

The Skyscraper
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the monthly publication of



**The Amateur Astronomical Society
of Rhode Island**

47 Peepload Road
North Scituate, RI 02857

www.theskyscrapers.org

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See back page for directions to Seagrave Observatory.

Please submit items for the newsletter by January 15 to Jim Hendrickson, 1 Sunflower Circle, North Providence, RI 02911 or e-mail to jim@distantgalaxy.com

Email subscriptions:

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

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The Skyscraper

January 2005

January Meeting

Friday, January 7, 2005; 7:30pm at North Scituate Community Center

Our January meeting is planned to be one of our annual "members' nights." If you have a presentation of interest that you would like to share, we will be having a potpourri of contributions from our members on all sorts of topics.

Directions to North Scituate Community Center from Seagrave Observatory: North Scituate Community Center is the first building on the right side going south on Rt. 116, after the intersection of Rt. 6 Bypass (also Rt. 101) and Rt. 116, in N. Scituate. Famous Pizza is on the corner of that intersection. Parking is across the street from the Community Center.

Skyscrapers Calendar

Public observing is held every Saturday at Seagrave Observatory weather permitting and when the grounds are accessible.

January 7 Friday	7:30pm	January Meeting at North Scituate Community Center
January 8 Saturday	8:00pm	Public Observing Night at Seagrave Observatory
January 15 Saturday	3:00pm	Lowell Observatory trip planning meeting at Seagrave Observatory
	8:00pm	Public Observing Night at Seagrave Observatory
January 22 Saturday	8:00pm	Public Observing Night at Seagrave Observatory
January 29 Saturday	8:00pm	Public Observing Night at Seagrave Observatory

Notices

Intended to coincide with the January issue of the newsletter is a special 2004 Year in Review edition. However, technical difficulties have prevented it from being published at this time. Look for it in the coming weeks, along with the long-awaited *Quarter Century of Skyscraping*.

Tony Costanzo sends word that he is offering a discount to members at his store www.astronomy-shoppe.com/Club.htm

Magazines for Sale

Dave Huestis, Librarian

Notice to Skyscraper members in good standing. Skyscrapers has a limited supply of *Astronomy* magazines and a very large inventory of *Sky & Telescope* magazines for sale. The money realized from the selling of these magazines will benefit our Archive Preservation Fund.

We have complete years (12 issues) of *Astronomy* for the following years: 1998, 1996, 1995, 1994, 1993, 1990, 1988, 1987, 1986, 1985, 1984, 1983, 1982, 1981. During the month of January we will be offering complete years for only \$15.00 per year. That's just over \$1.00 per issue. A great buy! After January they will be \$20.00 per year. Buy three (3) or more years and I'll reduce the price to \$12.00 per year, or exactly \$1.00 per issue. What a bargain!!

We have incomplete years for the following:

1991 (June missing)
1980 (May, June, July missing)
1997 (May, June, Oct, Nov missing)
1992 (April, May, June missing)

Since you will have to do some work to complete these sets, I will offer these at \$1.00 per issue as well.

As for the *Sky & Telescope* back issues for sale, you can reference a spreadsheet online that lists all the issues and

years available. Besides many single issues you may purchase to fill in holes in your collection, we have many complete years available as well. In fact, we have one or more sets of complete years (12 issues) for the years 1960 thru 1999, excluding 1969.

For January only, we will be offering the *Sky & Telescope* back issues to members in good standing at 30% off the suggested price list which can be found on our web site as well. That's a tremendous savings.

I will begin taking orders January 1 by email (dhuestis@aol.com). If you don't have email capabilities, contact one of our Executive Board members by phone and they can relate the order to me. All orders are on a first-contact, first-serve basis. All magazines are in good (older ones) to excellent condition for the more recent issues.

The magazines can be delivered to Seagrave Observatory (or wherever we hold our winter meetings), or they may be picked up at my home in Burrillville. Payment upon receipt. Check made out to Skyscrapers, Inc.

Hope you will take advantage of this sale.

Meteor Shower Prospects for 2005

Dave Huestis

The upcoming year looks fairly bleak as far as major astronomical events are concerned. Oh, there is always something of interest occurring in the sky for the sky enthusiast, but the casual stargazer requires events a little more spectacular than the rest of us do.

Last year we had favorable Moon conditions for several of the major meteor showers. As usual the weather didn't cooperate. And I thought 2003 was bad!! We did get lucky with Comet Neat during mid- May, the June 8 transit of Venus, and the October 27 total lunar eclipse. Unfortunately we do not have a block bluster line-up of similar events scheduled for 2005.

Even the meteor shower prospects for the upcoming year are meteorocre (sic) at best. Only two occur during favorable Moon phases. They are the Eta Aquarids of May and the once reliable Perseids of August. We can only hope there is a new comet somewhere out in the

depths of the solar system ready to head our way and put on a good show.

