

Island Astronomy  
Institute

# OBSERVER

Summer 2005

Years ago, Ruth Grierson, Nature Columnist for The Bar Harbor Times mentioned there might just be an astronomy “nitch” to be filled on MDI. I’d like to share with you just how right she was. The response to Island Astronomy Institute has been electric. Ruth’s “nitch” is turning out to be a universe unto itself, filling it is going to take some very hard work. I’m proud to say we are well on our way, as the list of organizations we collaborate with shows.

**Bass Harbor Memorial Library**  
**Camp Beech Cliff**  
**College of the Atlantic**  
**LandEscapes**  
**MDI Adult Education**  
**Northeast Harbor Public Library**  
**Northeastern University Outing Club**  
**Pemetic Elementary School**  
**Southwest Harbor Public Library**  
**Trenton Summer Academy**  
**Tremont Historical Society**  
**The University of Maine**

In joining me as the Institute’s Founding Board of Directors, Dwight Lanpher P.E. (Lanpher Associates, Northeast Harbor) and Jeff Wright (Roc Caivano Architects, Bar Harbor) have given this organization its start in life. Our small team is committed to transforming a small LLC into a far more capable non-profit organization.

In all we do, we are supported by our Advisory Board. This skilled group consists of, Anne Welles (The Pemetic School and 2005 Maine Teacher of the Year Finalist), Dr. Craig Kesselheim (The Great Maine Schools Project, at The George Mitchell Institute), Steve Pappas (Assistant Managing Editor of the Ellsworth American), and Maureen Ellerton (Retired Fiscal Director, The Department of Human Services, Columbia County, N.Y.)

In a very short time we have grown into a vibrant organization - one endorsed by Maine's, IRS approved 501(c) 3, NASA affiliate, the Maine Space Grant Consortium (MSGC). The MSGC has taken on the Island Astronomy Institute's dream of bringing a STARLAB portable planetarium to the region. On June 17<sup>th</sup> we signed the agreement approving our Mobile Space Science Center Project, the object of our "Stars For Children" campaign. As Maine's affiliate to NASA's National Space Grant College and Fellowship Program, the MSGC has determined that the Institute's project furthers its own tax exempt mission, and will therefore manage the funding of this project through contributions generated by the Island Astronomy Institute.

This agreement allows us to approach large donors and grant providers on behalf of this special project of the MSGC. We set off on our "Stars for Children" campaign with a long list of collaborating organizations, strong backing, and the proven ability to make a difference.

Proof of the difference we can make lies in new astronomy curriculum at the Pemetec School in Southwest Harbor. This innovative, school wide program, combines professional development and curriculum design, with in school support. After two years of work, this federally funded project, is expanding eager young minds. The response of teachers and students has left everyone involved wondering how astronomy could ever be left out of any school's curriculum.

To share these results with teachers throughout the region, the Educational Studies Department at The College of The Atlantic will sponsor a special seminar showcasing the Pemetec curriculum. COA and the Institute will collaborate on grants to expand the Pemetec project from sources such as the National Science Foundation.

These diverse elements will come together in the Pemetec School gymnasium in Southwest Harbor on July 16<sup>th</sup>, at our Astronomy Fair. The fair's theme, "Stars for Children" celebrates our project with the MSGC. Pemetec's teachers will be on hand to share their stories and excitement, as the Sky Connection demonstrates a STARLAB planetarium, graciously on loan from Learning Technologies, Inc. The festivities take place between 10:00 AM and 4:00 PM. There will be books, games, telescopes, and more to use or purchase. All proceeds from the fair will fund our special project with the MSGC. We hope to see you there.

On August 6<sup>th</sup> science meets art at a very special Star Party. The event is a collaboration between LandEscapes and the Institute at the Dix Point residence of Nancy Manter in West Tremont, Maine. Deserts, drinks, and Island Astronomy's "magnificent brass" telescope will be on hand. Donations will benefit our "Stars for Children" Campaign. Please RSVP to the Institute if you wish to attend.

Thank you for giving our little "nitch" such a bright future.

Peter Lord  
President