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Rochester Academy of Science

BULLETIN

"An organization of people in the Natural Sciences"



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ABOUT THE **ACADEMY** - The Rochester Academy Of Science, Inc. is an organization which 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. Each Section also sets dues to cover Section-related publications and mailings.



For applications and/or more information contact membership chairman Stephen Busschaert, 54 Keswick Rd., Rochester, NY 14609; by telephone 288-5683; or by e-mail <sbusschaert@msn.com>.

The *Academy* Internet web page is <http://www.rasny.org>

The *Astronomy Section* Information phone number is (585) 987-5330. The *Astronomy Section* Internet web page is <http://rochesterastronomy.org>

This "**BULLETIN**" is produced monthly, *except July and September*, by the *Astronomy Section, Rochester Academy of Science*. The editor is Frank Bov, 16 Gladbrook Rd., Pittsford, NY 14534 Phone (585) 422-9910 (days) and (585) 385-1518 (evenings), e-mail <frank.bov@xerox.com>

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE JUNE, 2007

RAS, like many other not-for-profit organizations, is running into a shortage of new members and members willing to take leadership positions in individual sections. The Board of Directors is looking for new Directors and Officers. Most of the current Directors have been on the Board for a long time and are more than willing to step down if there are new people who want to get involved. I know that most of us have joined specific RAS sections that address our interests, but there is a need for the parent organization to survive since it serves many of the educational objectives of the organization.

I sometimes worry that there are

too few children in our society with an interest in the classical sciences to support the needs of our economy. Building student interest in the sciences is one of our objectives. But renewing interest in the organization will not happen overnight.

I ask each member of the Academy to take these three simple steps to help create a membership *wave*.

1. Bring someone younger to an event of the Section(s) that you belong. Pick one of the more exciting activities your Section does and bring one of your children, a friend or someone who had an interest in that subject.
2. Attend an event of another Section in the Academy. I love to go to a star party by the Astronomy Section once a year. I probably only do it during warm weather but I try to do it every year. I also went to their Winterfest at Ionia and was more intrigued by the antique snow sleds that were exhibited there than the outdoor activities. Maybe you can try a fossil trip or meeting or a Mineral Section meeting. Attend the RAS Spring Lecture or Fall Paper Session this year. All the events are

listed in the newsletter.

3. Take a leadership or working position in one of your Sections' activities. Even if is just to volunteer to cook at your Section's picnic or lead a field trip. Just jump on board to do some work. We are involved in student outreach events such as SED and it's the same people who are always there trying to get some students excited about a career in science. I thank those people for their continuing efforts but they can always use an extra hand to talk with more students. Volunteer to help

Three easy steps, a few hours out of your year and maybe we can start a turnaround in science education interest and in membership in the RAS. I also have set up a e-mail address for communications at <RochAcSci@aol.com>. Let me know if you have any ideas on how to strengthen the RAS or to make it more exciting to new members. I'm never sure if anyone ever read the Presidents So, if you get this far, send me an e-mail to let me know someone is out there.

Stan Spector
President RAS

FIELD TRIPS FOR ANTHROPOLOGY AND LIFE SCIENCES

This summer we will be having several field trips to various places. However, the days and times will be planned only 2-3 weeks ahead according to peoples interest. Contact Karen Wolf if you're interested at 670-9607 or <karenwolf@frontiernet.net>. Places can include Burroughs Audubon Nature Center (BANC) sanctuary, Zurich Bog, the Japanese Garden on Jackson Road, Niagara Falls and Fort Niagara, trip to a country home in Springwater, Mills Mansion, etc. We can also join plan joint field trips with other RAS sections, BANC, The Butterfly Club etc. Therefore contact Karen with your specific places of interest and plans will be made from there. Announcements will be through the RAS website, e-mailings and calls to those who do not have emails.

* * *

RAS SPRING LECTURE REPORT

The spring lecture was held Monday, April 16th at the Brighton Town Hall and was well attended by RAS members, especially members from the fossil section. Professor J. Michael Pratt was our guest speaker, and he showed how fossil discoveries from Quarry Farms near Elmira had affected Mark Twain's second book, along with his satirical essay: "Was the World Made for Man".

Mark Twain wrote this essay on one of the scientific debates of the time. He analyzed famous scientists' arguments on this subject, based in part on what he

himself had learned at Quarry Farms. Instead of speaking against the leading scientists' answers, Twain used his satirical wit to focus on the problems with these arguments. Michael's presentation was an enjoyable mix of light entertainment with an analysis of the scientific debate of the time.

Stan Spector

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SCIENCE EXPLORATION DAYS REPORT

Science Exploration Days is one of the Academy's top academic outreach opportunities, and a chance to be a kid again yourself. All active Sections were represented, including one that's no longer active. The RAS gets the entire south wall of the St. John Fisher gym, and we do a pretty good job of filling it. From rocks that glow to salads made from weeds to pictures of distant galaxies, the RAS shows students the variety of science in a way that no other exhibitor can.

This year's event was kind of slow Wednesday, due mainly to reduced science interest as kids become involved in high school activities. The up side was that we exhibitors had more time to enjoy the exhibits. (I'm told Thursday had nearly double the attendance; thankfully kids retain their innate curiosity through their middle school years.)

