



# NORFOLK SKIES



The Official Newsletter of the new Norfolk Astronomical Society

Glendon L. Howell, Editor

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October 2001

## Meetings And Events For October 2001

Date	Activity
Sat., Oct. 13	<b>Virginia Association of Astronomical Societies (VAAS)</b> 2001 Statewide Convention, held in Roanoke and hosted by the Roanoke Valley Astronomical Society (RVAS). See announcement in this issue.
Mon., Oct. 15	<b>Mars: A Strange and Complex Planet</b> , free Sigma Series lecture given by Dr. Joel S. Levine, Senior Research Scientist with NASA Langley, 7:30 PM at the Virginia Air & Space Center, Hampton.
Fri., Oct. 19	<b>East Coast Star Party (ECSP)</b> , held at Hampton Lodge Family Campground and hosted by Kent Blackwell. See announcement in this issue. This event substitutes for our usual monthly observing session.
Fri., Oct. 19	<b>Fan Mountain Observatory Open House</b> , operated by the University of Virginia in Charlottesville. Free tickets must be requested.
Mon., Oct. 22	<b>NAS Regular Meeting</b> , 7 PM, at MRO Computers & Astronomy, 1620 Cedar Rd, located at the intersection of Cedar Road and Dominion Blvd in Chesapeake. A <b>Telescope Buying Tips</b> seminar is planned.
Thu., Oct. 25	<b>Telescope Buying Tips</b> seminar, held at Chesapeake Planetarium, immediately after the 8 PM program..

## Local Planetarium Shows

**WHEN WORLDS COLLIDE** will be shown **Thursdays, October 4, 11, 18 and 25**, from 8 to 9 PM at the Chesapeake Planetarium, 300 Cedar Road. The program explores what can happen when other bodies of the solar system (comets, meteoroids, asteroids) collide with Earth. Telescope outing immediately after the show, weather permitting. Admission free. For reservations call 547-0153.

**THE X-TRA TERRESTRIAL FILES (Sept. 22 – Nov. 11)** will be shown weekdays at 2:30 PM, and at 11 AM, 1:30 PM, and 3:30 PM Saturday, and at 1:30 PM and 3:30 PM Sundays at the Virginia Living Museum Planetarium, 524 N. J.Clyde Morris Blvd, in Newport News. The program explores the theories and science behind the search for extra-terrestrial life in our vast universe. Admission \$3.00. For information call 595-1900.

## Virginia Association of Astronomical Societies (VAAS) Saturday, October 13, 2001

This year's Virginia Association of Astronomical Societies (VAAS) state-wide convention is set for **Saturday, October 13, 2001** in Roanoke, VA. Hosted this year by the members of the Roanoke Valley Astronomical Society (RVAS), the convention is set to be held in the Whitman Auditorium, located in the Business/Science Building of Virginia Western Community College.

Pre-registration has been extended to September 29 at \$10.00 per adult (\$7.50 for students). A boxed lunch at \$7.50 each is also available only to those who pre-register. After that date, registration increases to \$15.00 and lunch is on your own.

Typical activities at VAAS conventions include astronomical talks, door prizes, vendors, and a star party, weather permitting. Speakers in this year's line-up thus far include Dr. Brett Taylor who will speak on wormholes, our very own Kent Blackwell who will talk about deep sky observing, Ted Ake of the IESNA who will talk about lighting control, and Eric Douglass of ALPO who will talk about Lunar and Planetary observing. Information on this convention and past ones is available online at:

<http://www.geocities.com/roavas/vaas2.html>

<http://members.tripod.com/vaas99.html>

### **East Coast Star Party (ECSP)**

October 19 & 20

Kent Blackwell, Organizer

Hampton Lodge Campground - Coinjock, NC (252-453-2732)

Approximately 45 miles south of Norfolk/Virginia Beach, VA area

#### **DIRECTIONS From Tidewater:**

- travel south on Route 168 (Battlefield Blvd.) to North Carolina, then to US 158 towards Nags Head
- Driving south on US 158, cross the Joseph Palmer Knapp Bridge at Coinjock.
- Turn left at foot of bridge. Waterlilly exit. Follow signs.

Observing Site is the cedar trees @100' to the left after campground entrance gate.

***PLEASE OBEY CAMPGROUND 10 MPH SPEED LIMIT.***

#### **REGISTRATION:**

1 PERSON \$15

2 PERSONS (SPOUSE OR SIGNIFICANT OTHER) \$25

FAMILY OF 3 OR MORE \$35

- Registration applicable to all participants. Includes one or two nights camping if you wish to do so.
- You may camp near your telescope
- The campground gate will remain open all night for those wishing to leave early.

