Science in Canada, seven BAA members made the pilgrimage to Stellafane that year and Fred Price was off in England meeting Patrick Moore. Here's a neat anecdote: an observer in Bavaria saw the moon occulting the Pleiades and, not knowing what was happening, reported a swarm of UFOs landing on the dark part of the moon. He refused to believe the real explanation, being sure it was another cover-up. And finally, Irv Goetz's blemished photograph showing a UFO approaching the moon was published in Scientific American. I've seen the photo, it's the best picture yet of a "flying saucer".

Back then, dues were \$5 for an individual, \$8 for a family and \$3 for a student. A stamp to mail the SPECTRUM cost 8 cents. In June, we elected Bill Chambers, Edith Geiger and Fred Price to the Board of Directors. Bill and Fred were repeats; Irv Goetz declined to run to retain his seat. One obituary appeared -- for Paul Shuart. @

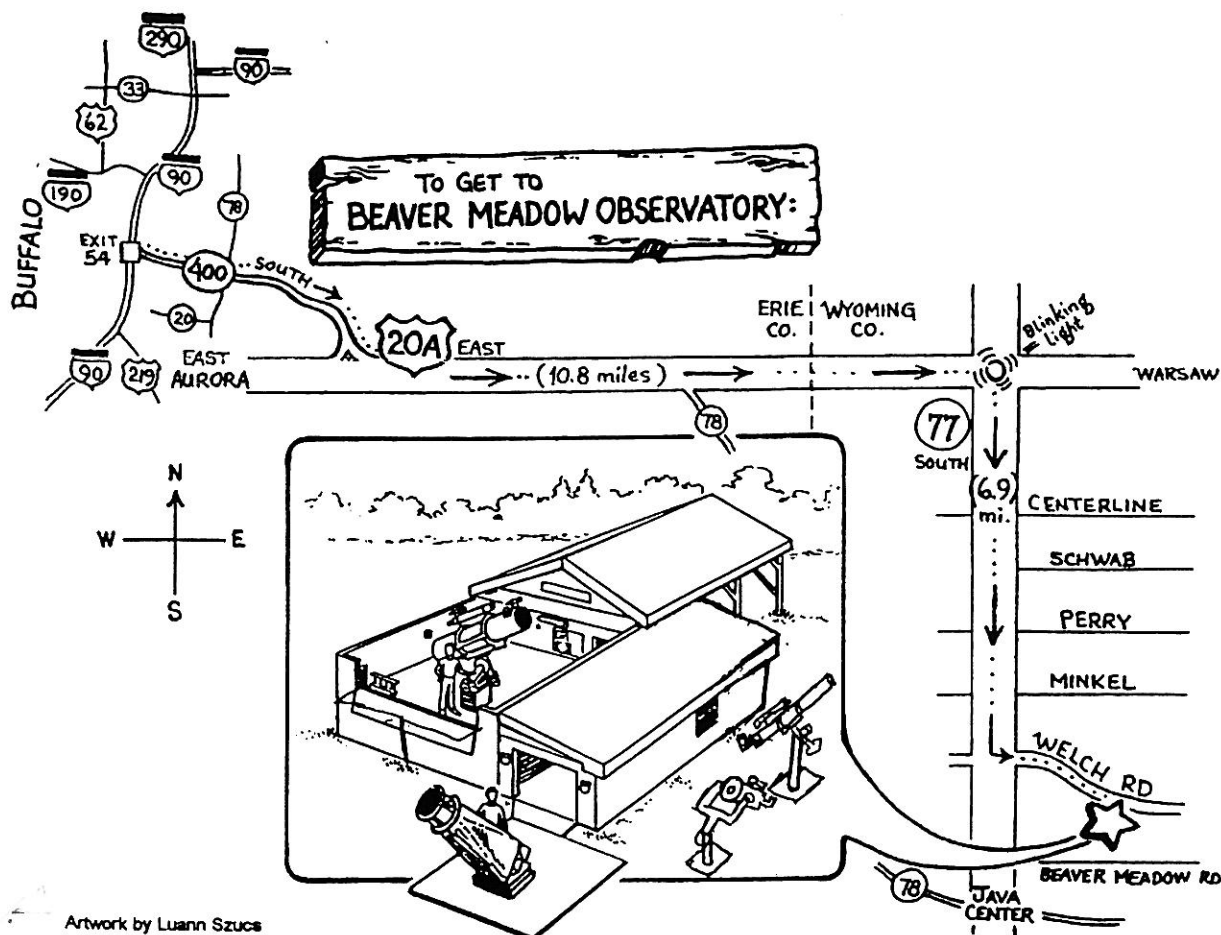
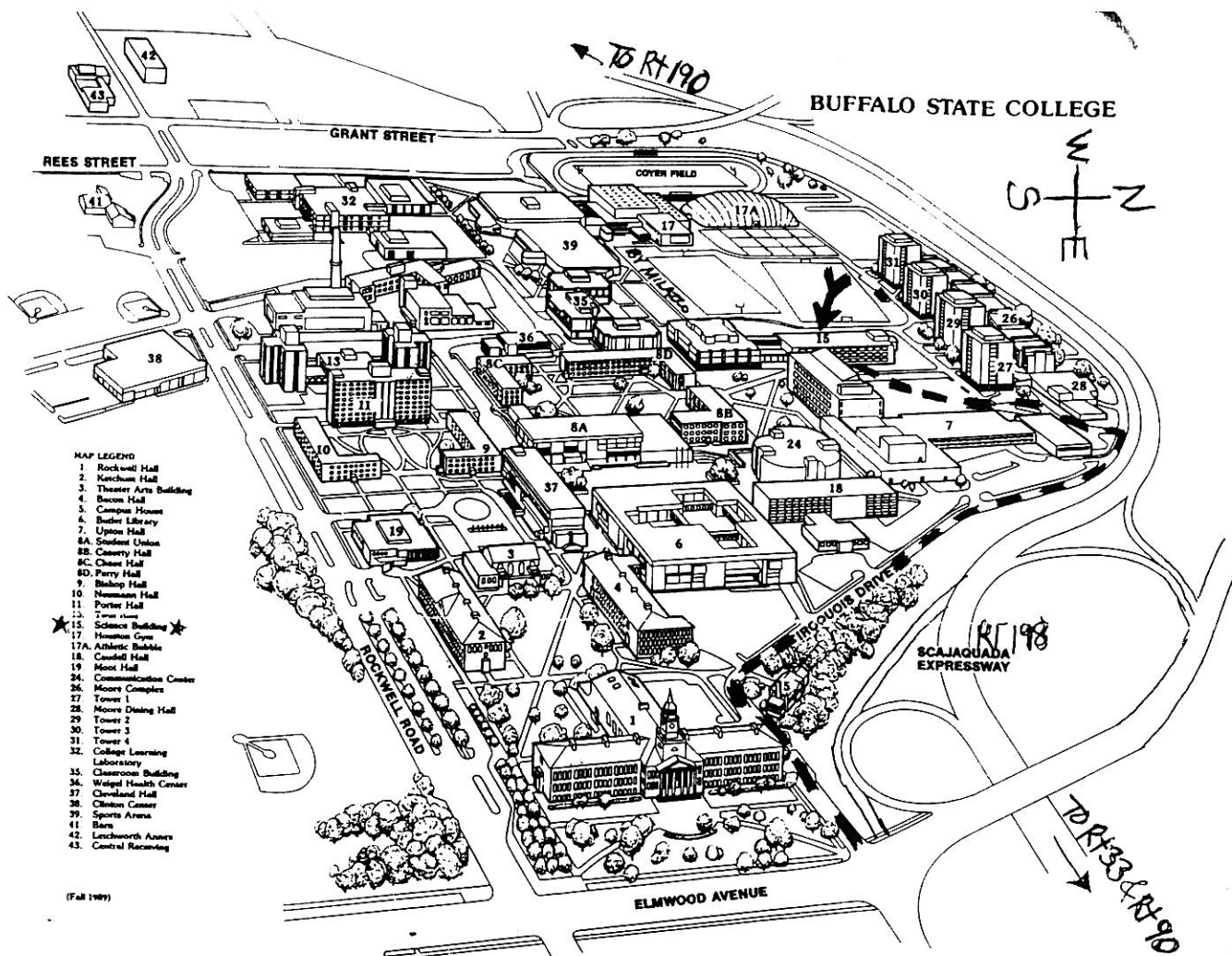
## TREASURER'S NOTICE

