

# Friends Of The Observatory Newsletter

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Phone 513-321-5186

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www.cincinnatiobservatory.org Bill Cartwright, editor

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## A Letter From President Huber

Dear "Friends",

I hope everyone has been enjoying the fall Season. You know that October was the month with the most clear nights...well that is all gone now as we head into November. I would like to give all members my heartfelt thanks participating in the elections of the FOTO officers. And also one more thanks to everyone again for their help at Scope Out '01. I think I'm still recovering.... Many changes are going to be happening around the "O" this month. Please see "*The Observatory Construction Update*" on page 3 for more details. Also the good news is that we have working restrooms in the Mitchel building once again. Good bye Porta-potties!!!

Don't forget the Annual Winter Banquet in December. If you can't make this month's meeting please give me a call and sign-up to bring something yummy. 513-894-7735.

See you this Thursday.

## November FOTO Meeting

Our next monthly meeting will be at **7:30 PM, Thursday, November 1st** in the basement of Hyde Park Community Methodist Church at the corner of Observatory and Grace in Hyde Park.

This month's meeting's lecture will be given by **John Bevan** who will talk about



his "Journey to the Southern Hemisphere". John is a native Australian and has been back to his "land down under" on many vacations.

Last month **Chuck Strubbe, Paul Nohr** and **Dick Wessling** spoke about cleaning lenses and the history of the Mitchel lenses.

Before the meeting have supper at 6 with other FOTO members at *The Cooker* in the Hyde Park Shopping Center.

## Planning Meeting

The next FOTO planning meeting will be held at 6PM on **Wednesday, November 14<sup>th</sup>** at Max & Erma's in the Rookwood Pavillion in Norwood. We've scheduled it on the second Wednesday instead of the third Wednesday so as not to conflict with Thanksgiving.

## FOTOKids Meeting

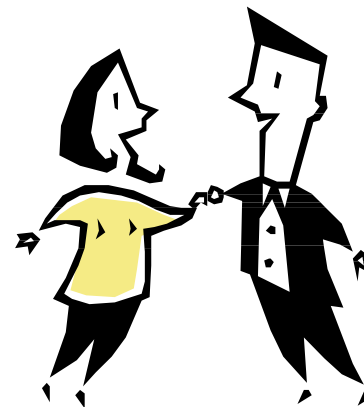
**ROCKETS! ROCKETS! ROCKETS!**

FOTOKids will next meet on **Friday, November 2nd at 7:30 PM** at the Cincinnati Observatory Center. QUARK,

The Queen City rocketry club will give a presentation and help us build some starter rockets. Don't miss this one. If you want to build a rocket and haven't contacted **Chuck Strubbe**, please contact him ASAP at 513-886-7600.

If you have a kid interested in astronomy between the ages of 8 and 14, find out more about FOTOKids by contacting Chuck Strubbe at (513) 886-7600 or [jstrubbe@one.net](mailto:jstrubbe@one.net).

## Welcome New Members!



**Chris Parrett & Mary Fitzpatrick,  
Kathleen Baughman, Maury &  
Emma Tepper,  
Fred & Ann Calvert,  
Darin & Teresa Hanners,  
Douglas Ryan,  
Dr. Myron Wayne,  
Stephen King, Steve & Sally Diehl,  
David Baubach, Peter Roberts,  
and James & Bette Ramsey.**

## FOTO Election Returns

Patriotic spirit from the war spilled over into the FOTO elections as all the incumbents were re-elected by a landslide. It's now official! FOTO would like to congratulate the winners in the FOTO election of officers at the October meeting.

**Greg Huber** elected President.

**Craig Niemi** elected Vice-President.

**JoAnne Pedersen** elected Treasurer.

**Valerie Niemi** elected Secretary.

FOTO would like to thank all of the members that came out to the October meeting to vote and show their support for the club.

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## More Hot Astronomical Websites

*By Chuck Strubbe*

Here's an update for Web software. Some of it is free and some of it is shareware. Regardless, all are worth it.

<http://www.stella2000.com/> -- Coeli software has several very useful packages. Stella 2000 is their shareware astronomical suite (planetarium software). It comes in many levels at many prices. However, Coeli also offers several freeware packages that have many components of the full Stella 2000 Suite. Check out Desk Nite, a planetarium program that resides as the background of your desktop.

