



May 05

Volume XXXV, Issue 5

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Bolide Observed Over LI's South Shore



Image, courtesy Tom Madigan

Using Adobe Photoshop and a view of the sky obtained from the same location, 24 hours later, I created this rendition of what the object looked like as it streaked across the Southern sky. The sky, weather and lighting conditions were approximately the same.

Mary and Tom Madigan witnessed a -7th magnitude bolide traveling NE to SW at approximately 7:45 PM, Sunday, April 24th. The object was observed from Medford at an altitude of 30° above the southern horizon, was very bright and appeared during early twilight (about 5 minutes after sunset). The main body was a brilliant green with a dazzling yellow-orange frontal lobe with a prominent vapor trail following. It would have been easily visible during full daylight. Had this event occurred after dark, it would have been brilliant and would have easily cast a shadow. The altitude at which it disintegrated from the heat of friction can be inferred by the very prominent vapor trail. This altitude would be about the same as the cruise altitude of a large, commercial airliner, the same altitude where these aircraft form contrails, contrails forming from the interaction of the hot jet exhaust and the cold air of the upper troposphere – lower stratosphere. That altitude would be between 30,000 – 50,000 feet, about 6 – 10 miles, not too high when you think about what could have happened if the object made it to the ground! Inside this issue read of other eye-witness accounts of this event, widely observed by many area residents.

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Editor's Column

<p>Tom Madigan, Editor Tom Madigan 99 North Summit Ave. Patchogue, NY 11772-2226 tmadigan@optonline.net 631-714-4388</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>
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Please excuse the lateness of this month's issue. For those who use Bob Chapin's Heavenly Events Calendar as their sole source of information about the month's stellar highlights, please accept my apologies. Aside from some lingering personal problems that require my ongoing attention, I have been waiting for some additional input from outside sources in order to publish certain items and the particulars about upcoming events.

I invite anyone to submit their own article for consideration, comment on what's been published, offer suggestions about the format or just drop me an email to let me know what you think.

Clarification

It has come to my attention that there are those who were displeased with last month's front page article honoring the late Pope John Paul II. I tied in the pope's relationship with Brother Guy Consolmagno, who personally visited Custer, is an author of several books on astronomy and is one of the principal astronomers at the Vatican. In my article, I emphasized the pope's role as a philosopher and a scientist in his own right, mentioning Galileo and other items related to astronomy. The pope was a world leader, and I thought it eminently appropriate that he be recognized as such, not in his capacity as a *religious* leader, but as someone who was a learned scientist and philosopher in his own right. If there are those who don't like what I've published, they ought to write me an email or a letter; after all, I am the Editor, and the time-tested method that's used with ANY publication where one disagrees with something that's been published is to write a 'letter to the editor'. This journal is an interactive one where everyone is free to submit an article for publication or to comment on what's already been published. This format, I believe, is one that reflects Custer's diverse membership. While everyone may not particularly agree with everything that's published all the time, it's an *individual's choice* not to read a particular article if they find it upsetting or offensive. Taken in total, my article on the pope was well received with more than just a few compliments having been expressed or finding their way into my inbox.

Best,

Tom

Tom Madigan, Editor

Announcements & General Interest

LIPA Public Announcement

LIPA Chairman Richard Kessel is to announce plans to convert 600 flood lamps to full cutoff fixtures! Come out and show your solidarity and support to both Chairman Kessel and all the others who have worked so hard for so long to achieve dark skies and an educated public. At the press conference, Chairman Kessel and his chief of staff will be presented with the IDA Award which were issued at the Tucson IDA Annual Meeting. LIPA will also be presented with an award from SELENE, as LIPA has been pro-actively adhering to the NY State bill. Chairman Kessel has sent a letter of support for the legislation to the Governor. If anyone is interested in attending, send me an email or call, as all the details aren't in as yet.

Where: Riverhead LIPA facility;

When: May 24, 1:00 PM.

University Class Observatory for Montauk

Suffolk County Legislator Jay Schneiderman is actively looking into plans to erect a university class observatory at Montauk. Please stay tuned for further developments.

Skies Above Riverhead

Riverhead Town Supervisor Phil Cardinale and Councilman Ed Densieski are looking for volunteers to sit on the new "Dark Skies" advisory committee, which will advise the town on related issues like energy conservation and responsible lighting. Those interested should call the councilman at 727-3200 ext. 223. "

Note:

Riverhead has a "Hailey" type lighting ordinance for all new construction, residential, commercial and municipal. Now they want to clean up the existing lights.

