

# ASTRAL PROJECTIONS

**March 2009**

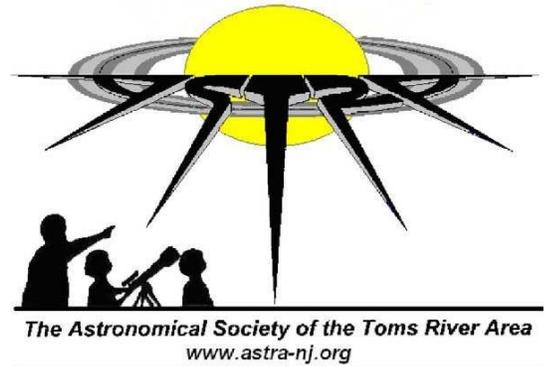
[www.ASTRA-NJ.org](http://www.ASTRA-NJ.org)

\*\*\*\* PLEASE NOTE \*\*\*\*

Meetings are in the Solar Lounge beginning at 7:00 PM. The Solar Lounge is located in the Ocean County College Center building across from the Planetarium. The relocation of the meeting is due to the renovation of the planetarium building.

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**Please pay your dues for 2009. They are now \$25/year/family. New members will pay \$30 for the first year they join, of which \$5 will go towards the telescope fund. All donations above and beyond the minimums of \$25 (\$30 for new members) will be put to good use.**



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## **Our Next Meeting – Friday – 7 PM – March 13, 2009**

**Our Changing Sun**: presented by Ken Legal a member of the STAR Astronomy Club. Ken will talk about our Sun and its cyclic behavior and which part of the solar cycle we are experiencing now.

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## **2009 Meeting Schedule**

See [www.ASTRA-NJ.org/schedule.html](http://www.ASTRA-NJ.org/schedule.html) for latest update

**March 13<sup>th</sup>** – Starts at 7:00PM. **Our Changing Sun**; Presentation by Ken Legal, a STAR member.

**April 10<sup>th</sup>** – Starts at 7:00PM. **Preparations and Ideas for Astronomy Day. Review of the Night Sky Network.**

**May 8<sup>th</sup>** – Starts at 7:00PM. **Astronomy Equipment and/or Book, show and tell.**

**June 12<sup>th</sup>** – Starts at 7:00PM. **Celestial Navigation**; Presented by Sarah Waters.

**July 10<sup>th</sup>** – Starts at 7:00PM. **Virtual Observer Research Project. Simulation of Visual Telescope Observation**; presented by Roger Blake.

**August** – No Meeting (Picnic Date To Be Determined)

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# Highlights of the Last Meeting

February 13, 2009

Rich opened the meeting at 7 pm our new starting time. [Friday the 13th for those who are superstitious. Our next meeting, March 13<sup>th</sup>, will make two in a row.]

## **Kid's Zone:**

Teresa hosted a very informative and fun Kid's Zone. *OUR SOLAR SYSTEM*. The kids [and several adults] enjoyed making a model of our solar system using foam blocks, craft sticks, construction paper and their imaginations. Teresa had a poster showing the planets including poor Pluto, no longer a planet, to help those of us who have trouble remembering their order. Nicely done.

## **Announcements:**

Rich collected checks from those planning to make the trip to the Museum of Natural History in March to see the astronomy exhibit there.

Ro has already booked many star parties for this year. The next one will be at Wells Mills March 21st.

Ro was invited to attend a Night Sky workshop in San Francisco. We are looking forward to Ro's report next meeting.

John is starting an ASTRA Library. Books in the library will be loaned to ASTRA members on a monthly basis. Many of the books in the library are already listed on the club's website. If you have astronomy related books you want to donate to the library let John know. Books can be checked out and returned at the ASTRA meetings. If you want to borrow a book, let John know so he can bring it to the meeting for you.

Phil mentioned that Ceres [a dwarf planet] is near opposition. It is a good time to observe it. It is between magnitude 6 and 7.

Several members of the club reported observation of Comet Lulin. By early March you will be able to find it after dark in the eastern sky. Visit Sky and Telescope's website, <http://www.skyandtelescope.com>, for a very useful map of its current position.

## **Kepler Mission Launch – Early March**

John presented an overview of NASA's upcoming Kepler mission launch and provided free handouts about the mission. The launch date is currently set for March 6th. The Kepler mission will search for earth-sized objects in other stellar systems. The Kepler probe will watch for small variations in the light coming from other stars. By analysis of this data NASA will be able to determine if and when an earth sized planet transits a far away star. [This method is already being used to detect Jupiter-sized and larger planets in other systems, but Kepler will be sensitive enough to detect even smaller objects.] For more information visit NASA website. <http://kepler.nasa.gov>

## **Speaker of the Month:**

### **Charlie Byrne presenting *The Near Side Mega-Basin of the Moon***

Charlie Byrne is a member of the STAR Astronomy Club and has written two books related to the Moon. Charlie explained how the moon was formed when a planet like object, known as Theo, struck the earth. It is believed that this was a glancing blow. Theo was completely destroyed. However, portions of it became part of our planet Earth, and the Moon. It is believed this is why the Moon has a structure similar to Earth.

