



## President's Message

It's always fun to experience a rare event. Last year, some of us joined the millions of folks who witnessed a solar eclipse as it sped across our continent. This summer, an infrequent botanical event occurred. Two "corpse plants" bloomed in the Buffalo Botanical Gardens. With barely a two day window to see (and smell) this magnificent flower, plus years between blooms, it's an event that's easy to miss. One of our members, RAS Vice President Michael Grenier, caught "Morty" as it began to fade. Hopefully those of you living near Buffalo got to the greenhouse in time to see either "Morty" or "Fester" in all their stinky grandeur. You'll learn more about these amazing plants from the article on this page.

Wishing you delightful surprises as summer continues!

Jutta Siefert Dudley

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## Call for RAS Member Abstracts for the 45th Annual RAS Fall Scientific Paper Session

You are invited to present a poster or short talk at the November 10 program. Are you working on projects, made any discoveries or been active in a citizen science activity? We'd like to hear about it!

Information is found at [www.rasny.org](http://www.rasny.org). When Geneseo College sends out the second call

## Save the Date!

Saturday, November 10, 2018

RAS Scientific Paper Session  
SUNY at Geneseo

in early September, detailed information will be on our website.

Don't let the summer fly by without making plans to share your interests at this event!

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## Corpse Flowers Morty and Fester Bloom in Buffalo

In July 2014, the Buffalo N.Y. Botanical Gardens acquired three *Amorphophallus titanum* corms, commonly referred to as "corpse flowers" because of their scent while in bloom. One named "Morty" bloomed on June 10, 2018 and the smallest of the three corms, "Fester" followed in Morty's footsteps and bloomed on June 30, 2018. It was quite unexpected and reportedly smelled like "Satan's outhouse". It was about two meters high, and about one meter in diameter. It remained open for about twenty-four hours and is not expected to bloom again for another ten years or so.

*Amorphophallus titanum*, native to Sumatra and Java, derives its name from *amorphos*, "without form, misshapen" + *phallos*, "phallus", and *titan*, "giant." The popular name *Titan arum* was coined by the



Corpse Flower "Fester" in full glory

naturalist Sir David Attenborough for his BBC series *The Private Life of Plants*. He thought the translation of the scientific name was considered "too rude" for television audiences.

The "fragrance" of the Corpse Flower resembles rotting meat, attracting carrion eating beetles and flesh flies that pollinate it. The inflorescence's deep red color and texture contribute to the illusion that the spathe is a piece of meat.

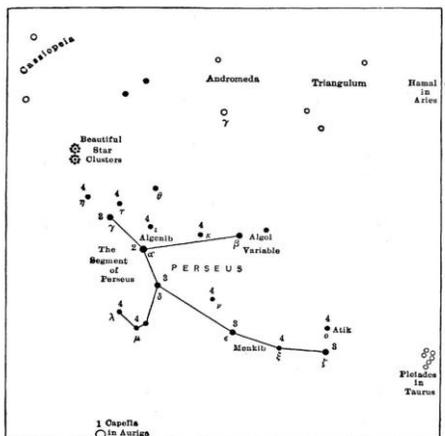


Buffalo Botanical Gardens volunteer Joseph Hart and blooming "Morty"

Photo credits: J Hart.

## August 11-12: Perseid Meteor Shower Extravaganza!

The most spectacular meteor shower of 2018 will occur the evening of August 12<sup>th</sup>, Sunday evening – the Perseid Meteor Shower. That evening will be special in many ways: it will be close to new moon, a thin crescent which sets before the Perseid show starts at midnight. This allows for optimal viewing of not only the meteors, but all deep sky objects. The typical Perseid shower peaks at 60-70 meteors per hour, with occasional outbursts of 150-200 meteors per hour. Bright "fireballs" are common. The Perseids are so named because they appear to radiate out of the constellation Perseus, located between Cassiopeia and the Pleiades (see picture below).



The Perseids have a close connection with the city of Rochester. The Perseid Meteor Shower happens every year when the earth passes through the path of the comet Swift-Tuttle. The co-discoverer of the Swift-Tuttle comet is Rochesterian Lewis A. Swift. He not only received his Ph.D. from the University of Rochester, but had the Warner Observatory built for himself by the Rochester patent medicine magnate Hulbert Harrington Warner. The telescope in the ASRAS logo is the 16" refractor that was housed in Swift's observatory.

