

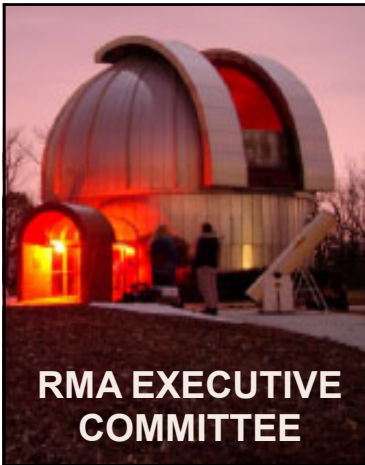
The SPECTRUM

A Roper Mountain Astronomers Publication

Volume 15

SEPTEMBER 2002

Number 9



RMA EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

PRESIDENT:

Paul Titus

(864) 963-8144

paul@carolinaskies.com

VICE-PRESIDENT:

Jim Menius

(864) 599-8006

whyzard@charter.net

TREASURER:

Tom Bradbury

(864) 627-1294

trbradbury@yahoo.com

SECRETARY:

Sibyl McGarity

(864) 294-1173

starstruck407@aol.com

MEMBERS AT LARGE:

Bill Balmer

(864) 967-8250

bill_balmer@email.msn.com

Frank Hinson

(864) 963-8163

2bfrank@charter.net

James Spurck (Editor)

(864) 235-3373

JSpurck@charter.net

RMSC STAFF

ASTRONOMER:

Doug Gegen

(864) 895-7566

zeppguy@mindspring.com

President's Message ...

Cooler weather! That's what I think about as September rolls around. And this year I'm sure all of you are also looking forward to a break in the temperature since it's been pretty unbearable here in Greenville. I encourage you to join the DSOG group and go up to Mt. Pisgah and observe in the beautiful Smokey Mountains.

An IMPORTANT reminder for ALL members; this issue is out earlier than usual because our yearly picnic is being held Saturday, September 7 at Lake Robinson. Members of the club are encouraged to bring their families for the event and go to the website to sign up for the particular food or dessert you'd like to bring. Afterwards you can choose to go to Doug Gegen's house to observe or join some of the DSOG members who will be driving up to Mt. Pisgah. Remember that it is from 2-6 PM and be sure to bring your solar filtered telescopes.

The September meeting will be a presentation of RMA member photo images as well as a review of some objects to look at this month in the sky. We'll also be introducing as well as accepting nominations of club officers for the 2003 year. So if you would like to become an officer or member at large please come out to the meeting and get your name in the ring! Also, we'll try once again to pass the bylaws revision if we have enough members present.

I'd like to thank Frank Hinson, James Spurck, and Joplin Motisher for participating in the Pisgah Camping Trip last month. And apologize to Clive Lund for leaving him up there all alone Saturday night. Even the best of us get fooled by the weather sometimes!

A quick update on club purchases; I drove up to Camera Corner in Burlington, NC on August 24 and picked up some new eyepieces and accessories for the 13" Coultter donated over the summer. The eyepieces will also double up with those currently in use on Godzilla. I will try to bring Godzilla up to the picnic, and maybe even the 13" for use at the DSOG outing. So there's another reason to come out to club events. I will also see about bringing the scopes to the September club meeting at RMSC.

I'll finish off my message this month by encouraging all members who haven't been to the club meeting in a long time to attend the September meeting so that we can take care of the bylaws revision and so you can enjoy the photographic efforts of your fellow club members.

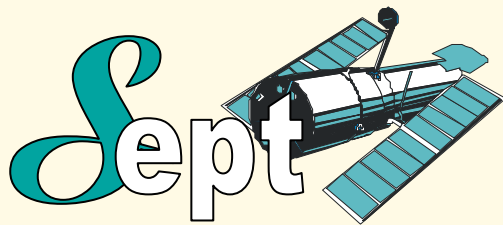
Clear Skies RMAers!