**NOTICE!!! SKY Publishing Corporation has raised the 1999 -2000 Club Rate for a One Year Subscription to SKY & TELESCOPE. One year (12 issues ) now costs \$29. 95.**

BENEFITS  
of being a member of the  
BUFFALO ASTRONOMICAL ASSOCIATION  
in affiliation since 1934 with the  
BUFFALO SOCIETY OF NATURAL SCIENCES

BY MILAZZO 3-99

1. Monthly meetings, second Friday of the month, 7:30 pm at Buffalo State College, Science Building auditorium, Rm 213, September-June, except our March awards banquet.
2. The use of the Beaver Meadow Observatory at any time, which includes the following telescopes: 20" Dobsonian, 12", 8" 6", and a 4" equatorials, and a CCD digital imaging detector. 10" Mead Schmidt Cassagrain
3. Bi-monthly newsletter, "The Spectrum."
4. Membership card.
5. The use of club loaner scopes: 3.5 inch Questar, 6 inch Dobsonian, 50 mm refractor.
6. Loaner library of books and videos.
7. Membership directory listing members and their interests.
8. Copy of the by-laws.
9. Group observing with members in the Summer (star parties).
10. Discount on subscriptions to Astronomy and Sky & Telescope magazines.
11. Field trips.
12. Workshops.
13. Loaning of exchange newsletter of regional astronomy clubs.
14. List of helpful advisors in the field of amateur astronomy.





# OBSERVATORY NEWS

by Dan Marcus

It's Star Party Time!!!! Lets hope the good weather continues all summer! The weather this spring was excellent for observing at the Observatory. Bill Aquino, Dennis Hohman, Rick Pason, and Frank Chalupka have been having great results using the clubs Cookbook CCD camera on the 12". They along with several other CCD users have requested that we leave the 12" setup for the CCD camera. This will allow CCD users to save on the setup and cleanup time thus allowing them to do more images in one night.

Frank has been using the LX200 10" for public nights. It looks like this will be a really nice addition to our observatory. If we continue to use this for public night use, it will free up the 12" for CCD use during public nights. With the CCD cameras we can show the public images of what they really should be seeing when looking through the 10" and the 20".

I will be proposing to the board that we obtain an equatorial wedge for the LX200 10" and some sort of dew removal system. We still need some sort of plan as where to

set up the scope permanently, and get it computer operated!

Neil Dennis has the plans drawn up for the storage box for the 10" and will start fabrication in a couple of weeks. When he is done we will be storing the telescope out at the Observatory. He also reports that the sliding portion of the Observatory roof needs to be replaced. He estimates it will cost around \$700 + cost of disposal to replace.

Still need HELP for Public Nights. Public nights are a great way to learn how to operate the equipment at the Observatory. The more people who show up, the more fun we have. Learn how to use the CCD cameras, the LX200, and how to image process. You might consider meeting a couple of friends and having a picnic before public night. Please call Dan Marcus 773-5015 if you wish to sign up to give a talk, or even just to direct traffic. The best help is someone to greet people, and get them to sign the log!!!!

Neil Dennis / Dan Marcus

## CLUB LOANER SCOPES

The following rules will apply to the use of our three" loaner" telescopes. First, a comment on what the club has available.

6" Dobsonian, this is a nice portable scope with decent optics.

A small Meade refractor on an equatorial mount, this is a basic unit, good for someone with limited storage space but not an exceptional scope.

Questar (90mm) portable, this is a nice scope for taking on a trip by air or by car but needs a solid table to properly set up (no tripod).