Normally I welcome in the new year with the Quadrantids, but in 2005 they will be spoiled by the bright last quarter Moon on the night of January 2-3. Activity is best after midnight, but that is the time the Moon will rise. It will certainly reduce the number of meteors one could observe. The Quads are bright, blue and fast (25.5 miles per second). To salvage any good looks at this shower you can start observing after midnight and first cast your gaze towards the northeast sky and scan around. As the morning progresses begin scanning a little more westward. Between 4:00 am and dawn hold the best prospects.

Furthermore, to maximize your chances of seeing as many shooting stars as possible, at least shield the Moon from your direct view. The Quads often blaze more than halfway across the sky, and a small percentage of those leave persistent dust trains. Just remember, it's going to

be quite cold out there, so be sure to do whatever is necessary to stay warm and alert.

A meteor chart online (<http://www.theskyscrapers.org/meteors/>) has the bleak prospects for the major meteor showers of 2005. I hope the weather will cooperate on the nights when the Eta Aquarids and the Perseids peak. All of

Secretary's Report

Joel Cohen, Secretary

Monthly Meeting

December 3, 2005, Skyscrapers Meeting Hall

Meeting Start - 7:35 PM Steve Hubbard introduced this month's speaker, Dr. Owen Gingerich, of the Harvard Center for Astrophysics. Dr. Gingerich spoke about his 30 plus years search for copies of Copernicus' book, *De Revolutionibus*, published in Nuremberg, Germany, in 1543. Dr. Gingerich also determined the ownership of many of the copies of the books by interpreting the notes written in the margins. Dr. Gingerich wrote a book about his discoveries entitled "The Book Nobody Read". He autographed copies for those in attendance who wished to purchase it.

After a break to enjoy a sumptuous holiday repast and live entertainment provided by Gerry Dyck, Dan Lorraine called the business portion of the meeting to order.

Secretary's Report - Last month's Report was annotated with a correction by Dave Huestis. The title of the book he donated was *Seti Pioneers*, not *Seti Powers*. The Report was then accepted as published with the correction.

Treasurer's Report - Bill Kirby read the Treasurer's Report and posted it in the Meeting House. The Report was accepted as read.

Trustee's Report - Ted Ferneza stated that the repairs in the Clark Ante room had begun and that Jack Szelka was able to spend more time at this task during the next few months. Ted reported that Bob Napier volunteered to clean the corrector plate and do some other minor repairs to the 12" Meade.

Librarian/Historian's Report - Dave Huestis commented on the large number of returned books this month and thanked those who brought the loaned items back for others to sign out.

Dave mentioned the substantial numbers of back issues of *Astronomy* and *Sky & Telescope* donated by Bob Napier were now available for sale. It was announced that the club had purchased copies of *The Messier Objects* and *The Caldwell Objects* by Stephen James O'Meara and a copy of *Deep Sky Wonders* by Walter Scott Houston. Dan Lorraine

these meteor streams are old. We need some new comets to visit the inner solar system in such a way that the Earth will sweep through their dusty tail remnants. The accompanying chart will highlight 2005's meteor showers and Moon phases.

Good luck and stay warm.

donated a copy of *A QUARTER CENTURY OF SKYSCRAPING* published in 1957. It's a book that documents the first 25 years of Skyscrapers history and will soon be available for all members to view on the Skyscrapers website.

New Business - Craig Cortis was introduced as a new applicant for membership. A comment was voiced regarding interest in a return trip to Hartness House in Vermont. Said comment sparked certain vocal remembrances of liaisons at the trip past. Bob Horton will coordinate.

Old Business - Jack Szelka's motion to print business cards for the organization carried. The following individuals were voted into membership: Raymond Ricard, Joe Sanandrea, Stan and Marilyn Steliga, Jim Brenick, Miroslav Futoma, Krystov Ruiz and Dan Kowal.

Good of the Organization - Jerry Dyck mentioned the occultation of Jupiter on Tuesday morning December 8, 2004. Steve Hubbard gave a short list of upcoming speakers at the next few meetings to be held at the Scituate Community Center. January is members' Potpourri and February, Dave Huestis will be speaking on the 30th Anniversary of the Great Skyscrapers Planetarium Exhibit at the Warwick Mall. Bob Howe had visited Tony Costanzo of Astronomy Shop in NH and Tony is offering discounts to all Skyscrapers members. Dave Huestis reminded us of the Geminids December 13th and 14th.

Dan Lorraine thanked the members who contributed to defray the cost of the evening's refreshments. Dan announced that the donated 6" Dynascope reflector had been refurbished and the mirror resurfaced and was now available for loan to any member. Dan also announced that we have secured insurance coverage for our facilities through the very professional efforts of one Christopher Iannotti of Gen Corp Insurance. Dan highly recommended Chris if we need any individual insurance matters addressed.

Dan closed with a wish for Happy Holidays to all.

Adjournment - 10:15 pm

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
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