<http://www.astronomy.ch/> -- Astronomy Software for Personal Computers -- Freeware. This sights offers two programs that probably prove the maxim that simple is better. The two programs are Planetarium and Eclipse-Simulator. They run in DOS emulation and are only a 360K download. But they provide fresh views of the night sky and eclipses.

<http://www.griffithobs.org/software.html> - John Mosley of the Griffith Observatory has put together a wonderful list of astronomy software available via the Internet. Lots of good stuff here.

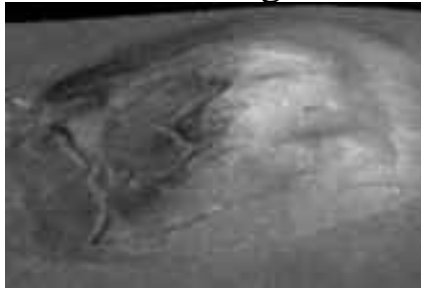
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## Did You Know....

Astronomers had discovered 40 new planets as of February of this year. The latest total is 80!

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## The Face on Mars: Unmasked by New Images



Twenty-five years ago something funny happened around Mars. NASA's Viking 1 spacecraft was circling the planet, snapping photos of possible landing sites for its sister ship Viking 2, when it spotted the shadowy likeness of a human face. An enormous head nearly 2 miles (3.2 kilometers) from end to end seemed to be staring back at the cameras from a region of the Red Planet called Cydonia. There must have been a degree of surprise among mission controllers back at the Jet Propulsion Lab when the face appeared on their monitors.

But the sensation was short-lived. Scientists figured it was just another Martian mesa, common enough around Cydonia, only this one had unusual shadows that made it look like an Egyptian pharaoh.

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## Did You Know....

"Clear Sky Worlds" are newly discovered planets of Jovian size with surface temperatures of around 900 degrees F rotating around suns from 7 to 80 million miles away. They have sulfates and chlorides in their atmosphere.

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## Stonelick Lake Star Parties

*by Scott Naylor*

The next Stonelick Star Party and Cloud Dates will be Saturday, November 10th with a rain date of Saturday, November 17th. We will be setting up around dusk in the beach overflow parking lot. They're held at Stonelick Lake State Park, which is open to the public all night year round. For updates, directions or information, phone Scott Naylor at 513-575-5556.

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## Stunning Comet Close-Ups Released From Fly-By



Stunning close-ups of a comet's core were released by NASA scientists who called the images the best ever taken of a comet. In one of the closest photographs, the comet Borrelly appears like an eerie cosmic potato. In others, mysterious jets of gas and dust are seen shooting out from the comet in an unexpected direction. [http://www.space.com/scienceastronomy/solarsystem/comet\\_star\\_010926.html](http://www.space.com/scienceastronomy/solarsystem/comet_star_010926.html)

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## Did You Know....

Experiments have begun to develop a tiny wormhole.

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## Hubble Looks into the Heart of a Globular Cluster



Astronomers have used the Hubble Space Telescope to peer deep into the core of a dense cluster of stars called Omega Centauri. Located 17,000 light years from Earth, Omega Centauri contains several million stars locked together and orbiting a common center of gravity. The stars at the core are so densely packed together; they occasionally collide and form larger stars.

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## The Observatory Construction Update

By Bob Casey

DOMES repairs started last week, the week of October 22nd. The sequence will be to first protect the telescope (totally enclosed and out of commission for 3 months. Second, paint the dome where panels aren't to be replaced and third, replace lower panels and skeleton connections.

ADA RAMPS work also started the week of October 22<sup>nd</sup>, the first scheduled review was Thursday, October 18<sup>th</sup>, but the contractor is intending to start work on the circular drive and interior of the Herget building simultaneously. His intent is to always have the drive useable and to have the base coat of asphalt in place before the asphalt plant closes for the winter. Duration is approximately 4 months.

HVAC/Electrical work and window work for the Herget building is expected to start before the end of the year thereby interrupting normal service to the building for about a 3-4 month period. That schedule is dependent upon building permits that are being requested this week. This is normally a 4-5 week approval, but we have had problems with this in the past. The urgency is that some work needs to be done to allow the ADA ramp work to proceed. The site clearance for HVAC and electric in the basement will be extensive and messy as will the spread of plaster dust upstairs.

OFFICES: As a result of the three items above we need to move the offices and the issue is to where and how fast. The two feasible options are the West wing or to a trailer. As of this morning we are pursuing a trailer with the help of **Dobbs Ackermann**. We would expect to be in the trailer for 4 months at an estimated expense of \$1000.00. Recognize that timing is dependent upon the construction proceeding roughly as planned. We have already started to work on moving. Trailer placement will be dependent upon what construction is happening where, and the expense of hooking up utilities - this is a temporary situation.

