

The Spectrum

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July / August 2002



Table Of Contents

Message from the President Elect
Page 2

Observatory News
Page 3

Membership Corner
Page 4

Editors Note
Page 4

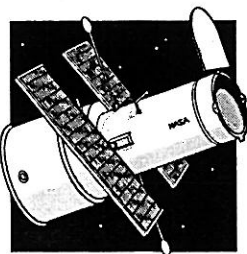
Star Parties
Page 4

Nocturnal Tales
Page 5

Observing Thoughts
Page 5

BAA Annuals
Page 6

Spy and Tell
Page 6



High Speed Internet Access to Beaver Meadow Observatory by Peter Proulx

New Partnership with UB and the BAA will provide High Speed Internet Access to Beaver Meadow Observatory

A two year effort to partner with UB's Physics Department will culminate in installation of a High Speed Satellite based Internet Link to our Observatory and Nature Center. A small group of members has been working with the Physics Department of UB to develop a partnership between our club and students in their Astronomy curriculum.

A little history is in order here, we first started talking with UB about a project to bring a 20 inch SCT that was donated to the school "on line" at the BMO. This was an ambitious project; the telescope was monster in weight and size built by a Mr. Catapovic (a former BAA club member). The telescope was in storage at the school for the past 15 odd years. Members of our club participated in star testing the instrument and developing a budget to house the scope at the BMO and link it to UB via the Internet. Our budget came in at over \$250K; the school had donations from the Catapovic family for over \$40K earmarked for this project. The plan was to raise the additional dollars through the UB Alumni, however the events of September 11th severely curtailed fund raising efforts. With the limited funds available a decision was made earlier this year to utilize funds in the following manner:

1. The donated Catapovic telescope would be installed at the UB campus for use as a transit scope. This is a fine instrument and will work well in this capacity.
2. Funds would be allocated to providing Internet Access to BMO in order to share data with our club and the Physics department. They are interested in our imaging efforts.
3. Some additional funds might be available towards equipment for our clubs Robotic Scope effort.

UB has made a generous offer to pay for the equipment and installation of a Satellite Internet Link to the BMO. The funding covers the Satellite Equipment but also two Sun SPARC station for servers. They have agreed to pay for a third of the \$99 monthly access costs for two years. The BAA would pay one third and the Nature Center would pay the final third. This works well for the Nature Center as they were in the process of trying to find high speed Internet access to service their staff and visitors. Our Board of Directors approved Two years of funding at their June meeting. We hope to have the link installed and operational by September 1, 2002. Additionally as part of our partnership UB is looking for our Club to participate in yearly presentations to students in the Astronomy curriculum. Bill and Frank did a talk with last year's class that got rave reviews.

The BAA will benefit by having the Internet available at the BMO for member use and also for public nights. Our linkage with UB will help with our community outreach and my hope is that it can lead to a continued partnership beyond the initial two years. Although the initial project with UB did not come to pass our clubs own Robotic Scope project will benefit tremendously from the Internet connectivity. If things go as planned with the Robotic Scope project all members will have access to our 10" LX200 for imaging. This High Speed Internet connectivity will give everyone a chance to participate in Astronomy at the BMO!

BMO Robotic Telescope Project Fundraiser

During the Board meeting on October 3, 2001, the BAA Board of Directors unanimously approved a proposal to build a 10" robotic telescope at Beaver Meadow Observatory. Construction of the system has now begun and will move forward in line with fund raising efforts. This is a tremendous addition to the observing capabilities of the Buffalo Astronomical Association and will provide enormous observing flexibility for the Association's membership. A club project of this magnitude and importance will require a lot of hard work by the project's committee members. Anyone willing to help out should get in touch with project manager Mike O'Connor at 662-7456 mtoconnor@adelphia.net.

Also, we can all help make this work by digging deep and making a cash donation to the project. The BAA Board of Directors has voted to match BAA member contributions to the Robotic Scope Project up to \$2500 with money from the observatory fund - so each dollar you contribute becomes two dollars for the project! All donations should be made payable to the Buffalo Astronomical Association, Inc. and be sent to BAA treasurer Beverly Orzechowski - who has volunteered to head up project finances - 125 Roycroft Blvd. Snyder, NY 14226.

