WHAT IS A "STAR PARTY"?

A star party is an invitation to anyone wishing to enjoy and learn more about the splendors of the sky. At a star party, AAAP members set up a wide variety of telescopes (basic and advanced models) and offer visitors stunning close-ups of celestial objects. Many visitors bring their own telescopes to take advantage of viewing conditions at the site. Others use the occasion simply to view the stars and planets with their own eyes.

Star parties begin just before sunset. Unpredictable celestial events often make star parties memorable occasions. For example, the sky might be lit by a bright meteor or filled with the Aurora Borealis.

At AAAP star parties, our members are happy to answer questions about astronomy, recommend the proper telescopes to buy, or help you set up and align your own telescope. At our Wagman Observatory star parties, the evening also includes guided tours of the constellations by one of our instructors, perhaps aided with binoculars. We provide the same services at our southerly star party site: Mingo Creek Park in Washington County, which also includes an indoor planetarium.

GETTING READY

Before departing for an AAAP star party, check the sky conditions. If the sky is overcast or the forecast suggests rain, consider postponing your visit until the next event. If there are just a few scattered clouds (with the Moon and stars visible in between), the star party will be "go." Observing conditions at the Wagman Observatory can be confirmed on star party nights by calling **724-224-2510.**

Rest facilities at the Wagman Observatory consist of a portable toilet. Food and beverages are not served at our star parties, and alcoholic beverages are prohibited by County Parks regulations. For a long, comfortable night of star gazing, we recommend "stocking up" before leaving home.

Handicapped persons are encouraged to attend AAAP star parties. Portable telescopes are easily positioned for viewing by anyone. The refractor telescope at Wagman Observatory is handicapped-accessible for most observations. If not, many of the portable telescopes at the site provide equally spectacular views.

WHAT EQUIPMENT SHOULD YOU BRING?

You do not have to bring a telescope or any other observer's equipment to a star party. It often gets quite cool on a clear night, even in summer, so bring a coat, light jacket or sweater. Blankets, head cover and extra clothing layers (including socks) are recommended for star parties in the spring and fall.

LIGHTS and SMOKING

Eyes must be dark-adapted to fully enjoy the night sky and faint objects in telescopes. Therefore, DO NOT use cell phones, white lights or flashlights, glow sticks and the like, and especially no flash photography, in the observing rooms or near the outside telescopes. There is no smoking permitted anywhere on the site.

IS THERE A FEE?

All AAAP star parties are free to the public. At the Wagman Observatory, we appreciate any donations to help cover facility operating costs.

WHERE ARE THE STAR PARTIES HELD?

Wagman Observatory: **724-224-2510**

The Wagman Observatory is located in Deer Lakes Regional Park near Russellton, Pa. in the northeast corner of Allegheny County. See the back of this flyer for the map to the observatory site. If you are unfamiliar with this part of the County, we recommend that you drive during daylight to help spot landmarks. If you still have difficulty finding the site on a star party night, call the observatory for final directions.

Deer Lakes Park Tips: Once on the park road, ignore the signs marked "Entrance #1" and "Entrance #2". The observatory entrance is at the very top of the steep hill in the middle of the park. Look for blue portable signs and a yellow gate at the crest of the hill. Address for GPS only, no mail delivery: 225 Kurn Road, Tarentum, PA 15084.

Mingo Creek Park Observatory, **724-348-6150**

Mingo Creek County Park, Washington County, Pa. The site of the AAAP's South Hills Observatory is located 10 miles east of Washington PA in Nottingham Township. Take I-79 to Exit 43. Turn right and follow to stop sign. Turn right on Rt. 519 South and follow to Rt. 136 East. Location: 40.211° N, 80.020°W **NOTE: The Mingo Creek Park Observatory has a different star party schedule from Wagman!**

MORE INFORMATION

For more information on the activities of, and membership in, the AAAP, please write us at:

AAAP, P.O. Box 314, Glenshaw, PA 15116

Or access our homepage on the Internet:

http://www.3ap.org

Send email to: **aaap@3ap.org**

2013 Star Party Schedule

"Space, The Final Frontier..."
and it is yours to explore with

The Amateur Astronomers Association of Pittsburgh

Nicholas E. Wagman Observatory
(Deer Lakes Park, Allegheny County)

- **February 16** Wagman Winterfest
- **April 19 – 20**
- **May 17 – 18**
- **June 14 – 15**
- **July 12 – 13**
- **August 9 – 10**
- **September 14 –21 (Moonrise)**
- **October 12 – 26 (Dark Sky)**

