

Lunar Occultation on May 16

Krishnadas Kootale, MMAS

There will be a lunar occultation on Sunday, May 16 at about 9:50 PM. What is even better is that this will be a grazing occultation.

A lunar occultation is an eclipse of a star or a planet by the Moon. In a grazing occultation, the star or planet will appear to graze the northern or southern limb of the Moon. Observers close to the graze path have a chance to see the star appear and disappear repeatedly as it passes behind the hills and valleys on the Moon.

On May 16, a 6.2 magnitude star in the constellation Gemini will graze the northern limb of the three-day-old waxing crescent Moon. This will make the constant motion of the Moon across the background stars conspicuous. A grazing occultation is not just appealing from an aesthetic point of view, but also an opportunity to contribute to the body of scientific knowledge. Records of grazing occultations are used for refining the data on the lunar profile and the star coordinate system.

Fortunately for us, the graze path of the occultation passes through New Jersey. UACNJ is organizing an observing event in Hackettstown, at the intersection of N Valley View Road and E Winding Hill Drive just off Route 46 East. Those interested may contact me at ckkrish@gmail.com.



48-inch ITEK Foundation
Photo by Kevin Conod

Observatory

Committee Update

Gil Jeffer, Committee Chair, NWJAA

Work on the ITEK observatory is progressing steadily. Mandated state inspections at each stage of construction confirm that the mostly-volunteer crew is doing an outstanding job.

We have begun dismantling the observatory donated by Maureen Brady and will be reconstructing it on the pad that has already been poured at the UACNJ facility.

As always, please contact me at gil.jeffer@gmail.com if you can help with either of these important projects.

We are seeking donations of labor and materials to replace the odd-size doors on the ground floor of the UACNJ house. Please contact me if you can shepherd this work.

Many thanks to all who have given their time and talent for these and other projects at Jenny Jump.

Donations Appreciated!

There is a donation jar in the kitchen to help pay for replenishing supplies and one in the bedroom to help pay for heat for those who stay overnight. Your donations are an important part of the UACNJ operating budget.

2010 Stats

During the first team rotation, we hosted an average of 45 guests on public nights. Many thanks to all who participated!

2010 Symposium

Plans are underway for the annual UACNJ symposium which will be held September 24-26. If you would like to help with this event, (planning, speaking, day worker, etc.), please contact Ron Russo at ron@roned.com.

NJAstronomers Email List

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Just send an email to:

NJAstronomers-subscribe@yahoogroups.com