JUNIOR MEETING

On the evening of the 24th of June 1950 the Junior division of the N.C.A. heard Mrs. Grace Savage, librarian at the Naval Observatory, talk on the use of the library.

About 10 people attended and most of them adjourned to the five inch where instruction in its use was given.

- - - Miles Davis

NEWS NOTES OF ASTRONOMICAL INTEREST

The diameter of Pluto was measured in March by Dr. G. P. Kuiper at Mt. Palomar using the 200 inch Hale telescope and a visual disk meter. The diameter he obtained was 3,600 miles. This makes its mass about 1/10 that of the earth.

Nova in Ophiuchus. In a wire received by the Naval Observatory on June 26th the Harvard College Observatory reported the discovery of a 10th magnitude nova in Ophiuchus.

Lunar observers. All you lunar observers who would like a copy of the Wilkins 300 inch Moon map write The Strolling Astronomer at the Institute of Meteoritics, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, New Mexico. The map will be published in the next 24 issues. A two year subscription is only $6.00.

The fifteen-inch astrographic telescope is back in working order at the Naval Observatory. You will remember that they had trouble with the lens. See Vol. 2, No. 3 for more information.

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JUNIOR STAR DUST

Published by the Junior Members
of the National Capital Astronomers
Washington, D.C.

July-August 1950 Vol. 2, No. 5

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A NEW INSTRUMENT AT THE NAVAL OBSERVATORY

The other day I had occasion to call Morgan Cilley at his office in the observatory. In times past I have been accustomed to hearing the voice answering the phone say "Nine Inch Transit Division", but this time it was different. Mr. Scott answered by saying "Seven Inch". This made me wonder, has progress come to the observatory. Here is the story as told to me by the expert, Mr. F. P. Scott, Senior Astronomer on the Astronomical Council and Director of the Seven Inch Transit Division.

Way back in 1863 the observatory bought a new transit circle. It was an eight inch German instrument. When the observatory moved to its present location the old eight was rebuilt and a nine inch Clark object glass placed in the telescope.

This then became the nine inch transit which was used from 1900 to about 1945. Its primary work was to make observations of the positions of the Sun-Moon-Planets and the Standard Stars.

For the past five years the old nine inch has stood idle in its building on clock house hill. Then in the latter part of June the nine inch objective was placed in its "coffin" where it will rest until someone devises a program in which it can be used.

The new seven inch is being built in the shops on the observatory grounds so the astronomers who will use "her" can follow the construction step by step. They hope that it can be mounted by this fall, however, this does not mean that an observing program can start right away. In fact it will take some time to make all the

A NEW INSTRUMENT AT THE NAVAL OBSERVATORY (CONT.)

adjustments. Mr. Scott spent some time telling of the adjustments and corrections that must be made. If they are lucky it will only take a year. Here are a few of the adjustments: first the divisions in the circle. The silver circle is divided in two minutes of arc. There is an error amounting to a fraction of a second of arc between each division. Each error must be found. The tube must be corrected for flexture that is the amount it sags under its own weight as it is moved from horizon to the zenith. These are just two of the most important and time consuming.

At length when the astronomers feel that "she" is ready the observing program can start, that is, if the city lights and haze have not climbed so high in the sky that they will have to convert "her" to a zenith telescope.

- - - J. E. Lankford

METEORS AND COMETS FOR JULY AND AUGUST 1950

So far this year has been very uneventful as far as comets are concerned.

In April Dr. Van Biesbroeck announced that he had rediscovered comet d'Arrest with the McDonald telescope.

The first new comet of 1950 was discovered by Minkowski and Harrington with the 48 inch Palomar Schmidt camera. At the time of discovery on May 19 it was 8 mag. and located in Ophiuchus.

METEORS

NAME	DATE	RADIANT
Capricornids	July 18-30	Capricornus
Aquarids	July 25-30	Aquaris
Perseids	August 1-15	Perseus
Cygnids	August 10-20	Cygnus
Draconids	August 21-31	Draco

- - - R. H. Green

THE PLANETS FOR JULY AND AUGUST 1950

Mercury will be in conjunction with the sun on July 10. It is poorly placed for observation during July and August. The planet will be at elongation 27° east of the sun on the 21st of August and will have a magnitude of 0.5.

Venus is the morning star for July and August and will be prominent in the east before sunrise. It will have a magnitude of -3.3.

Mars is still in Virgo very close to Spica. The planet will pass to the east of that star towards the end of July. By sunset Mars will be low in the southwest setting a few hours before midnight. The diameter will be 7.88" on the second of July and 6.74" on the first of August. At this time the magnitude will be 0.8.

Jupiter rises in the late evening and is visible in the southern sky for the rest of the night. There is a fairly close conjunction of Jupiter and the moon on night of the 3rd and again on the 31st of July. It is at opposition with the sun on the 26th of August. Jupiter's magnitude is -2.3 with a diameter of 44.84" on July 3rd and 48.62" on the 3rd of August.

Saturn will be in Leo near the bright star Regulus and is well down in the west at sunset. By the end of August it is too close to the Sun to observe. Saturn will be in conjunction with the moon on the 19th of July and again of the 15th of August.

Uranus see volume 2, numbers 2 and 3 of Junior Star Dust for information on this planet

- - - J. A. Weinstein