BAA OFFICERS

President—Daniel Marcus
Phone: 773-5015
Vice President—Dr. Jack Mack
Phone: 632 6210
Secretary—Joe Orzechowski
Phone: 632-7091
Treasurer—Bev Orzechowski
Phone: 632-7091

MEMBERS AT LARGE

Frank Chalupka
Phone: 681-7360
Bob Titran
Phone: 774-2742
Alan Friedman
Phone: 881-4310

COLLEGE OF FELLOWS

Rowland Rupp
Phone: 839-1842

OBSERVATORY DIRECTORS

Bill Aquino 731-9366
Neil Dennis 322-7596

MEMBERSHIP DIRECTORS

Tristan Dilapo 941-5613
Alan Friedman 881-4310

ASTRONOMY DAY

Bob Titran

UB TELESCOPE PROJECT

Peter Proulx

ROBOTIC SCOPE PROJECT

Mike O'Connor

STAR PARTIES

Jeff Gardner

SPEAKERS

Dr. Jack Mack

SPECTRUM STAFF

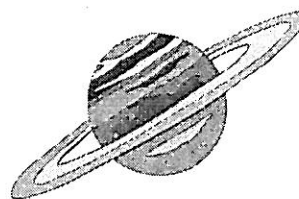
Editor—Jamie Seibert
Phone: 689-3349
E-Mail: jseibert@buffalo.edu
Circulation—Ella Abate
Phone: 773-2398

**BAA Web Site**

Tom Bemus and Bill Smith put together a club web site at :
<http://members.aol.com/BuffAstro/>

**Meetings**

BAA meetings are held on the 2nd Friday of the month from September to June in the New Science Building on the Buffalo State College Campus. Meetings start at 7:30 pm and all members and guest are encouraged to attend.

**Message from the President-Elect by Joe Orzechowski**

Although I don't officially become President of the BAA until September, I thought I would introduce myself at this time and let you know what my plans are for the next two years. I have been a member of the BAA for about eleven years now. During that time I served as Membership Chairman for about five years and held an at-large seat on the Board of Directors for four years. I am currently closing out a two year term as the BAA's Secretary. I have also been active in the BAA's educational program, giving presentations at the observatory and at various schools, clubs and even campgrounds around the area.

Thinking back on my years as a BAA member, I must say I have learned a lot about astronomy and observing. I've also had some interesting and enjoyable experiences along the way with fellow members, some of whom have since become friends. I was a member when the BAA first acquired its 20" scope. This new acquisition required an addition to the Beaver Meadow Observatory to house the large instrument. That project brought together many club members who provided their expertise in electrical wiring, painting, woodworking and so much more. I was one of many who helped in the construction of this addition. During my eleven years as a member we have also had other members who wrote, revised, submitted and won two sizable grants. This grant money has been used to purchase much of the equipment that we use to further our mission of bringing astronomy to the public. I was able to played a minor role in rewriting a small portion of the second grant proposal.

In a more astronomical vein, I have been convinced by fellow members to go view comets at hours of the morning that required special modifications to my alarm clock. I've traveled to the Winter Star Party in the Florida Keys, to Starfest in Mt. Forest, Ontario, to Las Vegas (for astronomy, really), to someplace in southwestern Illinois, and to Cedar Key, Florida all in pursuit of dark skies and better observing conditions (and to have some fun). In case your wondering, the Illinois trip was to record the recent transit of the planet Mercury across the Sun. I haven't brought all this up to bore you with some sort of verbal picture album. Nor did I bring it up to brag about my contributions to the BAA or about my travels. My contributions pale in comparison to the well deserved national recognition received by our four "GRB boys". Their continued dedication to observing these illusive objects makes a mockery of any observing I have done in the last decade. And as far as travel goes, any one of

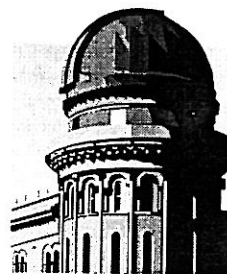
several members who have taken solar eclipse trips to Hawaii, Turkey, Africa, or the Caribbean could easily put my travel experiences to shame.

No, I thought I would mention these things to point out that the BAA is alive and well and is working just fine. The BAA provides benefits to those members who wish to just sit back and learn something about astronomy. The BAA also has plenty to offer those members who are able to put in a full day's work and then spend half the night observing or tinkering on one thing or another. Because of this, I don't have any plans to bring about sweeping changes in the way the BAA is run. I also have no great ideas that I, as president, want to see implemented. Instead I think I'll just try to do the best I can in "presiding" over the regular meetings and the board meetings and let the members and the board continues to run the BAA as they have done during the eleven years I have been a member. I think you've done a fine job.

