

# SIDEREAL TIMES

The Official Publication of the  
Amateur Astronomers Association of Princeton

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## From the Director

Hi everyone, my name is Ludovico (Ludy) D'Angelo and I am your elected Director of the AAAP for this next year. I have been with the club now for 5 years (maybe 6) and I have enjoyed every minute of it. I have had prior roles in the club as Secretary and Program Chair, and help out on most of our Outreach and observatory duties. I am also one of the cooks for our annual Starquest event which we hold every year. Since this is the first time that I am the Director of anything, I'll use this article to give a little background on myself. I was born and raised in Princeton. My father worked at the physics annex near the Fitzrandolph Observatory. Growing up, I remember the many times I would come to the University with my father and be introduced to many people (probably professors and engineers). My first telescope was a small Newtonian made with a cardboard tube (I was 9 or 10). My father bought it or was given it by one of the professors for me. I remember looking up from my back yard and being able to see all the stars (yes, even the Milky Way!). The first real telescope I looked in was the Alvin Clark that is now a museum piece in Peyton Hall. Saturn was the first planet I saw in that scope. It was quite a wonder. Ever since that time (age 11 or 12), I started being really interested in space, science, and astronomy. I would bike up to University lectures (maybe AAAP meetings) by myself to listen and be awed by the really smart people. Of course that lasted until I went to college. Then suddenly, I was too busy to think about astronomy so much, and tried to become an engineer. What I did become was an Artist/Philosopher with a deep background in mechanics and science. My interest was ignited again when my children turned 6 and my wife asked me if we should get a telescope for them. So I bought a Meade ETX-90 (for them), joined the AAAP, and came to a public night with my kid's new telescope and my boys. We set up the scope; they looked through it at some objects (for about 30 seconds), and then spotted the C-14 in the AAAP observatory. The rest is more history.

When I write next, I will hope to have some ideas and thoughts on the direction the club is going, and what the future may hold for us amateur astronomers. Remember, our next meeting will be at the State Museum Planetarium in Trenton on June 8<sup>th</sup> at 8 PM. See you there.

*Ludovico D'Angelo, Director*

**The deadline for the Midsummer issue is:**

**Friday, July 16, 2010**

**Send your submissions to:**

**editors@princetonastronomy.org**

## Membership Meeting Minutes May 11, 2010

The meeting was called to order by Director Bill Murray

1. The Director called for the Election of the Board of Directors: The slate of candidates was presented to the membership by Nomination Committee Chair, Jeff Bernardis. The Director opened the floor to additional nominations. There were none so member Saul Moroz moved to close the nomination. The motion was seconded by Assistant Director John Church. A vote was held and, with 22 members voting, the slate was approved. The new Board is Ludy D'Angelo – Director, Jeff Bernardis - Assistant Director, John Church – Program Chair, Michael Mitrano – Treasurer, and Larry Kane – Secretary.
2. Director's Report: There was no Directors report.
3. Assistant Director John Church did not have a report.
4. Treasurer's Report: Treasurer, Michael Mitrano gave his report which appears in another section of this edition of Sidereal Times.
5. Secretary Report: There was no Secretary report.
6. Observatory Report: Co-Chair, Gene Ramsey announced that there have been problems with guests parking on the grass along the road leading to the Nature Center and that the police will write tickets. Bill Murray will continue to end his talks at the State Planetarium with, on Friday nights, an invitation to the attendees to visit the observatory.

7. Outreach Report: There are no events planned.
8. Sidereal Times: The deadline for the next edition is Friday, May 21.
9. New Business: Jim Norton, a new AAAP member and an active member of the United Astronomy Clubs of New Jersey which includes the AAAP, presented the plans for the Jenny Jump observatories and out-reach programs. He noted that because the AAAP is a member organization, members of the AAAP have access to much of this. He suggested that a way to do this might be to integrate our newsletters.

It was noted that under Governor Christie's proposed budget, the State Museum and Planetarium could be closed. Member Rex Parker suggested that the AAAP send a letter in support of keeping them open.

The Director adjourned the meeting.

*Larry Kane, Secretary*

## Community Outreach

So we have reached the end of another year of community outreach. Looking back, it was a pretty good year, although it was a bit slower than in previous years. One good thing was the number of new volunteers that stepped forward to help out; it's always nice to have as many people as possible help out.

Although I said it was the end of the year, it is not impossible for someone to ask us to have an event for them. Keep checking your emails – there just might be something there.