Make check payable to **Kent Blackwell**

#### **HOTELS IN THE AREA FOR THOSE NOT WISHING TO CAMP:**

- Rivera Motel - Coinjock, NC 252-453-2141 - Approximately 15 miles from Campground
- Sea Oats Motel - Powells Point, NC 252-491-8455 - Approximately 20 miles from Campground

Note: Approximately 30 miles south is Nags Head NC, an ocean resort town with hundreds of hotels

#### **ITINERARY**

##### **FRIDAY:**

12:00 NOON - Registration: Begins.

8:00 PM - Casual Stargazing Begins

##### **SATURDAY:**

10:00AM - Registration Begins.

6:00PM - COOKOUT at Kent Blackwell's Trailer Lot #29. (Kent will supply hamburgers, hot dogs, soft drinks - You may bring a dish if you wish)

7:00 PM - Door Prize Drawings

Dusk Until Dawn - Observing

**DOOR PRIZES OFFERED INCLUDE:**

- 8.8mm Meade Ultra-Wide Eyepiece, from Meade Instruments
- 20mm TeleVue Plossl Eyepiece, from Al & Judy Nagler
- Book Set, "Night Sky Observer's Guide" by Kepple & Sanner, from Willmann-Bell, Inc.
- Book, "Starlight Nights" by Leslie Peltier, from Sky Publishing Corp.
- Observing Ladder, from Kent
- 2 David Levy 16" Planispheres, from Ken Publishing
- 1, 11" Planisphere, from Ken Publishing

More prizes to be announced

Let's hope for clear skies. If possible call or email Kent Blackwell to confirm a day or so before the event, it helps me know how much food to buy. Hope to see you there.

Kent Blackwell <kent@exis.net>  
 1169 Old Kempsville Road  
 Virginia Beach, VA 23464  
 757-495-4663

**Fan Mountain Open House October 19**

There will be a Fan Mountain Open House the evening of Friday, October 19. Unfortunately this falls the same weekend as the East Coast Star Party. Members who may be interested in having the opportunity to observe through 30 and 40-inch observatory telescopes are encouraged to write the University of Virginia Astronomy, sending a stamped self-addressed envelope (SASE) to

Fan Mountain Public Night  
 P.O. Box 3818  
 Charlottesville, VA 22903

, and requesting up to 5 free tickets (used to limit attendance). The Observatory lies about 13 miles south of Charlottesville.

Leander McCormick Observatory, which houses a 26-inch Alvin-Clark refractor, is open the first and third Fridays of each month. This observatory lies in Charlottesville on the western edge of the UVA campus.

**Telescope Buying Tips Seminar**

Members of the NAS are planning to do two "Telescope Buying Tips" seminars for the public this month. The first is scheduled to be held **Monday, October 22** at MRO Computers & Astronomy in conjunction with our regular monthly meeting. This will be followed by a second one at the Chesapeake Planetarium immediately after the show on **Thursday, October 25**.

Glen Howell has been hard at work preparing a Powerpoint presentation for the event. The dates were picked to afford us views of the near First Quarter moon and the planet Mars. Saturn also rises about 9 PM but is expected to be too low for viewing. Parking lot lighting will restrict viewing to mainly bright subjects.

Your help is needed! We need members to bring out a variety of types of telescopes and sizes so that the public can look through them and compare. Sizes brought should be more in the beginner range of perhaps 3.5 up to 8 inches, but smaller and larger ones can be brought. Dobsonians, equatorially driven Newtonians, refractors, SCTs and Matsutovs are needed. If you can help, contact Glen (485-4242) who is coordinating the event.

### **Discount Magazine Subscriptions Deadline October 31**

*Astronomy* magazine is now available through the club for **\$29.00** (\$10.95 off), and *Sky & Telescope* magazine for **\$29.95** (\$10.00 off). New subscriptions are welcome, and renewals are required at this time for all subscriptions due on or before next March 2002. The extra lead time is needed to insure you receive your magazines on time.

Make checks payable to the Glendon L. Howell, and mail to 2808 Flag Road, Chesapeake, VA 23323-2102.

