

# The SPECTRUM

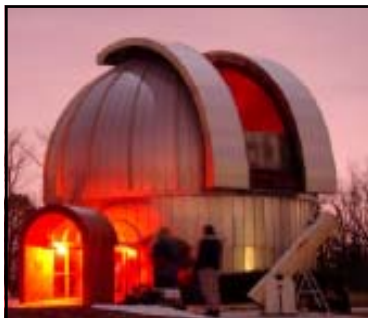
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## *Tidings of joy to you all!*

December is a month that some of us will reflect on our faith and others will reflect on family and gifts. In either case we all share a love of the hobby which shows off some of the most beautiful objects in the sky. As we head towards deep winter Orion is climbing high in the evening skies and showing off the Great Nebula in all its splendor. Rising above is Taurus with Saturn sitting on the end of one horn, doing a balancing act as it moves among the constellations. We are waving goodbye to Cygnus as it drops to the horizon taking many objects including the Summer Triangle to a well deserved rest.

Though the weather is growing cold, the benefit is clearer, less polluted skies. I know some of you balk at observing in these temperatures, but unlike sports, our hobby is year round! Any night of the year we can stand outside and marvel at galaxies, clusters, and nebula which dot the overhead skies. Let me encourage you to get out those dusty binoculars and step outside even for just 15 minutes to look at some of the bright objects which will help you get through the doldrums of winter. Look at Andromeda and see how far M31 stretches across the constellation, then lower the binoculars to the Double Cluster and admire the density and number of stars in that area of the sky. Fly quickly over to Orion and visit M42 on your way to bright Sirius in Canis Major, then set the binocs aside while you take in the Winter Triangle formed by Betelgeuse, Sirius, and Procyon.

There is so much to see in our skies that a lifetime just isn't enough. Events like last month's Leonids come along occasionally to make our hobby a memorable one. Perhaps another bright comet like Hale Bopp or Hyatauke will once again dot our skies in the coming years. Take some time over the holidays to think about all the objects you looked at for the first time this year, and then think about those which inspired you when first starting in the hobby. Now think about what's in the sky right now that you can look at anew or add to your observed list. There is so much to see that it's worth taking the time to get dressed up for the cold weather, so bundle up and enjoy.

Finally I'd like to remind you of a few events this month. Our Christmas party is on the 12th at Prime Sirloin, followed the next night (13th) by an outreach event at Hollywood 20, and the next night (14th) by a public star party at the WCRC field. I hope to see every one of you at Prime Sirloin and the other events so we can share our love of the skies with one another and the public. If I don't have a great time the rest of this month and be prepared for some fun times in 2003!

Clear Skies RMAers!  
Paul Titus  
RMA President 2002-03

**Next RMA Club Meeting**  
**ROPER MOUNTAIN SCIENCE CENTER**  
**Thursday, January 9, 2003 - 7:30 p.m.**



# RMA CALENDAR OF EVENTS

## December - 2002

1	2	3	4	5	6	7★
8	9	10	11	12★	13★	14★
15	16	17	18	19	20	21★
22	23	24	25	26	27	28★
29	30	31	1	2	3	4

- Dec. 7:** DSOG Star Party at Cromer Road
- Dec. 12:** RMA Christmas Party
- Dec. 13:** Public Outreach observing session at Hollywood 20 theater at 6:30 p.m. We will also organize a group to observe the Geminid Meteor shower from a dark sky location later that evening
- Dec. 14:** Public Star Party at WCRC field, 6:30 p.m.
- Dec. 21:** Alternate Public Star Party at WCRC.
- Dec. 28:** DSOG Star Party at Cromer Road

\* A "go" or "nogo" will be posted on the RMA newsgroup by 5:00pm on the day of the stargaze events.

