
Press Release

NEWS

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BURLCO HISTORIAN OFFERS HALLEY'S COMET LECTURE ON MARCH 3

Joe "Comet Man" Laufer Celebrates 25th Anniversary of Comet's Return

Burlington County Historian Joe Laufer will present a free illustrated lecture entitled "Halley's Comet - 25 Years Later" on Wednesday, March 3 at 7 p.m. at the Mount Holly Library and Lyceum on High Street.

A retired educator, Laufer made his foray onto the national scene 25 years ago when he took a sabbatical from his job at Burlington County College to help the world celebrate the return of Halley's Comet after its 75-year interplanetary trek.

Sponsored by the Freeholders, Laufer's lecture will commemorate the anniversary and the centennial of the death of Mark Twain, who was born in 1835 under Halley's Comet and died 75 years later at the comet's return on April 21, 1910.

Laufer will discuss the location of Halley's Comet today as it speeds through space and its anticipated return to Earth just over 50 years from now. However, the primary focus will be a retrospective of all the hype associated with Halley's Comet in 1985 and 1986, as well as what has been learned about the comet through the space probes sent to intercept it on its 30th recorded return in history. (more)

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Laufer was considered a major part of that hype and the New York Times dubbed him “one of the prime movers in drumming up and organizing interest in the 1986 apparition of Halley’s Comet.” He was also featured in a special edition of National Geographic Magazine for the children’s time capsule he promoted for the next generation of comet watchers, and Life Magazine chose him to create its guide for finding the comet during its return.

Laufer also travelled to Europe in 1984 on what he calls “a Halley Odyssey” to visit sites associated with the life of Edmond Halley, after whom the comet is named, and other locations associated with the comet.

Laufer’s lecture will include highlights from this 22-day adventure, which provides historical insights into this most popular of all comets. He will also describe the honor of being designated the official U.S. delegate to the dedication of the memorial to Edmond Halley in Westminster Abbey in 1986.

The lecture is the first of three free lectures featured in the annual Burlington County Historian Lecture Series to be presented on the first Wednesday of March, April and May at 7 p.m. at the Mount Holly Library, 307 High Street.

On April 7, the topic will be “Passport to Burlington County – 21 Places to Visit in Your Backyard,” and on May 5 the topic will be “Showcasing Burlington County’s Unique Stained Glass Treasures.”

Registration is encouraged by calling the Division of Cultural Affairs and Tourism at (609) 265-5068. More information may also be found at www.BurlcoHistorian.com,

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