

This Year's Astronomical Highlights

The grand finale of the fall meeting of the AAVSO is the talk by Dr. Harlow Shapley, director of the Harvard College Observatory. In this talk Dr. Shapley sums up the ten most important astronomical events of the past year. Here are the "Highlights" of 1949-1950.

1. The measurement of the diameter of Pluto with the 200 inch Hale telescope.
2. The ADH international telescope is on its way to South Africa. Dr. Bok will take charge when it arrives at the observatory. (Note the name is made up of the initials of the observatories which are sponsoring it. Armagh, Dunsink and Harvard.)
3. Plain for a High altitude observatory at 17,000 ft. in India.
4. Largest meteor crater in the world has been discovered in Canada. Its diameter is about $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles. From all appearances it is very old.
5. The new progress in radio astronomy has led to the discovery of fifty "radio stars."
6. The one hundredth anniversary of astro-photography was celebrated on the 17th of July 1950.
7. New parallax for the sun has been obtained. The old parallax was $8.79''$; the new $8.80''$.
8. New colors and magnitudes have been obtained with a photoelectric photometer for the closer stars.
9. Alpha Centauri B has been proved to be a flare star. The nearest star to the earth has been proved to be one of those strange flare type red variables.
10. (Lowlight) the great smog from Canada covered almost half the globe.

--- Dr. Harlow Shapley

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The Fall Meeting of the AAVSO

The 39th annual meeting of the American Association of Variable Star Observers was held at the Harvard College Observatory on the 13th and 14th of October on the invitation of Dr. Harlow Shapley. This offered an opportunity to get up to Cambridge and see several friends. Miles Davis, Leo Carroll and Bill Tiffet at Harvard College and the Mayalls at Harvard College Observatory.

The program opened on Friday evening with a talk on the Auroral research of Cornell Observatory by Dr. Carl W. Gartlein of the Physics Dept. at Cornell.

Saturday morning, promptly at ten, the meeting was called to order by President Neal Heines and Dr. Shapley welcomed us to the Harvard Observatory. He commended the work being done by the AAVSO and gave special praise to the international character of the membership.

Many interesting papers were presented on the work being done by the members of the AAVSO. During the morning session papers were presented on solar work of which the most interesting was one on sun spot color. Other papers of interest in the morning was one on a suspected variable and a paper on Lunar Meteor work by John Holloway of M.I.T.

Highlights of the afternoon session were the papers by Dr. Alice Farnsworth and C. B. Ford. Dr. Farnsworth's paper dealt with the history of the sunspot work done at the Williston Observatory of Mt. Holyoke College. Mr. Ford's paper told of his study of area relations in light curves. This a new and very interesting field for the amateur.

At 4 p.m. the members had tea at the home of Dr. and Mrs. Shapley and the meeting closed that night

with a dinner at the Continental Hotel.

--- John E. Lankford

Planets for November and December

Mercury is an evening star during November and December. It will be very difficult to see during these months even at its eastern elongation of the 15th of December. Venus is too close to the sun during November for observation, being in superior conjunction on the 13th of November. In December it comes into the evening sky but will be poorly placed for observation.

Earth. The editors have received a note from the Association of Lunar and Planetary Observers of Mars which asks owners of large telescopes to try to make observations of the planet Earth. For more information write O. J. Zumph director of the ALPOM, Sytis Major. Mars is still visible in Sagittarius and can be seen shortly after sunset in the southwest. In December it moves into Capricornus and is of mag. 1.3.

Jupiter is well up in the southeast at sunset and is a conspicuous object until after midnight. In December it is on the meridian at sunset and sets around midnight.

Saturn is a morning star in Virgo, rising a few hours before the sun and soon after midnight in December.

--- Jimmy Weinstein

Meteors for November and December

Date	Shower	Radiant Point
November 1-17	Taurids	Taurus
" 10-17	Leonids	Leo
December 12-13	Geminids	Gemini

--- Bob Green

Occultations for November and December

Date	No.	Mag.	Time	Edge
Nov. 17	3256	6.2	2:05.7 PM	Dark
" 24	552	3.0	6:23.5 AM	"
" 28	1088	5.6	12:30.7 PM	Bright
Dec. 27	1308	4.7	1:17.0 AM	"
" 28	1418	5.9	4:14.2 AM	"

---John R. Edmonds

The October Junior Meeting

The Lunar Eclipse and variations on the surface of the moon was the subject of the October Junior meeting held at Science Service building.

A group of about twenty Seniors and Juniors were in attendance. John Lankford spoke on the general procedure of observing an eclipse. Change in brightness and size of craters and spots on the moon were discussed by John Edmonds. Particular craters were pointed out that were to be studied before and after the eclipse to note any changes that had taken place.

The night of the eclipse about thirty people attended the observing party at the Naval Observatory. Seven telescopes were used, including the five and twelve inch refractors. Canadian forest fires made the skies smooody all day but it cleared that night and the outing was enjoyed by all.

--- John R. Edmonds

Predictions of the Position of Vesta

For owners of telescopes with circles here are the positions of the 7th magnitude asteroid Vesta.

Date	RA.	Decl.
	h m	o
Nov. 5	3 00.2	6 30
" 15	2 50.0	6 04
" 25	2 40.7	5 51
Dec. 5	2 33.2	5 54