

Announcements

The Year-Long Star Party at Spruce Knob

by John Nusbaum

NOVAC is now the proud owner of a brand new, "no frills" star party at the premier observing location in the Eastern US! The Year-Long Star Party (YLSP) is held for 4 nights each month from March through November. The Star Party is held at the Gatewood Group Camping Area just west and slightly below Spruce Knob, the highest peak in West Virginia. Gatewood sits on top of a knoll at 4,338 feet.

The skies at the Year-Long Star Party are truly dark. M33, the face-on spiral galaxy in Triangulum is a naked eye object and the Milky Way stretches from horizon to horizon in both summer and winter! If you have never observed in truly dark, magnitude 7 skies, you will be in for a real treat!

2002 Schedule—Spruce Knob, WV

September 5-8	Thursday-Sunday nights
October 4-7	Friday-Monday nights
November 1-4	Friday-Monday nights

The Star Party is free to NOVAC members and there is a nominal cost for non-members.

For more information see the NOVAC website at www.novac.com/spruce or contact John Nusbaum at john@nusbaum.com.

Bear Alert!

A black bear has been frequenting Gatewood Campground and damaged some NOVAC members' equipment at the August YLSP session. Please be aware that interaction with potentially dangerous wildlife is a possibility if you decide to go to Spruce Knob (or any other observing site, for that matter.) See www.yahoo.com/group/spruceknob to get the complete story.

NASM/Einstein Planetarium public observing

2002 Schedule—Sky Meadows State Park, Paris, VA

Join Sean O'Brien, staff astronomer of the Albert Einstein Planetarium, and other local amateur astronomers, for public telescopic observing under dark, star-filled skies, away from city lights. The evening begins with a short night sky orientation at dusk, followed by telescopic observing of various astronomical objects, ending at 11 pm.

Directions to Sky Meadows State Park: Sky Meadows State Park is west of Washington, D.C., on US Route 17 North, 1 mile south of US Route 50, or 7 miles north of Interstate 66, Exit 23. The park contact phone number is (540) 592-3556. There is a \$4 parking fee per car. Please cover flashlights with a red filter or a brown paper bag. Dress warmly. In case of clouds or rain, an amateur astronomer will lead a short alternate program.

Date (all Saturdays)	Comments
September 7	1 day after New Moon
October 5	1 day before New Moon
November 9	2 days before 1st Quarter

Editor's note: This is a fun program for NOVAC members to help out with. Sky Meadows park has great skies, and the public is always very receptive.

Newsletter now available via e-mail

As an added convenience, members may now elect to receive their newsletter in electronic form via e-mail. The electronic version will be in Adobe PDF format and will typically be 500 to 800 kilobytes. Photos will appear with much better resolution in the electronic copy.

If you would like to receive the newsletter in PDF format, send your name, mailing address, and the e-mail address to which you want the newsletter delivered to mjmills@fpcc.net. Please put "Newsletter PDF" in the subject line. Changes will take effect with the September/October issue. Please note: if you choose to receive the electronic copy, you will not receive a paper copy.