

the University Commencement in June, 1947. It may not be possible to open the Planetarium immediately, as the Zeiss Planetarium instrument, which costs \$75,000 alone, is built only in Germany, and it is difficult, if not impossible to obtain one at the present time. Negotiations have already been initiated through government as well as private channels, however, and the trustees of the Foundation are making every effort to secure the instrument and open the Planetarium at the earliest possible date.

National Capital Astronomers  
Washington, D. C.

May 1946

Vol. 3, No. 8

\*\*\*\*\*

NEW MEETING PLACE. The Committee selected to inspect the Commerce Dept. auditorium to determine whether it would provide a better meeting place for our association recommended against the change because the hall is too large. The Committee will give further consideration to finding a better meeting place for the Association.

MR. GEORGE V. PLACHY, Secretary of the Amateur Astronomers Association of New York will lecture on May 4 at 8 P.M. in the National Museum. His subject "The Total Solar Eclipse of July 9, 1945" will be illustrated with Kodachrome slides, motion pictures, and photographs. Mr. Plachy viewed the eclipse from a location near Butte, Montana, where he was flown by the specially equipped scientific plane of the Sperry Gyroscope Company.

- NEW MEMBERS
- Full Members: Capt. William P. Harris, AUS, 4315 Chesapeake St., N. W. WO-3284  
Capt. Franklin F. Marsh, AUS, 415 East Nelson Ave., Alexandria, Va., TE-9353
- Juniors: Walter Gilbert, 2220 N. Quantico St. Arlington, Va., CH-5061  
Charles P. Smith, 2524 Second St., S. Arlington, Va., CH-8944  
John L. Holloway, Jr., 3026 Porter St., N. W., (8), EM-7708  
Robert A. McLellan, 5300 W. St., Bradbury Heights, 19, Md., HI-0757

NOMINEES. The Nominating Committee has reported its selection of candidates for office for the coming year. Further nominations may be made from the floor. Officers will be elected at the May meeting to take office in September. In making the report, Dr. Woolard spoke of the difficulty that the Committee experienced in selecting two candidates for each office. It was not possible to find two candidates who were willing to accept the nomination for secretary. The nominees are as follows:

- President: Leo W. Scott; Mabel Sterns  
Vice President: George V. Skirm; Ray K. Windham  
Treasurer: Eugene S. Hemming; Edwin V. Smith  
Secretary: Morgan Cilley  
Trustee: Morgan Cilley; U. Sherman Lyons

We all hope that our Editor, Mabel Sterns, has a splendid time on the west coast. But we hope even more that she won't forget that we need her back here.

MR. LYONS WILL HOLD ASTRONOMICAL OBSERVATION LECTURES for the National Capital Park and Planning Commission at Barnard Hill Park, 24th and Randolph Sts., N.E. on May 12, July 7, and September 1, weather permitting. He welcomes assistance from the NCA's. Bring telescopes.

Mrs. Helen Harris, Sec., 4315 Chesapeake St., N.W. WO-3284  
Grace C. Scholz, Acting Editor, 4335 Harrison St., N.W.  
OR-5552

DETROIT CONVENTION. Don't forget the convention of amateur astronomers at the Cranbrook Institute of Science near Detroit the weekend of July 4th.

OUR PHILADELPHIA TRIP. We really had an interesting and educational time on our trip to Philadelphia. We saw a lot of new and different things, and gazed through some telescopes. To give you unfortunate people who didn't come along an idea of what happened, here is a timetable of what we did.

7:00--We left Washington.

8:45--Our first stop. We stopped at a Howard Johnson restaurant just outside Baltimore for 15 minutes.

10:15--Our second stop. Our bus broke down and for two hours we were marooned at a gas station out in the middle of nowhere. We played the slot machine in the gas station, score--2 winners and a lot of losers.

12:15--We started again.

1:30--We arrived in Philadelphia. We stopped at another Howard Johnson and had lunch.

2:30--We arrived at the Franklin Institute. While waiting to get in the Fels Planetarium, we looked at a working model of the solar system, showing all the planets and their moons, except Pluto, in motion.

3:00--We were in the Fels Planetarium, a part of the Institute, listening to a very interesting display on "Planets and Their Ways."

3:45--We wandered through the Institute, looking at exhibits on chemistry, physics, and best of all, astronomy. We also went through an astronomical workshop where several members of the Philadelphia Amateurs were at work grinding lenses.

5:30--We arrived at Cook Observatory, where we saw some very interesting instruments--one of these, a sideroscope. This is a refractory telescope in which the light falls on a plane mirror, that can be moved to any angle. The light is reflected from this mirror through a stationary tube and lense to an eye piece in a warm, comfortable room.

7:00--We ate at a very un-automatic Horn and Hardart Automat.

8:00--We went to Flower Observatory. The seeing, which had been bad all day, was better, and after a good lecture on the 18-inch refracting telescope, we were able to get a view of Saturn. The rings were at a good angle and we could see them very well. We also saw a somewhat

flattened Mars.

10:30--We started home.

2:15--We arrived in Washington wise, wan and weary.

--Lee S. Richardson, Junior Member

Did someone leave a copy of one of Sir James Jean's books in the Flower Observatory? If so, please call the editor.

DR. CHARLES P. SAYLOR of the Bureau of Standards spoke at our April meeting on "Secrets of the Atom Bomb."

He developed the idea that many nuclear physicists could have, and did, anticipate the principal methods of making an atom bomb and some of the effects.

He cited a lecture given on April 17, 1944 by S. C. Lind, Dean of the Institute of Technology of the University of Minnesota. Dr. Lind accurately foretold several interesting things about the atomic bomb.

Dr. Saylor advocated less secrecy on the subject, so that the scientists of the world could be free to study this new source of energy, and to utilize it to its fullest advantage. "The greatest uses of atomic power have not yet been conceived", he concluded.

--Capt. William P. Harris, AUS

PLANETARIUM IN NORTH CAROLINA. The announcement of Mr. John Motley Morehead's \$1,125,000 gift to the University of North Carolina recently is of dual significance. It will not only give the State one of the nation's finest art collections, but also one of the six planetaria in the country as well as the only one in the South and the only one owned by an educational institution anywhere.

Mr. Morehead has set up a trust fund of \$1,000,000 for the construction of the planetarium and memorial gallery, which together with reception rooms, offices, classrooms, and service rooms, will comprise "The Morehead Building."

Officials hope to have the structure ready for use by