Rupps' Star Party Cancelled

On Friday, June 14th Irene Rupp took a fall at their cottage on Lime Lake. It was bad enough to require knee surgery that same evening. As a result, Rowland and Irene have decided to cancel their annual star party scheduled for Saturday, June 22nd. The event may be rescheduled for later in the summer. Watch The Spectrum for a new date.

The BAA would like to wish Irene Rupp a speedy recovery from her recent accident.



Observatory News by Bill Aquino

Summer has arrived and the observatory is in full swing now. If you have not made it out to one of the public nights yet this year, make it a point to attend at least one night, they are fun and you will be glad you did. There are some interesting projects going on at BMO and I encourage everyone to get involved with them.

Robotic Telescope System

Work has begun on the club's robotic telescope system. This will be a real technical challenge for the club. If you are interested in being involved with the very cutting-edge of amateur astronomy this project is for you.

UB Telescope

Our club's collaboration with the University is just about ready to begin bearing fruit in the form of reliable, and effective, Internet access for the entire Meadow. This collaboration is a very exciting project with the potential to provide tremendous benefits over the years for the club, the University students, and the people of Western New York.

Building Automation

This is a new project at BMO. For years we have had a problem with the lights, heaters, or appliances/equipment being accidentally left on after everyone went home for the night. Mark Reville has volunteered to try and come up with an affordable solution. It will be nice to have a solution once and for all for this old problem. If you can help, please contact Mark Reville.

8" SCT

An 8" SCT system in need of repair was recently donated to the club. This system consists of a Meade 8" SCT optical tube assembly, a Vixen German equatorial mount, and an add-on "goto" system called the SkySensor 2000. Anthony Davoli volunteered to repair the physical damage to the OTA and constructed an adapter that allows the system to be mounted on the tripod left over from the robotic scope project. The OTA repairs are now complete and Anthony did a fine job. What we need to do now is get the SkySensor "goto" attachment working and construct a pier for this system. Dennis Hohman has volunteered to head-up this effort. This telescope will replace the club's 10" LX200 SCT (now dedicated to the robotic project) as our general purpose SCT instrument. If you can help, please contact Dennis Hohman.

Public Night Speakers

The public night volunteer speakers schedule is now complete. Thanks everyone for helping out.

April 6 – Bill Aquino

April 20 – Bill Aquino

May 4 – Tom Bakowski

May 18 – Roland Rupp

June 1 – Alan Freidman

June 15 – Anthony Davoli

July 6 – Ed Cerasani

July 20 – Ted Bistany

August 3 – Bob Titran

August 17 – Joe Orzechowski

Sept 7 – Bob Titran

Sept 21 – Roland Rupp

Oct 5 – Frank Chalupka

Oct 19 – Anthony Davoli

Special Thanks

Need to be extended to the public night volunteers as well as two club mem-

bers. It is generous donations of both time and resources that make BMO such a dynamic facility. Note: I think it is VERY important for the club to say Thank You, often and publicly, to those members whom volunteer. During busy public nights and in the dark it is sometimes difficult for me to stop and greet all of the club members spread out about the grounds. If I somehow omit your name from the lists below please let me know so I can have an opportunity to thank you.

April 20th Public Night Volunteers included Bob Hughes, Anthony Davoli, Neil Dennis, Bill Aquino, Rick Pason, Jeff Gardner, Fred Gordon, Mark Reville. There were clear skies for public viewing.

May 4th Public Night Volunteers included Frank Chalupka, Don Knecht, Jamie and Anna Seibert, Alan Freidman, Ted Bistany, Tom Bakowski, Neil Dennis, Bill Aquino, Gary Flagg, Roland Rupp, Fred Gordon, Bob Hughes. There were partly clear skies for public viewing.

May 18th Public Night Volunteers included Steve Kramer, Geoff Kramer, Rick Pason, Roland Rupp, Neil Dennis, Bill Aquino. Heavy clouds, very cold, no observing.

June 1st Public Night Volunteers included Alan Freidman, Bev and Joe Orzechowski, Pete Proulx, Roland Rupp, Rick Pason, Bill Aquino, Jamie and Anna Seibert, Fred Gordon, Jeff Gardner. A clear sunset quickly followed by heavy clouds.

June 15th Public Night Volunteers included Ted Bistany, Paul Tabor, Frank Chalupka, Tom Bakowski, Rick Pason, and Bill Aquino. It rained all evening so there was no observing.

