

SIDEREAL TIMES

*The Official Publication of the
Amateur Astronomers Association of Princeton*

Director

Bill Murray

Treasurer

Michael Mitrano

Program Chairman

OPEN

Assistant Director

John Church

Secretary

Larry Kane

Editors

Bryan Hubbard and Ira Polans

Volume 39

January 2010

Number 1

From the Director

As I write this article we are awaiting the first big snow storm of the year. The weather so far this winter has not been a big improvement on Spring, Summer or Fall. The Geminid meteor shower on the 13th was clouded out for me although one of the teachers I work with saw a very bright bolide down on the shore. With the weather being cold and cloudy I find myself doing a lot more binocular astronomy at this time of year. For this I generally use my Canon 10X30 image stabilized binoculars. Image stabilized binoculars are really a modern wonder. With older binoculars magnification that was high enough to do reasonable astronomy yielded shaky images that made it difficult to see anything. The traditional solution was some kind of binocular support, but this ruined the beautiful portability of binoculars. With my Canons I can freeze the image with the press of a button, even if they are hand held. If the weather is clear, even for only a few minutes I can grab them for a quick view of the moon, the Pleiades or the Orion Nebula, a real convenience at this time of year.

Our next meeting will be on Tuesday January 12th at 8 PM at Peyton Hall. The speaker will be George Sjoborg. The title of his talk is "Astronomy: The Last Haven for the Amateur Scientist. How the Backyard Astronomer Can and Does Do Meaningful Research".

As of the December meeting we have recorded a total of about 25 votes on the Bylaws/Constitution proposal that is under consideration. Under the existing bylaws we need 40% of our membership to vote to constitute a quorum. Since we have about 100 members we need over 40 votes. Elsewhere in this issue I will have Bryan and Ira reprint my article from the October issue on the changes under consideration. This article includes an absentee ballot for people who have not voted yet. Just before the January meeting I will send out a broadcast e-mail to the club requesting members to vote on this issue. An exact version of the changes is available on the website as well (click on the dropdown site map and go to "Constitution & Bylaws (pdf)").

Bill Murray, Director

The deadline for the February issue is:

Friday January 29, 2010

Send your submissions to:

editors@princetonastronomy.org

Bylaws/Constitution Changes Vote January 12th!!!

This is a reprint from the October issue of Sideréal Times. If you have not had a chance to vote on this issue please do so by the time of the January meeting.

The adventures we had this Spring and Summer attempting to finance the emergency repairs that the observatory needed engendered a discussion among the board members about how we could change our constitution to make funding repairs of this sort more flexible. Mike Mitrano, our Treasurer, agreed to have a look at the current constitution and propose to the board changes to expedite the allocation of funds in case of an emergency. While he was reviewing the constitution Mike noticed several sections that were antiquated and made changes to them as well. In addition he added a couple of changes to bring us into the 21st century, like e-mail voting.

His proposed amendments were presented to the board at the board meeting on August 20th and with some revisions were presented to the general membership at the meeting on September 8th.

Here is a summary of the proposed change to the constitution:

Article V: The procedure to amend the constitution is changed in that an amendment may be proposed by the board as well as by the general membership; the amendment(s) must be discussed at a regularly scheduled meeting and the membership may cast a vote by e-mail (as well as regular mail or voting in person)

Here is a summary of the proposed changes to the bylaws:

