



FOCUS

The Newsletter of the United Astronomy Clubs of New Jersey

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1998 Officers Elected; Plans Begun for 28"

It was a cold, rainy, nasty day outside, but several UACNJ members warmed themselves with dreams of the future observatory to house the 28" Naegele telescope. On Saturday morning, November 8, the UACNJ Officers met to vote on the slate of Officers for 1998 followed by an open meeting to begin making plans for the new observatory.

The Officers effective January 1, 1998 are as follows:

President, Ron Russo (MMAS)
Vice President, Al Witzgall (NJAA, AAI)
Treasurer, Ron Schechter (AAAP)
Recording Secretary, Kevin Conod (NJAG)
Trustee, Gill Jeffers (HAAA)

That afternoon, an informal general meeting was held on the matter of the new observatory headed up by Barry Malpas. Open to anyone interested, the group considered the placement of the observatory,

the basic design, the materials best suited to the task, cost estimates and fund raising.

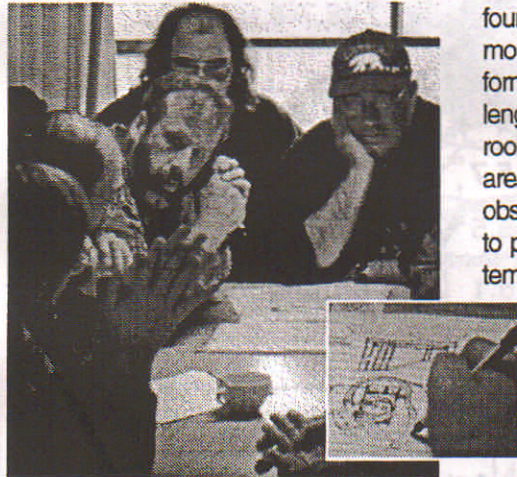
There was some discussion on site location but the weight of opinion was in

tial for thermal currents from the house as well as the number of trees that would need to be cleared weighed against it.

Barry made a rough sketch floor plan of a building which would rest on a concrete foundation formed around the rock of the mountain itself as it stuck out of the ground forming a natural platform. It was decided to lengthen the building to allow for a "warm room" - a room insulated from the telescope area where a portable heater could afford observers relief from cold nights in addition to providing a place for computers or other temperature/humidity sensitive equipment.

Construction materials were considered based upon their thermal properties. Ken Malpas will be making preliminary drawings based on these discussions.

The issue of cost and fund raising was also considered. The cost of the project is estimated at present to be around \$120,000. It was decided that the best way to proceed would be to ask for corporate donations. A preliminary list of potential benefactors was drawn up in addition to other ideas for raising money. A promotional package is planned which will be sent to these potential donors.



From left to right: Aaron Krahnert, Al Witzgall, Barry Malpas, Richard Gaines, Ralph Marantino.
Inset: A first sketch of the observatory - it's a start!

favor of "the pinnacle", the highest point on the mountain to the east of the house. Another site on the west side was also considered, but the proximity of neighboring homes, the microwave tower and the poten-

Protected "Dark Area" Program Update

Nominations for protected Dark Area status have begun to come in. The map on the back of this page shows NJAA's Voorhees State Park site (Robinson Observatory). The information presented is based upon the data received from the club. The concentric circles indicate the limiting magnitude for 15, 30 and 60 degrees above the horizon. The central number is the limit-

ing magnitude for zenith. All figures are based on an average night.

This graphically shows where the light pollution threat is coming from. The club specifically identified the junction of Routes 31 and 22 to the south and a car dealership on Route 31. The magnitude estimates reflect this.

The goal is to assemble information

TPO Discount Subscription Plan UPDATE

Increasing printing and postal costs have forced me to raise the subscription rate for The Practical Observer.