Neil Dennis has built and installed a mailbox on the north side of the observatory near the front door. The folks at the Nature Center will be depositing our mail here. Whenever someone visits BMO please check this box and place any mail into the observatory on the counter for eventual pick-up.

Mark Swiderski has recently done some extensive troubleshooting and repair work on the observatory's computer network system. Everything is once again up and running fine now. He found some of the system settings in individual computers had been modified incorrectly, the hub was defective (thanks Dennis Hohman for loaning us a good one for troubleshooting), and some of the system cables were disconnected. Mark has donated a new network hub to the observatory and the system is working great. In addition, Mark has also replaced the OBS2 computer monitor, which was having trouble with the focus circuits. Thanks to Mark's efforts the BMO computer systems are once again 100 percent functional.



MEETING 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.

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Letter from the Editor (Electronic *Spectrum* Available) by Jamie Seibert

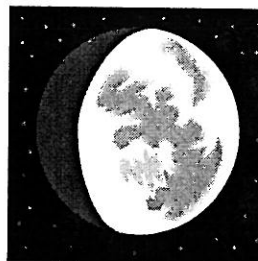
Some of you may know this, but for those who don't, I've started putting together an electronic version of *The Spectrum*. The last four editions (including this one) have been available over the internet in a "PDF" file format. There are a couple of reasons I decided to do this. First, there is a lot more that can be done with an electronic version over a printed version. Things like color pictures and member photographs are just a few things that I've added to the electronic version. The other big reason for producing an electronic version is that we would be able to cut back on the number of printed editions we produce. After several discussions with the Board and a few trial runs, it has been decided to ask members if they would like to continue to receive *The Spectrum* in the printed form or would they be happy to just receive *The Spectrum* in the electronic format.

The printed version of *The Spectrum* won't be going away. All member submitted articles, and the regular columns will appear in both the printed and electronic version. Other than what has been mentioned above, the editions will be the same.

Anyone who would like to only receive the electronic version should send their E-Mail address to me. My E-mail address is jseibert@buffalo.edu. I will compile a list of Address and cross reference it with the current membership directory. Anyone I don't receive an E-mail address from will receive a printed version like normal. I'd like to encourage

anyone with internet access to participate in this. Not only will you be saving the club some money to use in other projects, but I think you'll enjoy the extra stuff available in the electronic version. You can download this issue and the past two issues from the following web site <http://jseibert5.cit.buffalo.edu/BAASpectrum>. To open a "PDF" file, you will need a program such as Adobe Acrobat Reader. This is a free program for Windows PC and Macintosh computers. You can download this program here <http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readstep2.html>. I hope to hear from many of you soon.

Jamie Seibert
The Spectrum Editor



Star Parties

Star parties are a great opportunity to get out and meet other club members while sharing the fun astronomy has to offer. All club members are welcome to host their own star party. If anybody is interested, there are still open dates this summer and fall. Check your BAA calendar for the moon phases and any public night conflicts.

Contact Janice and Jeff Gardner at 639-0866 or MMDAWG@AOL.COM

Current star party schedule:

Sat July 27 Alan Friedman at Beaver Meadow. Solar observing through his new H-alpha filter, bagels & lox served, 10:30 AM 881-4310

Sat Aug 3 Dennis Hohman. Observing from his new dome. Evening at 4956 N. Freeman Rd. Orchard Park 662-2904

Fri Aug 30 Jack & Jayne Mack Arrive in daylight to see the new garden, stay for the evening. Children welcome. Bring a munchies if convenient. 1 Hunters Ln. Williamsville 632-6210

Sat Oct 5 Anthony Davoli Evening at his new home or at Beaver Meadow. Check the next Spectrum to see whether the home is built and its address if it is. 826-1068

2002 Informal CSSP weekends (<http://members.aol.com/CherrySpSP>)
7/4-6, 7/12-13, 8/9-10, 10/5-6, 11/1-2

Stars-n-Parks @ CSSP (http://members.aol.com/CherrySpSP/2002_schedule.htm)
7/6, 7/13, 8/3, 8/10, 8/31, 10/5

Astroblast 2002 (Oil City, PA) (<http://www.oras.org/astrobst.htm>)
8/1-6

Starfest (Mount Forest Ontario) <http://www.nyaa.starfest.com>
8/8-12

Black Forest Star Party (CSSP) (<http://www.bfsp.org/starparty/>)
9/6-8

CKSP 2003 (Cedar Key, FL) (<http://members.aol.com/bemusabord/cedarkey.html>)
2/23-3/1, 2003