Other interesting features of the Perseus constellation visible during the new moon condition are: the star Algol, the second brightest star in Perseus, whose name means "Demon's Head" in Arabic (after the

Gorgon medusa) because it is a variable star whose period is 2.87 days. Also clearly visible in Perseus that night will be the Open Cluster of Messier 34, the Double Cluster (NGC 869 and NGC 884), the California Nebula (NGC 1499), as well as the Little Dumbbell Nebula of Messier 76, aka Barbell or Cork Nebula.

Other sky events that can be seen on August 11<sup>th</sup> or 12<sup>th</sup> are:

**Mars:** Perfect visibility. Rises 7:47 p.m., sets 4:10 a.m.

**Venus:** Great visibility. Sets 9:55 p.m.

**Jupiter:** Fairly good visibility. Sets 11:38 p.m.

**Saturn:** Perfect visibility. Sets 2:28 a.m.

**Uranus:** Average visibility. Rises 11:01p.m.

Iridium satellite flares (the moment when the satellite's solar panels are at an exact orientation to reflect the sunlight at an observer) can be seen briefly, but spectacularly, with the naked eye on Aug 11 at 10:20:44 p.m., alt 44° ENE, and on Aug 12 at 10:18:56 p.m., alt 38°, ENE at Ionia, NY. For more accurate estimates of flare times at your particular time and location see the website <https://www.heavens-above.com/>.

Come on down to the Farash Observatory Saturday (Aug. 11) or Sunday (Aug. 12) to see the show under the dark skies over Ionia with other amateur astronomers! Or, go to the RMSC Strasenburgh Planetarium's Observatory on Saturday (Aug. 11).

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**Anthropology Field Report:** Dr. Alexander Smith (SUNY Brockport professor and Anthropology Section representative) spent the month of June doing archaeological fieldwork in Sardinia, Italy. He initiated, along with co-directors Dr. Linda Gosner and Dr. Jessica Nowlin, a new project studying the ancient landscape of the Sinis Peninsula near modern day Oristano on the Western coast of the island. Work began on the Sinis Archaeological Project by studying the area surrounding the Bronze Age site of S'Urachi. The team encountered lithics, ceramics, and other materials ranging from the Neolithic to the present.



Photo Credit: by Linda Gosner

# Events for August/September, 2018

For updates to events, check the Academy website, <http://www.rasny.org>, and Section websites.

## AUGUST EVENTS

### **4 Sat: FOSSIL FIELD TRIP**

A joint field trip with the Wayne County Gem and Mineral Club. The clubs will visit the Green's Landing site on the east side of Canandaigua Lake. Final arrangements are in process. Contact: Dan Krisher at [DLKFossil@gmail.com](mailto:DLKFossil@gmail.com).

### **4 Sat: ANTHROPOLOGY/ LIFE SCIENCES FIELD TRIP**

10:30 a.m. Meet at Big Tree Inn, by Rte 390 to car pool to Livingston Arts Center New Deal Gallery. Native Studies Art. After lunch, visit Mills Mansion, (open 1-4). Both places are in Mt. Morris. Bring a lunch. Contact: Alex Smith, 750-3329, or Karen Wolf, 670-9709.

### **6 Mon: ASTRONOMY BOARD MEETING**

7 p.m. Farash Center at Ionia. All ASRAS members are welcome. Contact: Mark Minarich; (585) 257-6042.

### **8 Wed: LIFE SCIENCES HERBARIUM WORKSHOP**

1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. Basement of the Rochester Museum and Science Center (RMSC). Ongoing task of organizing the Herbarium families in alphabetical family order. No experience necessary. At RMSC front desk have staff person call ext. 368 in the Herbarium. If you'd like to attend, or for more information, contact herbarium curator: Elizabeth Pixley, (585) 334-0977 or [evpixley@gmail.com](mailto:evpixley@gmail.com).

### **12 Sun: ASTRONOMY PUBLIC OPEN HOUSE**

12:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m. (or later, if skies are clear). Marian and Max Farash Center for Observational Astronomy, 8355 County Road 14 Ionia, NY 14475. *Perseid Meteor shower!* For cancellations or changes contact: Mark Minarich; (585) 257-6042, or see: [www.rocheasterastronomy.org/calendar-of-events](http://www.rocheasterastronomy.org/calendar-of-events)

**15 Wed: RAS BOARD MEETING**  
7:00 p.m. Brighton Town Hall, Stage Conference Room.

### **25 Sat: LIFE SCIENCES FIELD TRIP**

2:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. We will attend the BANC Sanctuary “Bug Hunt” and hike the grounds. For directions contact: Larry Hirsch: (585) 429-6199.

