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STAR DUST
National Capital Astronomers

April 1955 Vol. 12, No. 8

APRIL CALENDAR

- Apr. 2 "NEW STARS", Dr. Cecilia Payne-Gaposchkin, Chairman (Sat.) of the Department of Astronomy at Harvard, Department of Commerce Auditorium, 8:15 P. M.
- Apr. 16 DISCUSSION GROUP with Grace Scholz. "A TAKE-OFF (Sat.) FOR US ON THE MOST STIMULATING MADISON CONVENTION PAPERS," Commerce Department Foyer, 8:00 P. M.
- Apr. 21 TRIP TO BALTIMORE PLANETARIUM in Enoch Pratt (Thur.) Library. Meet in front of Commerce Department at 7:00 P. M. Trip being arranged by Thelma Cressy, telephone HO 2-2993.
- Apr. 27 Twenty-second Arthur Lecture on the Sun, "SOLAR (Wed.) ACTIVITY AND ITS TERRESTRIAL EFFECTS," Sir Harold Spencer-Jones, Astronomer Royal of Great Britain, 8:30 P. M. U. S. National Museum, 10th and Constitution.

Each Saturday morning, Telescope making class with Irene Warthen at Chevy Chase Community Center, 5600 block of Connecticut Avenue, 9-12 A. M. Miss Warthen's phone is LOckwood 5-4058.

"NEW STARS" -- Perhaps the most astonishing idea advanced by astronomers in recent years is the theory that the universe is still creating new stars, that the days of creation are not over and, indeed, may never be over. Some scientists believe that there are stars only 100,000 years old. In other words, the human race is older than some of the stars that we can see in the sky through our telescopes. Mrs. Cecilia Payne-Gaposchkin will discuss this lively theory and some of its implications. Dr. Gaposchkin

SOME MESSIER OBJECTS THAT ARE VISIBLE THIS SPRING

No.	Description	Location		Dec.
		R.A.	h m	
M 3	Globular Cluster	Canes Venatici	13 39.9	28 38
13	" "	Hercules	16 39.9	36 33
35	Open	Gemini	06 05.8	24 21
44	" (Beehive)	Cancer	08 37.2	20 10
51	Spiral Galaxy (Whirlpool Nebula)	Canes Venatici	13 27.8	47 27
53	Globular Cluster	Coma Berenices	13 10.5	18 26
64	Spiral Galaxy (Black-Eye Nebula)	Coma Berenices	12 54.3	21 57
81	" "	Ursa Major	09 51.5	69 18
82	Irregular	Ursa Major	09 51.9	69 56

----- A. L. White

is one of the most distinguished of our contemporary astronomers. She is the author of "Stars in the Making," one of the finest popular books on astronomy to appear in recent years.

-----Benjamin Adelman

BALTIMORE PLANETARIUM TRIP. On Thursday, April 21, the NCA will attend the 9 P. M. showing at the Davis Planetarium, Maryland Academy of Sciences, Enoch Pratt Library, Baltimore, Maryland. The Planetarium program will not be released until after STAR DUST is printed. However, Director Paul Watson always gives us an interesting show. There will be astronomical exhibits and photographs, as well as a 7-inch reflector and a 4 1/2-inch refractor telescope on the observing deck, which we may look through before and after we visit the planetarium. Let's get there early enough to look at the exhibits before 9 and not interrupt the planetarium program by being late. The trip, including the program, if available, will be discussed at the April business meeting. Please meet at the Commerce Department Building at 7 P. M. unless you make other arrangements. We will try to arrange for those living in northern Washington or Maryland to go without coming to the Commerce Department Building. We need to know how many are interested in order to provide transportation and to let Director Watson know how many will be there. See us at the April meeting or telephone Elizabeth Goerner, EMerson 3-2492, Thelma Cressy, HObart 2-2993. ROUTE: Take Baltimore Washington Expressway to center of Baltimore. Turn right onto Route 40 Mulberry Street (not Route 40 Alternate). Proceed 4 blocks to 400 Cathedral Street. Library (Planetarium) is at Cathedral and Mulberry Streets. Look for parking lot immediately after turning right on Mulberry.

APRIL 16 DISCUSSION GROUP. Perhaps you haven't read all the papers given at the Madison Convention and would like to hear them discussed. On the other hand, perhaps you have read them and have your own pet theories and observational facts to add. Do you know the present phase of the solar cycle? Do you want to join in the search for nova? Have you heard the evidence for Saturn's Ring D?