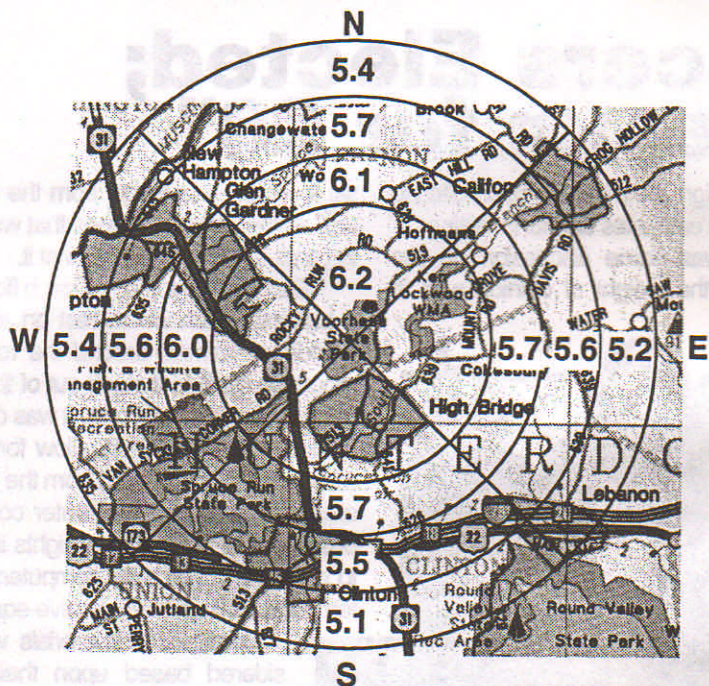
Nevertheless, while everyone else will pay the new \$14/year rate, UACNJ members can receive their subscriptions at the old rate of \$12.

Write Gordon Bond, 313 Raphael Ave., Middlesex, NJ 08846-1224 for a free sample issue and full information to show at your next club meeting.

"Dark Area" Update

such as this in a way that it can be presented to the appropriate state, county, local and private authorities who would be responsible for establishing regulations to halt, and eventually reverse, light pollution's encroachment on such areas. A meeting is planned for January, 1998 to decide how best to organize, present and make use of the data.

The establishment of protected dark areas was one of the recommendations of the State Light Pollution Study Commission. It is hoped that the UACNJ can encourage other environmental and nature organizations to nominate their own sites as well. If your club hasn't nominated a site but would like to, forms can be found on the UACNJ web site.



*Happy Holidays &
a Clear New Year!*

UACNJ NOTEBOOK

January 31, 1998

Rutgers Annual Geology Day

Rutgers Geology Museum, New Brunswick, NJ

Speakers include: Dr. Matthew Golombek,
chief Pathfinder scientist

Dr. Allan Treiman, Martian meteorite expert

Dr. Richard Olsson, Rutgers Department of Geosciences -
NJ fossils, asteroids & mass extinctions

For more information call: (732) 932-7243

March 11, 1998 to April 22, 1998

"A Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy"

Introductory course in astronomy held at Newark Museum's
Dryfuss Planetarium between 7:30 pm and 9 pm.

Registration deadline February 1, 1998, \$50 fee

For more information call (973) 596-6607

UACNJ Receives \$2,000 Exxon Grant

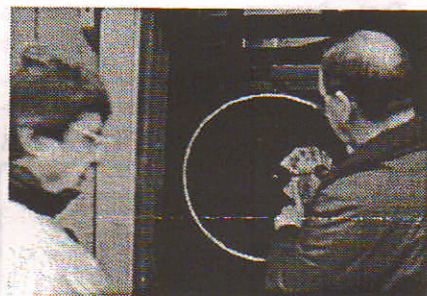
Many thanks go out to the Exxon Corporation Volunteer Involvement Fund for their generous grant of \$2,000, which will be used to purchase equipment for the 16" Greenwood Observatory.

Exxon was made aware of the UACNJ and its work thanks to the efforts of former Exxon employees and AAI members, Mike Luciuk and Don Kruse.

Supernova Search Group Formed

Aaron Krahnert, Gordon Bond and Lonnie Buinis have formed a UACNJ supernova search group. The goal of the group is a CCD-based search program to locate and make photometric and spectroscopic measurements of supernovae. They are looking at the Kimble-Kennedy 16" split-ring telescope, which has been slated as the UACNJ's research instrument, to be the scope used in an automated system. The telescope is presently on display in the exhibits area. The group plans on soliciting a small grant to help pay for the construction of instrumentation.

16" Newtonian Reflector Collimated



In case you were thinking you were discovering a bunch of comets in every field of view, the 16" telescope in the Greenwood Observatory was badly out of alignment. Don Greenwood (right) and Darryl Foyuth fixed things with a laser collimator.

The UACNJ is on the Web!

Check us out at

<http://www.erols.com/njastro/>

The observers duty roster and the Jenny Jump project work schedule are located in the "UACNJ connection" section on the site.

Check it out, something new is always being added!