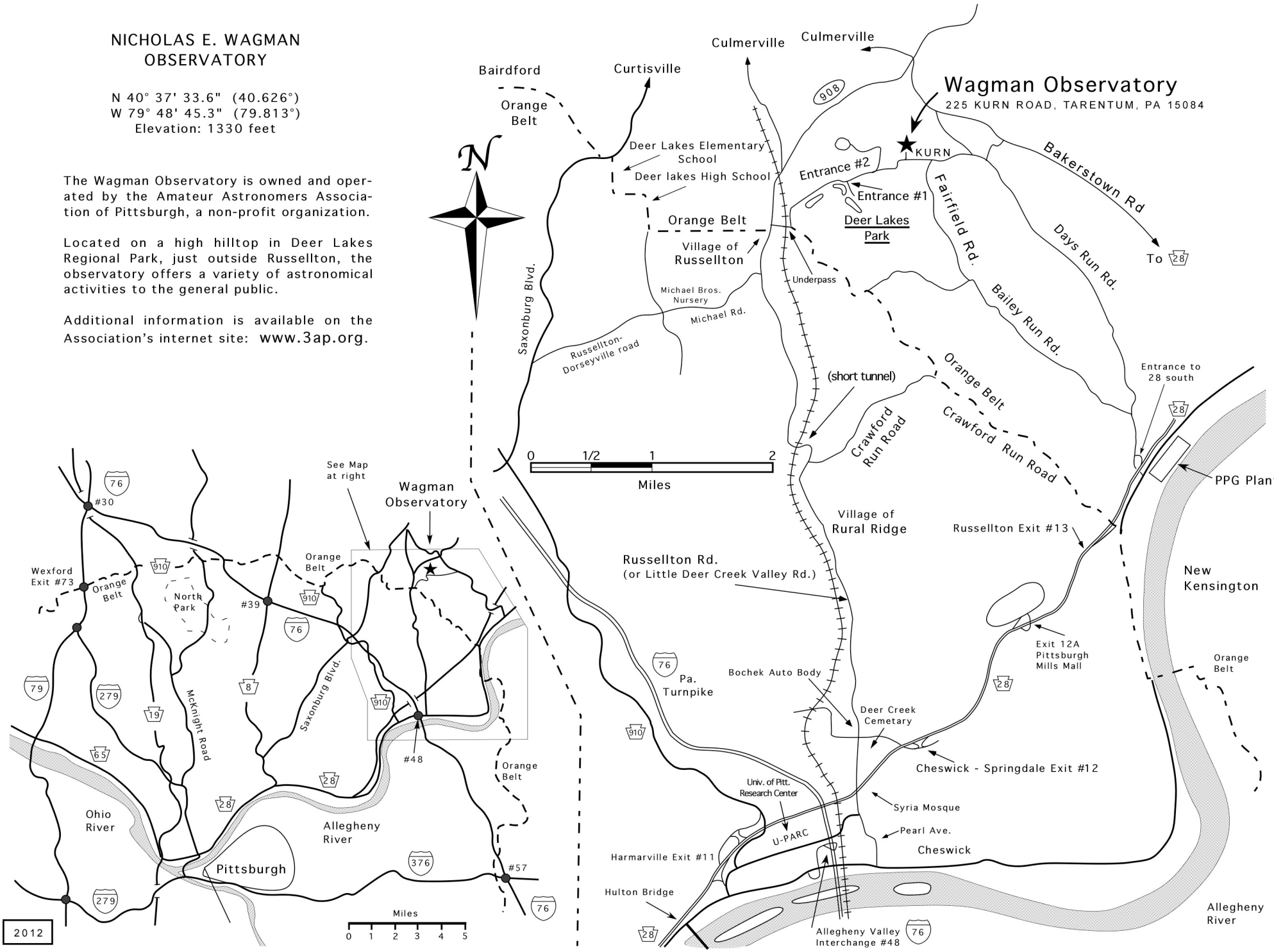
Mingo Creek Park Observatory
(Mingo Creek Park, Washington County)

- **April 19 – 20**
- **May 17 – 18**
- **June 14 – 15**
- **July 12 –1 3**
- **Aug 9 – 10**
- **Sept 7 – 28**
- **Oct 12 – 26**
- **Nov 9 Bundle-up**

NICHOLAS E. WAGMAN OBSERVATORY

N 40° 37' 33.6" (40.626°)
W 79° 48' 45.3" (79.813°)
Elevation: 1330 feet

The Wagman Observatory is owned and operated by the Amateur Astronomers Association of Pittsburgh, a non-profit organization.

Located on a high hilltop in Deer Lakes Regional Park, just outside Russellton, the observatory offers a variety of astronomical activities to the general public.

Additional information is available on the Association's internet site: www.3ap.org.