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STAR DUST, v. 26, no. 2

SHORT NOTES
from the President

October 5th, meeting : 8:15PM
Dept. of Commerce Auditorium.

This issue of StarDust will come as a surprise. . . . The format is different, the type is full size and the contents raises the question of "Is this rebirth a challenge to our membership?"

"Measurement of the Astronomical Unit by Radio Astronomy" is the topic of NCA speaker Dr. Stephen H. Knowles.

Your president has taken the responsibility of creating change with a new administration. . . . The ultimate goal is to build a professional scientific membership composed mainly of amateurs, who, (1) enjoy delving into the serious fun of building more and better telescopes, (2) gain expertise as knowledgeable sky observers, (3) and to broaden their knowledge of astronomy and space information with their attendance at our regularly scheduled monthly lectures and discussion groups.

The exact mean distance between the earth and the sun, called the Astronomical Unit, is a fundamental quantity in astrophysical research.

Until the mid-1950's, measurements based on the orbital effects of the asteroid Eros, at its closest approaches to the earth, were considered the best means of calculating the earth-sun distance.

In the past decade powerful astronomical radars have been used to determine precise travel times of radio pulses between the two bodies and hence their separation.

Since 1966, Dr Knowles has been perfecting a third method, useful for checking the other two: annual period doppler shifts in the 21cm neutral hydrogen line emissions from large interstellar radio sources are used

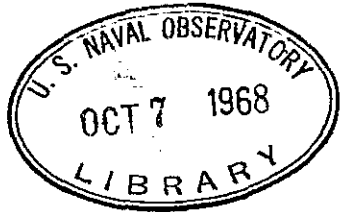
Continued on page 2

Continued page 3

National Capital Astronomers
Astronomical League of Wash, DC
George E. Gould, Pres. 423-8777
5308 29th Pl. Hillcrest Hts, Md 20031

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In support of these goals, your president and your other officers and trustees intend to set high standards in the selection of technical speakers and committee chairmen for our programs.

Star Dust must become a challenge to the membership and reflect their interests and related information requests in astronomy subjects. . . . Therefore as your president, I am designating the second Saturday of each month as Star Dust news and editorial meeting.

At this time members are urged to bring in questions for the question box-- short articles from various news sources, books on astronomy and related sciences, for review---items on telescope making--- observations past and proposed for the future---- and any other subject and material that will be of scientific interest to our members.

In order to get this program on the road, we will need Junior and Senior reporters. This is an opportunity to learn how to write good technical articles---Reader Digest style--- This training will be invaluable to any member who wants to develop a professional approach in analyzing technical papers and in improving his technical writing ability.

We will also need Jr and Senior Editors. The ability to rewrite and guide others will be a most rewarding experience---- Even if you have never had any training in school or on the job. . . . The way to learn is to try it.

It's just like building a telescope---We will have experts to guide you. In a few months, you will be able to do almost the impossible.

So make it your business to volunteer for these assignments. It will take a few months for everybody who is interested to get their feet wet. It is our intention to print as many articles and items as possible

that meet the Editor's Criteria.

You will enjoy the thrill of seeing your By-line an an accredited NCA Astro-Reporter. In addition, other NCA members will surely seek you out as a knowledgeable member at subsequent meetings for discussion and further information. This is the path to lasting friendships.

Put Nov.30th down on your Calender. For J.Roland Cumberland. He makes the fabulous Questar optics. There will be no underscored, no meeting on the following Dec.7th. Learn how they are made.

In addition we are interested in having a Questar star party on Friday Nov.29th. It is planned for the South Eastern section of our town but in the Hillcrest Hts,Marlow Hts ,Md. area. In the vicinity of Branch Ave and St. Barnabus Rd. Let us know if you want to attend. Contact Jerry Schnall Larry White-Bob Wright-Bob McCracken.

We hope to have at least one dozen Questars on hand. If you have one or know of any in this area besides the local school systems let us know about them.

Mr.Cumberland will have some 3.5 and the new 7" Questars at his talk on Sat., evening Nov.30th. If poor weather precludes viewing the stars after the talk, then Mr.Cumberland will set up the telescopes for viewing in the auditorium as long distance microscopes.

In order to reinstitute some of the excellent programs that made NCA an outstanding amateur astronomy club, your president met with Past Presidents,Mable Sterns, Margaret Noble, Janet 'Perky' Wright, & Bob Wright at the Wright's emporium. Also attending were Moncure Noble and Susan Wright.

As a result, we will print in Star Dust from time to time on a continuous basis, interesting items of past NCA activities. It is further planned that some of these activities will be reinstated for the enjoyment of the present membership.

Continued on page 4

October Speaker, from page 1,
to calculate the earth's orbital velocity,
and then from its period of revolution the
orbit size. Our speaker will discuss mea-
surements of the Crab Nebula, Sagittarius
A and Cassiopea A for this purpose, using
a 50 channel radiometer. Their present
and future place among the other techni-
ques is evaluated.

Dr. Stephen H. Knowles is an astronomer
with the E.O. Hulbert Center for Space
Research of the Naval Research Labora-
tory. Much of his work is done with the N
Navy's major radio telescope facility at
Maryland Point.

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The September Speaker

Our first speaker of the new meeting
year was Dennis Rawlins, who presented
NCA a sequel to his December 1967 talk
entitled "Chase of the trans-Uranian Plan-
et". Mr. Rawlins emphasized that the lack
of good star charts early in the nineteenth
century prevented a much earlier recogni-
tion of Neptune and complicated its 1845
discovery, as did the French and British
astronomical bureaucracy of the times.
It now appears that mathematical predic-
tions of the existence of the eighth planet
were more lucky than skillful.

W.R.W.