MITCHEL BLDG: The rest rooms are functional and being finished up as are the windows in the auditorium. The last piece of finishing the floors near the rest rooms will occur the week of October 15th. Unfortunately the plumbers were unable to disassemble and repair the old drinking fountain so a new one has been installed.

Mitchel will serve as the only presentation room/telescope for the coming months certainly by December 3rd if not sooner. On Thursday October 11th we spent about 4 hours cleaning the "comet room" and the auditorium with the intent of making space for items we may need there as well as finding "the right spot for things". Telescope filters and the overhead projector have been placed in the comet room. Most items have been removed from the stage and put in either the cleaned out podium or in the AV desk.

We have some two-program nights in November and a couple of large private rentals that we will be working to keep on track, but we may need to make some adjustments.

From today on we will only schedule one event per time slot until we know when we have two presentation rooms available again.

## ATM Back On Hiatus

The ATM group is going to have to suspend their telescope making exploits while we wait for the building construction to be completed. This is going to have to be an extended break probably lasting up to six months or so. BUT the ATM group will still be alive and well in our hearts. Keep working at home!

## Paul Nohr Class Temporarily Suspended

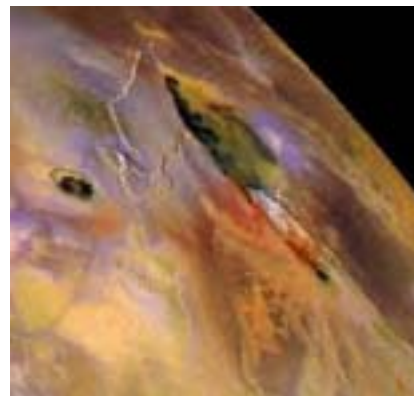
Construction will temporarily suspend the Paul Nohr classes until further notice, which like the ATM sessions, will probably be from three to six months. But stay tuned, as we will keep you updated.

## AstroPhoto Group Meetings Postponed

By Craig Niemi

With everything up in the air at the "O", the FOTO imaging group is in hiatus for the foreseeable future. We'll have more information at the next FOTO monthly meeting and will have pointers for upcoming events like the Leonids in November.

## Galileo Successfully Swings by Io



During a flyby past Jupiter's moon Io in August, NASA's Galileo spacecraft witnessed the tallest volcanic plume ever seen. Galileo's original mission was to fly through a previous eruption from the Tvashtar volcano - Tvashtar wasn't erupting, but another, previously undiscovered volcano was. The huge plume of lava generated by this new volcano towered 500 km above the surface of the moon when Galileo flew by.

[http://www.space.com/scienceastronomy/solarsystem/galileo\\_update\\_011016.html](http://www.space.com/scienceastronomy/solarsystem/galileo_update_011016.html)

## Did You Know....

Comet Shoemaker-Levy was soft enough that you could have crushed it in your hands. But it was hard enough to punch a hole in Jupiter as big as the earth!!!

## Bright Future for Solar Power Satellites



Two new studies looking at the feasibility of space-based solar power - orbiting satellites that would serve as high-tech space dams - suggest the concept shouldn't be readily dismissed and could generate both Earth-bound and space-based benefits.

## New Energy Source 'Wrings' Power From Black Hole Spin



Scientists for the first time have seen energy being extracted from a black hole. Like an electric dynamo, this black hole spins and pumps energy out through cable-like magnetic field lines into the chaotic gas whipping around it, making the gas -- already infernally hot from the sheer force of crushing gravity -- even hotter.

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### Did You Know....

Did you know that the full moon on November 30th will be a Blue Moon? As a matter of fact it will be a Blue Moon by both definitions of the term Blue Moon!!! Come to the November meeting to find out why!!

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## Winter Banquet

*By Greg Huber*

Friends! Next month is the annual Winter Banquet. There will be a sign in sheet going around at the next meeting with all sorts of goodies to sign up for. This is one of the fun events we do each year and we all love for you to be there. If you don't know what to bring give Greg Huber a call at 513-894-7735. He is a really nice guy. (*Ed. note: ...and will eat whatever you bring.*)

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### Did You Know....

