METEOR


METEOR is the official publication of both the Greenbelt and Goddard Astronomy Clubs and is distributed monthly as a privilege of membership in one or both of these organizations. Articles and other contributions are welcome. Membership in the Greenbelt Astronomy Club is open to all, but membership in the Goddard club is only open to NASA civil servants and contractors. The Greenbelt club meets on the last Wednesday of the month at 7:30 pm EDT at the Owens Science Center. The Goddard Astronomy Club meets on the second Tuesday of the month at the Goddard Space Flight Center at noon in Bldg. #21 Rm. #191. The address of the Editor is: 12A Parkway Road, Greenbelt, Maryland 20770

Goddard Astronomy Club

The Goddard Astronomy Club held its monthly meeting on Tuesday, August 10th, in the Bldg. #21 Rm. #191 conference room. There was a review of the clubs plans for the year, and a yearly calendar was drafted. This will be sent to members separately. It was determined that we would try to have a speaker at every other meeting. The club has gained access to the 16-inch B&C at GORF. To get use of this scope, you must make arrangements with either Howard Dew or Don Haxton. A traveling exhibit describing the club and amateur astronomy was suggested. The proposal for a constitution change, the new observatory plans, and a membership list will be sent to members, along with the proposed yearly calendar.

The club's trip to Caroline Furnace had thirteen members, friends, and family attend. Saturday night was better than Friday, and many Perseid meteors was seen.

Greenbelt Astronomy Club

The August meeting of the Greenbelt Astronomy Club was held at the Owens Science Center on Wednesday, August 25th. Although the Owens Science Center was closed, we still held the meeting outside in the hot weather in front of the building. The results of the Perseid Meteor Shower was discussed. The table and parade for Labor Day in Greenbelt was a major topic of discussion. A sign up sheet was distributed. Sue Bassett will bring the club's Light Pollution display; Doug Love star charts. Date of the meetings will be changed to the last non-holiday Thursday of the month due to Doug Love's changing schedule. The next meeting will be held on Thursday, September 30th. The next Northway Fields Star Party will be on Saturday, September 25th at 8:00 pm EDT. A possible joint Star Party with the Goddard Astronomy Club and the Baltimore Astronomical Society was mentioned. Dues will be raised to $12.00 per year effective January 1st 1994. The club treasury now has $120 in it. After the meeting Beth and Adam Guthrie had a demonstration on night-vision equipment available thru them from Russia.

Northway Fields Star Party

Another Northway Fields Star Party was held on Saturday night, August 21st. Only two telescopes and three members showed up. Doug Love brought his trusty 6-inch f8 newtonian reflector, and Lynne Gilliland and George Giba brought a 4-inch f8 refractor. We observed the Moon, Saturn, and several nice double stars before the clouds rolled in. The next Northway Star Party is on Saturday night, September 25th at 8:00 pm EDT. Please try to attend, and bring a telescope, if
you have one. These Star Parties are held to get more people into astronomy to help fight the plague of light pollution that is stealing the stars from us all.

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Perseid Meteor Shower 1993 Reports
by G.W. Gliba

Although there was no Perseid Storm seen anywhere, there was a short peak of enhanced activity that was seen by some members of both the Goddard and the Greenbelt Astronomy Clubs. Otherwise, the Perseids seemed to be normal; showing typical post-maximum activity. Some members of both clubs traveled far to see the Perseids. Some were clouded out, and some got lucky. Below are the reports recieved thus far.

Observing from White Sands, New Mexico, Larry Woods observed a very bright Perseid Fireball as he stepped out of his car to watch meteors on the night before the predicted peak. On the night of the maximum, he saw many Perseids, but nothing unusual was noticed my him. He noticed several apparent meteors on his FM radio, but nothing on his TV, probably due to the lack of any suitable channels to tune-into.

On the night of the predicted maximum, Don Haxton and Howard Dew watched for Perseids from Big Meadows in Shenandoah National Park. Between 9 pm and 12:30 am on August 11/12 they saw 159 meteors, most of which were Perseids. Of these, about twenty were Fireballs! It seems they saw the peak, which was rich in bright meteors. Seems they got a better view than anyone in both clubs, with the possible exception of Doug Caprette. Greenbelt Astronomy Club member Sue Bassett was also at Big Meadows watching the peak of the Perseids.

Doug Caprette traveled down to just SE of Greenville, North Carolina to escape the clouds. Between 10:05 pm and 10:20 pm EDT he saw eleven Perseids, eleven of which were brighter than 1st magnitude. After this it tapered off considerably before clouding up.

Many people showed up to watch the possible Perseid storm at the Northway Fields. Greenbelt Astronomy Club president Doug Love said it was mostly cloudy and that only one Perseid was seen before it clouded up completely. He said that in total, over 100 people showed up despite the poor conditions! Although there was little publicity about Northway Fields being a fairly dark site, we guess the word has gotten around that this is one of the few local dark sites left in the greater Greenbelt area.

Watching from the Hopewell Observatory site, Jeff Querber only saw eight Perseids due to the poor weather. The ones he saw were seen thru the haze from about 9:30 to 11:30 pm. He did see one Fireball with a two second train.

Lynne Gilliland and George Gliba were clouded out for the peak, but saw a number ofnice post maximum Perseids. One nice -4 magn. Perseid Fireball was seen at the friday evening tent talks at Stellafane. However, based on five hours of post-maximum data, the post-maximum Perseids seemed to be normal. Bill Hathaway observed with them at Stellafane, and all three saw the Fireball together. Greenbelt and Goddard Astronomy Clubs' members Russ Waugh, Tom Bryant, Dan Schultz, and Armen Caroglanian were also at Stellafane watching Perseids and they also saw many nice meteors, but nothing unusual.

Some experts are predicting that there will be a Storm next year, but Brian Marsden has said that if ever the Perseids were going to storm it would be this year. Interestingly, although the Perseids have been traced back through the old historical records for over 1600 years, there is no indication that there has ever been a true storm like the Leonids. Perhaps we will have to wait until the Leonids in 1998 or 1999 to see a Meteor Storm.
COMMUNITY DAY
NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 19, 1993
10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.
Goddard Visitor Center, Greenbelt, Maryland

10:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. - Engineering Fair in Building 8
Goddard's world renown engineers showcasing their work; displays
include: Robots, Fibre Optics, Thermal Systems, a Solar Car and
Instruments from Space Shuttle Missions

10:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. - Special guided bus tours of the Center

11:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. - Spacesuit demonstrations

12:00 Noon - Musical entertainment

1:00 p.m. - "The Flight of Astro-1" by Astronaut Ronald A. Parise

3:00 p.m. - Model rocket launches

FREE to All
Plenty of Parking

For more information call: 301/286-8955
Visitor Center phone: 301/286-8981
TDD: 301/286-8955