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September's Jr Div Meeting Reported by
Astro Reporter Ken Crowley

Pres. Bill Bruck reported on the summer
Executive Comm Meeting, at which several
problems were discussed. Generally the
problems centered around the lack of reg-
ional members and activities. The Area
officers were urged to have information
concerning meetings published in StarDust
One of the ideas proposed was a Junior Div
Star Party to be held in late Sept. A comm
was formed, at the general meeting, to se-
lect a specific time and place. In connec-
tion with such activities, transportation by
car pool and telephone grapevine were
suggested. Another idea, proposed as a
club project, was the construction of a ten
continued next column

OCTOBER CALENDER

- Oct 5 Dinner with the speaker at Bassins
14th & Pa Aves. NW 6:15PM Call
Bill Winkler 736-3553 or Geo.
Gould, 423-8777 for reservations.
- Oct. 5 Meeting at Dept of Commerce
Auditorium, 14th & E Sts. NW
8:15 PM
- Oct 19 NCA picnic and star party at
Mannassas Battlefield Memorial
Park, 5:30PM, bring your own
food for barbequeing, and your
telescopes and binoculars. Till
Midnight. Park is on Rte 66 ,
West of Beltway.

A reminder: the Nov. 16 discussion group
will be a roundtable discussion on all
phases of astrophotography. Plan your
slide and print displays, and descriptions
of your techniques and problems
now.

- Oct. 20 Prince Georges Juniors will meet
at the P.G. Cty Materials Center
2# PM , Geoffrey Hornseth will
be in charge of this group.
Md-Dc Sam Bacasse, TA 9 5432
Va Jrs. Grady Whitney 273 -2538
Observing at the Five Inch , Oct 18th
8 to 10PM with Larry White.

- Oct 5 General meeting of the Junior Div.
7:15 PM in Dept of Commerce aud.
itorium before regular lecture.

All Jrs. should plan to attend.

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inch telescope, the mirror is offered by
VP Sam Bacasse. A comm. was formed to
possible methods of raising funds for this
purpose. Sam also reported on his efforts
concerning publicity for the 'Exploring the
Sky' programs. He plans to consult with
the Senior Div., about further Jr publicity
activities. - - - Finally a field trip to the
twenty six inch refractor at the Naval
Observatory was proposed. necessary in-
formation to be acquired.

Continued on page 4.

Bill Winkler our VP has arranged an excellent program for our Nov.2nd meeting. Three experienced Planetarium directors and lecturers will form a panel for an interesting discussion and sky slide show presentation. Our own Margaret Knoble, from Prince Georges Cty, Al Brieter from Montgomery Cty Jr. College, and Mr. Fagin from Fairfax Cty. Come prepared to ask questions.

Hoy Walls built a 6" reflector with a pyroceran mirror that is to be used as an ext a telescope at the Naval Observatory. It has a wooden tripod and a very nice aluminum mounting with slow motion controls. Hoy gave us a counter weight from one of his telescopes. EYEPIECES AND FINDER ARE NEEDED. The rings are large enough for a moon watch scope. HAS ANYONE PARTS THAT THEY WILL DONATE FOR THIS SCOPE?

In reorganizing our meeting agenda, your president will have the minutes of the previous meeting printed in Star Dust. This will eliminate the reading of minutes at the meeting. The Chair will ask for corrections or additions to the published minutes. Then the chair will entertain a motion to accept the minutes as published and or amended.

From Jerry Schnall, Telescope Making. is meeting Hopefully the telescope class will meet at the Palisades Community Center, near Sherier and Edmonds Places N.W., Wash DC, On Friday evenings between 7:30 and 10:00 PM.

The following agenda will be used starting with the October meeting.

- 8:15 Call to order
- Reports of telescope making classes
- Observing at the 5" Larry White
- What did you see? w/Bob Wright
- Occultations, with Bob McCracken Jr. Activities, Ted Noble, Geoffrey Hornseth, Bill Bruk, Sam Bacasse, Grady Whitney.
- 8:30 Introduction of Guest Speaker
- 9:10 Speakers Deadline (maximum) Ten minute q and a period.
- 9:20 Break to 9:29
- 9:30 Business meeting called to order.
- 9:45 to 10.00 Adjourn

Sherier Place is one block west of Mc Arthur Blvd. and Edmonds Place is one block south of Arizona Ave. Jerry hopes to start his classes on Sept.27th.

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- New & proposed members:
- Gerhard H. Bold 113 N.Emory Dr. Sterling, Va 22170
 - Helmut E. Dost 10412 Hutting Pl. Silver Spr. Md 20902 949 5035
 - Dr & Mrs Stanley Blumenthal, 10461 Grosvenor Pl. Rockville, Md 20852, 443 6473
 - Cliff & E. Curtis Green 7411 Gresham St N. Springfield, Va 22151, 441-3838
 - Thomas J. Guarnieri, 11307 Schuykill Rd Rockville, Md 20853 946-1351
 - Jrs.: James Robert Barker, Jr., 16 Cheverly Circle, Cheverly, Md 20785, 773-2135
 - John Landua, 938 Dead Run Dr. McLean, Va. 22101 356-7807
 - Bruce Muirhead, 4909 Stonecliff Rd. Suitland, Md 20023 736-4298
 - William R. Schmidt, 5514 Randolph St. Hyattsville, Md. 20784 Wa-7-0541
 - Susan A Wright, 202 Piping Rock Dr. Silver Spring, Md 20904 384-6748

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Sept. Jr. Meeting , Continued from page 3

After the regular business was completed, Mr. Don Hammond of District 36, Toastmasters International, which covers the Metropolitan Washington D.C. area, spoke to the Juniors about a program of instructive sessions in public speaking and Parliamentary procedure. About ten Juniors expressed interest. Further details were left to the Senior Division.