"Roaster Planets" are newly discovered planets of Jovian size rotating only a few million miles from their suns. Temperatures on these worlds are over 2 million degrees and they rotate their sun in about 4 days. Their clouds rain silicate rock and iron!

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## Astronomy Lecture Series For Beginners

This series, given at the Observatory, focuses on continuing astronomy education for beginners and amateurs interested in observing the night sky.

Monday, November 12, 7:00-9:00 PM

"Comets and Meteors"

**This class has been filled.**

Wednesday, December 12, 7:00-9:00 PM

"Earth, Sun, Moon"

This program will discuss the relationships between the Earth, Sun, and Moon, seasons, eclipses, moon phases, gravity, and much more. This is a great program to prepare you for the partial solar eclipse on December 14.

Cost: \$12.

To register, please call **Dean Regas** at 513-321-5186

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### Did You Know....

Most of the world's ozone-destroying pollutants have come from the northern half of our planet. Yet Earth's yawning ozone hole straddles the south pole -- not the north.

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## Huge Dust Storm On Mars

Two NASA spacecraft are giving scientists a ringside seat for the biggest global dust storm seen on Mars in several decades. The extraordinary storm, which first enveloped the Red Planet three months ago, is finally subsiding.. [The Perfect Dust Storm Strikes Mars - http://science.nasa.gov/headlines/y2001/ast11oct\\_2.htm](http://science.nasa.gov/headlines/y2001/ast11oct_2.htm)

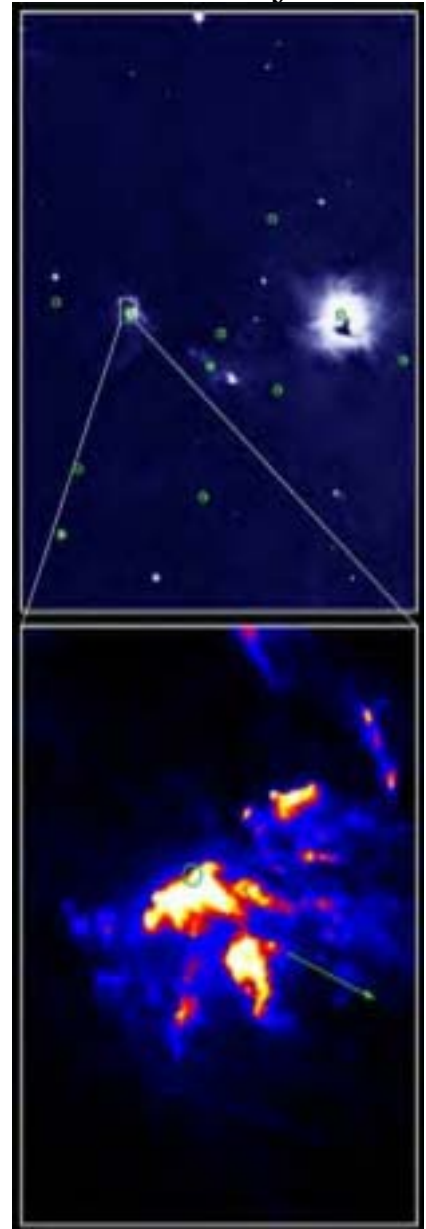
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### Did You Know....

Martian dust storms not only cloud the Red Planet's air, they also warm its atmosphere. The temperature of Mars' upper atmosphere soared 80 degrees F during the storm -- a result of sunlight heating airborne dust grains. In a curious twist, the onset of global warming in the thin atmosphere marked the beginning of a cool period on the planet's surface, which has chilled under the near-constant shroud of dust.

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## X-Ray Emissions Detected From Elusive Cosmic Objects



A type of celestial object that has long stumped astronomers has been found to emit X-rays, thus proving a theory of how the objects form. Scientists reported this week that these objects, called Herbig Haro objects, are produced by high velocity shocks.

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### Did You Know....

There is a huge black hole at the center of our galaxy which is 2 million times as massive as our Sun.

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## Cosmic Possibilities

**Eileen McConkey**, FOTO member, is an artist displaying and working at the Pendleton Art Center in Over the Rhine. Her work of the last 2 years is loosely called "**Cosmic Possibilities**" for although you would not recognize any celestial phenomenon or Messier object in her work you cannot mistake the presence of nebular influence.

"As people enter my studio and see the work," she says, "the most common comment that I hear is 'WOW' and then talk of Hubble photos and the like starts to happen."