OBSERVATIONAL DATA

Mercury is too close to the sun for observation and superior conjunction occurs April 22nd. Venus is a morning star and may be seen low in the east before sunrise. Mars has moved to Taurus and is visible in the west early in the evening. Jupiter is past the meridian at sunset and sets after midnight. Saturn rises around 8:30 and is visible low in the southern sky for the rest of the night. On the 15th at 11:00 P. M. (E.S.T.), the Milky Way lies along the northern horizon passing through Auriga, Perseus, Cassiopeia and Cygnus.

----A. L. White

LUNAR OCCULTATIONS FOR APRIL

Date	Star	Mag.	Age	Phase	E. S. T.
2	BD / 9° 2226	6.8	10.0	D	9:59.3 P. M.
23	Nu Tau	4.4	2.4	D	7:05.4 P. M.
24	72 Tau	5.4	2.4	D	7:21.0 P. M.
27	BD / 19° 1784	6.8	5.5	D	8:16.4 P. M.

THE GREAT NEBULA OF ORION, now in the southwestern sky, can be observed for a few weeks more. Although visible to the naked eye and revealed by field glasses as a luminous green cloud, the marvelous details of the Great Nebula are disclosed only by photography. Prolonged time exposures show that the central triangular area is partly circled by a distinct loop, and at least 20 curved wreaths spread out to envelop nearly the whole constellation of Orion. This nebula is 585 light years away, not much farther than most of the Orion stars themselves. If the earth revolved around Rigel or Betelgeuse instead of the sun, our night sky would glow with a distinct emerald green hue, radiated from the nebula. The nebula itself would occupy a part of the Rigelian sky about twice the size of the Big Dipper Bowl. In real size the nebula is 10 light years across and would extend from the Sun to Sirius with two light years to spare!

Does the earth have more satellites than just the moon? Do you wonder why you never seem to see anything happen on the moon? Let's talk about these things and pool our knowledge of recent findings.

---Grace C. Scholz

OBSERVATION PROGRAM WITH NATIONAL CAPITAL PARKS -- The NCA will cooperate with the National Parks again this year in a series of evening observation meetings for the public. The National Capital Parks will furnish a public address system and projection equipment for use if it is cloudy. NCA members who own portable telescopes should bring them to give the public a chance to enjoy the wonders of the heavens. Many of the people who come to these outings have never before looked through any kind of a telescope. Some may become interested enough in astronomy to later attend our regular lecture meetings and some eventually join the NCA. So although we may look upon participation in these programs as primarily a service to the community, they are also an opportunity to find new people with whom to share our interest in astronomy.

The program for this season is as follows:

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Place</u>	<u>Moon Ph.</u>	<u>Planets Vis.</u>
Sun. May 1	8:30-10:30	Fort Reno Park	1 Q.	Mars, Sat., Jup.
Sun. May 29	9-11	"	1 Q.	"
Sat. Jun. 18	9-11	"	Not vis.	"
Thurs. Jul. 21*	6:30-9:30	(to be announc)	3 days	"
Tues. Aug. 9*	6:30-9:30	"	Not vis.	"
Sun. Aug. 21	9-11	Fort Reno Park	4 days	Saturn
Sat. Sept. 17	8-10	"	Not vis.	Saturn
Sun. Oct. 9	7-9	"	"	Constellation study

*The National Parks will conduct a nature hike or similar activity July 21 and Aug. 9 from 6:30 till dusk when observations will begin.

Please bring your portable telescopes to make these outings a success.

----William L. Isherwood

THE PANEL LAST MONTH was really better than I had hoped it would be. I want to thank very, very much all the NCA people who contributed to the success of both the dinner and the program. Certainly without their help it would not have been as good as it was. Especially, I should like to thank Elizabeth Goerner for the work she did in planning and arranging for the dinner; Grace Scholz and Elizabeth Goerner for printing the post cards used in sending in questions; Bob Deller and Hal Griggs for handling the microphone and amplification system during the program; Bob Wright for entertaining Mr. Federer while he was in town; Ben Adelman for the excellent publicity given the program in the newspapers and in the announcements sent out; Betty Fazekas for her correspondence with neighboring societies; Roger Smith for the very good name plaques which were on the Panel table; Jewell Boling for the write-ups in STAR DUST; Dana Law for the cooperation given me throughout the period the program was being planned and the choosing of the excellent eating place; and finally, I wish to thank all those who sent in questions making such an interesting program possible.

----Bob Rhynsburger

NEW MEMBER FOR MARCH

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CHANGES OF ADDRESS

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