

## The Skyscraper

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the monthly publication of



### The Amateur Astronomical Society of Rhode Island

47 Peepthead Road  
North Scituate, RI 02857

[www.theskyscrapers.org](http://www.theskyscrapers.org)

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See back page for directions to Seagrave Observatory.

Please submit items for the newsletter by July 15 to Jim Hendrickson, 1 Sunflower Circle, North Providence, RI 02911 or e-mail to [jim@distantgalaxy.com](mailto:jim@distantgalaxy.com)

#### Email subscriptions:

To receive *The Skyscraper* by email, send email with your name and address to [jim@distantgalaxy.com](mailto:jim@distantgalaxy.com). Note that you will no longer receive the newsletter by postal mail.

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# The Skyscraper

July 2003

## Annual Summer Cookout & July Meeting

Saturday, July 12, 4:00pm at Seagrave Observatory

Food & drink will be provided at the cookout, all you can eat for \$5 per person. RSVP to Steve Hubbard :Cstars@att.net or call 508-832-2375

## The Accelerating Universe

Dr. Mannheim will be presenting a talk before us concerning some recent high redshift supernovae data. This data has revealed the presence of an apparent cosmic repulsion - a sort of anti-gravity. This causes the galaxies to accelerate away from each other, rather than slowing down. Thus, even while gravity is locally attractive for nearby objects, on the grandest scale, it appears to be repulsive. There will be a presentation of the implications of such a cosmic repulsion, showing that it poses a severe, as yet unresolved challenge to the standard Newton-Einstein gravitational theory. Currently planned observations to a slightly higher redshift to allow for definitive testing of the whole cosmological constant idea will also be discussed.

Dr. Mannheim is currently a professor in the Department of Physics at the University of Connecticut, having earned his BA from Oxford University and an MS and PHD from the Weizmann Institute. His research interests are: elementary particle theory, general relativity, astrophysics and astroparticle physics.

## Final Notice

If you haven't already done so, please renew your dues as soon as possible. We've got a lot planned for this year and hope that you're part of it. If we don't hear from you by the end of July, we'll have to drop you from our mailings.

## Skyscrapers Calendar

Public observing is held every Saturday at Seagrave Observatory.

<b>July 5 Saturday</b>	<b>8:00pm Public Observing Night</b> at Seagrave Observatory
<b>July 12 Saturday</b>	<b>4:00pm Members' Cookout &amp; Monthly Meeting</b> at Seagrave Observatory
	<b>8:00pm Public Observing Night</b> at Seagrave Observatory
<b>July 19 Saturday</b>	<b>8:00pm Public Observing Night</b> at Seagrave Observatory
<b>July 26 Saturday</b>	<b>8:00pm Public Observing Night</b> at Seagrave Observatory

## President's Message

*Dan Lorraine, President*

Lot's has been happening over the past month at Seagrave Observatory – the Clark refractor has been dismantled for a little cosmetic maintenance just in time for it's 125th birthday, Bob Horton has been working on plans for this years AstroAssembly which is shaping up to be bigger and better than ever, and the much needed improvements and repairs to our property, buildings, and equipment continues, thanks to the hard work of many dedicated Skyscrapers! And of course, this month is our annual members and friends cookout on

Saturday July 12 at 4:00 p.m. The cost is only \$5.00 for all you can eat! Weather permitting we will be observing the sun with a Hydrogen-Alpha filter, followed by our regularly scheduled meeting and program, and then back outside for more observing. Plan on coming and spending the evening with friends and enjoy the beautiful grounds that we're all so lucky to have. And if you haven't renewed your membership, shame on you! Please send it in as soon as you can because we will be forced to drop you from our mailing list (and we'd prefer not to do that because we'd rather have your money ... I mean you!).

Hope to see all of you at the cookout ... until then ...

## A Couple of Mid-Summer Meteor Showers

*David A Huestis, Librarian*

People spend a lot more leisure time outdoors during the summer months, so it's no wonder they observe more shooting stars at that time of year. If you can survive the onslaught of mosquitoes, an early mid-summer evening can be a great time to view a few meteors blazing across the sky. And since the August Perseids will be ruined by a Full Moon next month, and since we haven't seen a decent meteor display for some time now, I say get out there in July and enjoy whatever meteors have a fatal close encounter with the Earth's upper atmosphere. Get ready for the Delta Aquarid and Capricornid meteor showers.

The first meteor shower of July, the Delta Aquarids, peaks on the evening of the 27th to the early morning of the 28th. New Moon is on the 29th so ideal observing conditions will prevail. At peak time about 20 bright, yellow meteors can be observed per hour. Because these meteors nearly broadside the Earth, their speed is a moderate 25.5 miles per second.