The Pendleton Art Center is an eight-story building full of about 118 artists (some of whom are also FOTO members) who show their work to the general public on the last Friday of every month (Final Friday) from 6:00 PM to 10:00 PM.

Come on down for a great and different night out. Admission is free and there is valet parking or shuttle service available. The location is at 1310 Pendleton Street or you can get directions and more information at:

[www.pendletonartcenter.com](http://www.pendletonartcenter.com). or  
[eileen@pendletonartcenter.com](mailto:eileen@pendletonartcenter.com)

## Did You Know....

In September, Physicists have made two samples of trillions of atoms interact at a distance in an experiment which may bring Star Trek-style teleportation and rapid quantum computing closer to reality.

## November's Word of the Month

"Nocturnal" (a noun).

Answer to October's Word of the Month:

"Oblique Rotator". An oblique rotator is a body whose axis of rotation does not line up with its magnetic field. The earth is slightly askew. But Uranus's rotation is over 50 degrees removed from its magnetic field.

## Did You Know....

A comet travels three times faster than an asteroid.

## Chinese Announce Moon Probe



The official Chinese news agency announced today that China is planning to send a spacecraft to the moon. Few details have been released so far, only that it will be launched on Chinese-made Long-March rocket, but not when, or whether it will land on the moon.

## Did You Know....

That huge fireball that blew up in the atmosphere above Whitehorse in the Yukon this summer, was only about 15 feet in diameter.

## Andromeda's Black Hole Not As Cool As Believed

Last year scientists using NASA's Chandra X-ray Observatory announced the discovery of an unusual source very near the nucleus of the Andromeda Galaxy, which astronomers associated with the supermassive black hole located at the center of M31. But a closer look has caused the story to change. <http://spaceflightnow.com/news/n0110/13chandra/>

## FOTO-SETI Update

Now, 23 dedicated FOTO members, up one from last month (thanks Sheila), have completed 6481 SETI studies, an increase of 221 in the past month, for a combined total of 20.12 years of computer time!

Sign up now to become part of the greatest search in history! Join SETI. <http://www.space.com/searchforlife>

## A Point to Ponder....

Comets may have delivered life to Earth as they brought water, organic compounds, amino acids and hydrocarbons. The elements of life then, may be throughout the universe!

## November's Trivia Question

Name one of the two cultures that accurately described planetary movements in 750 BCE.

October's Trivia Question: Name the European astronomer in 1572 and the non-European culture that observed the "new star" visible for 15 months. Bonus: Name this "new star".

Answers: Tycho Brahe and China.

Bonus answer: A supernova

## Did You Know....

Stars and galaxies started forming about 900 million years after the Big Bang.

## Discovery Helps To Solve Mystery In Globular Clusters



In a discovery that may help to solve a long-standing mystery, astronomers have found gas between the densely packed stars that make up the globular cluster, 47 Tucanae.

<http://spaceflightnow.com/news/n0110/21clusters/>

## Did You Know....

The asteroid Eros is three times larger than the asteroid that killed the dinosaurs 65 million years ago.

## Success!!! Odyssey Probe Enters Martian Orbit

NASA's 2001 Mars Odyssey spacecraft completed its six-month, 285-million mile cruise to the Red Planet last Tuesday with a make-or-break 20-minute engine firing to slip into orbit around Mars. Odyssey will begin mapping the surface of the planet in early 2002, searching for near surface water and mapping mineral deposits from past water activity. <http://spaceflightnow.com/mars/odyssey/status.html>

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## A Point to Ponder...

Without Jupiter to vacuum clean asteroids and comets from the solar system, there would be no life on Earth!

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**Is your membership about to expire? Please rush your renewal check to the address shown below. \$35 single and \$50 family, payable to the "C.O.C."**

## Must See Picture Of 'Perfect' Spiral Galaxy



A remarkable first-light image was obtained with a new state-of-the-art instrument at the Gemini North Telescope in Hawaii. The image clearly reveals a large galaxy in Pisces has been called the "Perfect Spiral Galaxy" due to its nearly ideal form.

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## Did You Know....

The star Altair spins at 470,000 mph at its equator.

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## The Sun is Starting to Quiet Down

Our Sun is starting to calm down after reaching the peak of its 11-year activity cycle. The sun has settled down at the poles, but there is still the potential for large solar storms around the equator. The sun will reach the minimum of its cycle in 2007.

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## Did You Know....

Between 200 and 900 million years after the Big Bang, was the period known as the literal "Dark Ages" when there was no starlight whatsoever.

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