

A MYSTERIOUS REPORTER may call you any day now. It will be Bert Rotbart on the job finding out what NCA'ers are doing that other NCA'ers would like to know about. Watch out for BERT'S PERSONAL PATTEN beginning in January.

A 10-MINUTE DEMONSTRATION of some basic astronomical instrument at each lecture session has been suggested. How many people would be interested in such demonstrations?

NEW MEMBERS

- *Bertolini, Miss Sylvia, 1517 Jefferson St., Hyattsville, Md. WA-1241
Cantonwine, Gordon, 1393 Congress St., S. E.
- *Doster, Wm. B. Jr., 2006 Ingraham, Hyattsville, Md. UN-7296
Goldberg, Aaron, 6119 43rd St., Riverdale, Md. WA-9053
Sharp, Wm. T., 6905 Carleton Terrace, College Park, Md. AP-1492

BOB RHYNSEBURGER did a bang-up job on the November Discussion Group on "Theories of Cosmogonies." Eighteen persons were in attendance. The discussion centered chiefly around the cosmology of the solar system.

IRVING MALITSKY AND HARRIET HUTZLER will attend the convention of the American Astronomical Society in Haverford in December. Irving has promised to report it for Star Dust.

MR. CILLEY tripped and broke his rib recently. We wish him a speedy recovery.

GROTE REBER gave a talk on radio astronomy at the Naval Observatory November 20.

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

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DECEMBER CALENDAR

- Dec. 2 Sat. "WHAT WE LEARN FROM COMETS," Dr. Carl C. Kiess, 8:15 P. M. Commerce Auditorium.
- Dec. 5 Tue. Astronomy Class, Science Service, 1719 N Street, N. W., 8 P. M. Dr. Wells, Instructor; Jim Cracroft, Assistant Instructor.
- Dec. 6 Wed. Observing at the NCA 5" on Naval Observatory Grounds, 7:45 (If it rains will be on December 13.)
- Dec. 16 Sat. "LITTLE KNOWN AND ODD FACTS ABOUT ASTRONOMY," Discussion Group, 8:15 Department of Commerce Foyer, Mrs. Norris, Leader. (Everyone please bring one or more facts.)
- Dec. 19 Tue. Astronomy Class, Science Service, 8:00 P. M.
- Dec. 20 Wed. Open house, Naval Observatory, 7:00 P. M. (Passes must be requested from the Observatory in advance.)

Thursday and Friday, 7-10 P. M. Telescope Making Class, Roosevelt High School, Room 313, 13th and Upshur, N.W. Miss Irene Warthen, Instructor. Telephone LQckwood 5-1237. Note: Miss Warthen will be present only on Tuesdays. For further details call Miss Warthen.

BRIGHT COMETS throughout human history have attracted a great deal of attention because of their sudden and extraordinary appearance and have been recognized by the ignorant and the superstitious as omens of "famine, pestilence, and war".

Dr. Carl C. Kiess, speaker for Saturday, December 2, will tell of the superstitions regarding comets before the era of the telescope, and how a new instrument of observation dispelled them and led to our present understanding of comets as members of the solar system. He will illustrate his lecture with slides.

Subsequent to his graduation from Indiana University, Dr. Kiess was on the staff of the Lick Observatory, assigned to observe comets. While searching for Encke's comet in July 1911, he discovered a new one known as Comet 1911 b. After teaching astronomy at various universities, Dr. Kiess accepted a position in the Bureau of Standards as spectroscopist and has been engaged there in spectroscopic research work.

NAVAL OBSERVATORY has not yet announced its policy on having open nights in 1951. Passes must be requested from the observatory in advance for the open night on December 20.

ASTRONOMY COURSE is underway. There is still room for three or four more persons to take the course. Get in touch with Dr. Wells or Miss Perkins immediately if you wish to enroll.

NCA MEMBERS who have not paid their dues by December 1 are due to be dropped from membership.

STAR DUST with this issue becomes also an Astronomers' Trading Post. Do you have something astronomical you would like to trade for something else? Call or write the editor of Star Dust and we'll see what can be done about getting you a "swap."

CARL WERNTZ'S COLUMN

For several years a corps of faithful observers has been making observations through the NCA 5", and on the basis of these observations has been estimating, roughly, very roughly; the magnitudes of certain variable stars. John Lankford now has a camera which will do the job much more exactly. The camera, mounted in his back yard, has a 15" focal length lens and rests on a mounting which was secured from the A.A.V.S.O. Although it is equipped with a driving mechanism John has been tracking manually.