Newsday reporter seeking amateur astronomers who use Slooh.com

"I'm a reporter at Newsday looking for amateur astronomers who use Slooh.com."

If you live in NYC or Long Island and would like to correspond with Richard, please contact him as follows:

Richard J. Dalton Jr.

Newsday

(631) 843-4257

rdalton@newsday.com

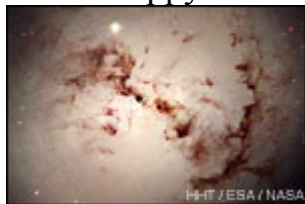
Custer 2005 ELECTIONS

Your Board of Directors has selected the 2005 Nominating Committee:

1. Chairwoman, Nikki Longo, 631-888-6593;
2. Committee Member Ruth Makofske, [REDACTED].

Any member interested in being considered should contact the committee directly.

Happy 15th Birthday Hubble



The [Hubble space telescope](#) went into orbit on April 25, 1990. After 15 years and over 700,000 observations, Hubble continues to deliver [stunning photos](#) and amazing scientific discoveries.

- Using Web mail? [Read about Hubble.](#)

- [Video: 15 Years of Hubble](#)

- [World Book: Hubble](#)

Alert, courtesy, America Online (AOL) via AOL Research & Learn Skywatcher Alert

Editor: Please read my commentary on page 6 concerning the HST and the still-functioning Voyager spacecraft.

Gift Corner & Classifieds

<p>WE HAVE METEORITES.</p> <p>Great sets mounted in beautiful display cases. Perfect for gifts.</p> <p>Custer coffee mugs, only \$4.</p> <p>Do you have <i>yours</i> yet?</p>	<p>The Gift Shop still has a dwindling number of copies of <i>ASTRONOMY FOR ALL AGES</i>, 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>We have Susan Harder's patented & dark sky friendly PARSHIELD®</p> <p>OUTDOOR FLOODLIGHT SHIELDS</p> <p>for PAR 38 type bulbs. Controls glare, reduces light trespass & allows you to direct the light where you need it. Two shields per box in your choice of Off White or Bronze finish for \$20.00, tax incl.</p>
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Following items for sale by the *Amateur Observers Society*.

If you have any questions, please contact Bernie Reed of the AOS at the numbers listed below.

The following is a list of the things we have and the cost from Telescopes.com or Camera Concepts. I am including the prices listed at Telescopes.com so people can check them on line and see that I think we are making a pretty good offer. We would like to sell this as an entire package. Let someone else piece it out if they so desire. These items are all BRAND New (used 2 times) So... here you go!

Celestron C-8SGT	-SOLD-	\$1214.00 (with CG-5EQ mount and tripod)
Celestron GPS		\$199.00
Celestron Power Tank		\$59.95
Celestron Lense Shade C8		\$49.95
Celestron Filter \$ Lense Set w/case		\$139.00
Jimsmobile.com case for telescope		\$149.95
Pelican case (from Camera Concepts) for the CG-5EQ mount)		\$212.95
Soft Tripod case		\$79.95
2 Apogee Astro Chairs		\$139.98
Bigha Green Laser pointer		\$139.95
2 Starlight Rigel System (Red Lights)		\$40.00
Moon Filter		\$16.00
16" Guide to the Stars		\$20.00

Total retail is \$2460.00 (way below manufactures price and what we paid) Take an additional 20% off and give us \$2000.00 and you carry it home. I can be reached at (631) 451-2244 or cell (631) 806-4683 to talk about it or set up a time to look at it.

You're No Jack Kennedy, Mr. President

An Editorial by Tom Madigan

With almost complete anarchy reigning in what was supposed to be a model democracy by now in Iraq and with the possibility of nuclear war breaking out in the Pacific, what chance does the Hubble Space Telescope or Voyagers, 1 and 2, still functioning long after their end-of-mission dates and far exceeding every expectation, have of surviving budget cuts, priority re-evaluations or even a short by-line on page 24 of the NY Times? Not much.

