

981
1579

STAR DUST
National Capital Astronomers

June 1957

Vol. 14, No. 10

OBSERVATIONAL DATA FOR JUNE

Mercury reaches greatest western elongation June 1 and may be seen at this time low in the east just before sunrise. Venus is a brilliant object low in the western sky for an hour or more after sunset. Mars is moving from Gemini into Cancer and is to be seen for an hour or two after sunset low in the west. Jupiter is just past the meridian at sunset and sets at about midnight. Saturn is in opposition on the 1st. The planet rises about sunset and is visible almost until dawn. The date of maximum intensity for the DRACONID meteor shower is June 28. This shower averages 12 meteors per hour.

LUNAR OCCULTATIONS FOR JUNE

Date	Star	Mag.	Age	Phase	E. S. T.
8	2 b Lib	6.7	10.7	D	11:10.0 P. M.
12-20	BD /1° 4773	6.4	21.9	R	3:00 8 A. M.

---A. L. White

Jewell Boling, Editor 1717 P St., N. W. NO 7-7693

JUNE CALENDAR

June 1 "SATELLITE SIDELIGHTS", Dr. Armand Spitz, Director (Sat.) of Spitz Laboratories, Department of Commerce Auditorium, 8:15 P. M.

June 8 MIDDLE EAST REGIONAL CONVENTION, Harrisburg, Pa. (Sat.) See the article inside for details.

June 29 EXPLORING THE SKY, Joint Program of the NCA and (Sat.) the National Capital Parks, Fort Reno Park, 40th and Chesapeake Streets, N. W., 9:00 P. M. Please come and don't forget your telescopes.

TELESCOPE MAKING CLASS with Hoy Walls each Monday evening through June 17 at 7:30 P. M., Chevy Chase Community Center, 5600 block of Connecticut Avenue, N. W. Mr. Walls' telephone number is OL 2-5395.

SATELLITE SIDELIGHTS - Armand Spitz, Director of Spitz Laboratories, has spent many years in helping to make an understanding of science an easy matter for the non-scientific public. He is the author of several books and numerous articles on science. He has been a pioneer in radio and television education, and for several years had had his own radio and television shows. His planetariums, which are known throughout the world, have done much to popularize astronomy. Dr. Spitz was Director of Education at the Franklin Institute of Philadelphia and lecturer at the Fels Planetarium there for many years. He is now the Coordinator of Visual Satellite Operations for the Smithsonian Astrophysical Observatory. In this capacity he is to see that the artificial satellites launched during the I. G. Y. do not get lost.

JUN 28 1957

Dr. Spitz will talk about the human side of the satellite observing program. He will discuss the results of the recent nationwide alert from a national point of view and bring the problems up to date. He will bring up many new things which have not been "seen" before. This promises to be a refreshing non-technical lecture giving a new slant on the satellite program.

--Everette Neville

NCA OFFICERS ELECTED AT THE MAY MEETING -- For the one-year term beginning September 1957:

Robert H. McCracken	President
Roger K. Smith	Vice President
Phyllis M. Seips	Secretary
Lillian R. Gregor	Treasurer
Elizabeth M. Lipscomb	Trustee (4-year term)

AUDITING COMMITTEE. Mr. C. L. Andrews and Mr. Leith Holloway have agreed to audit the NCA Treasurer's books during the summer.

NCA MEMBERS -- Let's Go To Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, June 8 to the Middle East Regional Convention of the Astronomical League. Make it a family jaunt or bring your friends. If you can't conveniently make it to Harrisburg by 9:30 A. M., come later in the day.

Date: Saturday, June 8
Place: Paxtang Presbyterian Church,
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania (Paxtang is a suburb of Harrisburg).
Program: 9 A. M. Registration
10:00 A. M. Business Session
10:15 A. M. Session for Papers
John Groome, Chairman
10:45 A. M. First Round Table Session
Dana Law, Chairman
A. What successful programs would you suggest
B. Public Star Parties - How to do it.
C. Suggested speaking topics for amateurs

Thus we had a chance to compare two models in one day, and the originality of Armand's delivery rivaled in pleasure the big show we had seen earlier, so we felt the weather had actually favored us, since we may see the stars almost any night.

Forty-three visitors from NCA stayed for the evening, and 34 of us bunked most comfortably for the night at a luxurious motel on U. S. 40. The next morning we set out sight-seeing in brilliant sunlight, and most of us went to the indescribably beautiful "Longwood Gardens", the huge DuPont estate a few miles across the Pennsylvania border. We didn't see the Dixie line and wonder where it got itself lost. At the gardens we spent hours going through the lushly landscaped hothouse parks, miles of them, and acres of outdoor formal gardens with scores of sparkling fountains which made "Sans Souci seem like a child's toy," declared one of our passengers who had traveled much in Europe. We spun the color camera till our arms ached and could only depart when hunger drove us to dinner. Later we went to the Naval Academy at Annapolis where two submarines were on display. Others went to Ft. McHenry, and some went past Winterthur to get a look at it. We came home at dark Sunday, tired, but satisfied with a world and a universe of new impressions.

---Tove Neville

all filed inside and got seated in the most comfortable upholstered circular seats yet, with even a round pillow effect on the back to lean the head on.

