

Ted Barker Memorial Solar Observatory

More than fifty people of all ages gathered on Saturday, May 30, for the dedication of the Ted Barker Memorial Solar Observatory. Ted, who passed away in 2008, was past president of the Morris Museum Astronomy Society (MMAS) and United Astronomy Clubs of New Jersey.

Ron Russo, UACNJ President, welcomed Ted's many friends and family members, including UACNJ Observers and members of MMAS. Anthony Pisano of MMAS then described Ted's many contributions to MMAS and UACNJ. A bronze plaque honoring Ted was donated by MMAS and has been mounted on the observatory. Joann Barker spoke about Ted's love of astronomy and joy in learning in a beautiful and moving tribute to her husband. Everyone enjoyed refreshments provided by Ted's family, including a cake inscribed with Ted's trademark saying, "Stars Up, Lights Down."

The Solar Observatory was open for observing throughout the afternoon. The telescope is equipped with a variety of solar filters and a spectrograph, providing a wide range of options for safe solar viewing. Plans are underway to install a coronagraph. The sun's surface, sunspots, and solar flares can be viewed at this unique public facility.



Photo by Warren Westura

Upcoming Events

July 25

UACNJ picnic

August 22

Board meeting

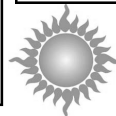
October 17-18

Starquest and UACNJ Symposium

Details of these events, future work sessions, and opportunities to qualify on the new solar telescope will be announced on the UACNJ email list.

Speakers Bureau

UACNJ maintains a list of speakers for public programs and club events. If you would like to be added to the list or if your club is seeking a speaker for an upcoming meeting, please contact Karl at hrickokj@embarqmail.com.



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ITEK Update

A link to progress updates on the ITEK telescope joint project with New Jersey Institute of Technology (NJIT) can be found on the homepage at www.uacnj.org.

New Observer Guide

The UACNJ Observers Guide has been revised. This guide explains all of the procedures for Observers including duty nights, using the house facilities, operating the Greenwood telescope, and more. Paid Observers will receive a copy via email from the Membership Chairman and a reference copy will be posted in the house at Jenny Jump.

Club News

Members of the North Jersey Astronomical Group (NJAG) assisted with a Spring Stargazing event sponsored by the Newark Museum's Dreyfuss Planetarium and the Essex County Department of Parks. The event was held at Riker Hill Park in Livingston on May 30. Under some nice clear skies, over 100 visitors enjoyed stargazing and views of the Moon, Saturn, a variety of deep sky objects as well as a few satellites.

UACNJ Library

Although lending rules have not been established yet, noticeable progress has been made in the library. Observers are invited to browse next time they are at Jenny Jump. Access to this library is just one of the many benefits of becoming a UACNJ Observer.

2009 Dark Sky Award

Warren Westura, SHAA

Sheep Hill Astronomical Association (SHAA) in Boonton will recognize Harding Township with the 2009 Dark Sky Award for the recently installed full cut-off, night sky friendly lighting at the town hall, library, and skating rink in the township. Council Chairman Lou Lanzerotti and the rest of the Harding Town Council will be presented the award later this summer. Not only does this lighting help protect the night sky, the designs are attractive, save energy, and make sense economically.

The Dark Sky Awards were created as an alternative to complaining about bad lighting. This positive recognition of good lighting can help improve public awareness of good lighting techniques. The first award was given to Walmart in recognition of the full cut-off lighting that was installed when they renovated the abandoned E. F. Drew chemical refining site at the base of Sheep Hill for their Boonton store. This lighting, which uses rheostats to limit the amount of illumination, was of special interest to SHAA members because the SHAA observatory is nearby. In appreciation, SHAA held its 2007 Astronomy Day activities in the Walmart parking lot where club president Andy Monka and I presented the first Dark Sky Award certificate which had been designed by Gordon Bond. The icing on the cake was when I found out that all new Walmart stores use full cut-off lighting.

After the success of the first award presentation, I decided to seek other sites to commend. In 2008 I stumbled upon Nic Platt while on assignment for Recorder newspapers. His recent development, Hartley Farms in New Vernon, has a very aggressive and considerate good-lighting code that all homes in the development must adhere to. Indeed, one home builder was installing significantly more lights than were allowed and Nic halted the construction until all non-conforming lighting fixtures and wiring was removed. During the SHAA Astronomy Day activities in 2008 - which were also held in the Boonton Walmart Parking Lot - Nic Platt and his brother received the second Dark Sky Award in a joint presentation by Andy Monka and Ron Russo, president of UACNJ.

If you would like to nominate a lighting project for a Dark Sky Award, please contact me at wwestura@optonline.net.