## November Recap ...

To recap November's events: At the monthly meeting James Spurck gave a well received program on the Bethlehem Star, in fact we probably will be selling some CDs of it in the near future. The Inter-club Saturn viewing night was a success despite the poor weather as we had 5 visitors from across the border who toured the Daniel Observatory and watch James' presentation. The Leonids were a decent show for those who headed south and not north towards the mountains. We saw a storm despite the ever-present Moon, but the observed number was less than last years though the rate was nearly equal. No outreach activities occurred, but I did receive several calls about our December activities.

## Christmas Party

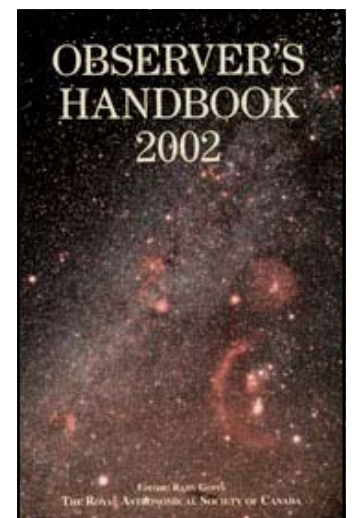
### Thursday, December 14

All RMA members are encouraged to attend the RMA Christmas Party at Prime Sirloin across from Greenville Mall starting around 6:30pm. We'll have some door prizes and some great fun so come out and join us. We've reserved a room in the back of the restaurant for our party, so pay for your meal at the register and then come back and join in the fun.

**Directions:** Prime Sirloin can be reached from 385 by exiting at Roper Mtn Road and heading towards Greenville Mall. Turn LEFT onto Woodruff Road and go approximately 1/2 mile and you'll see Prime Sirloin on the RIGHT. If you are coming up Woodruff from Greenville, go through the Verdae/Roper Mountain intersection and proceed the 1/2 to the restaurant. If you are coming from the 85 side of Woodruff, proceed past BJ's and Target (on the left) and Greenville Mall main entrance (on the right) approximately 2/3 of a mile, Prime Sirloin is located about 500 yds on the LEFT past the central entrance to the mall.

## Observers Handbook Orders

RMA members wishing to order the 2003 Edition of the RASC Observers Handbook should contact Tom Bradbury for details. Those not familiar with the RASC Observers handbook should take a look at <http://www.rasc.ca/pubs/oh2003.pdf> or <http://www.rasc.ca/pubs/home.html> for an overview. This handbook is possibly the best yearly publication that any amateur or professional astronomer could purchase and really use. Briefly, it contains data and charts for astronomical events that change yearly like meteor showers, as well as those that don't like the orbital components of the planets, etc. It contains astronomical data on equipment types, specifications of time and other errata. The club will purchase a few of these, but to ensure you get a copy remember to contact Tom.



# Hollywood 20 Outreach Friday, December 13

RMA volunteers will be at Hollywood 20 on December 13th for the opening of Star Trek: Nemesis. The manager of the theater has asked that we setup outside and inside. Weather permitting we'll bring out Godzilla to show off the planets and those of you willing to volunteer can setup as well. We'll also have a table inside with our club info, demo scope, etc regardless of weather conditions. Please let me know ASAP if you want to help as we can get free access to the movie for volunteers. The scheduled time we need to be there is 6pm, though I may come by earlier and setup my LX200 to show off the Sun if weather permits.

## Host Refreshments

### Just a reminder:

Refreshments at club meetings are a voluntary effort. Why not volunteer to bring refreshments for an upcoming meeting? The club will take care of cups, plates, napkins, utensils, and ice. Members can be reimbursed up to \$30 for refreshments when they provide a receipt to the RMA Treasurer, Tom Bradbury. Members can sign up online at the website or can call the RMA President at home to get their name on the list to provide refreshments. Sign up now to host the January refreshments!

## Bobfest 2003

(This is from information posted on the CCAS website [www.ccastro.org](http://www.ccastro.org))

Date: Saturday January 11, 2003

Location: Gardner-Webb University

Three speakers are already on tap, Gayle Riggsbee, Dr. Steve Harris, and Art Mullis, all of the Charlotte Amateur Astronomers Club (CAAC). Gayle will give a program on the history of the Yerkes Observatory. Dr. Harris will speak on cosmology, specifically the expansion of the universe. Finally, Art Mullis will present "Globular Clusters, Nebulous Objects Or Galactic Time Capsules."