- 1) **Section 1.D—Duties of the Treasurer:** The treasurer will no longer notify members when their dues are due (This has been standardized: all dues are due in October)
- 2) **Section 2.A—Nominating Committee:** The nominating committee is no longer required to have exactly four members.
- 3) **Section 5.C—General Membership:** a quorum for voting purposes is defined as 15% of the membership. The requirements for voting on expenditures are struck from this section
- 4) **Section 6.C—Permitted expenditure Purposes:** meeting (speaker) and event (Starquest) expenses are added to the list of permitted expenditures
- 5) **Section 6.D—Expenditure Authority:** Here is the new expenditure authority provision quoted in full:
 - a. **The Director and any officer other than the Treasurer, together with the Treasurer, may authorize expenditure for any permitted purpose other than equipment or observatory improvement of up to \$1000, or for equipment or observatory improvement up to \$200**
 - b. **The Board of Trustees may authorize expenditure for any permitted purpose of up to \$1000, and may authorize in any amount an emergency expenditure that it deems necessary to preserve the property of the AAAP or the health and safety of members or the public.**
 - c. **Any other expenditure in excess of \$1000 must be recommended by the Board of Trustees and the recommendation must be published in AAAP's monthly newsletter together with the meeting date on which the expenditure will be voted. The expenditure must then be approved by a majority of the votes cast and not less than 30% of the paid membership. Members not attending the meeting may vote by mailed or e-mailed ballot provided that their ballot is received by the Secretary within 40 days of the meeting.**

The vote on these changes will occur at the meeting on January 12th before the general meeting. Our current constitution requires that a majority of 40% of our membership vote in favor of the amendments in order for them to be enacted. Votes may either be cast in person or by mail in ballot. If you can't attend the January meeting I request that you use the mail in ballot to record your vote (see below).

A redline version of the proposed changes (along with the sections of the constitution that they are replacing) is available to read on our website: <http://www.princetonastronomy.org> (click on the dropdown site map and go to "Constitution & Bylaws (pdf)").

If you have any questions regarding this issue you can e-mail me at _____ and I will be happy to answer them.

Bill Murray, Director

Vote to authorize the changes to the AAAP Constitution and Bylaws. (Proposed: September 8, 2009)

Name _____

Approve _____

Disapprove _____

Mail to:

Amateur Astronomers Association of Princeton
c/o Larry Kane, Secretary
P.O. Box 2017
Princeton, NJ 08543

Membership Meeting Minutes December 8, 2009

The meeting was called to order by Director Bill Murray

1. He announced that our January speaker has been confirmed. The talk will be on amateur astronomy and its contributions to science.
2. John Church provided the Assistant Director's report and noted the discussion of changing the month for Star Quest that was discussed at the last Board meeting. Bill Murray stated that the new month, if it is May, should be locked in, as he has to sign the contract to secure the conference site in Hope. It was thought that the Board could make the decision to set the dates for Star Quest. Mike Mitrano pointed out that if we intend to offer an agreement to pay a reduced penalty for cancellation in the event of bad weather, we need to do so now. Bill Murray said that he would contact the person at the Hope center about this.
3. Treasurer Michael Mitrano reported that his laptop crashed this evening. His financial report appears in another section of this issue of the Sidereal Times.
4. Observatory: Gene Ramsey reported that he and John Church had winterized the observatory. Therefore, there will not be water available until next Spring. He stated that he put WD-40 on the locks. He also reported that he is working with three more members to train them to become key-holders. He now hopes to have six, four person teams by the opening in April. Gene noted that the C-14 telescope was now going to a "park" position that pointed to the door. Ron Mittelsteadt noted that changing the park position offers less wear on the telescope gears.
5. Public Outreach Chair Jeff Bernardis noted that there are two events planned for this coming week, Thursday at the Riverside School and Friday at the Stuart School. He asked that anyone that can help out should send him an email.
6. Sidereal Times: Editor Ira Polans noted that the next deadline for articles is December 18.
7. Old Business: Bill Murray reported that we are still in the process of getting a final vote on the by-laws revisions. Secretary Larry Kane reported that as of the vote before this evening's meeting, twenty five people have voted in favor of amending the by-laws. Bill Murray announced that he would send out a blast-email to all members and put the paper ballot into the next edition of the Sidereal times. The Secretary noted that at least fifteen more members have to vote in favor of the revisions in order to pass them. Bill stated that he would hold another voice vote at the January meeting.
8. New Business: Bill Murray noted that we are still looking for a Program Chair and that we have a couple of possible speakers for future meetings.