Charlie then showed what happens when a meteor strikes a planet like the Earth and/or the Moon. Charlie provided an interesting mix of the theory and real impact data. After years of analysis of the actual shape of the moon's surface and by using current meteor impact theory, Charlie was able to create a model that explains the non-uniform shape of the moon found today. Based on this model Charlie believes that the near side mega basin of the moon is a single large impact site, which formed "The Man on the Moon" that we see in our telescopes. Charlie demonstrated that the material ejected during this very large near side impact, actually landed on the far side of the moon creating a huge mountain of ejected material. This mountain of material was found and was accurately mapped by NASA and Soviet space programs.

Charlie provided compelling evidence and a logical presentation of his theory. Very interesting and something to think about. If you want to learn more, look for Charlie's book.

**2009 March Celestial Events:** by Randy

Day	Date	Time (EDT)	Event
Tue	3	03:00	Moon 0.8 Deg. N of Pleiades (M45)
Wed	4	01:35	Moon Set
		02:46	<b>First Quarter Moon</b>
		18:00	Lunar Straight Wall visible
Sat	7	05:05	Jupiter Rises
		05:35	Mars Rises
		05:48	Mercury Rises
		06:24	Sunrise
		14:11	Moon Rise
		17:53	Saturn Rises
		17:59	Sunset
		20:30	Venus Sets
Sun	8	02:00	<b>Daylight Saving Time begins</b>
Tue	10	18:53	Moon Rise
		22:38	<b>Full Moon</b>
Thu	12	05:34	Titan's shadow on Saturn
Fri	13	20:10	Zodiacal light in W for two weeks
Sat	14	05:37	Jupiter Rises
		06:25	Mars Rises
		06:50	Mercury Rises
		07:13	Sunrise
		07:17	Saturn Sets
		19:06	Sunset
		19:55	Venus Sets
		23:26	Moon Rise
Wed	18	11:21	Moon Set
		13:47	<b>Last Quarter Moon</b>
Fri	20	07:44	<b>Spring Equinox</b>
Sat	21	05:20	Jupiter Rises
		06:05	Mars Rises
		06:50	Mercury Rises
		06:51	Saturn Sets
		07:02	Sunrise
		14:18	Moon Set
		19:13	Sunset
		19:55	Venus Sets
Thu	26	12:06	<b>New Moon</b>
		19:40	Moon Set
Sat	28	04:25	Titan's shadow on Saturn
		04:55	Jupiter Rises
		05:55	Mars Rises
		06:20	Saturn Sets
		06:50	Sunrise
		19:20	Sunset
		19:20	Venus Sets
		22:02	Moon Set
Apr	2	10:34	<b>First Quarter Moon</b>
		11:46	Moon Rise

# Astronomical League

[www.AstroLeague.org](http://www.AstroLeague.org)

As an ASTRA member you have a membership in the Astronomical League, which gets you the Reflector magazine, discounts on books, and Observing Awards. If you are not getting your Reflector magazine or want to apply for an Observing Award, contact the club **ALCOR**: Ro Spedalieri.

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## OPT Reward Club

ASTRA members should start receiving their OPT Rewards Club membership cards in the mail. You don't have to do anything just use your Rewards number when you purchase your astronomy equipment from Oceanside Photo & Telescope "OPT" and receive exclusive discounts.

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## Items for Sale

### **ASTRA-WEAR: For Embroidered and/or Printed items with the ASTRA Logo**

You can see some samples at ASTRA meetings and ordering information for all items on our website, <http://www.astra-nj.org/ASTRA-WEAR.pdf>.

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**Astronomic Group Purchase, Items for Sale, or Help Wanted Advertisements:** If you want to handle a Group Purchase, have Sale items, or need Help contact the President [President@astra-nj.org](mailto:President@astra-nj.org) to announce it at a meeting and send the advertisement to the newsletter (See *Newsletter* below).

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**Education Article:** If you have written a general interest astronomy article, please submit it to the newsletter (See *Newsletter* below). Try to keep it less than one page or it may need to be split over several months. It would be helpful if it were sent as an MS Word document attachment to an e-mail.

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**Newsletter:** E-mail material to [Newsletter@astra-nj.org](mailto:Newsletter@astra-nj.org)

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**Astronomy Courses:** Planetarium staff offers a number of mini-courses on astronomy. Call the OCC Department of Continuing and Professional Education, 732/255-0404, for information or to register.

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**Planetarium office:** 732/255-0343 weekdays 9 AM - 4 PM. **Hot line:** 732/255-0342. Select 6 for ASTRA. Visit the Planetarium web page at <http://ocean.edu/planet.htm> or visit our web page at <http://astra-nj.org>

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**Executive Board:** **President** – Rich Brady, [President@astra-nj.org](mailto:President@astra-nj.org); **Vice President-Secretary** – Ed Mullen, [VP@astra-nj.org](mailto:VP@astra-nj.org); **Treasurer** - Ro Spedalieri, [Treasurer@astra-nj.org](mailto:Treasurer@astra-nj.org); **Newsletter Editor** – Allen Malsbury, [Newsletter@astra-nj.org](mailto:Newsletter@astra-nj.org); **Webmaster** - John Endreson, [Webmaster@astra-nj.org](mailto:Webmaster@astra-nj.org).

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