

STAR DUST

VARIABLE STAR OBSERVING at the 5-inch on October 12th drew some grown-ups as well as the junior members. The next junior night will be Friday, November 8th.

National Capital Astronomers
Washington, D. C.

THE SECOND DISCUSSION GROUP at the Commerce Building delved into cometary orbits, Pluto's mass and eccentricity, looked over the charts and star finder that Mr. Delaney brought, heard an account of radar meteor counting, and considered the proposed national organization, Mr. Skirm presided in the absence of Mr. Cilley. On November 16th come prepared to discuss the moon, with Mr. Boyle as alternate "mediator."

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KEEP IN MIND

Nov. 2 Saturday, 8 p.m., Commerce Auditorium, 14th Street. "The Motions of the Stars," by G. M. Clemens, Director, Nautical Almanac Office.

Nov. 8 Friday, 8 p.m., Naval Observatory. Junior night for variable stars.

Nov. 16 Saturday, 8 p.m., foyer of Commerce Auditorium. "The Moon" is suggested topic for discussion group. Mr. Cilley, leader; Mr. Boyle, alternate.

NEW MEMBERS

Maurice S. A. Delaney, 1506 Noyes Drive N.W. Sh. 8447.
Carroll S. Slemaker, 3807 Minnesota Ave. N.E. (19).

Junior member.

Mrs. Grace C. Moore, 1326 19th Street N.W. Du. 9349.

A CLASS IN TELESCOPE MAKING at Howard University is being conducted by Dr. Calder. The first course in astronomy at that institution was offered last year.

THE PUBLICITY COMMITTEE requests that all information to be released outside our organization be submitted for approval. This action will eliminate the possibility of duplicate releases or misinformation. On the other hand, the Committee will furnish material regarding the society upon request.

"THE MOTIONS OF THE STARS" is the topic chosen by Mr. G. M. Clemence, Director of the Nautical Almanac Office, U. S. Naval Observatory. He came to the Naval Observatory in 1930 from Brown University where he taught mathematics. At the Observatory he has served successively in the Time Service, in the department of Meridian Astronomy, and in the Almanac Office, becoming Director in 1945. He is the author of a number of papers on the astronomy of position and celestial mechanics.

---Edgar W. Woolard

THE EXECUTIVE SESSION held October 6th, proposed these objectives as guides for committees:

Lecture Committee. Engage speakers, provide blackboard, projector, or other equipment required. Furnish the president, editor, and publicity chairman with information for introducing the speaker and preparing advance notice of the lecture.

Entertainment and Activities. Plan trips, social events and entertainments, and special activities not included in the regular program of the society.

The Committee maintains a file of all publicity given the NCA and its activities. Since not all such items may come to our attention, we should appreciate it if members would clip articles, mark the date and source, and turn them in for the records.

---Grace C. Scholz, Co-Chairman, 4335 Harrison Street N.W.; Ordway 5552 evenings, or Oliver 4200, Ext. 277 during the day.

Mabel Sterns, Editor, 2517 K Street N.W. (7) Di. 9422

Publicity. Send copies of Star Dust to prospective members; keep record of visitors at lectures to check the effect of publicity; provide publicity information to radio, newspapers, other publications; issue notices for posting on bulletin boards.

Membership. Investigate qualifications of prospective members, preferably by personal interview in addition to other methods; pass on application; accept first year's dues and hold for official vote; maintain supply of application forms and see that complete details are obtained; send application and dues of successful candidates to the treasurer. Notify unsuccessful applicants of the fact and return dues.

Observation. Arrange program of regular observations with the 5" telescope; also observations of meteor showers, constellations, etc. Provide any instruction that members may desire.

Telescope Making. Find suitable location to grind mirrors and build telescopes; arrange for training and supervision; give assistance upon request; organize a class if demand warrants.

Publications. Be on the alert for new publications dealing with astronomy; recommend sources of information; keep informed of the principal journals and book reviews.

"LINKAGE SYSTEMS IN THREE DIMENSIONS" was the subject of a most unusual and entertaining lecture by Mr. Michael Goldberg of the Bureau of Ordnance, delivered October 5th in the Commerce Auditorium.

It is impossible to describe to those who were not present the myriad array of complex and baffling space linkages which Mr. Goldberg demonstrated to his astonished audience. He had on hand seemingly endless numbers of wood and paper models of mechanisms, some

of which consisted of straight bars with pin joints, while others consisted of flat plates hinged along their edges. These were made to perform astounding motions, especially some of the hinged plate models which could be collapsed flat, opened out and then collapsed flat in another configuration.

Many of these mechanisms were originated by Mr. Goldberg himself as a result of mathematical analysis of the type of motion desired and by analogy with similar two-dimensional linkages.

While many of these devices may have practical value, it is also likely that originating them would provide a fascinating game for the person interested in mathematical analysis since the results of such analysis can readily be checked by simple methods of model construction. ---Joseph C. Boyle

VISITORS at events other than public lectures, should be accompanied by members. This policy was intended by the officers and trustees to comply with regulations of the Naval Observatory, and to assure certain privileges for those holding memberships.

APPLICATIONS FOR MEMBERSHIP, accompanied by dues for one year, should be sent to the Membership Committee, Mr. Benjamin King, Chairman, Westchester Apartments.

A sponsor who counter-signs an application should be a regular member of NCA. It is his responsibility to see that the form and dues are returned to the Membership Committee, as set forth in the by-laws.

NCA NIGHT AT THE 12" brought out a dozen in spite of clouds and mist. Mr. Gilley showed us how to set the circles on a telescope to find the object desired, and each one tried his hand at the newly renovated instrument. Those who waited were rewarded by a clear sky overhead and some fine observing.