With the current crop of Know-Nothings in Washington, D.C., starting with the man who married a librarian and who probably never saw the inside of a library despite being a Yale graduate, a man who sees global warming as just another political battle being waged against him by those who don't share his particular world view, it's back to the past with shades of the Scopes Monkey trial and the Inquisition with The Flat Earth Society as the Grand Inquisitor. It's ironic that, with the passing of Pope John Paul II, a scientist and philosopher in his own right, a man who championed and promoted the authentic and complimentary nature of Science and Religion, the current Anti-Scientists and hypocrites in Washington, who the robots at NASA are loathe to oppose, are using a *very narrow swath* of John Paul II's moral teachings as a club to dumb into submission all those who oppose them and those who actually use the scientific method or, pray tell, deductive reasoning to reach a sound conclusion.

It's not 1961, the president is *not* JFK and we're not in a self-imposed 'race' to the moon or Mars. The analogy, so often cited to justify this president's grand vision for the moon and Mars, is a non sequitur; it simply doesn't follow. The Voyagers have performed brilliantly long after their end-of-mission dates and far exceeding all technical expectations. They're still returning valuable data about a region of space that probably won't be explored again for *centuries*, if ever. We are at a critical juncture now; we are presented with a singular opportunity to learn about the transitional region of the solar system where the sun's influence yields to that of interstellar space. HST and the Voyagers are not a military enterprise. The Apollo program was, at its core, military in nature. It was an answer to what was perceived as a belligerent Soviet Union, a government that successfully completed a manned, single orbit of the Earth before the United States. The perception that who controls space, controls everything, was quite real then and it's quite real now, except that the geo-political makeup is markedly different now. We're cooperating with our former nemesis of Cold War fame, not racing them to the moon.

NASA has just announced plans to review and quite possibly cut the funding for the extended Voyager missions. Why? To save \$4.2 M annually. I've already gone on record concerning the HST and what a foolish and cowardly solution scuttling it early would be. I won't spend much time on that here. HST is sexy. It returns sexy, beautiful pictures. It's just about universally loved by all from the milkman to the particle physicist at Brookhaven National Lab. It has many friends in congress. Not so with Voyager. Saving the Voyagers won't be such an easy sell as HST. But save it we must.

The projected end-of-life date for the probes is somewhere around 2020 when the onboard Radioisotope Thermoelectric Generators will cease to provide power, having consumed the entire compliment of Plutonium. Mission scientists and anyone interested in learning about the Heliopause, the transitional region in question, are hoping the probes reach this region before the fuel supply is exhausted. It's going to be close. This is a singular opportunity to continue Voyager's historic legacy; to push the frontiers of knowledge and exploration into interstellar space; to boldly go where no man has gone before.

Using the current expenditures projected out over a 15 year period, it will cost \$63M to operate the Voyagers to their expected end-of-life dates. In today's dollars, what effect will this \$63M have on the building of some future Martian outpost or lunar colony, whose generation inhabiting them will have read about the Voyager missions in their history books? Not much.

The opinion expressed here is the private opinion of the author and may not reflect the official position of Custer or its Board of Directors.

HEAVENLY EVENTS TO WATCH FOR May 05

SETTIN' ELMER'S GLASS (The Ridicule Method)

“Listen, all ye telescopers, all ye sweepers and sky gropers,
To the tale I have to tell:

‘Twas down on old Long Island, at Elmer’s on Bay View,
That we started in to set his glass, we were an able crew:
There was Campbell with his ridicule fresh from the H.C.O.,
And Baron Yelden with his beard, the one he needs to mow;
The Secretary joined the gang to keep the parties happy,
For when the experts set a glass they are a wee bit scrappy.”

- William Tyler Olcott

Perhaps the best chance to spot MERCURY this month may come on the morning of May 6. (See below.) VENUS is now in the evening sky, but she sets along the west-northwest horizon only 40 minutes after sunset as May begins, and 80 minutes after sunset at month’s end. After that, Venus will stay within 25° of the western horizon at sunset for the rest of the year, and won’t

be up after nightfall until the end of summer. As MARS speeds eastward within Aquarius it brightens by about 30% during May. By month’s end it rises along the eastern horizon shortly after 2 AM. Bright JUPITER, retrograding westward in Virgo, is due south at nightfall and sets around daybreak. SATURN, which tarries among the winter stars of Gemini, is fairly low in the west after dusk, and sets soon after midnight in mid-May.

