



Summer, 2004

Volume XXXIV, Issue 6

Executive Board

PRESIDENT

Bob Vanson '05
Radio Astronomy Chair
631-218-2350
bvanson@aol.com

VICE PRESIDENT

Chuck Cardona III '05
Programs & Publicity Chair
631-727-6769
chaz@owl.net

TREASURER

Barbara Lebkuecher '05
631-722-3850
barbaraleb@aol.com

SECRETARY

Anna Verticchio '05
631-727-8393
akam10@optonline.net

FINANCE CHAIR

Warren Hamburger '05
631-563-6106

DIRECTORS

Alarico Verticchio '05
631-727-8393
akam10@optonline.net

Dr. Jeffrey Katz '05
631-696-3333
katz@scientific-consultants.com

Jeff Johns '06
631-586-3068
cityslob@aol.com

Kurt Massey '06
631-325-2123
kamassey@peconic.net

Summer, '04, a Summer of Highlights!

Mars Rovers Spirit and Opportunity return spectacular images and data. The mission is extended a second time for another 6 months, through March, '05. For the latest updates and images, please visit NASA's official site: <http://marsrovers.jpl.nasa.gov>.

Cassini-Huygens, a collaborative mission between NASA and Europe's ESA successfully complete orbital insertion of the Cassini spacecraft on July 1st. The orbiter, with the Huygens probe awaiting release on Christmas of this year, begins transmitting a treasure trove of data and spectacular images of Saturn and its ever growing family of natural satellites back to Earth. For the latest updates and images, please visit NASA's official site: <http://saturn.jpl.nasa.gov>.

Suffolk passes first comprehensive legislation aimed at controlling light pollution.

Optical fabrication machine for Custer's hybrid 25" Newtonian-Cassegrain is installed at the former Grumman complex in Calverton. Final adjustments and assembly are in progress. Custer is in receipt of the 25" low-expansion blank, fully cored and ready to begin initial grinding. Volunteers needed!

26th Annual Astronomy Jamboree

Friday, October 15th, 7:00 PM;

Saturday, October 16th, 9:30 AM thru 10:00 PM;

Sunday, October 17th, early morning nature walk at Orient State Park.

Please see details inside.

Table of Contents

| | | |
|---|----------------------------|---|
| Summer, 2004 | Volume XXXIV, Issue 6..... | 1 |
| Executive Board..... | | 1 |
| PRESIDENT | | 1 |
| VICE PRESIDENT | | 1 |
| TREASURER | | 1 |
| SECRETARY | | 1 |
| FINANCE CHAIR | | 1 |
| DIRECTORS | | 1 |
| Summer, '04, a Summer of Highlights! | | 1 |
| 26th Annual Astronomy Jamboree | | 1 |
| Table of Contents..... | | 2 |
| Announcements & General Interest | | 2 |
| Editor's Column | | 3 |
| Gift Corner & Classifieds | | 4 |
| "For the Luv of Venus" | | 4 |
| HEAVENLY EVENTS FOR October, 2004..... | | 5 |
| PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE..... | | 6 |
| WELCOME TO OUR NEW OR RETURNING MEMBERS:..... | | 6 |
| 26 th Annual Astronomy Jamboree | | 7 |
| Friday night, October 15 th at Custer Institute; | | 7 |
| Saturday, October 16 th at Southold High School, Oaklawn Ave. | | 7 |
| Sunday, October 17 th | | 7 |
| Suffolk's New Light Pollution Legislation..... | | 8 |
| Tribute to Robbie Manken | | 9 |

Announcements & General Interest

Volunteers are needed to help get the optical fabrication of our 25" telescope underway. Be on the ground floor with the team that will produce the largest, permanently fixed telescope on Long Island. Call Tom Madigan at 631-447-5339 (home) or 631-369-1100 (office) for further details.

R.I.P., Robbie Manken. Please see special tribute inside.

Please read editor's message on page 3.

October 27th Total Lunar Eclipse; please see our Heavenly Events page inside.