Well, the show itself! You can mention all the wonderful inventions Armand has dreamed up for this new Model-B planetarium, including "migrating-star holes" to show their proper motions over thousands of years, smoothly variable speed, and a moon that changes phase as you watch it, but is it possible to describe the feeling it is as if to zoom back and forth in the four dimensions of the universe, feeling that you are a part and master of all time and space? Well, that is the way I felt on seeing this my first planetary show, and I heard many say afterwards that they were more impressed with the "Spitz" than they had been with the "Hayden" and the "Adler". Of course, our man-made condition offered us every phenomenon of astronomical interest known to man. From the polar constellations to the Southern Cross and the Magellanic Clouds we blazed across the skies in minutes. From Aurora Borealis to eclipses, to comets, we were suspended in time-space with the sun setting and moon rising at the same time.

After such a stimulating show, it didn't matter that it still rained, for we felt we carried the whole cloudless universe with us, and instead of the planned outdoor picnic supper, we met with the new Delaware Astronomy Group at the laboratory next to the shops which many went through with great interest. Here we had an informal supper which the Delaware group had prepared; the hot-dogs were super, and the cupcakes scrumptious and we venture - homemade. We ate under the dome of the smaller Spitz planetarium, and later Armand Spitz demonstrated this instrument for us with his own witty and original comment, and reminiscences of earlier "Spitz history". He also gave us a satellite test observation, and showed us some professional slides of the late comet.

- 11:45 Report by Miss Grace C. Scholz, President, Astronomical League
- 12:00 Group Photo; Lunch; Inspection of Exhibits
- 1:00 Satellite Tracking Session (Round Table), G. R. Wright, Chairman
- 1:30 Report from Smithsonian Astrophysical Observatory
Projects: Dr. Armand N. Sptiz
- 2:00 Session for Papers (See note below)
- 2:30 Second Round Table Session
Leo N. Schoenig, Chairman
A. What do YOU want to know about telescope making?
B. New gadgets for experienced builders
- 3:15 Junior Reports and Activities
- 4:15 Leave for inspection of Harrisburg Satellite Tracking Station by car caravan.
- 6:30 Dinner: Harold T. Bitner, Chairman.
Introduction and Comments: Edward L. Naylor, General Chairman
Address: Dr. Julien Ripley, Dickenson College
- 9:00 Star Party

Papers: If you want to present a paper, contact Cliff Raible, 200 Rebecca Square, Millvale, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

Accommodations The Harrisburg society will make arrangements for Saturday night accommodations for those wishing to stay over (the rose gardens nearby Hershey would be fun for Sunday).

(Continued on next page)

Sessions will feature round table discussions with good coffee at the breaks.

Let's get a line up at the June 1 NCA meeting on who will be going and make arrangements for transportation for those without cars. If you are interested in going and aren't going to be at the June 1 meeting, contact Dana Law, OT 4-6835.

NEW MEMBERS

- Jack M. Levanion, 7920 18th Avenue, W. Hyattsville, Md.
HE 4-4428
- Mayne Owens, 1830 K St., N.W., Wash., D.C. ME 8-4621
- Mr. and Mrs. David Rotbart, 5333 Potomac Avenue, N.W.
Wash., D. C. FM 3-6302
- *Ronald M. Blagg, 7203 13th Avenue, Takoma Park Station,
Wash. 12, D. C. HE 4-7993
- *Neal R. Gross, 8600 Grubb Road, Wash. 15, D. C.
JU 8-9791
- *Bob Proctor, 2809 Weisman Road, Silver Spring, Md.
LO 4-6806
- *Bill Reader, 4502 Furman Road, Silver Spring, Md.
WH 6-7394

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Leith J. Holloway, Jr., 2430 Pennsylvania Ave., N. W.
Wash. 7, D. C. Apt. 733 FE 3-7796

--Elsa Dimick

THE SPITZ LABORATORIES TRIP, May 11-12, was an outstanding treat to any astronomer, and from the reports received, everyone enjoyed it immensely and was truly impressed and enriched by the experience. The National Capital Astronomers witnessed a historic occasion, the initiation of the new Air Force Planetarium which is to be set up and be a high point overlooking the 18000 acres of the Air Force Academy, Colorado Springs, Colorado. It is here to be used as a valuable device for training Air Force officers in navigation, and it will be installed in its own specially made building.

We left Washington with a cloudy sky a little after 9 A.M., and arrived at Yorklyn with a few dashes of rain right around noon. We had guaranteed the weather at the May business meeting, and weather we had plenty of -- the wrong kind for awhile. It rained on and off all afternoon and evening, but this really only brought home to us more forcefully and vividly the point that a planetarium is a wonderful invention where man may create his own sun - and moonrise, may travel forward or backward with the motions that are the history of the stars, and therefore I think we all enjoyed the magnificent show only the more. And a marvelous one it was. Armand was obviously proud of his new brain-child set up in the just completed test building.

On arriving, we realized that the staff at "Spitz", including Armand himself, had been pushing forward to our coming - which as Spitz himself mentioned was the deadline for the installation of the instrument - and we were told that the scaffolding had just been removed an hour previous, the sweeping of the floor just done in the last few minutes, and we guessed that several of them had worked most of the night to have it all ready for us. First we had a nice lunch, prepared by a church group at Armand Spitz' request, and when we had all finished, our group of 58 visitors from NCA assembled around the terra cotta-beige building with the silvery dome rising from it. At this point a bus arrived from Baltimore and unloaded the astronomy group from that fair city, and we