### **Tidewater Regional IDA Meeting Planned**

The third annual Tidewater Regional IDA Meeting & Outdoor Lighting Workshop is currently in the pre-planning stages. A potential site for this year's event could be Nauticus in Norfolk. Expected to be held sometime around mid-November, speakers are likely to include Phil Ianna the Chairman of Va-IDA, Chris Luginbuhl of the US Naval Observatory in Flagstaff, local marine biologist Johnny Noles, and representatives from CPTED (Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design) and Scenic Virginia.

### **The Astronomical League's Binocular Messier Club**

Emailed out with this issue is an electronic copy of the Astronomical League's Binocular Messier Club booklet. The Astronomical League offers many such programs to its member societies, and members are encouraged to hone their observing skills and work toward a framable certificate from the AL by following the observing guidelines of these AL Observe programs. More such programs will be included in future emailed newsletters. For those who are not able to receive their newsletters by email, contact Glen (485-4242) to obtain a copy of any program of interest.

### **Tuckahoe No-Frills Star Party**

By Kent Blackwell

The annual No-Frills Star Party, held this year on Maryland's Eastern Shore September 13-16, was a not as well attended as previous years. No doubt the terrible attacks upon New York and Washington DC on September 11 were the contributing factor. I debated whether to attend, but decided there is certainly something peaceful and solemn about being under the beautiful night sky. It was just what was needed to cope with the terror brought upon we American people.

Each fall the Delmarva Stargazers host the No-Frills Party. The name itself implies no amenities, but was surely not the case. Plenty of good home cooking was made available, and included in the admission price. Soft drinks, bottled water, coffee and tea were also available 24 hours a day.

Upon arrival on Friday, September 14 several people told me how clear the sky had been the evening before. I had some reservations whether it would be clear on Friday night since I had run into quite a bit of rain on the way to the star party. That turned out to be an unfounded concern. By the time darkness fell it had completely cleared, and at this point everyone had his or her telescopes pointed skyward. I strolled around the observing field to catch glimpses of Mars, views of globular star clusters, planetary nebulae, and was glad to see several people viewing double stars. Double star observing seems to have become a lost art, but perhaps will have resurgence with the popularity of exotic refractors. It's always a delight to see the excitement of amateur astronomers under a dark, clear sky. Many of my friends were there; ready to look at familiar objects. I can't think of anyone I know who gets more excited when viewing deep-sky objects than Danka Prilepkova-Gale. Danka is from Czechoslovakia, and has only been in America 8 years. It's amazing how much she has learned about astronomy since I've known her. Many other friends attended, but I was glad to see some new faces as well.

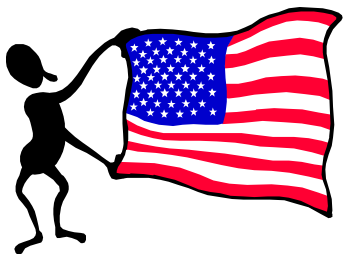
Most will agree the ideal opportunity for serious observing is alone. Star parties are often not the best times for such serious observing, but who can resist trying it when under a clear, dark sky? After observing the usual "show" objects I decided to view a few esoteric planetary nebulae in Aquila and Ophiuchus. The beautifully green planetary NGC 6572 in Ophiuchus remains one of my favorite objects, though it is rather small in angular size. The vivid green color more than makes up for its relatively small size. Taking a break I walked up to the food area to have my usual 3 or 4 hotdogs at 2:30 in the morning.

The weather on Saturday was simply gorgeous. Fall offers some of the cleanest and clearest skies of the year, a perfect time for star parties. Events during the day included swap tables, chatting with each other and observing the sun. Later in the day a few of us took the opportunity to look at the moon and Venus. It was a good day to do so, since Venus lie so close to the moon. After sighting them with binoculars we were delighted to see each naked eye. Mr. Richard O'Neill showed up with an original Henry Fitz 4.5" refractor, beautifully finished in Mahogany and polished brass. Richard, they just don't build them like that anymore. I remember seeing a Henry Fitz display at the Smithsonian Museum some years ago. Fitz was a competitor to the better-known firm of Alvin Clark and Sons.

