

FALL 1997 THROUGH 1998

Here is a polished edit:

Dr. Jack Wiltsie, an astronomy enthusiast and advocate for public outreach, emphasized the importance of making astronomy accessible to the community. With support from Professor John Tacinelli and Instructor Laura Tacheny at Rochester Community and Technical College (RCTC), a newly established community astronomy club began holding meetings on campus. The club also benefited from complimentary meeting space provided by college President Don Supalla.

Dr. Wiltsie managed the Rochester Community Astronomy Club during its early stages, guiding its development until membership grew large enough to elect officers. The club had access to the college observatory, located on a tree-covered hill on campus and equipped with a Meade Research Series #1266 12.5-inch Newtonian reflector telescope.

Early members included the club's founder, Dr. Jack Wiltsie; the college liaison, Professor John Tacinelli; physics instructor Laura Tacheny; Noel Taylor; Guy Hamernik; Bill Davidson; and several unidentified individuals. The club held monthly meetings at RCTC, where members discussed their observations, current events in space exploration, professional discoveries, astronomy updates, and historical topics related to the field. Membership was open to anyone interested in astronomy, with members encouraged to present a program at a future meeting.

Dr. Wiltsie urged the group to develop a more formal structure, beginning with the election of a president. He continued overseeing club operations while encouraging members to take responsibility for presentations and leadership roles. During the January 1998 meeting, Bill Davidson, who had recently moved to Rochester and had previously served as president of the Williamson County Astronomy Club in Georgetown, Texas, volunteered to serve as president. There were no objections.

The club's membership grew steadily throughout the year, largely by word of mouth. Many new participants were especially interested in organizing star parties. On December 12, 1998, Professor John Tacinelli, Dr. Jack Wiltsie, and Bill Davidson met to discuss the agenda for the January 1999 meeting. The main topics included:

- Officially establishing the second Tuesday of each month at 7:00 p.m. as the regular meeting time.
- Submitting the name **Rochester Community Astronomy Club** for discussion and approval.
- Holding official elections for president, vice president, and communications secretary.

- Discussing the astronomy interests represented within the club.

- Creating a list of members willing to give future presentations and identifying a volunteer for the February 1999 program.

An email was sent to 32 individuals announcing the January 1999 meeting and emphasizing its importance to the club's future.