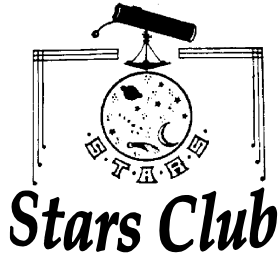


The Springfield

# News from the STARS

"Sharing the Wonders of the Night Sky"

SINCE 1934



July, 2003



## "On the Horizon"

"Roger, go at throttle up."

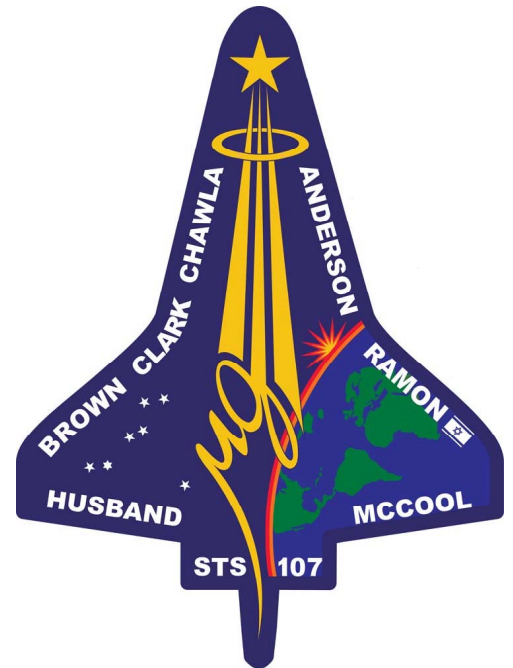
Seventeen years ago, those final words of Commander Francis Scobee from aboard the space shuttle *Challenger* echoed in our minds and hearts as we began to contemplate the loss of seven lives. The tragedy that took place in the skies over Florida on a cold January morning in 1986 temporarily dashed the hopes and dreams of a nation and its children. But teacher turned astronaut Christa McAuliffe proved that an ordinary person could do extraordinary things. The pioneering spirit of the *Challenger* crew has lived on to this day.

On February 1<sup>st</sup>, 2003 another tragedy befell the crew of *Columbia* in the skies over Texas and again we were left to contemplate the loss of seven lives. This time, the tragedy temporarily dashed the hopes and dreams of two nations, as Ilan Ramon had become the first Israeli astronaut. He reminded us that an ordinary person could do extraordinary things. The pioneering spirit of the *Columbia* crew will live on into the future.

In the time between *Challenger* and *Columbia*, much has changed. Seventeen years ago, thoughts of orbiting observatories and permanent habitation of space were still largely dreams. International cooperation in the effort to explore space was just beginning. Today, the reality is that space flight is an integral part of human experience. But that hasn't always been so.

This December, the world will celebrate the achievement of a hope and dream unlike any other, the dream of flight. In the time between the first heavier-than-air craft and the space shuttle, much has changed. A century ago, ordinary people did something extraordinary – they set the stage for others to follow in the aftermath of their efforts. So, too has the crew of *Columbia* left its mark on history.

## *Columbia Remembered*



- Mike Kozicki, Editor

## **A Summer to Remember!**

In addition to the Stars Club's regular events, this summer and fall will feature a wealth of special observing programs, many of which are still being planned. Among them are events at the Science Museum during the final week of August to mark the historic opposition of Mars, a possible Columbus Day weekend public observing night at Fountain Park and a lunar eclipse party at the Science Museum on Saturday, November 8<sup>th</sup>. Further details will be announced at upcoming club events and on the club website. If you would be able to help with any of these events, please let one of the club officers or directors know.

## **A New Asteroid in the Neighborhood**

On May 1<sup>st</sup>, the International Astronomical Union recognized the achievement of children's television pioneer Fred Rogers by naming the asteroid 26858 Misterogers in his honor. Rogers, who passed away on February 27<sup>th</sup>, produced and starred in *Mister Rogers' Neighborhood* on PBS from 1963-2001.