Larry Kane, Secretary

Community Outreach

We had two outreach events on our calendar this past month:

- On Thursday 12/10, John Giles and John Miller hosted a star party for the kids of Riverside Elementary School in Princeton. They battled the clouds, but were able to show the kids some objects, including Jupiter and Orion.

- The very next day, John Giles, Larry Kane, Bob Cava, Vic Davis, and I hosted for Stuart Country Day school, also in Princeton. It was a very clear, but extremely cold, night. Approximately 30 or 40 kids and parents showed up and I think everyone had a good time. I was glad we were able to have it this year because last year we had at least 3 cancellations due to clouds/weather and never did actually have it. The kids from last year were invited this year so they got to finally enjoy what they missed then.

Our upcoming calendar is currently clear, but as always, if you want to be involved in future events, please let me know by emailing me at j...@princeton.edu or calling me at

Jeff Bernardis, Outreach Coordinator

Interested in keyholder training?

or

Treasurer's Report

Dues for the current fiscal year are now up to \$2,480 (62 members). With other income sources, total revenue is about \$2,700 for fiscal the year to date.

With the observatory repair behind us and routine expenses modest, our surplus for the fiscal year to date is about \$500. We will have insurance to pay in January that will put us back into the red. After the holidays, I will be contacting members who have not renewed to see if they wish to do so.

The Association's cumulative surplus is about \$18,700.

Michael Mitrano, Treasurer

January's Program

Our speaker for January is amateur astronomer, George Sjöberg. His talk's title is "Imaging of Cataclysmic Variables and Interpretation of their Light Curves—A Personal Journey". An examination of the hardware and software used to image variable stars with a discussion of techniques and procedures. Creation of light curves and what can be learned from them. How amateurs support professional astronomers in examination of transient events (GRB's, supernovae, etc) and run-up's to and parallel imaging with HST observations.



Other News...

Atlantis Rockets to Orbit to Resupply ISS

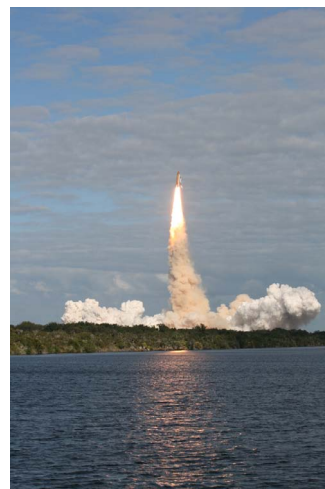
I was thrilled and fortunate to attend the recent launch of Space Shuttle Atlantis on 16 November 2009 at the Kennedy Space Center with a press pass and was reporting in person on behalf of The Planetary Society, Universe Today and Spaceflight magazine. Atlantis delivered critical spare parts to the Space Station (ISS) on the STS 129 flight. I also toured the next two space station manned modules known as Tranquility and Cupola up close at a special NASA ceremony inside the Space Station Processing Facility (SSPF). They are set for launch in February 2010 on the next shuttle flight, STS 130. Only 5 Shuttle launches remain until retirement around Sep 2010.

My reports and pictures are collected online at my web-pages below and the Rittenhouse Astronomical Society homepage. Included are my KSC television interviews with the Indian TV channel NDTV from New Delhi:

<http://www.rittenhouseastronomicalsociety.org/>
<http://www.rittenhouseastronomicalsociety.org/Dr.Kremer/K.htm>
<http://www.universetoday.com/author/ken-kremer/>

Read my full reports on the ISS, Shuttle and Mars in *Spaceflight* magazine: Jan and Feb 2010 issues also available at Barnes & Noble Bookstores:

<http://www.bis-spaceflight.com/sitesia.aspx/page/183/id/2102/l/en-gb,en-gb,en-us>



Moments after 2:28 PM blast off of Shuttle Atlantis on 16 Nov 2009 from the Kennedy Space Center. Credit: Ken Kremer

Please contact me for info or science outreach presentations by email ken.kremer@princeton.edu or by the Web at <http://www.rittenhouseastronomicalsociety.org/Dr.Kremer/K.htm>

Year in Space 2010 Calendar

The Mars mosaic of Spirit at the summit of Husband Hill which I co-created has been selected to appear in the "Year in Space 2010" Calendar, featured in Week 1. Complete details at this website with free downloadable poster.