To maximize your chances of seeing as many meteors as possible you must find a dark sky location from which to observe. Shield yourself from any stray light sources and continually scan the sky. Don't just stare at one area of the sky. If you can see the cloud-like milky gauze of the Milky Way from the observing site you choose, then you can be assured of a decent display of shooting stars.

The second meteor shower you should observe comes a day later on the night of July 29/30 with the peak of the Capricornid meteor shower. The Moon will still be New for observing purposes, so it won't interfere with observing on this night either.

The Capricornids are characterized by their often yellow coloration and their frequent brightness. They are also slow interplanetary interlopers, hitting our atmosphere at around 15 miles per second. Though you can expect only 15 meteors per hour at best under dark sky conditions, the Capricornids are noted for producing brilliant fireballs. That's one incentive for watching this meteor shower.

With both of these meteor showers you can begin observing just after sunset. July's celestial showers should satisfy your shooting star cravings until next month's less than favorable Perseid performance under a Full Moon. Keep your eyes to the skies!

## Secretary's Report

*Bob Napier, Secretary*

### Executive Committee Meeting

**May 24, 2003**

Executive Committee Members Present

President Dan Lorraine, 2nd VP Bob Horton  
Secretary Bob Napier, Treasurer Dolores Rinaldi  
Member-at-Large Joel Cohen

Trustees Present - Ted Ferneza and Jack Szelka.

Other Members Present - Historian Dave Huestis,  
Membership Chairperson Pat Landers, Web Master Jim  
Hendrickson, Rick Lynch

Trustees Property Status and Condition Report

**Summer Activities**-The trustees listed a number of projects and requested that members volunteer to help with the projects. Projects include: Replace/repair the doors on the Clark observatory building; apply sealer to Clark building brickwork; apply wood preservative to the meeting hall shingles; clean up the "dump" in the back of the property; apply stain/preservative to the twin rolloff building; inventory keys to property; inventory property; drain water from underground pipe between the meeting hall and the 16" rolloff.

**Training** - The trustees will come up with a training program for the observatory committee and other members to learn how to operate the Clark, Patton, 12"/16" Meade telescopes and how to conduct public Saturday night observing sessions. Certain members will be asked to conduct training sessions. Several of the members present asked to be trained ASAP. Ted will review who has keys to the property.

**Workshops** - To start with, there should be one workshop a month on the first Saturday of the month. Cloudy Saturday evenings programs to include putting together slide shows and collecting some astronomy and space science videos for public and school groups' viewing. On clear Saturday evenings, observing, telescope selection, eyepiece selection, variable stars observing, Messier observing, CCD imaging, etc., could be presented by various members with expertise in these areas.

**Members' Cookout** - Scheduled for 4 PM on July 12, just prior to the July monthly meeting. All food will be provided like last year for the fee of \$5/pp. A grill, soft drinks, napkins, etc. will also be provided.

**Monthly Meetings** - Monthly meetings are now scheduled for several months.

July - Dr. Philip Mannheim, Dept. of Physics, UCONN. High Redshift Supernovae.

August - Richard Trombly, Freelance Journalist, Editor of the Mars Society Red Planet Satellite Report

September - Gary Walker, Variable Star Observing and perhaps a live demo of CCD imaging of variable stars.

October - AstroAssembly

November - Dr. William Herbst, Wesleyan Univ., Head of Astronomy Dept. and Van Vleck Observatory. Talk on a very unusual star that was just discovered.

December - (Tentative) Dennis DiCicco of Sky and Telescope magazine

**Mars Observing Program** - This is a very close Mars opposition. Seagrave Observatory will be open to the public for Mars observing with the Clark telescope.

**Skyscrapers Image and New Memberships** - Skyscrapers should wear name tags and take the time to introduce themselves to new members and make them feel welcome. A new brochure will be printed up and distributed to places like Roger Williams Park Planetarium and Ladd

Observatory. Other suggestions to recruit new members was for members to visit daytime school classes and do presentations; "sidewalk" astronomy is high traffic areas.

**RINET Project** - Project requirements were reviewed, e.g., Phase I - provide a concise and extensive list of web site resources and links to astronomy and space science resources that RI students and teachers can use for projects, papers, etc. Phase II - Upon request from students and members of the RINET community, take images of designated objects and put on our web site for them to download and use for school and education related projects. Phase III - Connect the 16" Meade telescope and a CCD camera to the RINET provided Internet connection. Students should then be able to remotely control the telescope and CCD camera to take images themselves.

**AstroAssembly** - We are looking for better accommodations for AstroAssembly. Bob Horton is looking into the facilities available at Brown University, i.e., the Planetary Geology building or the NASA Planetary Data Center.