Editor's Column

| | |
|--|--|
| <p>Tom Madigan, Editor Tom Madigan 99 North Summit Ave. Patchogue, NY 11772-2226 tmadigan@optonline.net 631-447-5339</p> <p>Cutoff for submissions is the 15th of the month preceding publication</p> <p>Visit the new Custer Website at http://www.custerobservatory.org</p> | <p>The Custer Comment is published monthly by</p> <p>Custer Institute P.O. Box 1204 Main Bayview Road Southold, NY 11971 631-765-2626</p> |
|--|--|

This summer has been quite a summer, one that we won't soon forget. The spectacular successes of both the Mars rover mission and the Cassini-Huygens mission to Saturn, Suffolk's landmark legislation aimed at curbing light pollution, the near completion of our optical fabrication machine, built by dedicated Custer member Ralph Wubbenhorst and the untimely passing of Custer member and friend-to-all, Robbie Manken made this a summer to remember. It was also a summer where a Custer Comment hasn't been published until now. It was a summer that I'll not soon forget on a personal level, as well. I've sustained major injuries to my right knee and lower back. This combined with ongoing business obligations and a much-needed vacation during July have conspired to delay publication of the Custer Comment until now.

For those who have waited patiently for the Comment and those who thought that their membership dues were in arrears or that they were deleted from the mailing list or have relied on the monthly Heavenly Events page, please accept my sincere apologies. To those who regularly contribute to this publication and whose work hasn't seen the light of day, please accept my apologies, as well.

Going forward, I will endeavor to have the Comment published and in the mail at least one week before the start of the next month.

Best,
Tom
Tom Madigan, Editor

Gift Corner & Classifieds

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| <p>We have meteorites.</p> <p>Great sets mounted in beautiful display cases. Perfect for gifts.</p> | <p>The Gift Shop still has a dwindling number of copies of ASTRONOMY FOR ALL AGES, by Philip Harrington & Edward Pascuzzi, just \$20. As an added bonus, copies are signed by Ed Pascuzzi. We also have copies of <i>PARALLAX</i> by Alan W. Hirshfeld, guest speaker at the 2003 Jamboree. Quantities are limited so hurry and add this well-written and informative volume to your collection while supplies last.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">50% OFF SALE: THE EXCLUSIVE 2004 CUSTER ASTRONOMICAL POCKET DIARY, BASED ON CUSTER'S COORDINATES. NOW JUST \$4.50 + TAX.</p> | <p>Back by popular demand</p> <p>We again have the <i>exclusive, 2004 Custer</i> Astronomical Pocket Diary, based on Custer's coordinates. The price is still just \$9 and quantities are limited.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">New Custer logo coffee cups ONLY \$4 EACH</p> |
|---|---|---|

"For the Luv of Venus"



June 8th transit of Venus. Photo, courtesy Tom Crowley, Queensland, Australia and Custer member, Doug Hardy who had met Tom while traveling "Down Under". Notice the hawk immediately to the right of the sun. Great photo, Tom and thanks for forwarding it on for publication, Doug.

HEAVENLY EVENTS FOR October, 2004

“ Slowly, silently, now the moon
Walks the night in her silver shoon:
This way, and that, she peers, and sees
Silver fruit upon silver trees:
One by one the casements catch
Her beams beneath the silvery thatch;
Couched in his kennel, like a log,
With paws of silver sleeps the dog;
From their shadowy cote the white breasts peep
Of doves in a silver-feathered sleep.
A harvest mouse goes scampering by,
With silver claws and a silver eye;
And moveless fish in the water gleam,
By silver reeds in a silver stream.

- Walter De La Mare

Planet-watching in October is only slightly better than in September. MERCURY is gone from view. VENUS remains brilliant, well up in the east at daybreak, but is gradually sliding southward and downward. JUPITER begins to show above the eastern horizon an hour before sunrise at midmonth, and pulls up just beneath Venus by month's end. At that time MARS also can be found just above the horizon beneath them and right next to the slightly brighter star Spica. SATURN, slowing down near the Gemini-Cancer border, rises in the east-northeast around midnight in mid-October and is due south as it fades before sunrise. URANUS and NEPTUNE remain the only planets located in the early night sky until Saturn rises, so find them by using the required charts and equipment.

