

# SIDEREAL TIMES

The Official Publication of the  
Amateur Astronomers Association of Princeton

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Volume 31

September 2002

Number 8

## From the Editor

Here we are beginning another academic season (summer seems so short) and Mark Lopez, our Program Chairman, has already pulled together an excellent line up of speakers for our enjoyment all the way through December. When you review Mark's article in this issue, the line up is sure to have you looking forward to our monthly meetings with three researchers from Princeton University and our own Freeman Dyson from the Institute of Advanced Study on the agenda for November.

I'm sure we've all had a wonderful summer, which started with our own Jersey StarQuest and I've heard rumors that other members have had a great time at the Summer Star Party and Stellafane. How about hearing from some of you who have participated in summer astronomy activities with a short write-up.

**Introduction to Amateur Astronomy** As in past years, I will be doing my course at the Nature Center. This course may not be just for beginners. It is an excellent opportunity for elementary school teaches and even experienced amateur astronomers that may have considered teaching a course like this themselves. The first session will be Saturday, Sept. 21, at 2:30PM. Subsequent sessions will be on Fri. evenings; 9/27, 10/4, 10/11, 10/18, & 10/25. Contact the Nature Center to sign up (609) 737-0609, there is a \$5 fee to cover the cost of hand out materials. Enrollment is limited to 25 persons.

**Stella Della Valley** Bucks Mont Astronomical Association will be hosting their 16<sup>th</sup> annual event at Camp Onas in Ottsville, PA the weekend of October 4-6, 2002. If you are interested you may call Ed Radomski (215) 822-8312 or check out their website <http://>

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Simpson Observatory (609) 737-2575



## From the Assistant Director

**AAAP shines at Forrestal Science Fair.** Over 300 people attended the Forrestal Science Fair, held at the Princeton Forrestal Village August 25. AAAP members Brian Van Liew, Gene Ramsey and John Miller represented the club at a large, canopied booth in the center of the action.

The activities, underway from 11 AM to 4 PM, benefited from bright sunshine, and the AAAP took the opportunity to show people the sun, close up. Brian was armed with his 6" Maksutov, Gene with his 5" Maksutov and John with his 8" Dob. As soon as the telescopes were set up, children and their parents were anxious to look through the eyepieces. Luckily, there was a collection of superb sunspots. There were lots of "wow!" and "cool!" expressed from kids and grown-ups alike.

The eight-foot AAAP exhibit table held a variety of materials for guests to peruse. Included were half-a-dozen copies of *Astronomy* and *Sky and Telescope*, several captioned color pictures of the sun

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## From The Program Chairman

Welcome all to what I hope will prove to be a very interesting season of guest lecturers at our monthly business meetings. We are fortunate to have as a speaker at the first meeting of the 2002 - 2003 season a researcher who is on the forefront in the field of astrophysical science, Mr. Bartosz Pindor. Mr. Pindor is in the final year of his PhD work in the Department of Astrophysical Sciences at Princeton University. A native of Canada and a graduate of the University of Toronto, his thesis work involves the search for strongly lensed quasars in the Sloan Digital Sky Survey Dataset. Keeping in line with his research, the topic of Mr. Pindor's talk will be gravitational lensing.

In addition to his study of strongly lensed quasars, Mr. Pindor has also studied how the interaction between gas and dust in very young solar systems might lead to the formation of planets like our own, and he has worked to improve the ways in which astronomers measure distances. He currently is under the advisement of Dr. Edwin Turner for his thesis work and he has also cooperated with Dr. Jeremy Goodwin and Dr. Bohdan Paczynski respectively on the projects previously mentioned.

If you would like to make a very interesting evening more enjoyable, please feel free to join Mr. Pindor and myself for dinner on Tuesday evening before the meeting. As usual, we will be dining at the Annex Restaurant, 128 ½ Nassau St., at 6:00 PM. Please email me at [mal455@earthlink.net](mailto:mal455@earthlink.net) or call me at 609-393-2565 if you would like to attend the pre-meeting dinner. Come! You won't be disappointed.

Before I forget, the next three months should also prove to be exciting for the AAAP. In October, Dr. David Nice of Princeton University will be speaking on The Green Bank Telescope. Perfect for us telescope lovers. In November, we will be hosting the renowned Dr. Freeman Dyson of the Institute for Advanced Study. Dr. Dyson's topic is A New Way To Look For Life In Cold Places Far From The Sun. In December we are also in for a treat. Dr. Paul Steinhardt of Princeton University's Physics Department will speak to us on The Cyclic Model Of The Universe. See you at the meeting.

Mark Lopez

**Deadline**  
for the  
**October issue of the Sidereal Times**  
**Friday, September 27, 2002**

## From the Treasurer:

The treasury balance is \$8068.48 and 125 members.