**Web Site** - The newly redesigned web site is looking good. There are plans for expanding the amount of information available on the site. Discussed were provisions for a "discussion list" and how it would be monitored and expansion of resource categories. Each member present was asked to send at least 10 education and/or resource links to Web Master Jim Hendrickson to be include on the web site. This would help satisfy the RINET Phase I agreement to provide Skyscrapers with a high speed Internet connection to Seagrave Observatory.

**Archive Committee** - Dave Huestis will have an Archive Committee meeting on June 7. Contact Dave for details.

**Skyscrapers' Property Security** - Trustees will maintain an exact list of who has keys to which buildings and cabinets, etc.

## Monthly Meeting

June 6, 2003

### Introductions of Officers

**Secretary's Report** - Accepted as published in the Skyscraper.

**Treasurer's Report** - Accepted as read at the meeting (approx. amounts below - Secretary).

Inflows - 1494.--

Outflows - 3199.--

Ck. Acct - 3241.--

Savings - 8012.--

Total - 11253.--

**Trustees' Report** - The Clark telescope will be disassembled for repainting. Disassembly is scheduled for June 8. An inventory of all keys is underway to determine who has keys to what.

**Membership Report** - 3 new memberships were received.

**Historian/Librarian's Report** - Dave Huestis reported a donation of a book, "The Perfect Machine", about 200" Mt. Palomar telescope.

**Preservation Committee** - Dave Huestis reported that a committee meeting is to be held on June 7.

**New Business** - Three new members were introduced and will be voted on under Old Business at the next meeting.

**Old Business** - Motion to vote Dan and Christine Warren in as new members - Passed.

Motion to spend up to \$600 to refurbish the 12" Meade telescope. Tom Rinaldi reported that it would cost \$395 to refurbish the telescope and hand paddle, plus we pay for shipping to Meade. Meade pays for return shipping - Motion tables until trustees can look at specific problems that would require sending the telescope back to Meade.

**Good of Organization** - Former Skyscrapers' member, Greg Shanos from Sarasota, FL, visited Skyscrapers and attended this monthly meeting. He mentioned three notable star parties in Florida; The Winter Star Party in the Keys (somewhat expensive), Chiefland Star Party in Gainesville (cost \$40), and the Orange Blossom Express in St. Petersburg (cost \$40). Steve Hubbard talked about the Skyscrapers' Cookout on July 12 at 4 PM. Food, drinks, etc., will be provided for \$5 per person. The August Skyscrapers' monthly meeting will conflict with Stellafane on Aug 2,3. and may therefore be delayed until the following Friday.

Dave Hurdis mentioned that Blithwald, located in the Bristol area, was looking for Skyscrapers' volunteers to host a star party on August 19 (rain date Aug. 20). Bob Horton mentioned that AstroAssembly will tentatively be held on Oct. 3-4, depending on featured speaker arrangements. Brown may co-sponsor the main speaker, perhaps NASA astronaut, Story Musgrave, by paying speaker's fees and travel expenses. Bob also mentioned that Skyscrapers who stay at the Hartness House Inn in Springfield, Vt., and help in showing visitors the 10" Refracting Turret Telescope will get a discount in lodging costs. A trip to White Mountain in California is planned for sometime around Labor Day - contact Bob Horton if interested in going. Al Hall will arrange with Wesleyan University's Van Vleck Observatory to observe Mars opposition with their 20" Clark refractor during the August/September time frame. Rick Lynch reported that another trip to Plymouth, Ma., to visit the planetarium in the fall. Bill Luzader arranged and hosted the visit this past May.

Presidential Announcements - Dues are requested to be paid ASAP by members who are renewing their membership for the 2003-2004 dues year. There will be an Eboard meeting on June 14 at 5 PM. Members are welcome to attend.

## **Executive Committee Meeting** **June 14, 2003, 5pm**

Attendees: President Dan Lorraine, 1st VP Steve Hubbard, 2nd VP Bob Horton, Secretary Bob Napier, Member-at-Large Ken Dorr, Trustees Ted Ferneza and Rich Arnold.

Agenda Items --

1. Review of Hoffman Estate donations of early Skyscrapers correspondence, etc. Discussion to transfer old 16mm films taken by Smiley and other Skyscrapers to DVD. Perhaps a project for a student at RISD?

Categories of archives -

Math and Ephemeris

Letters

Historical Publications and Newsletters

Science Catalogs

Misc. Orders, etc.

Expeditions

June 17 - next meeting for sorting, categorizing and organization of archives.

