

Use Patterns for RAC's **RaClub.org** web site and **rac_group** Yahoo Group

While there is some overlap in capability between these two resources they are intended to serve different purposes. The distinctions may best be understood in light of the fact that web sites are publicly accessible and Yahoo Groups are accessible via controlled access registration only.

Briefly, **RaClub.org** is RAC's **public** location for info about club business, undertakings & accomplishments, available to anyone with web access.

The Yahoo **rac_group** is RAC's **internal** access-controlled conduit for near real-time communication, scheduling & private club matters among registrants.

The key areas of overlap that have caused confusion in the past are long-term archival of documents, technical papers and presentations, and the display of quality astrophotography. While both the web site and the Yahoo group have these capabilities, these functions should reside solely on the **RaClub.org** web site except when they are strictly private and internal to the club. The reason for this is that, unlike **rac_group**, our **RaClub.org** web site is accessible to anyone with internet access and is thus RAC's portal for public display of our accomplishments to the astronomical community. The Yahoo group is only accessible to registered users – information and images stored there is *not* accessible to the broader community. Now that RAC is a member of NASA/JPL's Night Sky Network, we especially want to feature our work to other clubs.

With these distinctions in mind, **RaClub.org** is the proper destination for placement of meeting minutes, program presentations, technical papers, archival documents, lesson plans for teaching astronomy to scouts and youths, member astrophotography portfolios, observing lists and other astronomy observing resources, beginner's tutorials and aids, star party announcement and directions, meeting announcements, public outreach announcements, directions on how to join RAC, a public member profile page, an extensive listing of links to web-based astronomy resources, etc. To submit an astrophotograph to the web site, email the file to imageeditor@raclub.org.

The web site also features a news section on the home page, which is updated with current announcements regarding meetings, star parties and club accomplishments. In particular, star party confirmation or cancellation notices are posted at noon on the day of a star party. At the same time an email is sent via the **rac_group** list server, see below. Star party announcements are the only aspect of the web site that approaches real-time; **rac_group** is much better suited for real-time contact within the club

The **rac_group** Yahoo Group is the club's internal real-time channel of choice, intended for more dynamic communication among RAC members and for scheduling and reminders of upcoming events. Yahoo provides an automated calendar function which sends out email alerts to all registered users for each event. The **rac_group** list server forwards emails to all registered users, providing an email communication path for the club. Other **rac_group** function include chat, polls, a buy & sell board, celestial event notices, and any amount of private content that members choose to post. Members may post private profiles if they do not wish to have information made public on the club web site. Photos of the picnic and other informal or private club events, to be shared only with the club and not related to quality astrophotography, are also appropriate for **rac_group**.