

Newsletter of The
United Astronomy
Clubs of New Jersey

www.uacnj.org

P.O. Box 150
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The FOCUS

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January • February • March 2006

2006 Events Calendar

April 28-30

Spring South Jersey Star Party (Observing)
South Jersey Astronomy Club
Bellplain State Forest

May 6

Astronomy Day at Jenny Jump
(Talks/Displays/Observing)
United Astronomy Clubs of New Jersey
Warren County Library, Rt. 46
& Jenny Jump State Forest, Hope, NJ

May 6

Astronomy Day
at Sheep Hill Observatory
(Solar Observing)
Sheep Hill Astronomical Association
Ross Drive, Booton, NJ

May 6-7

North East Astronomy Forum
(Dealers/Talks/Displays)
Rockland Astronomy Club
Rockland Community College
145 College Rd., Suffern, NY

June 23-25

Jersey StarQuest
(Observing/Camping/Talks)
Amateur Astronomers Assoc. of Princeton
Hope Conference and Renewal Center,
Hope, New Jersey

August 25-27

Black Forest Star Party
(Observing/Camping/Talks)
Central Pennsylvania Observers
Cherry Springs State Park,
Potter County, PA

September 23

13th Annual Astronomy Symposium
(Talks/Displays/Observing)
United Astronomy Clubs of New Jersey
Jenny Jump State Forest, Hope, NJ

October 20-22

Stella Della Valley XX
(Camping/Observing)
Bucks-Mont Astronomical Assoc.
Camp Onas - Ottsville, PA

Welcome from the President

by Karl Hricko (AAI)

As president of United Astronomy Clubs of NJ, I'd like to extend my greetings to all of you for this 2006 year. As you know, the mission of UACNJ is to promote and support amateur astronomy in New Jersey, and also to provide educational programs for the public.

We accomplish the first part by representing our member clubs with astronomical displays at major area events. These include our presence at the Rockland Astronomy Club's North East Astronomy Forum (NEAF), the Amateur Astronomers Association of Princeton's Jersey StarQuest, the Bucks-Mont Astronomical Association's Stella-Della-Valley camp weekend, and our own Astronomy Day and UACNJ Symposium. We provide a Speakers Bureau for member clubs, Messier, Asteroid and Spectroscopic Certificates to qualifying observers, and maintain a web site which provides information on member clubs and links to all their web sites. Since Jenny Jump State

Park is still one of the darkest sites in NJ, our membership has access to dark sky viewing along with sleeping and kitchen accommodations.

The second part of our mission, astronomy education, is addressed by maintaining an education center with a lecture room and a modest New Jersey astronomy museum. Free public programs are given from April through October on Saturday evenings from 8:00 to 10:30 p.m. These astronomy presentations are followed by public viewing at our observatory.

Because of the recent major flooding of our house at Jenny Jump, we are in the process of restoring things to a normal operating level now that the plumbing has been repaired. This involves the reorganization of our research library, sleeping accommodations, meeting room, bathroom, and kitchen facilities. We also have installed a freeze alarm to provide warning of low temperatures, and are in the *Con't. on Back*

Freeze Alarm Installed at Jenny Jump

Following the February 4, 2006 UACNJ Board of Directors Meeting at Jenny Jump, Karl Hricko (AAI) and Kevin Conod (NJAG) installed the organization's new "freeze alarm" at the house.

This unit monitors the temperature in the house and is programmed to call up to three members who live in the Jenny Jump area if it drops below a pre-set level. This alert is designed to help us prevent the kind of extensive damage resulting from last year's flood. A frozen pipe below the kitchen sink had burst,

flooding the building and causing the ceiling to collapse in the displays area.

A new generator has also been housed in a small shed behind the house and the Board examined options for installing a switch. This will provide electricity to the furnace and house in the event of a power failure.

In March, Karl Hricko met with a plumber at the house who repaired the last of the leaks in the hot water heating loop upstairs and emergency shut-off valves installed.

Updating the UACNJ Speakers Bureau

It isn't always easy for amateur astronomy clubs to find speakers for their meetings and events - particularly smaller groups. The UACNJ Speakers Bureau was designed with the idea of providing member-clubs with a comprehensive list of possible presentations.

The database includes basic information about the speaker and the topics of their talks. Key points of the database

include:

- What audience is the talk appropriate for?
- How far is the speaker willing to travel?
- What equipment does the speaker require?
- Is any compensation needed?

The Speakers Bureau was started by Barry Malpas (AAI) and carried on by him, though it technically falls under the Communications Chair's responsibilities.

Communications Chair, Gordon Bond (AAI), has adapted Barry's forms into an electronic format that can be emailed to prospective speakers. He will be confirming if the current information he has on file is still valid. This list, along with the forms, will be made available on the UACNJ website. An announcement when it is ready will be made on the UACNJ egroup.

Gordon wants to remind our member-clubs that this service is available and encourages everyone to take advantage of the resource!

UACNJ 2006 Officers

Karl Hricko (AAI)President
Dale Gary (AAI)Vice President
Gordon Bond (AAI) . . .Recording Secretary
Diane Jeffer (NWJAA)Treasurer
Leslie Coale (MMAS)Trustee

UACNJ 2006 Committee Chairs

Observers Duty Roster. . . Steve Clark (AAI)
Sales DeskTed Barker (MAAS)
DisplaysGordon Bond (AAI)
Public ProgramsDale Gary (AAI)
WebsiteKevin Conod (NJAG) with help
from Ed Carlos (AAI)

Facility and Observatory
Maintenance . . . Gil Jeffer (MMAS, NWJAA)
LibraryDiane Jeffer (MMAS) and
Leslie Coale (MMAS)

President's Message

Con't. from Front

process of installing a generator to maintain a backup for our electricity.

There is much to be done to bring our facilities up to the operational level that was originally intended. This would include: continual maintenance of our telescope and the Greenwood Observatory; the implementation of a research, solar, and a radio observatory; and the restoration of a renewed display area/museum, as well as establishing an internal computer network.

Whatever needs to be accomplished can only be done if you participate in whatever way that you can. You can contribute by offering suggestions to improve our organization, join in our work teams and other projects at Jenny Jump, and/or volunteer to represent your astronomy club at UACNJ meetings.

Thank you for being a member of UACNJ. We are looking forward to adding to the tradition of making UACNJ an appealing and attractive place for amateur astronomers in New Jersey. With your help, I'm sure this will be a satisfying and a productive year.

Don't Miss the UACNJ Picnic on July 22!



Winter's chill may still be with us, but it's not too early to plan on attending the 2006 UACNJ Picnic!

Membership Chair, Alan Midkiff, is once again hosting the event at his home near Jenny Jump. Seen in the pictures at left, his residence includes a rooftop observatory housing a lovely 25" f/5 Newtonian reflector. Alan has recently established a new amateur astronomy club known as the North West Jersey Amateur Astronomers (NWJAA).

All members are invited to be Alan and Cindy Midkiff's guests on July 22, 2006 from 2:00 pm till whenever for a day of fun, food and (hopefully!) observing! For more information, contact Alan at:

ahmidkiff@aol.com