### **18 Sat: FOSSIL FIELD TRIP**

Sites to be determined. The club will likely visit sites south of Syracuse. Contact: Dan Krisher at [DLKFossil@gmail.com](mailto:DLKFossil@gmail.com).

### **26 Sun: ANTHROPOLOGY FIELD TRIP**

10:00 a.m. Meet at Big Tree Inn by Rte 390 to car pool. We will attend the “Flint Knapping” events at Letchworth State Park and Civil War era re-enactments. Contact: Alex Smith, 750-3329, or Karen Wolf, 670-9709.

## SEPTEMBER EVENTS

### **10 Mon: ASTRONOMY BOARD MEETING**

7 p.m. Farash Center at Ionia. All ASRAS members are welcome. Contact: Mark Minarich; (585) 257-6042.

### **14 Fri: ASTRONOMY SECTION MEETING**

7:30 p.m.–10:00 p.m. Marian and Max Farash Center for Observational Astronomy. 8355 County Road 14, Ionia, NY 14475. Main Speaker: Dr. Joel Kastner – Astrophysical Sciences and Technology, RIT. Topic: “What I Did on My Sabbatical.” Short talk will be the ever popular “Astronomy and Mythology” by ASRAS facility manager Bob McGovern. \$1.00 hotdogs available at 7:00 p.m. prior to meeting. Contact: Mark Minarich (585) 257-6042.

### **15 Sat: LIFE SCIENCES HERBARIUM WORKSHOP**

10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. Basement of the Rochester Museum and Science Center (RMSC). Ongoing task of organizing the Herbarium families in alphabetical family order. No experience necessary. At RMSC front desk have staff person

call ext. 368 in the Herbarium. To attend, or for more information, contact herbarium curator: Elizabeth Pixley, (585) 334-0977 or [evpixley@gmail.com](mailto:evpixley@gmail.com).

### **15 Sat: ASTRONOMY PUBLIC OPEN HOUSE**

12:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m. (or later, if skies are clear). Marian and Max Farash Center for Observational Astronomy, 8355 County Road 14 Ionia, NY 14475. *21<sup>st</sup> Annual Ionia Fall Festival!* For cancellations or changes contact: Mark Minarich (585) 257-6042 or see: [www.rocheasterastronomy.org/calendar-of-events](http://www.rocheasterastronomy.org/calendar-of-events)

### **18 Tues: MINERAL SECTION MEETING**

7:00 p.m. Brighton Town Hall, Downstairs Meeting Room. Annual “Show & Tell / Swap & Sell Event”. Bring your specimens and collecting stories. Door prizes and refreshments. Contact: Stephen Busschaert, [mineralvp@rasny.org](mailto:mineralvp@rasny.org) or 585-351-7633.

### **19 Wed: RAS BOARD MEETING**

7:00 p.m. Brighton Town Hall, Stage Conference Room.

### **22 Sat: LIFE SCIENCES FIELD TRIP**

Time to be determined. Meet at Lamberton Conservatory in Highland Park to tour the plant exhibits and view the fall foliage. For details contact: Larry Hirsch, 429-6199.

## ONGOING EVENTS

### **STRASENBURGH OBSERVATORY**

ASRAS will operate the telescope at Strasenburgh Planetarium on mostly clear Saturday nights. Contact: Jim Seidewand (585) 703-9876.

### **ASTRONOMY STAR PARTY**

ASRAS hosts public outdoor star parties once a month on Fridays, either at Mendon Ponds Park or Northampton Park near Brockport. Notices are posted on the prior Wednesday at the ASRAS Facebook page, and [www.rocheasterastronomy.org/calendar-of-events](http://www.rocheasterastronomy.org/calendar-of-events), or, contact Jim Seidewand, (585) 703-9876.

**Rochester Academy of Science**  
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**ABOUT THE ACADEMY** - The Rochester Academy of Science, Inc. is an organization that has been promoting interest in the natural sciences since 1881, with special focus on the western New York state region. Membership is open to anyone with an interest in science. Dues are minimal for the Academy and are listed in the membership application online. Each Section also sets dues to cover Section-related publications and mailings.

For information, contact President Jutta Dudley at (585) 385-2368 or by e-mail: [pres@rasny.org](mailto:pres@rasny.org).

The Academy Internet website is

<http://www.rasny.org>

Or see us on Facebook at

<https://www.facebook.com/RochesterAcademyofScience>.

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[editor@rasny.org](mailto:editor@rasny.org).

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