Note: Michele, our publisher, will continue putting the dues renewal date on the upper right corner of each Sidereal Times address label. This is the date that your renewal membership is due with the AAAP. Those with club magazine subscriptions to Astronomy or Sky and Telescope or both would want their subscriptions renewed about three months prior to the date of your club renewal. Please act accordingly, for if you wait until your club dues are due to pay for your magazine subscription you may miss one or two issues.

I am not going to send out renewal notices to members who get magazines; they get enough notices from their respective publishers. If I don't receive you renewal on the date indicated on your address label you will be dropped from the roster. If you are a keyholder, the respective observatory chairmen will be notified and you will be asked to return the key.

The dues structure is as follows:

\$30 basic membership.

\$60 for membership and subscription to Astronomy or Sky and Telescope magazine.

\$90 if both magazines are desired with membership.

If you have a Sky and Tel subscription please send the subscription notice and the postage paid envelope when renewing your membership.

You may send the dues directly to me at: Ron Mittelstaedt, Treasurer, 149 Palmer Lane, Ewing, NJ 08618-3207

Ron Mittelstaedt

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*(Asst. Director, continued from page 1)*

taken in visible and H $\alpha$  wavelengths, a fact sheet about the sun, 30 trifold AAAP brochures and 60 AAAP promotional sheets. No promotional pieces remained by the end of the day.

We all agreed the day was a definitive success in bringing the excitement of astronomy to the fair.

John Miller

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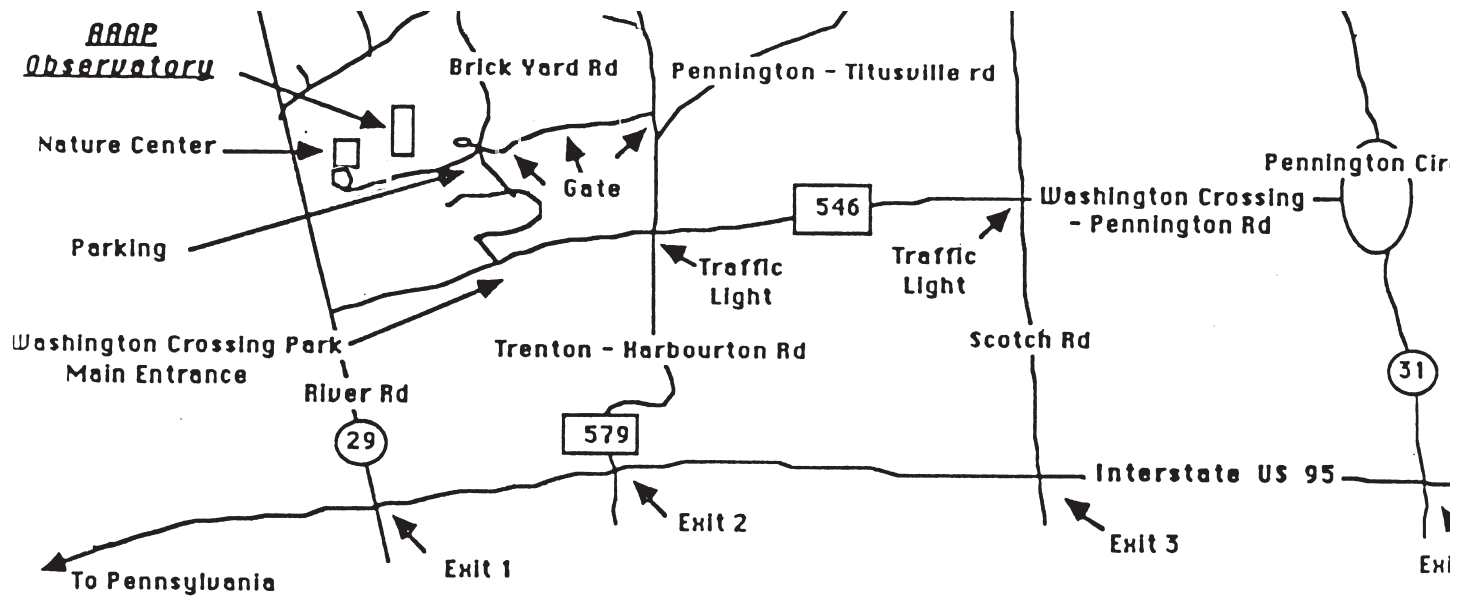
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[//bmaa.freeyellow.com](http://bmaa.freeyellow.com).

**Deadline** for the October issue of the Sidereal Times will be Friday, September 27. Let's see if we can begin filling our pages with the thoughts and ideas of more of our members.

I won't be seeing you at the September meeting as I will be attending my son's "Winging" ceremony in Pensacola, FL but I'm looking forward to our programs in October, November, and December.

Vic



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.

September 2002

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