- 2 The fat waning crescent Moon rises with Mars around 3:30 AM this morning.
- 5 The Water Jar of Aquarius appears above the eastern horizon around 2 AM, giving us barely an hour of “darkness” before dawn to watch for Eta Aquarid meteors. The waning crescent Moon will be a bit of a bother to those watching for these “sparks” streaking away from the Water Jar low in the east.
- 6 Starting around 5:10 AM, look for the very thin crescent Moon rising along the eastern horizon with Mercury. Binoculars will be necessary in the brightening sky.
- 8 Asteroid 1 Ceres is at opposition tonight. Find this 7.0 magnitude largest asteroid about 1½° northwest of the 3rd magnitude star Zubeneshemali, β (Beta) Librae.
- 12 The waxing crescent Moon leads Saturn down the west this evening. The stars Castor and Pollux make it an awesome foursome.
- 19 Jupiter and the waxing gibbous Moon pair up very nicely this evening. Check them out with binoculars or telescope at 6 PM (well before sunset) to see just how close they are!
- 23 Full Flower Moon this evening.
- 24 Antares, α (Alpha) Scorpii, is occulted after daybreak this morning by a bright Moon just past full. Around 4:22 AM the 1.2 magnitude red star will suddenly disappear behind the bright upper-left edge of the Moon - an event best watched through a telescope. The setting Moon won’t hang around long enough to let us see Antares re-emerge.
- 31 This morning the Moon visits Mars for the second time this month. Parts of southern South America get to see Mars occulted, but for us it’s a near miss. Still, worth getting up to enjoy.

Prepared by Robert Chapin

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Wanted to let you all know that the Museum has been taken down and packed up and the slit on the old dome has been jamming open. Therefore, I have instructed the Observatory Staff that use of the Dome and its telescopes is now shut down until the new dome is operational. The telescopes in the Shed and our portable scopes that can be carried out to the side yard are what is available for use for Saturday Night Public Viewing until the dome repairs are completed. We have received word from Ash that they are on schedule to deliver the new dome about the first week of August. Between now and then, Chuck Cardona, the project leader, will no doubt be announcing WORK PARTIES to complete the prep work needed before the new dome is delivered and erected. It is our members who need to get this done. This is by no means a small task we need to accomplish before any repairs and construction can take place. And once the new dome has been installed, we are going to have to put all the items back. The only way this can happen is if ALL CUSTER MEMBERS join in the effort and volunteer for these work parties.

Bob Vanson

WELCOME TO OUR NEW OR RETURNING MEMBERS:

Robin Rathert of Hicksville and Vicki Schuppe-Howitt of East Meadow.

Welcome one and all!

Bolide and Other Objects Observed From Northeastern US



Image, courtesy Mary Madigan

Many residents of the Northeastern United States observed the bolide pictured on the front page of this month's issue and rendered free hand, above, by my wife, Mary. The following are some reports, observations and eye-witness accounts of the bolide and other companion meteors that were observed from locations as far north as southern Maine and as far west as western Pennsylvania. Not used to witnessing an event such as this, some area residents phoned the local police and fire departments, the FAA with one municipality going so far as to initiate a search and rescue.

It may come as a surprise to some, but we really do live on a planet that orbits a real star and that planet provides quite a blanket of protection, so much so that we lose sight of the harsh, hostile and unforgiving environment that exists just outside our very fragile atmosphere. Every now and again, nature reminds us of how vulnerable we really are, a vulnerability that, with all our amazing technology, we are powerless to reduce; that our almost idyllic, day-to-day lives, playing out like some Hollywood script, could be violently shattered in an instant without warning. This reality and our collective ignorance of its existence were brought into sharp focus on April 24th. Educators, take note.