<http://www.yearinspace.com/>
<http://www.yearinspace.com/images/stories/images2010.pdf>

Submitted by Ken Kremer

20 Years Ago In Sidereal Times...

SIDEREAL TIMES

Newsletter of the Amateur Astronomers Association of Princeton, Inc.

JANUARY 1990

DIRECTOR: Larry Smith

EDITOR: JWHS

JANUARY 1990 (!) MEETING

The January meeting will be at the usual place, time, and date. That is, the second Tuesday of the month, January 9, at 8PM at Princeton University's Peyton Hall.

The speaker for January will be George Saliba. George is a professor of Middle-Eastern languages and culture at Columbia University. One of George's interests is in arabic astronomy and he will talk to us on "The Development of Arabic Planetary Theories in Medieval Times". George will be at our pre-meeting dinner at the Tiger's Tale at 5:45. All members are invited to this pre-meeting dinner.

FROM THE TREASURER

Since I'm sharting a separate column on club and non-club happenings, I will stick to financial interests in this report from the Treasurer. I will try to make this a year-end financial report. To make it a bit easier, I have added a copy of our treasury report starting in June, when I took office. As of this writing, the treasury has a balance of \$1,716.57. Our biggest expense---insurance---has not been paid yet, but as I said before will be \$457.00. Many repairs and renovations have been performed on the Observatory over the summer, to the tune of \$473.46. This does not include the \$235.44 for electricity and teleopone expenses since June. All money was well spent, for we have a fully functional Observatory and a one-person-chain-operated roof removal system. The club recieved so much for so little money, due to the efforts of club members who donated their time and money to make our Observatory one we all can be proud of.

-Ron Mittelstaedt

[Treasurer's Financial Statement on next page]

FROM THE EDITOR

This is a LANDMARK note from me, as if you count the words, you'll find that it resembles a script for mime Marcel Marceau: simply, THE AAAP MEMBERS ARE---thank you, Clint Eastwood---"MAKING MY DAY"! That is because the submissions are continuing to come in, and I feel our subjectmatter is---expanding! KEEP IT UP, PEOPLE!

-JWHS

NOT-NECESSARILY AAAP NEWS

This is a new column I am starting by indirect request so I don't mix the financial report with other happenings of interest. I would like to pass on some of the things I think the members would be interested in, that show up in our mailbox.

First of all, I called two radio stations about snow cancellations. If in doubt about a meeting being held after a snowstorm listen to WPST 97.5 FM, WWFM 89.1 FM, or WHWH 1350 AM. Our message will be aired if our meeting's cancelled and re-scheduled. The individual calling of members will still be in force; the radio message is actually for non-members who were planning to come to our meeting.

The New Jersey State Museum Planetarium is starting laser light shows, beginning January 24 and running through April 22, 1990, but will actually start January 20th during Super Science Weekend. The shows will feature "state of the art" laser animation done to different types of music. Shows feature rock music only, and one with rock, classical, country, and electronic music selections. Tickets are \$5.00 for adults, and \$3.00 for children. Call the Planetarium for more info at 609-292-6333.