Last summer Lankford and Miles Davis went with the newly built instrument into the depths of Mississippi where they obtained some good plates of the milky way through Aquila. At present, the camera, taking successive plates with a red, yellow, and blue filter, is being used to find the color indexes of some of the brighter stars. In the near future John hopes to photograph carefully some of the naked eye eclipsing variables such as Algol and lambda Tauri in order to determine their periods. This is necessary because some eclipsing binaries which were observed years ago are believed to have changed periods. We wish and expect John to be extremely successful in his ambitious project.

CORRECTIONS: NCA ROSTER. Following are the correct addresses and telephone numbers for two NCA members which were in error in the Roster:

- Norris, Mrs. Ernest Eden, Sr., 2204 Wyoming Ave., N. W.
(8) MI 2424.
- Scholz, Miss Grace C., 110 Schuyler Road, Silver Spring, Md. SL 0706

ASTRONOMICAL EXHIBIT featuring astronomy in November held during that month in the City Library was attended by many people and aroused a great deal of interest in the subject among those who attended. The section on meteors seemed to attract the most attention and comment.

BOB WRIGHT, CHAIRMAN of the Astronomical League's 1951 Convention, called a pre-convention meeting at Chapel Hill, North Carolina, site of the convention on November 18. Dr. Douglas Duke, Assistant Director of the Morehead Planetarium was host to the committee. The sessions were held in the University Room and the Faculty Lounge. Representatives were present from Washington, D.C., Richmond and Norfolk, Virginia, and Greensboro and Raleigh, North Carolina, a total of 19 in all. Besides Bob, Grace Scholz, Mabel Sterns, and Janet Perkins attended from here. Arrangements were made for dormitory, registration, and exhibit space. Several vantage points for viewing the eclipse in and around Chapel Hill were looked over. Afterwards the planetarium show, "The Fall Sky," was attended. Chapel Hill lies three miles north of the southern edge of the path of the eclipse. The annular phase of the eclipse there will last for 38 seconds. There is much work to be done, but as Bob says, with the advantages of the location and the spectacle which nature will provide, this is going to be a convention which nobody will want to miss.

52 OF THE 95 ASTRONOMERS living in the District of Columbia met November 15 at Georgetown University. The group plans regular meetings but on an informal basis. The organization of such a group has been contemplated for three years Father Heyden reports. Dr. E. O. Holburt of the Naval Research Laboratory gave the initial talk. His talk had to do with the mystery of the source of light in the night sky in excess of what can be accounted for by starlight. There is about five times as much light as should be there from starlight alone. Father Heyden has promised to get Dr. Holburt to send us a more detailed account of this phenomenon, which we hope to bring to you in January STAR DUST.

GRACE SCHOLZ ALMOST WALKED INTO THE GUNFIRE at Blair House when the attempt was made on President Truman's life. She had just left the AAA office and was on the sidewalk directly across from Blair House. She just froze in her tracks, she says.

DR. HALL'S LECTURE, "Some Astronomical Color Effects," given at the November meeting was a comprehensive talk which covered color and interpretation of color in astronomical work. Doctors, chemists, architects, industrialists -- all walks of life have to consider color. The accuracy of the colors which the artist uses helps to make a great picture.

Spectroscopes and elaborate equipment have been developed to accomplish color perception feats beyond the power of the human eye. In the old days an astronomer could only sit in a dark room and note what color the star looked to him. Now he does a very precise job of establishing color indices of astronomical objects by the use of modern spectroscopic devices.

-----Nettie Mansker

NEW SERIES OF OBSERVATION NIGHTS at the 5" is being initiated by the Telescope Expeditors' Committee, of which Jim Crowell is chairman. This committee - an observing committee to develop observers by using our telescopes -- begins a program of regular observing sessions on December 6. The program is planned for persons to observe objects they have not seen before and to carry out observations which will have scientific application. The following objects are to be observed on December 6:

1. Jupiter
2. Great Nebula in Andromeda
3. Star Cluster in Cassiopea
4. Great Nebula and Trapezium in Orion
5. Two Close-Star Clusters in Perseus
6. Aldebaran (double star)
7. M39 Star Cluster in Cygnus
8. Ring Nebula in Lyra