Meteor Shower Surprises New England

Monday, April 25th

BOSTON (AP) -- A meteor shower Sunday night sparked a flurry of frantic phone calls to police departments across New England from people who saw bright lights moving in the sky, a spokeswoman for the Federal Aviation Administration said. The meteor shower was seen as far north as Portland, Maine, and as far south as Long Island. Some witnesses apparently mistook the meteor shower for a plane crashing in Connecticut, the FAA's Holly Baker said. "We've checked all around. There are no aircraft unaccounted for," she said. The bright lights apparently came from the Lyrid meteor shower, which was scheduled to be visible to the naked eye between April 20 and April 25, said Peter Judge, spokesman for the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency. "We're getting various descriptions of lights in the sky," he said. "Everything from green lights to planes going down." Firefighters in Branford, Conn., responded to several reports of a possible plane crash in Long Island Sound in the Thimble Island area, but a search did not turn up anything and was called off a short while later. -- Associated Press

Meteor

Tim Kelly, The Suffolk Times
April 28th, 2005

Terry Orlando wasn't quite sure what she saw streaking across the early evening sky Sunday, but she knew she'd never seen the likes of it before. The Aquebogue resident was sitting with her husband, John, in their car at the end of Bay Avenue in Mattituck, enjoying the tranquil view as a peaceful dusk settled over the beach and the waters of Great Peconic Bay. Then she saw fire in the sky. "There was green, white and yellow, like you'd see in a flame," Ms. Orlando said. "It looked like an acetylene torch when you first light it. It didn't start very high and it didn't trail down and it just vaporized." The object moved so quickly — it was visible for no more than two seconds — that Ms. Orlando and her husband asked each other something like "did you see that?" They both had, which prompted Mr. Orlando to check his watch. It was 7:45 p.m. At that moment, Tom Madigan, a lifelong amateur astronomer and the newsletter editor for the Custer Institute astronomy center in Southold, was in Medford. He and his wife had gone food shopping and were in the car, heading toward their Patchogue home. The Madigans knew immediately what they saw.

Mr. Madigan described it as "bolide," an unusually large meteor that blazed brightly as it burned up when falling fast through the earth's thick atmosphere. "It was a phosphorescent green and extremely bright," said Mr. Madigan, "This was definitely a rare occurrence." The large meteor, which Mr. Madigan said apparently disintegrated before any part of it could reach the ground, sparked worried calls to police and other public agencies as far away as Cape Cod. Memories of the destruction of TWA Flight 800 in the sky south of Long Island in 1996 prompted some to report the sighting to the Federal Aviation Administration, which later said no aircraft were missing. Bert Vogel was at the kitchen sink in his Riverhead home when he caught a glimpse of the meteor through his south-facing window. "It looked like fireworks going straight across, but it was much brighter," said Mr. Vogel, the webmaster for Times/Review Newspapers. He saw a flash of bright yellow and orange. "It almost looked like there was something in front of the colored section," he said. "It had a tail like a comet." The tail was a vapor trail, which meant the object had reached cloud level, perhaps from 30,000 to 50,000 feet, said Mr. Madigan. He said the bolide could have been only the size of a baseball or as big as a small boulder. "It's all about how fast it's moving and how hot it gets," he said. "The heat of friction is so tremendous it causes it to turn into a plasma." Although the meteor fell only four minutes after sunset, the flash was so bright that had it been dark, "this thing would definitely have cast a shadow," said Mr. Madigan. Using the standard astronomical measuring stick for how bright an object is, Mr. Madigan estimates that the meteor was a -7 magnitude. The higher the number, the harder it is to see. Conversely, the lower the number, the brighter the object appears. The brightest star visible in the northern sky, Sirius, found near the Orion constellation during winter, is -1.55 magnitude. The planet Venus is a -4. "I've seen thousands of falling stars, but always at night," said Mr. Vogel. "I've never seen one in the daytime." Nor has Mr. Madigan. "This was quite phenomenal," he said.

Editor: Reprinted with permission of The Suffolk Times

Monday, April 25th

The AMS has so far received 16 reports of this brilliant object. It was seen as far north as southern Maine and as far south as Pennsylvania. The most often quoted color is green and the duration is reported as short on most reports. From what I can tell it does not appear to line up with any active radiant and could be a purely random occurrence. The updated AMS fireball table may be viewed at:

http://www.amsmeteors.org/fireball/fireball_log.html .

Clear Skies!

Robert Lunsford

American Meteor Society

I have fielded quite a few phone calls from the general public this morning, and have spoken to people, all of whom witnessed last night's fireball meteor (erroneously described as a "meteor shower") in the AP report printed below.

[Editor: article is on the previous page, entitled "Meteor Shower Surprises New England"].

One woman said it looked like it was " . . . about the size of a cantaloupe." Another swore it was " . . . no higher than 100 feet above the ground." And still another commented on how green the ball of fire appeared: "Like the ball shot out of a roman candle."