This marks the end of my third year in this position. While I have enjoyed it, I feel it is time for me try something new; given that I will be moving into the Assistant Director position, I would like to give up Outreach. If anybody is interested in taking this role on next year, please let me know and I will discuss your desire with Ludy.

Of course, it wouldn't be an Outreach article if I didn't ask for volunteers. Even though I am looking for a replacement, until one is named I will continue to act in the role. If you would like to receive notifications (via email) of upcoming events, just contact me. I can be reached at [jbernardis@comcast.net](mailto:jbernardis@comcast.net) or 609-466-4238.

*Jeff Bernardis, Outreach Coordinator*

### Interested in keyholder training?

**Contact:**

**[kane@princetonastronomy.org](mailto:kane@princetonastronomy.org) or  
by cell phone (609-273-1456)**

## Treasurer's Report

There has been no change in membership in the past month and we remain at 89 members. Expenses have been few and we now have a \$316 surplus for the fiscal year.

The Association's cumulative surplus is \$18,510.

*Michael Mitrano, Treasurer*

## June's Program

Well, as they say, it's déjà vu all over again. I was Program Chairman from 1975 to 1977, and here I am once again in the hot seat. Last time around I was fortunate to get lots of help and felt very lucky to be able to find speakers to fill up the slots. I will need help this time also. Ira Polans stepped up right away to serve on the Program Committee and has already suggested three people. He will be following up on these in the next few weeks. John Giles has some suggestions from his workplace as well. I have an email in to a Princeton professor in another department. Anyone with their own suggestions, and this especially includes all past Program Chairmen (you know who you are!) is urged to contact me on this and I will follow up. Thank you!

In the meantime, we are fortunate indeed in being able to resume having our traditional yearly show at the New Jersey State Planetarium in Trenton on June 8 at 8 pm. The equipment has been greatly upgraded, and there are lots of new whistles and bells and lasers and stuff to be seen, heard, and appreciated. Bill Murray will be doing the honors and we will all be very much looking forward to his presentation.

As has been the case in past years when a planetarium show was given, there will be no pre-meeting dinner. We will, however, plan on resuming these very enjoyable get-togethers in September.

*John Church, Program Chair*

**The June program will be held at the NJ State Planetarium in Trenton.**

## Washington Crossing State Park Lock Changes

WC park has recently installed their own keyed lock at one end of the chain that is used to secure the Brickyard Road gate that we use in the evenings. Our combination lock is at the other end of the chain. The chain secures the gate by passing through the hasp. The gate cannot be opened unless one lock or the other is removed from the chain so that the chain can be passed through the hasp. This way, both the park people and we have independent access.

All observatory users are asked to respect this new lock arrangement. Please do not lock the chain to itself with our lock, or lock the hasp with it. The lock goes only at one far end of the chain AFTER it has been passed through the hasp. The park's lock has to remain hanging free at the other far end of the chain.

The park has our combination, but is only supposed to use it in case of an emergency on the Brickyard Road side of the gate when no other access is available and their key is unavailable for some reason, or if we have accidentally locked the gate incorrectly. Maintenance and other park people are to use their own lock and open ours only in case of such an emergency, not routinely. We will report any misuse to park authorities.

For security purposes, it is planned to change the combination in the near future, notifying the park. After this has been done, the new combination will be promptly communicated to keyholders. At the same time, we will change the combination at the Bear Tavern Road gate and have it match the new one at Brickyard Road. Separately, we are planning to change the combination on the observatory door, and keyholders will of course be notified.

Sincere thanks to Gene Ramsey and Ron Mittelstaedt for their assistance with these new procedures.

*John Church*

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## 20 Years Ago In Sidereal Times...

### SIDEREAL TIMES

Amateur      Astronomers      Association      of      Princeton

Director: Larry Smith      JUNE 1990      Editor: JWHS

#### THE ANNUAL PEERY EXTRAVAGANZA

Our June meeting will be held at the N.J. State Planetarium on Tuesday June 12th at 8:00 P.M. Once again, Dick Perry will give us another "seat tour", entitled "Solar System News and Universe Report". As is always the case, this show promises to be enthralling!

There will be no pre-meeting dinner this month.

-Don Monticello

#### FROM THE EDITOR

A brief thanks to all AAAP members, for several things.