## ***Mount Stromlo Remembered***

On January 18<sup>th</sup>, 2003, a raging bushfire swept through the grounds of the Mount Stromlo Observatory, located just outside Canberra, Australia. Most of the facility's telescopes were lost, including the 74" Grubb-Parsons reflector, the 50" Great Melbourne Reflector, the 26" Yale-Columbia refractor and the 9" Oddie refractor, which had been installed in 1910. Also lost was the Gemini Near-Infrared Integral-Field Spectrograph, which was to have been delivered to the Gemini Observatory atop Mauna Kea, Hawaii. Now, an effort is underway to rebuild Mount Stromlo. For more information, see the August, 2003 issue of *Sky & Telescope*, p. 26. Photos of Mount Stromlo prior to the fire are at <http://www.reflector.org/features/stromlo>.

## **NOTICES**

**Executive Committee Meeting** - The next Stars Club Executive Committee meeting will be held in late fall. If you have ideas for events or speakers, notices for the newsletter, or anything else you would like to bring to the club's attention, please contact one of the club officers or directors prior to October 31.

**Club Election** – The annual Stars Club election will be held at the beginning of the November meeting, on ***Tuesday, November 25***. If you would like to nominate someone for a position on the Executive Committee, please let one of the current club officers or directors know by October 31.

**Membership Dues** – Club dues for 2004 will remain at \$20, Please send a check for that amount, payable to the Springfield Stars Club, to **Rich Sanderson** at P.O. Box 2793, Springfield, MA 01101. Your dues offset costs of running the club, mostly the museum room rental fee and mailings. PLEASE support your club!

**Sky & Telescope** – Club members are entitled to subscribe to Sky & Telescope magazine at a reduced rate. If you need to renew your subscription, return the renewal card you received in the mail and a check for the proper amount, payable to the Springfield Stars Club, to **Rich Sanderson** at P.O. Box 2793, Springfield, MA 01101.

**Summer Star Party**– The Rockland Astronomy Club will hold its 12<sup>th</sup> annual Summer Star Party and Family Camping Vacation from Friday, July 25 to Sunday, August 3 at the Shady Pines Campground in Savoy, MA. For more information, visit the club's website at <http://www.rocklandastronomy.com>

**Your Club** – This fall, the Stars Club turns 70, thanks to the volunteer efforts of its members over the years. Please take an active role in your club to continue this tradition. There are many ways in which you can help at meetings, star parties or public events. If interested, please let one of the club officers or directors know.

**Thank You** – A special thanks to **Joan Presz**, who makes sure that we have refreshments at our meetings. Please help her by bringing something for an upcoming meeting or make a donation to the refreshment fund.

## **THE OBSERVING LOG**

***Total Eclipse!*** If you missed the total eclipse of the Moon on the night of May 15<sup>th</sup>, don't worry. The Moon will once again pass through the umbra of the Earth's shadow during the evening hours of Saturday, November 8<sup>th</sup>. The partial phase of this eclipse begins at 6:32p.m. Totality, the time during which the Moon is completely within the umbra, lasts 25 minutes – from 8:06p.m. to 8:31p.m. Finally, the partial phase ends at 10:04p.m. All times are given in Eastern Standard Time (EST).

***Summer Meteors*** Although largely spoiled this year by the nearly full Moon, one of the year's best meteor showers, the Perseids, reaches its peak on the morning of August 13<sup>th</sup>.

***For the Record*** Unless you travel to it someday, you'll never be closer to Mars than you will be at 5:51a.m. EDT on August 27<sup>th</sup>. At that moment, the Earth and Mars will be separated by just 34,646,418 miles!

***Full Moon Dates:*** July 13, August 12, September 10, October 10, November 8, December 8

***New Moon Dates:*** July 29, August 27, September 25, October 25, November 23, December 23

***Autumnal Equinox*** (Start of Fall) – September 23, 2003 at 6:47a.m. EDT.

***Winter Solstice*** – December 22, 2003 at 2:04a.m. EST.