- 6 Since late February, 1999, Jupiter has been north of the celestial equator, but today it recrosses the equator into the southern skies in Virgo.
- 7 In the early morning sky the fat waning crescent Moon lines up nicely with Saturn beneath it and the twin stars Pollux and Castor above.
- 9 Algol, • (Beta) Persei, is in mid-eclipse at 11:31 PM, and will again be in mid-eclipse at 8:20 PM on the 12th. Also: On this night in 1604, 400 years ago, a “new” star was noticed in southern Ophiuchus, shining more brightly than any other star. Eight nights later Johannes Kepler, notified of this star, saw it for the first time, and he made a special study of it until it finally faded from view. This star, now known as Kepler's Star, is still the last supernova to be seen in our Milky Way Galaxy.
- 11 The thin waning crescent Moon rises beneath Venus by dawn this morning. Wait to see Jupiter rise directly beneath the Moon in the brightening sky. (A clear view to the horizon is recommended.)
- 14 New Moon. Neither a partial solar eclipse (seen in parts of Alaska and northeast Asia) nor an occultation of Mercury can be seen here.
- 20 The Moon sets around midnight tonight, leaving the night sky free to display Comet Halley's Orionid meteors, fanning out of the eastern sky.
- 24 Retrograde ends for Neptune, about 2° west of • (Theta) Capricorni.
- 26 The second flyby of Titan by the Cassini spacecraft is due today. On January 14 next year, during the 4th flyby, the Huygens probe is to be released for descent through Titan's thick atmosphere.
- 27 The Hunter's Moon is in total eclipse this evening! Come out and enjoy it!
Penumbral eclipse begins at 8:05 PM. Partial eclipse begins at 9:14 PM.
Total eclipse begins at 10:23 PM and ends at 11:45 PM.
Partial eclipse ends at 12:54 AM. Penumbral eclipse ends at 2:03 AM.
The Moon will pass through the north half of the Earth's umbral shadow, so the bright southern lunar highlands should be affected more than the darker northern lunar mare (“seas”).
- 30 Daylight Saving Time ends tonight. Set your clocks back an hour.

Prepared by Robert Chapin

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Well, it certainly was an eventful Annual BBQ and Membership Meeting. The food was excellent with BBQ'd Duck (yum-yum), Steak, Chicken, several varieties of sausages including Wild Boar, and lots of extras, not to mention many great deserts.

The Membership Meeting also transacted a good deal of business. Volunteer Tom Haeberle, a Custer member and accountant by trade, submitted his report on his audit of the Custer Books and Treasury. We received a clean bill of health. The membership voted to adopt the proposed Constitution and By-Laws and then approved two minor amendments recommended by members.

It was my pleasure to announce the award of Lifetime memberships to Chuck and brother John Cardona, Reidar Sjoen and Tom Madigan for their recent donation of a large quantity of AdZone Research shares to Custer. The membership then voted to expend some of the resulting funds to purchase a new dome and contract to have it installed. We will also be retiring Custer's water well and connecting to City Water. Then it was time for elections. The membership selected the following slate for recommendation to the Board of Director for affirmation; Pres. Bob Vanson; V.P. Chuck Cardona; Sec. Anna Verticchio; Treas. Barbara Lebkuecher; Directors Kurt Massey & Jeff Johns, and Dr. Jeffrey Katz to fill out the remainder of Duff Williamson's term. Sadly, I had accepted Duff's resignation as Director. He was moving his family to Florida by the end of June. Good luck! Your friends will miss you and Custer's doors will always be open whenever you travel back this way, so don't forget to drop in.

Bob Vanson

WELCOME TO OUR NEW OR RETURNING MEMBERS:

Cliff Chiesa & Family of Moriches, John Rosato of Hampton Bays, Christopher Boglick of Coram, Mal Speer of Farmingdale and Howard Zelizer of Wading River.

Welcome one and all!