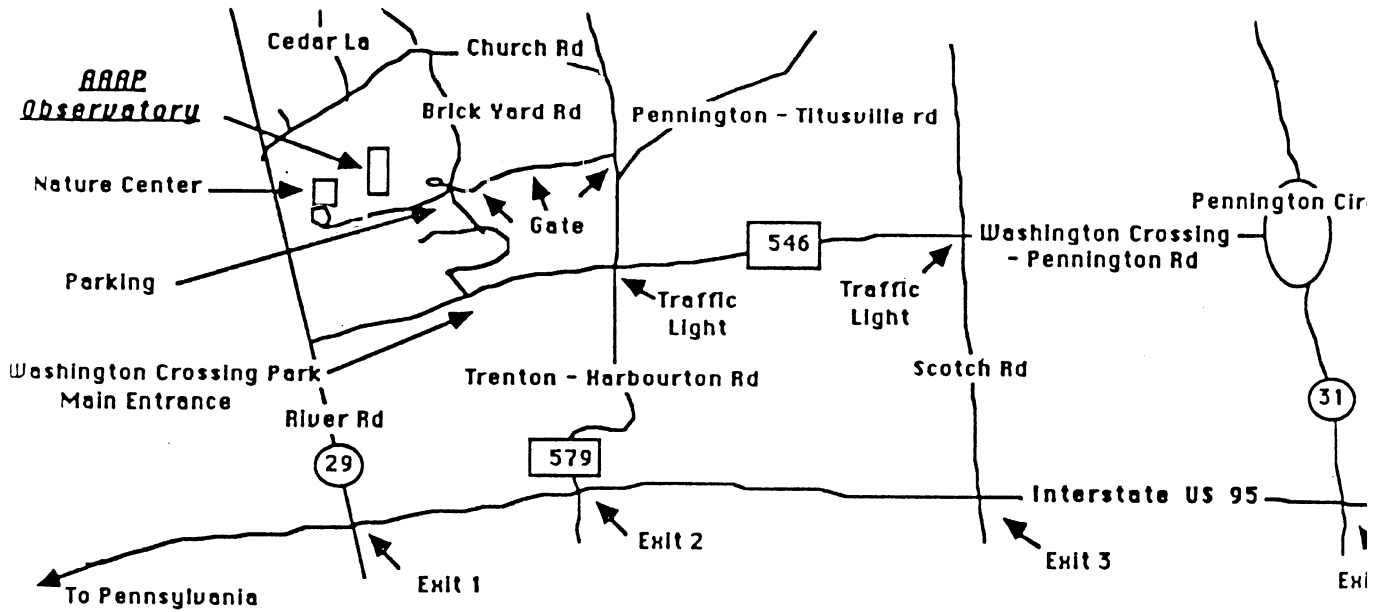
Most important: my hat is off to all members for their wonderful submissions this year! As the old saying goes, "KEEP THEM COMING!" And I know that the most valuable type of submissions have been the articles members have sent in about their "hands on" experiences---their field trips, for example. Things that related directly to all of our experiences, in other words. Not that other types of articles aren't well-appreciated; those too are heartily welcomed by all!

And articles that broaden our perspectives are also on "Simson's Wish List". Here's a possible (you better come through on this, Brown): I ran into former Director Dave Brown on Memorial Day weekend---he was back in the Princeton area for family reunions/Memorial Day celebrations---and BEGGED HIM to send me some articles about his new involvement with JPL and the Hubble Telescope. And he said he would, after he's finally gotten his feet on the ground.

And that is the sort of thing that I know all of us will LOVE TO READ! That's what I call REALLY broadening our perspective!

And lastly (and I'll confess shamefacedly): I want to thank all Times readers for---tolerance. Tolerance of, I should say; or better yet, "tolerance of Simpson's B.S."!

JWHS



The best way to get to the observatory is to take Interstate 95 South towards Pennsylvania. Then take Scotch road at Exit 3 and proceed north (this amounts to right). Then, at the third traffic light take a left onto the Washington Crossing-Pennington road (County Route 546). Take this road to the first traffic light and take a right onto Trenton-Harbourton road (County Route 579). Take this road to the first driveway on the left, this is the Phillips Farm/Soccer Field entrance to the park. There is a series of three gates with club combination locks. If the gates are not open, you will need the lock combination to open the gate or be accompanied by a Keyholder member. The Simpson (AAAP) Observatory's phone number is (609) 737-2575.

See us on the Web: [www.princetonastronomy.org](http://www.princetonastronomy.org)

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