The aero modeling group is always entertaining as they have some wonderful craft on display and enough ceiling height to launch their rubber band powered craft. This year, one got caught in some netting, slowly spiraling up until it's fate was as dire as its

propeller was tangled. Across from them was the animal therapy group, who bring dogs and other pets that are used in human emotional therapy. Pet one of these dogs and you'll know why they're special.

RG&E, now Constellation Energy always bring their high-voltage show and others bring injection molding systems to make screwdrivers (better than whistles, I can tell you). Kids walk around with cement in their hands, thanks to the civil engineering group. Radio amateurs set up both indoor and outdoor antennas for their display, and the University of Rochester Biology Department brings a varied array of biological specimens, skulls and skeletons.

Several displays addressed water quality, some showing how water drainage affects it, others seeking volunteers to "adopt a stream" and learn how to monitor its water quality. I was particularly struck by a simple display containing a couple pans of water, because this was *living* water. All through he pans you could find small insects and insect larvae, some over an inch long. The presence of each type of animal told you something, be it time of year (for seasonal insects) or water quality. It was reassuring to know that some of the major streams in our area are clean enough to support these delicate creatures!

So next year, please consider volunteering to help - they feed you well - and if you can't help out, at least stop by. Wednesday nights are always open to the public, so you have no excuse!

Frank Bov

EVENTS for JUNE / JULY 2007

(For updates to events, check the Academy web site, <http://www.rasny.org>, or appropriate Section web site.)

JUNE EVENTS

Fri 01 ASTRONOMY GENERAL MEETING

7:00 PM at the Wolk Observatory in Ionia, NY. Come early and socialize; the meeting begins at 7:30. Public welcome. Observing will follow if clear, so plan to stay a while if skies permit! Our main speaker is Dave Bishop, with his annual Astronomy Year in Review. Come see his fantastic images that summarize the year! For information, contact Carol Latta at 230-9548, or <cosmos@rochester.rr.com>.

Tue 05 FOSSIL ANNUAL PICNIC AND ELECTIONS

5:30 PM at Lee Tutt's house, 1250 Conifer Cove Lane, Webster (585) 872-3033. Please bring a dish to pass. Drinks, hamburgers, and hot dogs will be provided. A grill will be available.

Fri 08 ASTRONOMY STAR PARTY

10 to 11 PM at Northampton Park, near the ski lodge. Join us for views of Saturn and deep sky objects in members telescopes. Saturn is best at the very start of the party. Dress warm as evenings may be chilly and you may want to stay a while! Cloud date is Saturday. For more information, contact Jim Seidewand at 723-6225 or cell 703-9876

Sat Jun 09 RAS OUTDOOR EXPO

9 AM to 4 PM, Mendon Ponds Park Beach Area. The 2007

Outdoor Expo is sponsored by the Genesee Valley Chapter of the Adirondack Mountain Club. Several RAS Sections will have displays at the Expo. Stop by and support your Section. Visit the ADK event web site for more details: <http://www.gvc-adk.org/events/expo/expo2007.php>

Sun 10 MINERAL PICNIC (with Lapidary Club)

Noon to 4 or 5 PM in Roberts Cabin at the Henrietta Town Park. The picnic is sponsored by the Lapidary Society, and the Mineral Section is invited. The Lapidary Society provides meat, drinks, paper goods, etc. Each attendee is asked to bring a "dish to pass." This event has been a great success for the past several years and we look forward to a big turn out in 2007. Bring your spouse, partner, kids, etc.

Sat 16 MINERAL FIELD TRIP

To the Cayuga Salt Mine 191 Portland Point Road Lansing, NY. More details on the Mineral Section web site and in the RockKester News. For information, call Chuck Hiler at 924-7496 or check the Academy web site for updates.

Tue 19 MINERAL MEETING

7:30 to 9:30 PM at the Brighton Town Hall, 2300 Elmwood Ave. The program will be a swap, sell, trade, or give-away session. So bring your surplus specimens that

are in need of a new home - or come prepared to adopt. This will also be an opportunity for new members to start their collections. Refreshments. For information, call Chuck Hiler at 924-7496 or check the Academy web site for updates.

JULY EVENTS

Fri 06 ASTRONOMY STAR PARTY

10 to 11 PM at Mendon Ponds Park on Hopkins Point Road. Join us for views of deep sky objects in members telescopes. We'll be showing Jupiter, star clusters, galaxies, double stars, and gaseous nebulae. Dress warm as evenings may be cool and you may want to stay a while. Cloud date is Saturday. For more information, contact Jim Seidewand at 723-6225 or cell 703-9876

Fri-Sat 13-14 ASTRONOMY RocheStar Fest

Wolk Observatory/ Farrash Center for Observational Astronomy in Ionia, Our local star party, this is a weekend-long event featuring speakers, door prizes, silent auction, workshops, a Saturday evening dinner, and of course, observing if clear. Full details to come soon, so watch the ASRAS web site! A nominal fee is required to attend on Saturday, but Friday night's free. For information, contact Carol Latta at 230-9548, or <cosmos@rochester.rr.com>.