



**nomical Society of Greenwich**

**Bruce Museum**

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**October 2014**

**Monthly Meeting**

**Wednesday, October 1, 7:30 PM**

Once again, we have an Observatory report, and serious matters to discuss concerning our future – hope to see many of you at the meeting.

We'll also view the next video in the series, *Understanding the Universe*, with Professor Alex Filippenko:  
Lecture 8, "The Reason for the Seasons"

**Bowman Observatory Public Nights  
(Weather Permitting)**

**Work continues on the renovation. Our new telescope is in the process of being mounted:**

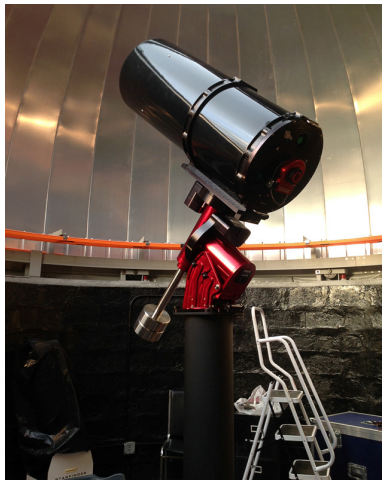


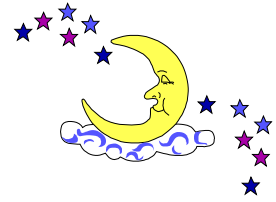
Photo: Rick Bria

**In the meantime, consider a visit to the Stamford Observatory, which is open every Friday, 8-10 PM, and operated by ASG members Bill Bambrick and Rick Bria.**

<http://www.stamford-observatory.com/>

## Lunacy

October	1	<i>First Quarter</i> Moon passes <b>Pluto</b>
	5	Moon passes <b>Neptune</b>
	6	Moon at perigee (225,232 miles from Earth)
	8	<i>Full Moon</i> – “Hunter’s Moon” - passes <b>Uranus</b> , and undergoes a total eclipse. In our area, the Moon enters the penumbra at 4:14 AM, and totality begins at 6:25 AM, just before the Moon sets around 7 AM.
	15	<i>Last Quarter</i>
	17	Moon passes <b>Jupiter</b>
	18	Moon at apogee (251,591 miles from Earth)
	23	<i>New Moon</i> passes <b>Venus</b>
	25	Moon passes <b>Saturn</b>
	28	Moon passes <b>Mars</b>
	29	Moon passes <b>Pluto</b>
	30	<i>First Quarter</i>



## News of the Worlds

At the beginning of October we'll have three early-evening planets to observe. **Mercury** puts in a brief appearance in the evening sky, never getting higher than 4° above the horizon. Our innermost planet passes between Earth and Sun on October 16, reappearing in the morning sky on the 26<sup>th</sup>.

Next comes **Saturn** (mag.0.6), in *Libra*, which sets about 2 hours after the Sun at the beginning of October, but only 1 hour after sunset by month's end. The ringed planet passes the crescent Moon on the 25<sup>th</sup>.

Finally, **Mars** lies one constellation farther east, in *Scorpius*, and very close to the red star *Antares*. The red planet then moves eastward into *Ophiuchus*, where it has a close encounter with **Comet Siding Spring (C/2013 A1)** which passes within 81,000 miles of Mars on October 19. This mag.8 body can be seen with a telescope, and will be tracked by all the spacecraft presently orbiting Mars. According to *Astronomy* magazine, no comet in recorded history has ever come closer to Mars (or Earth).

Mars isn't done yet, moving into *Sagittarius* on October 21, where it passes the Lagoon Nebula (M8) on the 27<sup>th</sup>. All this eastward movement means that throughout the month of October, Mars will set about 3 hours after the Sun.

Late-night planets this month are **Neptune** (mag.7.8), in *Aquarius*, and **Uranus** (mag.5.7) in *Pisces*, which reaches opposition on October 7 and is passed by asteroid *Fides* at mid-month.

**Jupiter** rises around 3 AM in *Cancer*, crossing into *Leo* at mid-month and rising around 1 AM by month's end. Our largest planet also brightens from mag. -1.9 to -2.1 during October as it heads for opposition in early February.

Only **Venus** is invisible this month, passing behind the Sun on October 25 and not reappearing in our

evening sky until December.

**Halloween, All Saints, and All Souls Day** (October 31, November 1 & 2) mark the midpoint of autumn – halfway between the Autumnal Equinox and the Winter Solstice.



## ASG News

Our **September 3 meeting** featured a progress report on the Bowman Observatory renovations (more on that this month!) and a discussion of the ASG's future. The Bruce Museum has asked us to phase out our evening meetings, which cost them a great deal in overtime. The consensus of the members who attended was that we should shift our meeting dates to Sunday afternoons, when the Museum will be open and we will be able to use the Lecture Gallery and invite museum visitors to attend our programs.

Astronomy Day is already booked for Sunday, February 8, 2015. Susan Lewis and Julie DiRaimondo, working with Bill Bambrick of Fairfield County Astronomical Society, volunteered to find speakers for March, April, and May. Anne Burns is presently working with the Bruce Museum staff to secure some Sunday afternoon dates, and discussing the possibility of an astronomy-related Family Day in the autumn. Ante Filipovic has offered to help with publicity.

Our **Star Party** at Wee Burn Country Club (September 14) was a great success; in spite of shifting clouds and a lack of moon or planets to view, we were able to show the members the Summer Triangle and Alberio. The children enjoyed looking through the various telescopes and binoculars brought by ASG members, and we handed out star maps. Many thanks to helpers Charlie Adams, Rick Bria, Anne Burns, Barbara & Frank Dahm, and Letty Militana - and to Wee Burn, which gave us a complimentary dinner and a generous donation to the observatory fund.