2. Clark Telescope Repainting - Scheduled to be done and reassembled by July 12.

3. Skyscrapers' Annual Cookout/Monthly Meeting on July 12. Cookout \$5 per person fee to cover cost of food, drinks, etc. Grass will need to be trimmed the Saturday before the cookout. If weather permits, solar observing with a H-alpha filter will be done. Porta-Potty will be available.

4. Work Sessions - Organize 10-15 members to maintain property after July 12 meeting. Volunteers needed to do staining meeting hall shingles, painting doors and windows, minor repairs, etc. Clean up dump in back of property.

5. 12" Meade Telescope - check out for potential problems and repair ourselves or send back to Meade for refurbishing. Al Hall, Bob Horton and Bob Napier will dismantle and evaluate problems and make recommendation to Trustees.

6. Finances - books need to be reviewed for fiscal status of organization before any more major expenditures.

7. AstroAssembly, Oct. 3,4 - Several speakers have been contacted and we are awaiting confirmations of their availability. Potential speakers are: P. Schultz, M. Hazen, J. Briggs and R. Boyce. The featured evening speaker may be funded by the RI Space Grant via Brown University's Planetary Data Center. Location of evening program still under consideration, possibly at Brown or somewhere closer to Seagrave Observatory. Parking consideration will be a major factor if held at Seagrave. Tent Rental to be in

the \$300-400 range. Dan to check with Horse Farm about overflow parking. AA proposed attendance fees to be \$15 for non-members and \$12 for members. Speaker fees to be determined on a case-by-case basis (fee, transportation, lodging, etc.). Ted Ferneza to look into getting Raffle Permit. Sky and Telescope may allow Skyscrapers to sell its publications "on consignment".

8. Hartness House Trip - A half dozen or so members who want to take a trip to Hartness House in Springfield, VT., after the foliage season can contact Bob Horton.

9. Skyscrapers' August Monthly Meeting - The August meeting will be Friday, August 8, because of the Stellafane Convention in Springfield, VT., on August 1, 2.

10. Skyscrapers' Saturday Evening Programs will be the Second Saturday of the month at Seagrave Observatory at 8 PM.

## Treasurer's Report

5/16/2003 – 6/20/2003

### Inflows

Deposits	
Donation	205.00
Dues	790.00
Publications	89.85
Total deposits	1084.85
Newsletter only	10.00
<b>Total inflows</b>	<b>1094.85</b>

### Outflows

Electric	19.24
Incorporation fee	20.00
Postage	37.00
Printing	35.48
Subscriptions	59.90
Lawn mowing	20.00
<b>Total outflows</b>	<b>191.62</b>

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<b>Overall total</b>	<b>903.23</b>
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### Account Balances

6/20/2003

#### Assets

Cash and bank accounts	
Checking	3938.81
Savings	8011.52
Total cash and bank accounts	11950.33
Total assets	11950.33

<b>Liabilities</b>	0.00
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<b>Overall Total</b>	<b>11950.33</b>
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## **Directions to Seagrave Observatory**

### **From the Providence area:**

Take Rt. 6 West to Interstate 295 in Johnston and proceed west on Rt. 6 to Scituate. In Scituate bear right off Rt. 6 onto Rt. 101. Turn right onto Rt. 116 North. Peeptoad Road is the first left off Rt. 116.

### **From Coventry/West Warwick area:**

Take Rt. 116 North. Peeptoad Road is the first left after crossing Rt. 101.

### **From Southern Rhode Island:**

Take Interstate 95 North. Exit onto Interstate 295 North in Warwick (left exit.) Exit to Rt. 6 West in Johnston. Bear right off Rt. 6 onto Rt. 101. Turn right on Rt. 116. Peeptoad Road is the first left off Rt. 116.

### **From Northern Rhode Island:**

Take Rt. 116 South. Follow Rt. 116 thru Greenville. Turn left at Knight's Farm intersection (Rt. 116 turns left) and follow Rt. 116. Watch for Peeptoad Road on the right.

### **From Connecticut:**

- Take Rt. 44 East to Greenville and turn right on Rt. 116 South. Turn left at Knight's Farm intersection (Rt. 116 turn left) and follow Rt. 116. Watch for Peeptoad Road on the right.
- Take Rt. 6 East toward Rhode Island; bear left on Rt. 101 East and continue to intersection with Rt. 116. Turn left; Peeptoad Road is the first left off Rt. 116.

### **From Massachusetts:**

Take Interstate 295 South (off Interstate 95 in Attleboro.) Exit onto Rt. 6 West in Johnston. Bear right off Rt. 6 onto Rt. 101. Turn right on Rt. 116. Peeptoad Road is the first left off Rt. 116.



**47 PEEPTOAD ROAD  
NORTH SCITUATE, RI 02857**