Paul Titus

Next RMA Club Meeting
ROPER MOUNTAIN SCIENCE CENTER
Thursday, September 12, 2002 - 7:30 p.m.



RMA CALENDAR OF EVENTS



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					

- Sept. 6:** New Moon
- Sept. 7:** Club Picnic (Lake Robinson) Observing at Doug Gegen's or Mt. Pisgah
- Sept. 12:** Club Meeting
- Sept. 13:** First Quarter
- Sept. 14:** Stargaze, tentative location... Clarke Residence
- Sept. 19:** RMA Executive Board Meeting (Stax on Orchard Park)
- Sept. 21:** Full Moon
- Sept. 28:** Star Party - WCRC Field
- Sept. 29:** Last Quarter

* A "go" or "nogo" will be posted on the RMA newsgroup by 5:00pm on the day of the stargaze events, or 963-8163 for information.

Regional Star Parties

Don't forget that Peach State Star Gaze and the Mid-Atlantic Star Party begin in October. Get your reservations in early and join hundreds of other enthusiasts who enjoy our hobby.



For the PSSG contact: Ken Poshedley, poshedly@bellsouth.net or phone 770-979-9842 after 7:30 p.m. weeknights.

<http://personal.atl.bellsouth.net/atl/p/o/poshedly/pssg/index.html>

For the MASP contact: John Dilday John@bsa.net or phone 919-362-5194 <http://www.carolinaskies.com/masp>

Changes to Refreshment Policy

A change is being made concerning the availability of refreshments at club meetings. The Executive Board has decided that from September onward refreshments will be a voluntary effort. What does this mean? We are asking members who feel inclined to do so to volunteer to bring refreshments for an upcoming meeting. If no one signs up for a particular month we won't have any available. This decision was made to promote participation in the club as well as to prevent certain members from 'burn-out' for continually providing refreshments month to month. 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.

REMEMBER!!

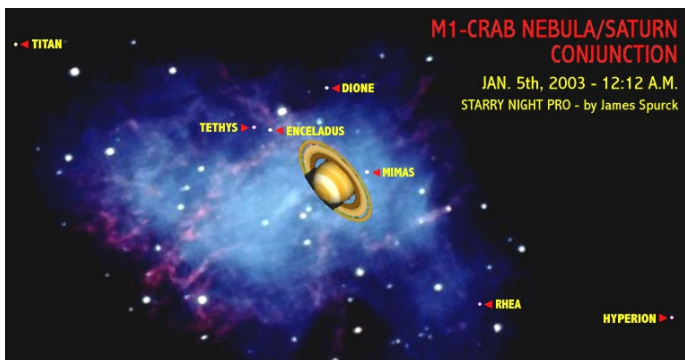
Do not forget the renewal of your magazine subscriptions. They are due now! Contact Tom Bradbury at tbradbury@yahoo.com.

Name That Scope!

I believe we need to give the new 13" club scope a nickname to go in the same vein as Godzilla. So get your creative thinking caps on and come up with a name or two for the new scope. Those with internet access can submit a name on the website, while those who don't can call me at home and pass them along. We'll also accept them at the September meeting! A vote on the names will occur at the October meeting so don't miss it!

— Paul T. (864)963-8144

Mark Your Calendars!



M1 (the Crab Nebula) and the planet Saturn will experience a Conjunction with each other on the weekend of January 4-5th, 2003.

A NEW Series coming ...

A new Spectrum series is coming entitled “**Celestial Events: Past, Present & Future.**” This series will feature real astronomical events either past, present or in the future which will provoke and encourage intellectual discussion among our members regarding these events.

Starting in October we will ask a volunteer member at each regular RMA meeting to write an article of their choice for ‘The Spectrum’ regarding their chosen astronomical event and how it impacted the world physically, mankind culturally, science intellectually and etc. If you want to contribute you must be at a regular RMA meeting to volunteer.