I highly doubt that this object had anything to do with the Lyrid Meteor Shower. The characteristics are all wrong; Lyrids are not known for producing brilliant fireballs like this. More likely it was an erratic chunk of stone or iron, probably related to something out of the asteroid belt.

This reminds me of another similarly bright fireball that swept across the Greater New York Skies almost exactly 39 years ago (April 25, 1966). Amazingly, that object too became visible around the same time ~ 7:30 in the evening.

Oh . . . PS . . . where was I on both occasions (1966 and last night)? Of course, inside, watching television! :(

-- *Joe Rao*

Tom Madigan, My husband and I saw a flash in the sky over the Peconic Bay at 7:45pm on sunday. It traveled east to west and only lasted a few seconds and was very low over the horizon. It seemed to start low in the sky and burn out at about jamesport. It definitely seemed to be between the north and south forks over the water. It did not appear like a shooting star, please call me if you have more info. I am curious about this one and we have never seen anything like it before.

Terry Orlando

Aquebogue, NY

Dear Tom & Mary,

Very interesting the observation....

If you have A. Photoshop, do you could develop a virtual or imaginary(digital drawing) of the effect/object?[size, brightness, color, displacement pattern in the sky.....etc. same that you describe in the email.

It will be great to see and analyze the event. What do you think concerning the object? How many peoples see the event?

I will forward your email to the Sociedad Astronómica Dominicana group members, to check if they are someone who have to see the object.

Any response I will contact you. Please, let me know any information regarding the event.

Best regards,

Carlos Sanlley
Professional Photographer
Soc. Astronómica Dominicana, member

Yes, the rest of the south shore of Long Island and apparently folks all the way to Rhode Island reported it to the authorities and the news. Check your local news, I heard it all over the radio this morning. By the way, good for you!!

Vicki Schuppe-Howitt

Hi Tom, I live in Plymouth, Mass. I didn't see it but I happened to have the scanner on. At about 7:55 the first state police report came in mentioning Otis Air Base Tower's sighting of a meteor. There followed a flurry of communication between various agencies state, local military as they responded to telephone calls. It involved helicopters searching for downed aircraft near rte 24 as well as foot searches. I wish I could have seen it. Wonder if and where it landed??!!

Jerry Flaherty
Plymouth, Mass

Yes my next door neighbor ran over to me as I stepped out back yelling "did you see that? did you see that?" I didn't. I must of missed it by 5 secs. He said he couldn't believe his eyes. I am still depressed about it. It was 7:45 pm.

Anthony DePalma
Hampton Bays, NY

YES!!!!!!!!!!!!!! And thank you for that report. I thought I was imagining it, since at 8 pm I had set my video to tape a show about meteors. YIKES. It looked like a headlight. I only saw it as white. But a very large ball.

Susan Harder
East Hampton, NY

Hi Tom,

They apparently saw it on the CT shoreline (I missed it):
<http://ap.tbo.com/ap/breaking/MGBQNNI2Y7E.html>

Bob Crelin
Guilford, CT

Thursday, April 28th

Hi, Tom...

I heard about this on the radio, so I gather you weren't the only one that saw it. Must have been quite a show!

Gail Clyma
SELENE-NY

Wednesday, May 11th

Thank you for writing. Since April 24 I've encountered 4 other people who saw flashes in the sky in very different areas of Long Island that night and all say it seems like fire works, one man said he saw a light shoot across Lake Panamoka and it seemed to go into the lake. He also said that the light started low over the water and flashed horizontal not vertical, which is what I saw over the Peconic bay - that the light started low over the water and shot out in a westerly direction horizontal over the water. I always thought that the meteor would be of a vertical decent. I also saw what looked like a vapor trail from a jet make a circle in the sky higher up at the cloud level and it stayed in the sky much longer than a vapor trail would last, my husband also saw that ring of white in the clouds. We don't know what any of this means and I would love to speak to someone who could give me an explanation. I'm bewildered!