Membership Corner

As we prepare to enjoy our annual summer hiatus from regular meetings and adjourn to summer vacations and star parties, I share a few statistics and thoughts on BAA membership. We have currently 138 members in the club of which 22 are new this year. We have had several very successful outreach programs recently – Astronomy Day at the Buffalo Museum of Science, Club Night at REI, Space Camp at the Boulevard Mall – not to mention the beginning of our public night programs at Beaver Meadow Observatory – and we've seen new members recently as a result. A warm welcome is in order to those who have joined us in the last two months: Marilyn Dorobiala, Geoffrey and Dori Hobika, Matthew Jones, Matthew Kane, Joseph Palmeri, Bruce Rosier and Donald Wessel.

We managed to muster a quorum at the annual business meeting in June and elected 4 new officers to serve a two year term: president – Joseph Orzechowski, vice-president – Jack Mack, secretary – Pete Proulx, treasurer – Beverly Orzechowski. Congratulations to the winners! Special thanks are in

order for Bill Aquino – observatory director and Jamie Seibert – Spectrum editor. These are big jobs to take on in the BAA. Thanks for doing it and doing it so well. Thanks also to Dan Marcus, our retiring president – we wish you calm seas and steady skies as you return to private life. To all who have donated their time and money to BAA projects this year – know that though too often we forget to say it – we thank you!

If you haven't received the current Membership Directory via email, on the Egroup, or in printed form at a BAA meeting – send me an email at BuffaloAstronomy@aol.com – or call me at 881-4310 and I will send a copy your way. And keep an eye out for your membership renewal in the mail this summer. Dues are due September 1st. Our first fall meeting is Friday, September 13th. Meantime – hope you have a wonderful summer.

Alan Friedman and Tristan Dilapo

Nocturnal Tales by Carl Milazzo

One night back in 1974, I was using our club dome observatory out in the town of Newstead. The nice thing about a dome is that it does a good job of preventing dew from forming on a 'scope and blocking wind and stray light. Our observatory was located on Calspan Corporation's rural land. In the middle of the night, I heard a weird whirling sound, but from inside the dome, it was difficult to tell where the sound was coming from. When I went outside, I saw it was coming from Calspan's 60 foot radio/radar dish, as it started to slew across the sky. I went over to it and talked to its operator in the adjacent building. He said that they were tracking a satellite orbiting the earth. Attached to the dish was a 6 inch telescope with an employee looking through it, some 50 feet above the ground in the black of night.

In April 1989, from Boston, N.Y., a green point source of light seemed to be coming from the ground near the 26 inch Dobsonian. I was thinking, "It can't be from a firefly, because they won't be out for another two months." It turned out to be a glow in the dark fungus. Over the years since then, I have seen it twice more, and even some glow worms.

During the Summer of 1989, a BAA member and I went out on the boardwalk over the marsh at night to do astrophotography. Then, at about 1 am, a car pulled into the parking lot near us and some people got out. Suddenly, they heard footsteps coming towards them from the boardwalk. They thought that no one would be out there at night and we were concerned about my vehicle being unlocked. One of the people was a local and he was showing his friends Beaver Meadow.

BAA member Joel Stuckey, back in the Summer of 1993, was first planning to do some astrophotography from California Hill Road in Cattaraugus County. And on his way back, he was going to stop for a while at Sculpture Park, where I was taking some images that night. Then, at about 2:30 am, I heard footsteps along the road, even though I knew that there were no houses on this road for two miles. Then I saw a flashlight a quarter of a mile down the road. I thought that Joel's car might have broken down coming up the steep hill a mile away and he was coming to meet me. It is so dark out there you can't see your car 100 feet away, and often it can be over two hours before a car passes you by on this road. When then footsteps were about 200 feet away, I yelled out, "Is that you Joel?" and suddenly the footsteps stopped. It turned out to be a young couple who went on a walk to see the sculptures.

In October 1994, I was just off the shoulder of Tonawanda Creek Road in the Town of Royalton. It was 5 am, and I was sitting in a lawn chair as I was taking long exposures of the night sky, with the autumn colors of the trees. Then a car came by and slowed down and rolled down his window. He said that I beat him to his favorite spot, he was planning on doing some bow-hunting there this morning.