The weather forecast Saturday night was for clear skies; in fact this would be the sixth clear night in a row, certainly a record for the East Coast. Some of the highlights of deep-sky objects included NGC 7009, the Saturn Nebula. It shown magnificently at 625x, appearing emerald green. Over to Pegasus, another planetary nebula viewed was NGC 7094. This 14th magnitude object isn't particularly faint, but has very low surface brightness because of its 94" size. Speaking of faint planetaries, Pease 1 was next on my list. This lies embedded within the glorious globular cluster, M 15. As it rose towards the zenith I aimed the 25", and was almost knocked off the ladder at the view of M 15. It was resolved so well I was reminded of an open cluster more than a globular. Immediately I reached for a 7mm eyepiece to yield the high magnification needed to see Pease 1, a 15.9 magnitude planetary. Because it is only 1" in size at least 400x and a nebula filter is required to see it. I was also able to see a galaxy less than one degree west of M 15, 16th magnitude 2ZW132. Has anyone ever seen it? One last object I just had to look view was the wonderful galaxy NGC 7331 and its satellite galaxies. Oh, yes, and just one more object nearby, Stephan's (pronounced STEPH HONZ) Quintet. It was perhaps more vivid than I have ever seen it.

After sighting Pease 1 and Stephan's Quintet I needed a break to walk around the observing field to see what other amateurs were observing. Spectacular object included M 31 in Andromeda, M 33 in Triangulum, the beautiful edge-on galaxy NGC 891 in Andromeda, and finally the planet Saturn. By the time Saturn was high in the sky it was early in the morning. Since I had a 5 hours drive back to home Virginia Beach I had to make the decision to give up observing for the less interesting task of going to bed.

Sunday morning was the time to pack up all the telescopes and accessories. Some had left the site before I awakened at 8:00 am, but most were still there. It was sad to have to say goodbye to friends until next time. Because of the attack on America on Tuesday, September 11 we all seemed drawn even closer together at this star party. I commend the organizers for allowing us to do what we do best, observe the serene night sky with our friends.



***Remember September 11, 2001:***

***Pray For Our Country  
As We Prepare  
For A War On Terrorism***

*Norfolk Skies* is published monthly by a national award winning Editor Glendon L. Howell (Astronomical League Mabel Sterns Award for 2000). Annual dues are only \$12.00 and fund primarily production and distribution of this newsletter. Members are entitled to reduced rates on *Astronomy* and *Sky & Telescope* magazines among other benefits. For more information, visit our web site at

<http://groups.hamptonroads.com/NAS/>

## Norfolk Astronomical Society Astronomical Calendar

September 2001	October 2001	November 2001
S M T W T F S	S M T W T F S	S M T W T F S
1	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3
2 3 4 5 6 7 8	7 8 9 10 11 12 13	4 5 6 7 8 9 10
9 10 11 12 13 14 15	14 15 16 17 18 19 20	11 12 13 14 15 16 17
16 17 18 19 20 21 22	21 22 23 24 25 26 27	18 19 20 21 22 23 24
23 24 25 26 27 28 29	28 29 30 31	25 26 27 28 29 30
30		

All times are EDT

<http://groups.hamptonroads.com/NAS/>

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b>30</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>
		9:49 AM Full Moon (Harvest Moon)				9:35 PM Moon occults +6.1 star SAO 93874 11:48 PM Moon occults +6.0 star SAO 93918
<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>
3:25 AM Moon occults +7.1 star SAO 93973 3:00 PM Saturn 0.5 degrees S of Moon		12:15 AM Moon occults +6.9 star SAO 78222 8:00 PM Jupiter 1.4 degrees south of Moon	12:20 AM Last Quarter Moon 3:24 AM Moon occults +6.1 star SAO 78349			9:00 AM VAAS Convention in Roanoke 10:00 PM Mercury reaches inferior conjunction
<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>
7:00 PM Moon reaches perigee 10:00 PM Venus 4 degrees south of Moon	7:30 PM "Mars: Strange and Complex Planet" lecture at VASC	3:23 PM New Moon		5:35 PM Moon occults +5.6 star SAO 159280	12:00 PM ECSP begins 7:30 PM Fan Mtn Obs Open House	12:00 PM ECSP begins
<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>
10:00 PM Orionid meteor shower peak	7:00 PM NAS Meeting / Telescope Buying Tips seminar at MRO 7:56 PM Moon occults +7.6 star SAO 187895	4:00 PM Mars 0.1 degrees north of Moon 10:58 PM First Quarter Moon	8:00 AM Neptune 3 degrees north of Moon	1:00 PM Uranus 3 degrees north of Moon 8:00 PM Telescope Buying Tips seminar at Chesapeake Planetarium	4:00 PM Moon reaches apogee	
<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>
2:00 AM Return to EST 9:25 PM (EST) Moon occults +5.8 star SAO 128621	12:00 PM (EST) Mercury 19 degrees west of Sun	2:00 PM (EST) Mercury 0.6 degrees north of Venus	9:49 PM Moon occults +6.5 star SAO 110537			