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STAR DUST  
National Capital Astronomers

March 1953 Vol. 10, No. 7  
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MARCH CALENDAR

- Date
- March 7 "NEW STUDIES OF STAR TWINKLING," lecture by Mr. Alfred H. Mikesell, astronomer of U. S. Naval Observatory. Commerce Auditorium, 8:15 p. m.
  - March 21 SPECIAL DISCUSSION GROUP, 1:30 p. m. until as long as people wish to stay. Story inside. Commerce Foyer, 8:00 p. m.

Tuesday and Friday, 7-10 p. m. Telescope Making Class, Roosevelt High School, Room 319, 13th and Upshur Sts., N. W. Miss Irene Warthen, Instructor. Telephone Lockwood 5-1237. Miss Warthen is present on Tuesdays.

"NEW STUDIES OF STAR TWINKLING," - One of the most obvious characteristics of a star, and one which appeals to poets far more than to astronomers, is its twinkling or scintillation. This is caused by motions in the air above us and since the aerial disturbances that cause it are worse in some localities than in others, this factor is very important in choosing a site for an observatory. In connection with finding a new location for the Naval Observatory, the staff became involved in a problem of stellar photometry, using methods different from those generally practiced by astronomers. Twinkling or scintillation was found to be such a serious factor in the operation of the equipment that a program of study of the phenomenon was undertaken. Mr. Alfred H. Mikesell, the speaker for our March meeting, has studied at the University of Berkeley, California. He has been an astronomer on the staff of the U. S. Naval Observatory since 1936 and with the

NEW MEMBERS

- \*Samuel R. Friedman, 3722 Appleton St., N. W. (16) EM 3-6738
- \*Thomas Gray, 5050 Fulton St., N. W. (16) WO 6-5037
- Robert H. and Gertrude C. Dellar, 123 Lynwood St., Apt. 202, Alexandria, Va.
- R. A. Soucy, 508 Monroe Place, Falls Church, Va. JE 3-7859
- Roger K. Smith, 5908 Vandegriff Ave., Rockville, Md. PO-26265

There are three errors in phone numbers in the membership list. These are correct: Morgan Cilley, JA 2-7500; Edwin Johnson, OV 3-1528; Alexander L. White, TE 6-2196.

SITE OF OLD BUILDING 15 AT NAVAL OBSERVATORY where

NCA'ers and their predecessors, the NAAA'ers (National Amateur Astronomers' Association), spent many happy hours of observing and warm companionship will soon be only a plot of green grass. Even the cement walkway leading down to the building is gone now. Many of us recall the old folding chairs which we used to take out and set up on the observatory lawn for meteor observing -- or just talking. We remember how during the war we used to have to mount the Alvan Clark 5 inch on the heavy oak tripod every time it was used. Many gifted juniors now well on their ways to scientific careers learned their first lessons in scientific method using the 5" and the equipment in building 15. Even though we look forward eagerly to the opening of building 25 with its many improved facilities as the new home of the Alvan Clark, we will never forget the good times we had in building 15. Bob Wright assures us the new building will be open before the next meeting.

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Jewell Boling, Editor, 1717 P St., N. W. NO 7-9621

Equatorial Division since 1948. He is at present concerned with the study of scintillation of stars. Mr. Mikesell will discuss the problem of star twinkling and review the studies made in the last few years, covering the methods used and results found in the studies. The lecture will be illustrated with slides and movies.

--Abraham Robinson

MARCH DISCUSSION GROUP -- Here is the special Discussion Group that you have been waiting for -- the chance to ask all your questions about equipment. It will be an afternoon and evening session, starting at 1:30 p. m., with time out for an evening meal and will run until everyone is all talked out. There are several more features that will be added to those already planned. Mr. Leo Schoenig from Pittsburgh will be chairman of these sessions and will also lead a discussion on telescope making. Another thing of interest will be a discussion on the balancing of telescopes to be conducted by Mr. Joe Boyle. Mr. Arthur Hoag of the Naval Observatory will conduct a session on optics. We hope to have someone who can help with problems on photography.

We have invited several guests from out of town for this Discussion Group. Mr. and Mrs. Thomas LuCaric from Baden, Pennsylvania, and Mr. Clarence Johnson from Schenectady, New York, will be here. Mr. P. Nash Anderson, Mr. Causey and Mr. Sanderlin expect to come from Norfolk. We have also asked folks from Richmond, Baltimore, and Philadelphia to come. All in all we expect to have a good time, mostly talking about telescopes and equipment. Be sure and come out for this interesting session. Feel free to come when you can and leave when you must.

THE NOMINATING COMMITTEE has been appointed by the President. As required by the NCA by-laws, the Chairman of this committee shall be a Trustee, whose term is not expiring, and two members who are not officers of the corporation. The Nominating Committee is as follows: G. R. Wright, Chairman; Mabel Sterns; Larry White. This committee will nominate one or more eligible candidates for each office, and shall make its report at the April meeting.

THE NATIONAL CAPITAL PARKS have once again requested the NCA for our cooperation in evenings of exploring the skies this coming summer. The following dates have been selected: April 19, June 7, September 13 and October 4, all Sunday evenings, and August 11, a Tuesday evening. Mr. Isherwood has been appointed as NCA coordinator for these evenings. The Park Service wish to have a definite program to present on the evenings when people come, hoping the clouds in the sky will clear. With their assistance in projection equipment, we have agreed to make available a varied program of slides and movies. We are hoping we will not need to use any of these. The August 11 date falls within the dates for the Perseid meteor shower. An interesting evening can certainly be arranged for both the NCA and others in the ways of meteor observing.

CONVENTION NEWS - Many of the NCA members have registered for the convention. It is hoped that every member of the NCA will register and also attend this convention, to be held here in Washington over the Labor Day weekend.

Plans are going forward rapidly. On February 21 Mr. Rolland LaPelle, President of the Astronomical League, Mr. Charles H. LeRoy, Promotion Chairman for the League who has been appointed Program Chairman, and Mr. John Streeter from the Fels Planetarium, were present in Washington for an all day session on convention plans. They met in the foyer of the Department of Commerce along with the general committee from the NCA. It will be necessary to recruit many persons to help with the convention and it is hoped that each of you will help in any way that you are called upon. Several will be needed as attendants while we visit the Naval Research Laboratory. Only those registered for the convention will be allowed to make this trip. We are required to submit a list in advance of those who intend to visit the Naval Research Laboratory. Each person on this list must be an American citizen and should be in a position to verify this fact. Help will also be needed for the other two trips, to the Naval Observatory and to Georgetown Observatory. We are arranging for chartered buses for these trips;