While at Golden Hill State Park, in September 1995, I was taking some images of the constellations, with tents in the background. I did not want to disturb the campers sitting around the campfire. So instead of using a flashlight to see the edge limit of the camera view finder, I used a laser pointer. But it turned out that one person in the group noticed the red laser beam glowing on the nearby tree top. He yelled out to his friends, "Did you see that?" Then I turned it off. His friends looked up, but they saw nothing, and they were starting to think that he had a little too much too drink. Then I came over to the campsite and showed them what their friend really saw. It wasn't aliens coming

to get them.

Several times a year, Fort Niagara conducts re-enactments, involving about 200 expert volunteers from all over New York and Ontario. On July 4th, 1996, I went there to take some night images of the Fort and the volunteers in their 1776 costumes.

Everything was exactly the way things were back then, including no flashlights - just candle lanterns. I asked one person wearing his costume to stand still for ten seconds next to the Fort, so I could take a time exposure. Afterwards, I asked him if he knew any constellations. He said that he knew all of them. It turned out that he runs a planetarium in Albany!

The Stellafane outdoor astronomy convention, which attracts about 2000 amateurs each year, is spread out over three miles, alternating between meadows and woods throughout. The convention runs for three days and nights, but if you forget at sunset to bring along a flashlight and a warm coat, or something to drink, you can be in deep trouble at 3 am! This happened to an amateur back in the Summer of 1997. I found him trying to sleep on the bare ground, shivering. Because he forgot to take a flashlight along with him, it was impossible to make it back to his campsite, because it is pitch dark in the woods. So with my flashlight, I guided him back the mile and a half to his campsite.

It was zero degrees out and windy in February 1998 near Reservoir State Park. Next door was a cemetery, with a nice stone arch for an entrance, which I was imaging that night. After about an hour, the police on patrol drove past me, but never saw me because of the snow mound near the entrance. But he did stop down the road to check out my vehicle. I said, "That's my vehicle," and he said that I spooked him when he heard my voice but didn't see me. I explained what I was doing. Then he later told me about some bright meteors and Northern lights he had seen over the years.

I have been coming to Beaver Meadow at night since 1972, but I have never seen the police until September 1999 at 2 am, out on the dock along the beaver pond. Out in the parking lot was a car with Pennsylvania plates, unlocked, with a camera on the seat. This was suspicious to the policeman, so he started to walk around the grounds when he noticed a flashlight, which was me "painting" in the scenic pond view for my picture. He was following the footprints in the dew and never noticed the red lights in the observatory, where a BAA member, with his eyes glued to the computer monitor, never noticed the policeman pull into the parking lot.

Near Albion, NY is a cemetery that is open until 8 pm. But in November it is pitch dark by 6 pm. In 1999, I went there at night, because it has a 100 ft hill with a 50 foot tall Civil War monument. Inside it is a spiral staircase that goes to the top, where there is a panoramic 360 degree view, from which you can see Buffalo, Rochester and Toronto. You would think that no one would be brave enough to come here at night, but I went there twice in November, and each time, within an hour a carload of people appeared for the view.

Tristan Dilapo and I jointly own a 26 inch Dobsonian, which is housed in an observatory in the hills of Boston, NY. In the spring of 2000, Tristan went out of town for a while, and was having a neighbor keep an eye on his place. He forgot to tell me, and when I went out to use the telescope, shortly afterwards the police showed up. Then I showed them proof that I be-

(Continued on Nocturnal page 7)

Observing Thought by Paul Tabor

Like many of you I spent many nights lying on the lawn when very young, just gazing at the heavens in wonderment. Astronomy has always been a hobby of mine. In 1956, as we know, astronomers first began to undertake a serious study of the moon. I was just starting to date my wife. I remember taking her out to Indian Falls, which in those days was one dark place, to show her the moon. I think she thought I had evil intent. Afterwards she probably thought she had latched onto a real nut case.

I have always carried on my own form of sidewalk astronomy. Since joining the B.A.A. though, I have had someplace to encourage people to go and enjoy more. I worked for Valu Home Centers, after I retired, for about five years. It amazed me how little people knew. So I would point out the shadow of the earth, or tell them what time they had to get up to see Venus or Mercury, things common to us. I had people come in and ask what was of interest that night or the next day. This is where the club was a real help.