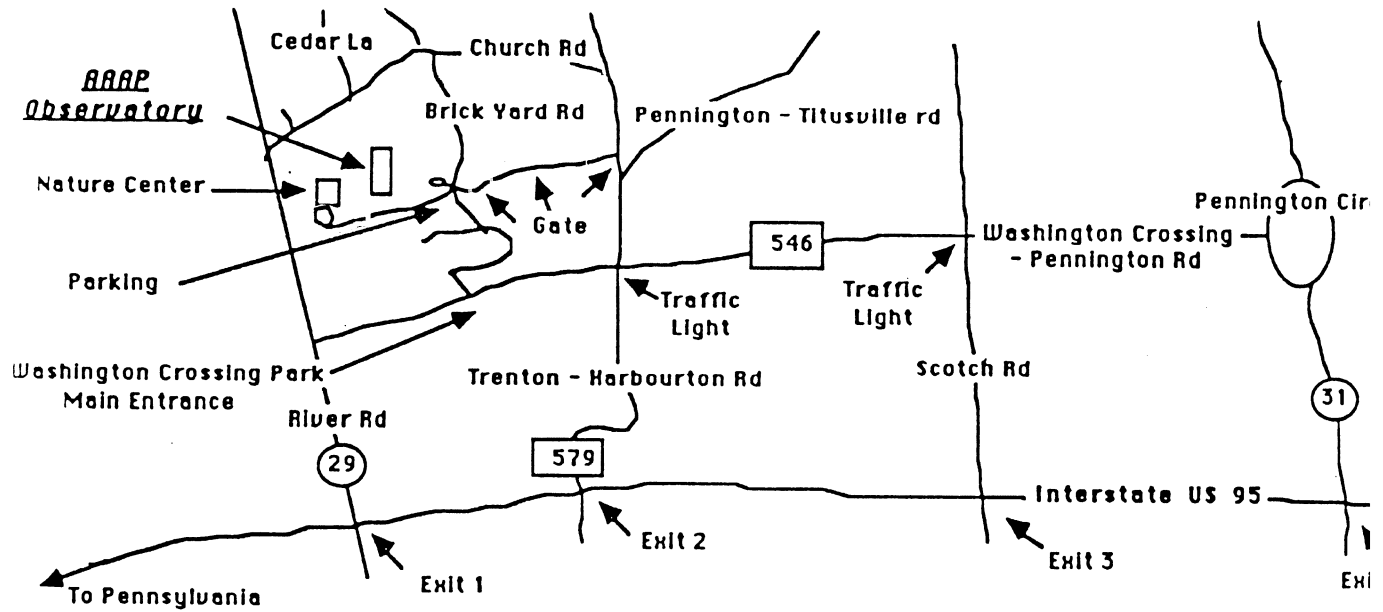
-Ron Mittelstaedt

AAAP FIELD TRIPS

At our December 18th meeting, we discussed plans for our GE Astro trip and voted on the dates for the proposed trip to the Fels Planetarium and NASA's Goddard Spaceflight Center in Greenbelt, MD. I have confirmed those dates with both of these latter institutions, so we're all set. Here's the pertinent information for each trip:

GE Astro. The date is the third Friday in January (NOT January 3!), which is January 19th at 6:00 PM. We will meet in the south lobby of building 410, which is located just off Old Trenton Road. GE Astro is located in East Windsor at the intersection of Route 571 (Princeton-Hightstown Road), Plainsboro Road and Old Trenton Road. IMPORTANT: if you plan on attending, you MUST call Vic Belanger at 609-448-8598 BEFORE the trip and give him your name, address, and country of citizenship. This is REQUIRED for security reasons. Those failing to comply will be unceremoniously stuffed in the next satellite and launched!

Fels Planetarium. It is located in the Franklin Institute at Logan Square on the Ben Franklin Parkway, halfway between City Hall and the Art Museum in Center City Philadelphia. The Fels Planetarium has been newly refurbished and re-equipped with the latest projection equipment. I understand the special effects are really something! Our field trip will be held in conjunction with a regular meeting of the Rittenhouse Astronomical Society on Wednesday, February 7, 1990. Admittance will be free at 7:00 PM. The meeting will start at 7:30 and the speaker will be Roger Gorden who will talk on telescope and eyepiece optics.



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

Amateur Astronomers
Association of Princeton
PO Box 2017
Princeton, NJ 08543

January 2010