Terry Orlando
Aquebogue, NY

News and Noteworthy

A letter to the editor was sent in by Custer member Susan Harder to the New York Times and published this weekend. Susan, a member of the International Dark Sky Association (<http://www.darksky.org>), has worked tirelessly with Gary Citro and Gail Clyma both of SELENE-NY, to help educate the public and to bring about reductions in light pollution. She has had much success working closely with LIPA's management, notably with chairman Richard Kessel and Ed Grilli. She has been kind enough to share her letter with us:

Long Island Section
New York Times
Letter to the Editor

What beautiful lighthouses we have here on Long Island----during the day. Take note of the glare from the unshielded exterior lighting of the Montauk Lighthouse (not the light in the tower, which by comparison looks dim) in the night photograph accompanying "Beacons of the Past, and Present" May 8, 2005. It's time to change all of our outdoor light fixtures to those which only shine downward. There are many good reasons to do so because improved optics can direct the light better and with less energy consumption. It is a fact that millions of migrating birds are thrown off course by unshielded lights since they fly at night to conserve energy; and partly navigate by the constellations. Those birds are the only "visitors" to the Lighthouse at night. In the case of the Montauk Lighthouse, why not turn the building mounted lights "off" because no one is there. If Montauk is to become a destination for "Dark Sky" observations of the stars, we need to clean up unshielded "wall packs" and change to "Glarebuster" fixtures. Susan Harder Dark Sky Society 26 Deep Six Drive East Hampton, NY 11937 631 329-0456

JOIN WITH US IN WELCOMING OUR
 VERY SPECIAL GUEST SPEAKER
DR. STORY MUSGRAVE
 AT THE
CRADLE OF AVIATION*
 ON MONDAY EVENING
JUNE 20, 2005 AT 7:00 PM.



Dr. Musgrave will speak on The Hubble Space Telescope Mission made in December of 1993.

Story Musgrave is a professional motivational speaker emphasizing leadership, teamwork, innovation and creativity. Former NASA astronaut, Story Musgrave delivers leadership and teamwork skills as a professional speaker. His powerful motivational speaker messages, and stories will stir leadership, teamwork, innovation and creativity for all audiences.

Dr. Story Musgrave's NASA career spanned the Apollo era to the Space Shuttle program into initial development of space walk strategies for the International Space Station. He loves to share his experiences as an astronaut, marine, surgeon, scientist and literary critic.

Dr. Musgrave participated in the design and development of all Space Shuttle extra vehicular activity equipment including space suits, life support systems, airlocks, and manned maneuvering units. From 1979 to 1982, and 1983 to 1984, he was assigned as a test and verification pilot in the Shuttle Avionics Integration Laboratory at JSC. Story's NASA astronaut experience fuels his passion to instill innovation, creativity, leadership and teamwork skills as a motivational speaker.

Perhaps the most dramatic of Story Musgrave's space mission was the fifth, on the Shuttle Endeavour. Musgrave commanded the mission to repair the damaged Hubble Space Telescope. During this 11-day mission, the Telescope was restored to full functionality. The repairs required five spacewalks, three performed by Dr. Musgrave himself.

For ticket information for this Not For Profit Event, call Tony Pirera at Spectrum Thin Films 1-631-589-3502 til 5:00pm or e-mail: tonystf@aol.com
 Tickets are \$12. per person **Advanced Sales Only**. Limited Seating.
 For additional and ticket purchase information, visit our web site:

www.asliclub.org www.endeavour.zoomshare.com/



*The Reckson Center at the Museums at Mitchel Cradle of Aviation

Directions to the Cradle of Aviation Museum:

- Meadowbrook Parkway north to exit M4, follow signs to Nassau Coliseum which will put you on Charles Lindbergh Blvd. stay on Charles Lindbergh Blvd. to the second traffic light and turn right into the parking lot.
- Meadowbrook Parkway south to exit M4, initially follow signs to Nassau Coliseum. Within approximately 1/4 mile take the right fork to Charles Lindbergh Blvd., remain on it to the second traffic light and turn right into the parking lot.

Annual Membership Meeting and Barbeque



Saturday, June 11th

**** Annual Membership Meeting and Elections ****
6:00 PM

**** Annual Barbeque & Covered Dish Dinner ****
3:30 PM; Members only!

Entertainment to follow:

The Home Grown String Quartet at 8:00 PM

Observing, weather permitting.

Directions: LIE (495) Exit 73 east Route 58 becomes Rt. 25. Follow 17 miles east, make sharp right at Gulf gas station onto Main Bayview Rd. Custer is ¼ mile down on left.



Custer Institute

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Southold, NY 11971

631-765-2626

www.custerobservatory.org

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