



NEWS LETTER

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October 2006

RITTENHOUSE ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY

OPEN TO PUBLIC AND STUDENTS
Upcoming **Meeting on Wednesday October 11th** at
7:30 PM

Fels Planetarium
The Franklin Institute
20th Street and Benjamin Franklin Parkway

Meeting Format: *Changes to accommodate student guests!*

Our October meeting will have a slight format change. We will be adding to our monthly meeting an astronomy "mini" lesson. Each meeting will start with an astronomy lesson posted on our website. The lessons will be 20 minutes in duration. After the lesson, we will have Dr. Friedman call the formal meeting to order. Vice-President Alan Daroff will offer tips and sightings as to what to look for currently in the night sky. We will have our guest speaker or presenter start at 8:15 P.M., and at the conclusion of their talk, we will adjourn to the rooftop observatory (weather permitting.) Below is our meeting at a glance:

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	
Rooftop Observing: Weather Permitting	

Guest Speakers ~ October 11

Derrick Pitts & Chris Ray

Derrick Pitts is the Chief Astronomer at the Franklin Institute and long standing member of our Society. Chris Ray is a well respected member in good standing of the Antique Telescope Society. Chris has renovated many historic and valuable telescopes located east of the Mississippi.

Chris will describe the renovation of the Franklin Institute's 1933 Zeiss Refractor Telescope and the refurbishment of the rooftop observatory. The project has taken 10 months overall, but will extend the useful life of this valued instrument for another 7 decades.

Derrick also has some adventures to share from the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics Convention in San Jose.

Visible Planets October 11, 2006

Mercury	Transit 2:16 PM	Set 7:16 PM
Venus	Rise 6:44 AM	Set 6:22 PM
Mars	Transit 1:01 PM	Set 6:36 PM
Jupiter	Transit 2:53 PM	Set 7:55 PM
Saturn	Rise 2:26 AM	Transit 9:20 AM

Members Night Review:

Society members sharing

Many thanks to those who shared a little about your experiences related to astronomy.

Starting off our evening was a good review of astronomy courses that you can participate in on-line or by written correspondence. We learned what it was like for **Ruth List** to take a course for graduate credit and the work that it involved. We then were challenged to a few date trivia questions by **Alan Daroff** who was elated to near shock when Peg Labosh hit the Star Trek first air date anniversary on the nose. Alan continued to enlighten the group about our Moon's closest and furthest points in its' orbit and prepped us for the upcoming equinox. **Mike Mountjoy** toured us through the construction of Space Command from ground zero, and it truly looked it when stripped to the foundation, bare ceilings and original walls. I was amazed that this operation takes place while the institute is open for its normal business. Accommodations for the safe passage of visitors during construction create an amazing job in itself. Mike's presentation highlighted for us the challenge and the amount of work and planning that go into the process. And talk of massive construction, **Peg Labosh** took the helm and guided us through the mysteries of the construction of Stonehenge, and numerous astronomical monuments found around the world. Peg was mesmerizing and had a well researched presentation. **Ted Williams** ended the evening with a spinning presentation, for possibly interested members, and then proceeded to fill in our members on developments with student involvement in the society. He presented the plans to the group for the restructuring of our meeting that are covered in the opening article.

Now Available: Observers' Handbook \$18.00,
Astronomical calendar from the Royal Astronomical
Society of Canada \$11.00~ Contact Alan Daroff at the
October Meeting.

Apprentice Certificate: *Students can earn student membership !*



Students that arrive from 7:15-7:30 will receive a Rittenhouse medallion sticker certifying their attendance. The sticker will be affixed to their Student Apprentice Certificate which will be available at all meetings at our sign in table.

Students will use the Apprentice Certificate to track and certify their attendance while also earning a free student membership.

Continued attendance at our lessons or events will qualify them for student membership which will be applied to the next academic year. You can only earn one RAS medallion sticker on any calendar day.

Students are welcome to attend the full meeting, including the guest speaker, but they should not feel obligated to stay. Many students travel across city transit to reach us, and we understand that they may be leaving to catch that return ride. Members are always welcome to the astronomy lesson. Students are always welcome to stay for the observatory if open (weather permitting.)

Website development: *Community Outreach for Instructional Design*

In an effort to involve more students with our website, we have recently reached out to Philadelphia University. In their graduate program, of Instructional Design and Technology, students design, and develop web based tutorials, or computer based training modules as part of their final projects for the Masters Degree offered through the University.

This year, we applied and were permitted to present a “learning need” to graduate students in their program. The students choose which learning need they think will garner them the best experience and apply their knowledge base from classes in instructional design to meet the need.

Many times this can be accomplished through well designed software that can be accessed over the internet, or by CDROM, or what best delivery suits the needs of their client.

Dr. Milt Friedman, Ruth List and Ted Williams delivered a presentation as clients on behalf of the society to develop some web tools that might document student involvement

with us on our website. We are currently developing a student based page which may serve to organize astronomy activity, astronomy related research, or act as a guide to accredited and professional websites.



Dr. Friedman had an opportunity to meet with the Director of the Program Dr. Tim Magee. Dr. Magee explained that the program has helped develop computer programs that assist learning in astronomy, genetics, medical training, fashion, anti-drug modules for students, resume writing, information literacy and more. It is an amazing program, and the products are developed with current principals of instructional design.

Rittenhouse Astronomical Society Officers

Dr. Milton Friedman	President
Alan Daroff	Vice- President
Ruth List	Treasurer- Web Team
Ted Williams	Secretary – Web Team
Carol Ludolf	Member at Large
Dave Walker	Liaison

Ruth List will be available at the upcoming October meeting to collect dues for the 2006-2007 academic year.

Our Mailing Address:

Rittenhouse Astronomical Society
P.O. Box 24665
Philadelphia PA. 19111

Checks are made out to “Rittenhouse Astronomical Society”