These will be available on a monthly loan basis-ie-one month at a time, additional months may be taken if no other request have been made for that unit. Any person wanting the use of the scope will file a request with me (phone or e-mail) for whatever unit and month desired. Allocation will be on a first come first served basis. The person borrowing the scope will agree to be responsible for the repair costs of any damage or loss while they have possession of any scope. The person borrowing the scope will be "checked out" by me or a designee as to the proper use of the scope when they pick it up. (either at Beaver Meadows Obs. Or at my home.

Neil Dennis (e-mail Wombat@RealNS.com)

## OBSERVATION REPORT

### Meteors and Mars

I spent several hours observing Mars during the week of its opposition. On 4/28 at about 12:20 a.m. Mars was presenting its most featureless face - located around the planet's 160° meridian (The April issue of Sky and Telescope gives some great info for searching out the subtle detail on the martian surface). Combined with only fair seeing and a big bright moon nearby, identifying any surface detail on the planet was difficult with my 6" mak-newtonian telescope despite the generous 16 arc second planetary disk. As I stepped away from the telescope for a moment I caught a glimpse of an amazing streak across the sky in the area just south of Leo. The streak - I assume a meteor entering earth's atmosphere - was headed west and split into two brilliant fireballs at perhaps magnitude -5. The two flares lasted a second and then were gone. This was the brightest shooting star that I have ever seen. Did anyone else see it? I would enjoy hearing from anyone who saw this event, or your experiences with Mars observing this spring. You can contact me via email at AlanFGAG@aol.com. I've included two sketches made from my observations that night.

Alan Friedman

## BEAVER MEADOW OBSERVATORY

The observatory is open to "checked out" members any time. Call Neil Dennis (322-7596) to get checked out. Public nights are held on the 1st and 3rd Saturday nights April through October. There is "members only" viewing after every public night. 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 just how easy it is. The "vets" will show you how.

ported to the sky. While Cygnus was thus prominent in myth and the sky, the swan was especially so in ancient ornithology. The subject of many fables, its hostility to other birds and to beasts was made much of. Astronomical symbolism have been seen in these by Thompson, as already has been alluded to under Aquila.

Associated too, with Leda, the friend of Jupiter and mother of castor, Pollux and Helena, had been classed among the Argonautic constellations.

Our Cygnus may have originated on the Euphrates as the tablets show a stellar bird of sorts, perhaps it was Urakhga, or the original of the Arabs' Rukh, the Roc, which Sinbad the Sailor knew. At all events, the present figuring did not originate with the Greeks. The history of the constellation had been entirely lost to them, as did that of the mysterious Engonasin.

Lowell was familiar with this asterism, and has brought it into his New Year's Eve, 1844:

Orion kneeling in his starry niche,  
The Lyre whose strings give music audible  
To holy ears, and countless splendors more,  
Crowned by the blazing Cross high-hung o'er all;  
and Smith, in Come Learn of the Stars:  
Yonder goes Cygnus, the Swan, flying southward,  
Sign of the Cross and of Christ unto me.

This Cross is formed by Alpha, Gamma, Eta and Beta, marking the upright along the Galaxy in length and being traversed by Zeta, EDSilon. Gamma and Delta.

## FOR SALE

8" Meade Schmidt-Cassegrain Telescope in carry case with, Standard Field Tripod

25mm & 9mm Eyepieces, Deer Shield, Filter

\$600.00 Anthony Mohler

(716) 942-6894

Celestron CG-11 sct, Losmandy G11 mount, with telrad, 26mm plossl, camera mount, polar alignment scope, dew heater, dew shield. Excellent condition.

\$2900.00

Celestron f6.3 focal reducer \$75.00

Tim McIntyre

(716) 632-3172

### NEWSLETTER OF THE BUFFALO ASTRONOMICAL ASSOCIATION INC.

Tim McIntyre  
135 Fairvale Drive  
Cheektowaga, NY 14225

Phone: 716-632-3172  
Email: TMcint9320@aol.com



## THE SPECTRUM

Web master ~ Mark Reville

We're on the Web  
[www.webt.com/mreville/indexbaa.html](http://www.webt.com/mreville/indexbaa.html)



ROWLAND RUPP

c/o ARCHIVES

132 BURROUGHS DR

SNYDER NY 14226

C