This series will also be placed on the RMA web site so others can contribute within a discussion forum setting with their responses. So get prepared and be thinking of the event that you would like to write about. To get the ball rolling, the first one in next month’s ‘Spectrum’ will be about “**The Famous Eclipse of Nineveh.**” It will be very interesting and thought provoking. So look for it in October’s Spectrum!

Roper Mountain Astronomers Annual Picnic 2-6 p.m. on Sept. 7, 2002

Directions to Lake Robinson:

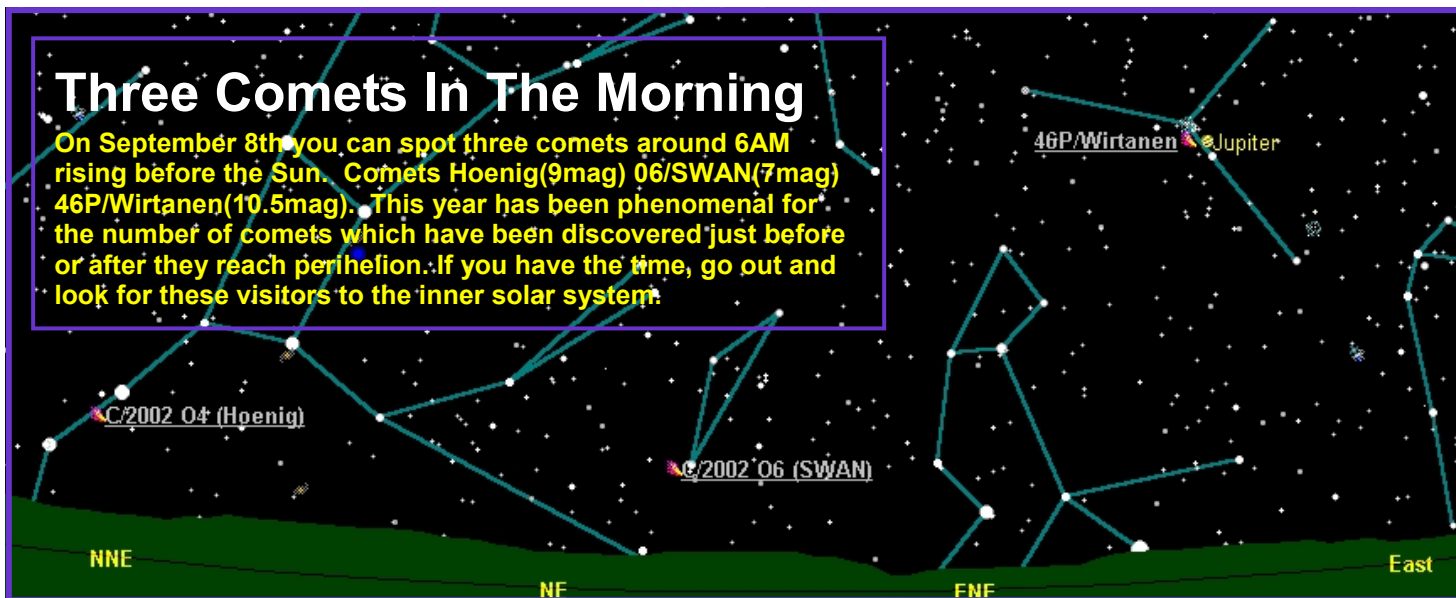
Starting from Roper Mountain Science Center :TURN RIGHT onto 385 (WEST toward downtown), Go 2.7 miles and then BEAR RIGHT onto RAMP to N PLEASANTBURG DR [HWY 291], Go 1.4 miles and then BEAR RIGHT onto US 29 (EAST), Go 7.2 miles and then TURN LEFT onto BUNCOMBE ST [HWY 290], Go 0.4 miles and then CONTINUE onto ONEAL RD [HWY 101] , Go 1.4 miles and then BEAR LEFT onto HWY 101 , Go 1.1 miles and then BEAR LEFT onto MILFORD CHURCH RD , Go 0.9 miles and then TURN RIGHT onto GROCE MEADOW RD, Go 0.9 miles and then TURN RIGHT onto MAYS BRIDGE RD , Go 0.1 miles to Lake Robinson, 2544 Mays Bridge Rd.