Astronomy is a sharing "hobby", but I built model boats for years. People come into my home and marvel at the models I still have, but if I tell them I had trouble with the foot or didn't like the way the mast was stepped, they don't have a clue what I'm talking about, but EVERYBODY looks up. When you tell them something about a constellation, or how to find the North Star, there's an immediate positive response. Somehow makes the "hobby" worth more.

BAA Annuals by Rowland A. Rupp

5 YEARS AGO - Seven star parties were listed for the summer of 1997. The Rupps led off at their summer cottage at Lime Lake followed by the Macks at their home in Williamsville, then at Larry Carlino's in Lockport and at Roger and Michele Whitfield's in Clarence. Two others were scheduled for BMO, and another at the Museum of Science to be hosted by Marilou Bebak.

The summer schedule for public viewing at BMO was published along with a schedule for CCD classes and meetings of the Telescope Group. There was also a list of eleven members who joined the BAA since the directory had been distributed a couple of months before. Tom Bemus compiled a list of deep sky objects he had been able to locate in either his 4-inch refractor or 10XSO binoculars. New members with modest size instruments may want to obtain a copy of this list for reference. Leslie Martin's article, "If You Were a Babylonian--" highlighted the astronomical achievements of that ancient society.

10 YEARS AGO - Star parties for a decade ago were planned by Larry Carlino, Bill Halbert, by Bill Smith and Carol Lorenc, the Rupps and the Marcuses. In Ed Lindberg's "Instrument Notes" he mildly lamented the rapid decline in bench testing telescope optics, but pointed out that it is being replaced by sophisticated computer controlled equivalents, yielding excellent commercial instruments. He briefly described the time-proven Foucault knife edge and Ronchi grating tests.

Bill Smith wrote on "Star Hops", guides to viewing programs published in Sky & Telescope that he tried himself and recommends to others. Bill also submitted the single observing report - the "Coathanger" in Cygnus. We had two obituaries - for Leonard Milks and for Carroll Geiger.

15 YEARS AGO - The Rupps, Biggies, Richard Jakiel, Bill Kirst, the Marcuses, the Morrisies and Larry Carlino all entertained at summer star parties. A mid-August trip to Toronto's David Dunlap Observatory was also on the agenda. John Yerger had just become Observatory Director for the second time, and reported that forty-one teachers from Team Project showed up at BMO. He thanked Hugh Pettit and Ed Czapla for their work at the site, and noted that Dan Marcus ran an astrophotography workshop in June. The College of Fellows award for 1987 went to Darwin Christy for his original work on meteoric dust.

I found an interesting little piece in this Spectrum, extracted from

the February 1967 issue (I may have commented on this before). The question is: which way do spiral galaxies rotate? Is it in the direction that would "wind up" their arms, or is it the opposite? Hubble asserted the former, Lindblad the latter. So which is it? What have we found out about this in the last thirty-five years? How about getting some commentary in the next Spectrum? The author of the original article is unknown.

There were two observation reports - one by Carl Milazzo which included his "easily seen" observation of Pluto through his 26-inch telescope. Observations of Saturn's 1987 apparition were reported by Richard Jakiel.

25 YEARS AGO - The July-August 1977 issue of The Spectrum was the last edited by Ernst Both who, a decade before, assumed the position "temporarily". Larry Carlino became his successor. Star parties were scheduled by Dave Steinagle, Tom Dessert, Paul Curtin and Bill Deazley. We also had our traditional party at Camp Sprucelands, and a picnic at Chestnut Ridge Park.

Having just been elected Secretary of the BAA, I enthusiastically issued a survey "to find out what our members really wanted to do". As I have learned over the years, surveys attract little response and have a tendency to confirm whatever the author designed the survey to show. (I suspect professionally designed surveys do little better.) While respondents indicated mild interest in several potential activities, only a study section attracted enough participation to become reality. It lasted several years under Ken Kimble's leadership.

35 YEARS AGO - There was no July-August Spectrum in 1967. Instead there was a "Special Edition" highlighting star parties. Here's the line up: Camp Sprucelands twice, Lockport's Remick Observatory twice and the BAA's own observatory at Newstead five times. There was one more entitled "Cain Patch" in Geneva, NY. What was that all about? Who remembers?

P.S. Sorry we had to cancel this year's star party and picnic at Lime Lake. As you know, Irene fell and broke her knee cap. She is recovering from surgery, but is hobbling around on crutches and is unhappy about the prospect of several weeks of recovery to be followed by therapy.