26th Annual Astronomy Jamboree

Friday, October 15th thru Sunday, October 17th

Friday night, October 15th at Custer Institute;

7:00 PM **The “Celestial Poetry” Sessions** with Bob Chapin will be held in the Reading Room. Culminating the evening will be wine tasting while singing “*The Astronomer’s Drinking Song*”.

Musical entertainment provided by *The Home Grown String Band*.

Saturday, October 16th at Southold High School, Oaklawn Ave.

9:30 AM **Registration;**

10:30 AM **Digital Universe Computer Visualization;** Ryan Carter of the Rose Center;

11:30 AM **Good News for Long Island, Light Pollution Control;** Susan Harder and Gary Citro of Dark Skies Association, New York Chapter;

12:30 PM **Lunch Break;**

1:30 PM **Welcome to the 26th Annual Jamboree;** Bob Vanson, President, Custer Institute;

1:45 PM **Nebulae and the birth, life and death of Stars;** Dr. Michael Inglis, Astronomer and Astronomy professor at Suffolk Community College;

2:45 PM **Paper Planets;** Dava Sobell, local resident and best-selling author of Galileo’s Daughter, Longitude and other science related titles;

3:45 PM **What’s inside a Neutron Star;** Dr. James Lattimer, Astronomer and Astronomy professor at SUNY, Stony Brook;

5:00 PM **Dinner Break;** Join us at The Soundview Inn, located on the North Road in Greenport. Register for the dinner during the morning registration;

8:00 PM **A Tale of 2 Planets;** Dr. Richard Terrile, author, Planetary Astronomer and Lecturer at NASA’s Jet Propulsion Lab, Pasadena, California, as well as past candidate for Mission Payload Astronaut;

10:00 PM **Observing,** weather permitting.

Sunday, October 17th

Early morning observing at Orient State Park. We’ll attempt to observe the “Green Flash”

Directions: LIE, east to exit 73; route 58, east becomes route 25. Stay on route 25 for 17 miles; hard right at Gulf service station. The Custer Institute and Observatory is located ¼ mile ahead on the left side of Main Bayview road.

Suffolk's New Light Pollution Legislation

All of Suffolk County owned facilities, parking lots, roadways, all new and replacement outdoor lighting fixtures will be "fully shielded".

This bi-partisan bill passed 18-0, unanimously and, aside from the positive, practical effects it will have on our night sky and the environment, it sets a significant precedent for the languishing NYS bill. Suffolk County Executive Steve Levy signed the legislation into law on ! All involved should be congratulated and thanked for their tireless efforts to get this key piece of legislation passed. *A special thanks from Custer Institute is extended to Susan Harder of Dark Skies, East Hampton, Gail Clyma, Gary Citro and the rest of the wonderful people at SELENE-NY, to Legislators Schneiderman and Cooper and to Suffolk County Executive Steve Levy.* The following is the text from the first page of the bill:

AMENDED COPY AS OF 8/6/2004

Intro. Res. No. 1574-2004

Laid on Table 6/8/2004

Introduced by Legislators Schneiderman and Cooper

RESOLUTION NO. -2004, ADOPTING LOCAL LAW
NO. - 2004, A LOCAL LAW TO REDUCE LIGHT
POLLUTION FROM COUNTY-OWNED FACILITIES

WHEREAS, there was duly presented and introduced to this County Legislature at a regular meeting held on , 2004 a proposed local law entitled, "A LOCAL LAW TO REDUCE LIGHT POLLUTION FROM COUNTY-OWNED FACILITIES," and said local law in final form is the same as when presented and introduced; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that said local law be enacted in form as follows:

LOCAL LAW NO. - 2004, SUFFOLK COUNTY, NEW YORK

A LOCAL LAW TO REDUCE LIGHT POLLUTION FROM COUNTY-
OWNED FACILITIES

BE IT ENACTED BY THE COUNTY LEGISLATURE OF THE COUNTY OF SUFFOLK,

The entire bill is included with the electronic distribution as an additional attachment and is also available for download at the Custer Comment Archive <http://tmadigan.home.netcom.com/custer>

