



NEWSLETTER

RITTENHOUSE ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY

Founded 1888 WWW.RITTENHOUSEASTRONOMICALSOCIETY.ORG

March 2007

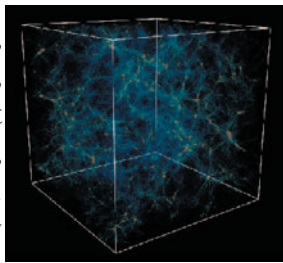
OPEN TO PUBLIC AND STUDENTS
Upcoming Meeting on March 14th at
7:30 PM
Fels Planetarium
The Franklin Institute
20th Street and Benjamin Franklin Parkway

Special Note:
February's Meeting

We hope that everyone had a Happy Valentine's Day. Since the RAS meeting was canceled in February it allowed for extra time to spend with your loved ones on that special day. We look forward to seeing all of you at our March meeting.

March's Meeting:
The Universe in 3-D
Dr. Albert Lamperti

Dr. Lamperti is going to take us on a 3D Tour of the Universe outside the solar system. The 3D tour will take us from Earth on an amazing trip through the known universe seeing Nebulae as a result of star death, nebulae giving birth to stars, dark nebulae, open star clusters, globular star clusters, galaxies that are irregular, spiral, barred spiral, elliptical, interacting and in clusters. We will return safely to Earth very near where the talk is being given!



All of this with the use of 3D glasses that will give the audience an unusual and not often seen aspect of deep sky objects.

Our meeting schedule originally had us start our 3D tours with a look at the Solar System followed by the Universe, but starting with the big picture can be just as exciting.

Dr. Lamperti has a long history with the Delaware Valley Amateur Astronomers. He holds an array of Astronomical League certificates for observing the night sky. He is well published in Astronomy and some of his publications include "Observing Galaxy Chains", "Observing some Galaxy Trios" and "Extra Galactic Globular Clusters" qualifying him as an expert tour guide of the universe for our Society.



Upcoming Meetings:

Table with 3 columns: Month, Lesson, Speaker. Rows include March (Web Project, Categorize the Universe, Dr. Albert Lamperti), April (Planet Earth, Climate Crisis/Solutions, Dr. Ken Kremer), and May (Brother Guy Consolmagno, Vatican Astronomer, Curator of Vatican Meteorite Collection, God, Astronomy and the Search for Elegance).

Astronomy News Update:

Hobbits are 2 to 4 feet tall people, a branch of humans, in The Lord of The Rings trilogy by J.R.R. Tolkien. We followed the travels of Bilbo Baggins as he traveled the lands of Middle-earth.

Now, way beyond Middle-earth, resides a newly discovered galaxy called Leo T which is approximately 600 light-years across located some 1.4 million light-years from Earth. The Sloan Digital Sky Survey revealed eight new galaxies of the Local group that are smaller than known dwarf galaxies. They are a new class called Hobbit galaxies. Leo T is the smallest, dimmest galaxy yet discovered. It is thought to be a source of active star formation.

~Dr. Milton Friedman

Table with 2 columns: Activity, Time. Rows include Student Check In (7:15 - 7:30 pm), Astronomy Lesson (7:30 - 7:50 pm), Call to Order: Dr. Milton Friedman, Sky Tonight: Alan Daroff, Guest Speaker, and Rooftop Observing: Weather Permitting.

Visible Planets 03/14/2007

	Rises	Transit	Sets
Mercury	05:10 am	10:31 pm	03:51 pm
Venus	07:32 am	02:10 pm	08:47 pm
Mars	04:35 am	09:34 am	02:34 pm
Jupiter	01:00 am	05:42 am	10:24 am
Saturn	03:00 pm	09:59 pm	04:58 am

Student Lesson:

Categorize the Universe

For our upcoming student lesson, we will present a project to our student members to enlist their assistance.

The Rittenhouse Astronomical Society is launching a community resource for Amateur and Professional Astronomers. It centers around our student web page. Starting the page with a few categories, we will link to web resources and web tools that might help to expand our knowledge of Astronomy.

The graphics on the opening page are from two sources. Frank Summers at NASA and Dr. Joel Primack, author of "Our View from the Center of the Universe." Dr. Primack, as many may recall, was a guest speaker with us last year. Dr. Primack's icons were published in his recent book to represent our location in the known universe.

The Solar System graphic provided by Mr. Summers is used to represent a newly organized structure of our Solar System. At a recent planetarium conference in Tom's River New Jersey, Mr. Summers unveiled this newly organized view of our universe. This will help future students better assimilate ideas of planetary systems.



This representation will help students understand the declassification of Pluto as a planet.

To these icons, we are attaching links to pages that will further lead us to astronomy resources and tools. Resources can be considered reference type websites or research papers that are published on line. They basically convey information through reading and graphics or pictures. Web tools should be thought of as interactive sites that allow the user to manipulate software that produce a demonstration, concept or interactive model that enable greater understanding of astronomical concepts.

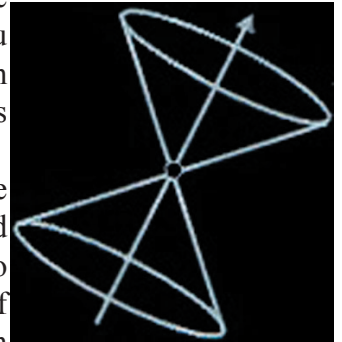
Our challenge to student members (actually all members are welcome to help out) is to gather websites that they feel might be most helpful to others, especially those that they have used for research personally.



Submit the URL of the resource you would like to include as a link to our website, and upon review we will post

it including your school's name (or what section of our city you represent.) Please include which category you feel link belongs to.

Let's see if we can come together as a web based community of contributors to a website for the assistance of fellow members and students in



the Rittenhouse Society and the general interested public. Please go to our website where instructions are also posted on our Student page.

~Ted Williams

Problem with Pluto?

If you still have problems accepting Pluto's demotion, or you are in need of illustrating to children this concept, check our website. Recently, I went digging through our astronomical interest page and found on the virtual universe link, a site sponsored by Caltech and NASA, Cool Cosmos

The web site has an "Ask an Astronomer" video section whose current featured video is the demotion of Pluto. I used the "Why Isn't Pluto a Planet Any More?" with my 4th grade students and it helped them to better understand the change in Pluto's status in a positive and scientific way. The movie points out that a similar circumstance happened in the early 1800's with Ceres and the asteroid belt.

Movies on this website are downloadable for free and can be used in instructional settings.

~ Ruth List

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