Spy and Tell by Edith L. Geiger

Karen Washburn is a 3rd grade teacher at the Shelden Elementary School in the Attica Central School System, where she has been teaching for 13 years. She provided an experience for her students that they will always remember and cherish. On January 18th, using a ham radio, her class was able to communicate with the first crew to live on the International Space Station: American astronaut, Bill Shephard, space station commander; and two Russian cosmonauts, Sergei Krikulev, and Yuri Gidzenko. In February, Karen presented a report at the International Educational Conference at the Johnson Space Center explaining the steps taken to bring about this outstanding event for her class.

Bob Rzoska has been doing the food vending for Hallmark Management Service at Daemen College for 8 years. For relaxation he finds gardening enjoyable. Cindy also works in a food industry. Son, Brian, turned 24 on June 7th, and is no longer living at home. He is now a taxicab driver. The first week in July, Bob and Cindy headed for South Carolina to visit Bob's brother.

Gail Willsky is a biochemist at U.B. and along with her work at the university, she delights in the great outdoors and going to Olean to do some naked eye viewing of the sky. She also takes enormous pleasure in sailing, especially in Buffalo Harbor, as a member of the sailing club. She's in the races held Wednesday nights, using a friend's boat in the competition.

The Knechts are a multi-talented family. Don plays clarinet, bass clarinet,

and baritone sax in a 10 piece "Wedding Band" which is kept very busy with weddings and country club doings. His day job is maintenance with Universal Liquor Wholesale. Elaine is back at WNED-FM 94.5 where she subs wherever she is needed. Daughter, Anna, is 14 1/2 and sang in the Mahler Third Symphony with the Buffalo Philharmonic in June. She finished her freshman year at St. Mary's, and near the end of the summer, she will be going to England with St. Paul's Girls' Choir. Theresa is 23 years old and is working on her masters in American history at Duquesne, and is the dorm director at Franciscan University near Steubenville, Ohio. Sarah, almost 21, lives in Manhattan, waiting for a break on Broadway. Tom is a student at St. Joe's in Kenmore. He just turned 16 and is studying his driver's manual. A great time is had by all.

Don Knecht and Bud Abate went to the Waterfront to have some ice cream on June 10th and have a look at the annular solar eclipse (partial).

Bruce Kindron is now retired from DuPont where he worked in a supervisory capacity in the laboratory, in the technical section. He retired as plant safety and protection supervisor. Besides astronomy, he enjoys boating, fishing, and gardening. He is a member of the Niagara Frontier Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society. Bruce is a longtime friend of BAA member, Bill Townsend, who is also a railroad buff. As children, they grew up together, and were also Boy Scouts together.

(Continued from Nocturnal page 5)

longed there, and they were satisfied. But they didn't leave right away. It turned out that they wanted to have a look through the giant telescope. So I burned their eyes out on the Orion nebula.

Griffis Sculpture Park in Cattaraugus county has over 200 sculptures outdoors, spread over a mile. One night in September of 2000, at 1 am I was photographing a half mile from the road. In the distance I heard the faint voices of a group of people. After about 20 minutes, I could see their flashlights heading straight towards me. They turned out to be about a half dozen U.B. students, and they were surprised to see anyone out in the middle of nowhere.

On October 26, 2000, I was watching an aurora from the front yard of a BAA member, Ken Schlum, just outside Lockport, NY. By 2 am the aurora became faint, so I started to help Ken learn some new constellations. Suddenly a car slowed down and stopped in the middle of the road. One person got out and ran down the road, then onto the neighbor's lawn, where there was a massive Halloween display. He was in shock when I shined my million lum flashlight on him and he ran the hundred feet back to his car and took off.

In August 2001, I was taking images of the Point Abino lighthouse at 4 am. It was a warm and calm, clear night. I heard a faint and distant-sounding buzzing noise. At that hour, who would be running a chain saw? It turned out to be a bumblebee, trapped under my kneeling pad, that I was using while photographing the stars around the lighthouse.

It was a rare warm, clear night in November, 2001. When I was driving down a back road near Akron, NY. when I saw a car parked on the shoulder. Next to it was a surveyor's tripod with a pantograph mount and a pair of 30 x 120 mm binoculars attached to it. I stopped and talked to their owner, who mentioned that at home he also has a Celestron 14 inch telescope. He has been to Beaver Meadow and is aware of our club, but has never joined. He is one of the 5000 amateurs in our area that doesn't belong to any astronomy club.

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Rowland Rupp
C/o Archives
132 Burroughs Dr
Snyder NY 14226