The meeting will include the usual swap table type of displays, solar observing if the weather permits, and prize drawings. This is a good time to catch up on what's going on in the region. It's also a good time to promote and inform the attendees of any upcoming activities for the coming 2003 observing season.

## Public Star Party

Saturday, December 14

RMA members should arrive at the WCRC field around 6pm to setup their telescopes and share the skies with visitors. We may have kids from a scout pack as well as some others. If you need directions either see the website or give me a call at 864 963-8144.

## Next Regular Club Meeting

Thursday of January (9th), 7:30 p.m.  
at the Roper Mountain Science Center.

The evening's presentation will be given by Doug Gegen and Bruce Hoffmaster and will be on the Rosse Telescope and the visit of the Antique Telescope Society to the facility. Don't forget to bring your astronomy related questions for the 'Ask the Astronomer' segment. We will not have a regular meeting in December.

## A NEW Series coming ...

A new Spectrum series is coming entitled "**Celestial Events: Past, Present or Future.**" We will ask a volunteer member at each regular RMA meeting starting in January to write an article of their choice for 'The Spectrum' regarding their chosen astronomical event and its historical impact on the world physically, culturally, intellectually and etc. If you want to contribute you must be at a regular RMA meeting to volunteer. **Be thinking what event you would like to write about!**



## Renewals!

Remember to renew your membership to the RMA at the next meeting if you haven't done so already. It's only \$20/yr for individuals and \$25/Family. This is inexpensive by any standard for the benefits available to members. Remember, we have 2 check-out scopes, star parties, invitation events at RMSC, workshops, access to the planetarium for meetings, etc. Just check with Tom Bradbury to pay your dues.

## Roper Mountain Astronomers

Post Office Box 25665  
Greenville, SC 29616-0665



### REMEMBER!!

Do not forget the renewal of your magazine subscriptions. They are due now! Contact Tom Bradbury at [tbradbury@yahoo.com](mailto:tbradbury@yahoo.com).

## Check Out Scopes

This is a reminder to members that the club has two telescopes that club members can check out from month to month. They are the 6" and 8" SkyQuest dobsonians the club purchased last year. Club scopes need to be brought to one of the RMA scheduled events and need to be returned at the following month's meeting. Contact Paul Titus for more details.



## RMA STORE

The Roper Mountain Astronomers is a non-profit organization. To raise funds for outreach and club activities we do run a 'store' during club meetings and Friday nights at the T.C. Hooper Planetarium. The following list is a sample of what can sometimes be purchased to help support the club:

- Red flashlights
- Astronomy Patches & Buttons
- Posters
- Computer software (Starry Night Backyard/Pro)
- T-Shirts
- Planisphere's
- Books on astronomy & observing
- Much more ...

## Membership Form

(Join the RMA today!)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ Renewal

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (HOME): \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Do you own a telescope or binoculars? \_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_ No

What Kind? \_\_\_\_\_

Areas of Interest: \_\_\_\_\_

Newsletter (\$12) \_\_\_\_ Student/Teacher (\$12) \_\_\_\_

Individual (\$20) \_\_\_\_ Family (\$25) \_\_\_\_ Other (\$\_\_\_\_)

Check here if you desire to have the newsletter delivered to your email address: \_\_\_\_ Yes

**Note:** Newsletter memberships entitle individual to receive the newsletter alone and do not include participation in private club activities. Student/Teacher memberships require proof of status and include participation in private club activities.

For current events, announcements, update information and outreach reports please visit our web site at:

[www.rmastro.com](http://www.rmastro.com)

**Just A Reminder** - All articles of the Spectrum must be in by the first Monday of each month. If received beyond that time the given article will be placed in line and may appear in the following next month's "The Spectrum" newsletter.