All members are reminded that September 7th is the RMA Picnic at Lake Robinson from 2-6PM. Members are asked to sign up to bring food or deserts either online at the club website or by contacting a club officer and passing along what you will bring.

Members are encouraged to bring their telescopes with solar filters for some solar viewing and then later in the evening either go to Doug Gegen's house or up to Mt. Pisgah with the DSOG group. Doug Gegen lives near the lake so it's only a short drive to his backyard, but those willing to travel the distance to Mt. Pisgah should enjoy the views at the higher elevations. If there is rain the picnic will still be held, but we will cancel the observing session.

Three Comets In The Morning

On September 8th you can spot three comets around 6AM rising before the Sun. Comets Hoenig(9mag) 06/SWAN(7mag) 46P/Wirtanen(10.5mag). This year has been phenomenal for the number of comets which have been discovered just before or after they reach perihelion. If you have the time, go out and look for these visitors to the inner solar system.



Roper Mountain Astronomers

Post Office Box 25665
Greenville, SC 29616-0665

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.

September's Night Sky

The summer Milky Way is the most spectacular part of the sky but the heat and humidity here make it the worst season to observe in.



MERCURY is at its greatest elongation from the sun at the beginning of the month and can be seen just after sunset glittering at nearly magnitude 0 below and to the right of Venus, just above the horizon. As the month progresses it both fades, losing an entire magnitude in just two weeks, and sinks lower into the sunset glow as it races back towards the sun.

VENUS will reach its greatest brilliancy this month, attaining a breathtaking magnitude 4.6 by the end of the month. This will be a great month to observe this otherwise unexciting planet; early on it will show as half a disk roughly the size of Jupiter but as the month progresses it will become noticeably larger and show a thinner crescent phase. Unfortunately it is also sinking into the sunset glow a little more each night and will become difficult to observe as it gets brighter.

MARS begins to be visible in the morning sky again, rising about a half hour before the sun early in the month. It will slowly increase the interval so that by the end of the month it is around 90 minutes, putting it fairly high up by dawn. Unfortunately, the red planet is very far away from us and appears tiny and about as dim as it ever gets, hovering around magnitude 1.8.

JUPITER begins to emerge from the dawn glow this month as well, though it still doesn't get very far above the horizon before sunrise. But it will be worthwhile to look for it low in the Northeast early in the month as it will be passing almost through the Beehive cluster (M44) for the first 10 days or so.

SATURN will give us the best show this month, though you will have to get up very early to see it at its best. The ringed planet rises around 1 AM early in the month and around 11 PM by the 30th. Besides adding another 0 magnitude 'star' to the brilliantly lit Orion/Taurus/Gemini area of the sky its rings remain tilted at a spectacular angle for telescope users.

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.

Deep Sky

Galaxy hunters begin to have more objects to chase down as summer wanes and the Virgo/Coma area disappears into the sunset. M31, the Andromeda Galaxy, and its companions M32 and M110 are obvious targets high in the Northeast but there are quite a few other Messier galaxies coming into view in the fall. M101, the Pinwheel Galaxy in Ursa Major, and M102, the Spindle Galaxy in Draco, are high in the Northwest during early evening. The galaxy hunt gets better as the night wears on, by 11 PM M33 in Triangulum, M77 in Cetus, and the Sculptor galaxy should all be high enough in the East to observe comfortably and those who like a challenge can go for M74 in Pisces. And finally, though they aren't exactly deep sky objects, Uranus and Neptune are both visible in Capricornus and Pluto can be seen in Ophiuchus.

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

www.rmastro.com

Jim Menius
Vice President