Tribute to Robbie Manken

(April 10, 1969 - July 19, 2004)

As well as a friend to all who knew him, a lifelong fixture and member of Custer, an avid amateur astronomer, Robbie was an accomplished photographer, motorcyclist and adventurer. His work has been displayed in many galleries and I thought that a fitting tribute to him would be to allow his pictures to speak for him. The full gallery can be found at:

<http://www.hamptons.com/members/rjm>



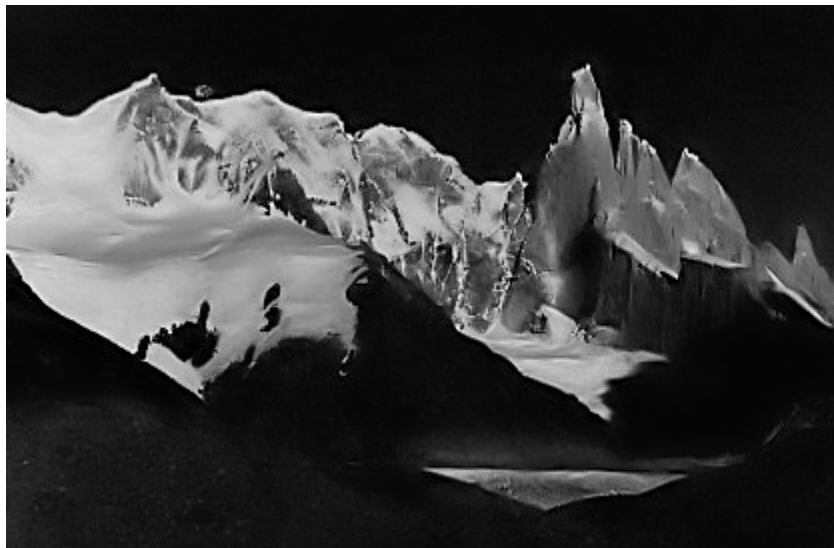
Robbie off the beaten path with his dual-sport in New Zealand



One of Robbie's many friends



Alpine daisies and Mt. Cook, New Zealand



Moonrise near Cerro Torre, Patagonia, Argentina, probably one of the most strangely beautiful places on Earth



Los Cuernos del Paine, Chile



The Peaks of Mt. Fitzroy, Patagonia

*"Oh! I have slipped the surly bonds of earth
And danced the skies on laughter-silvered wings;*

*Sunward I've climbed, and joined the tumbling mirth
Of sun-split clouds - and done a hundred things
You have not dreamed of - wheeled and soared and swung
High in the sunlit silence.*

*Hov'ring there,
I've chased the shouting wind along, and flung
My eager craft through footless halls of air.*

*Up, up the long, delirious, burning blue
I've topped the wind-swept heights with easy grace
Where never lark, or even eagle flew -
And, while with silent lifting mind I've trod
The high untrespassed sanctity of space,
Put out my hand and touched the face of God."*

(John Gillespie Magee, Jr.)

*Now, maybe you'll know peace, Robbie;
Via con Dios!*

This Issue of the Custer Comment was professionally printed by our friends at

**PATCHOGUE
PRINTING**

"Your Image Is Our Business"

Stationery • Forms • Invitations • Newsletters
Business Cards • Brochures • Menus • Tickets

DIGITAL COLOR COPIES

23 Havens Avenue • Patchogue, New York 11772
(1 block west of N. Ocean Avenue)
(631) 447-1506 • Fax (631) 447-1508



Professional Martial Arts Training with Certified Black Belt Instructor, Sensei Larry Beierle.

631-345-9611



CUSTER EVENTS CALENDAR

OBSERVATORY DUTY

Any staff on hand will be more than glad to assist in the operation of the telescope.

AT THE INSTITUTE

Public observing every Saturday night, weather permitting.

The Custer Comment

**TOM MADIGAN, Editor
CUSTER COMMENT**

99 North Summit Avenue
PATCHOGUE, NY

11772

FOWARDING AND ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

FIRST CLASS