

Not until 5 a.m. were he and an astronomer at the Observatory able to find a chart showing an object that appeared quite clearly in his binoculars.

THE PROPOSED OBSERVATORY AT AMERICAN UNIVERSITY was discussed at the March meeting. It was decided that a committee should give the subject further study and submit a questionnaire to individual members of the society. The president was unable to find anyone willing to be chairman of such a committee. However, Mr. Skirm and Miss Scholz agreed to conduct an opinion poll. Please answer the questions enclosed, comment freely, and return the information to Mr. Skirm in time to report on it at the April meeting.

OCCULTATION PREDICTIONS
Morgan Cilley and Benjamin King

<u>Date</u>	<u>Cat. No.</u>	<u>Star Name</u>	<u>Mag.</u>	<u>Immersion EST</u>
April				
1	1484	n Leon	3.6	10:22.2 PM
2	1598	BD+12°2284	6.4	9:06.9 PM
8	2182	26 Libr	6.3	4:04.4 AM
8	2282	10 G. Scor	5.9	11:23.2 PM
25	1046		6.9	10:06.6 PM
25	1049		6.6	10:27.1 PM
28	1342		7.5	0:15.2 PM
28	1334		7.0	11:03.2 PM
29	1569		6.8	10:05.1 PM

All occur on the dark side of the moon.

AFTER-MEETING TALK FESTS over pancakes or apple pie with tomato catsup (come and see for yourself) at a nearby restaurant are regular procedure. Join the rest after a business meeting or discussion group and get acquainted. It is also a chance to air your views on anything.

Mabel Sterns, President and Editor, 2517 K Street N.W.

STAR DUST

National Capital Astronomers
Washington, D. C.

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- April NCA EVENTS
- 3 Telescope class, 7:30 p.m. room 246 McKinley High School, 2nd and T Sts. N.E.
 - 5 "Men, Women, and Stars," Miss Leah B. Allen. 8 p.m., Commerce Department Auditorium.
 - 8 Constellation study. Meet at bus stop, 16th and Colorado Ave. N.W. 8 p.m.
 - 17 Telescope class.
 - 19 Discussion group, 8 p.m. foyer of Commerce Auditorium. Nebulae, star clusters, and galaxies. Bob Wright, mediator.
 - 22 Constellation study. Place to be set at previous gathering.
 - 26 Picnic-observation 5 p.m. corner Sligo Creek Parkway and Wayne Avenue, Silver Spring, Md. We will have the use of fireplace and cabin, on grounds of Montgomery-Blair school. Directions will be mailed later. Bob Wright, Chm.

MISS LEAH B. ALLEN will tell us about personalities in astronomy, especially amateur astronomers and their contributions to science, in her lecture April 3rd, "Men, Women, and Stars."

Director of Williams Observatory of Hood College, Frederick, Maryland, where she has been professor of

astronomy for nearly twenty years, Miss Allen has degrees from Brown University and Wellesley College. She has done radial velocity work at Lick Observatory as a computer and as Martin Kellogg research fellow; and volunteer photometric work at Harvard Observatory. She was also on the faculty of Wellesley College for several years.

"HEAVEN IS THEIR HOBBY" is a timely article in April Coronet about amateur astronomers, mentioning our Mr. Rotbart as an example. Also in the news recently were two of the junior astronomers whose picture appeared in the Times-Herald. Another display will appear soon (as this goes to press) in the Sunday Star.

DISCUSSION GROUP was unusually interesting last time. Miss Warthen brought her umbrella planetarium and other devices for learning constellations. A sound movie, "Star Identification," was shown and repeated. Bob Wright will lead the next session April 19th, choosing nebulae, star clusters, and galaxies for the program.

STAR CHARTS OF THE NORTHERN HEMISPHERE were provided members at the discussion group. One copy is enclosed for each of the other members. Additional copies may be obtained for 10 cents each--the cost to NCA--as long as the supply lasts.

Please note on your copy that the "Explanation for Use of Chart" is not correct and should be disregarded.

CONSTELLATION OBSERVATIONS will be held alternate Tuesdays beginning March 25 under the guidance of Miss Warthen. The first two will meet at 8 p.m., bus stop at 16th and Colorado Ave. N.W. The group will set the place for subsequent observations. If the weather is doubtful, call Miss Warthen, Shepherd 9451. A flashlight that throws a beam is fine for pointing to stars.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE APPOINTED; Mrs. Windham, chairman, Miss Koetz, and Mr. Scott, to report in April.

TELESCOPE MAKING CLASS has been handicapped by delay in shipment of glass and shortage of tools and grinding material. With glass loaned by the New York A.A.A., one 6" and two 8" mirrors are now under way besides a few previously begun at home.

A locker has been assigned for storing materials between classes. Workers who keep mirrors in it will be informed of the combination, and if they wish, may work any night school is in session. In order to gain time, those who can are urged to meet every Thursday night. Check with Mr. McLellan, Hillside 0757. (Irene Warthen, reporter.)

LEO SCOTT LEAVING WITH ECLIPSE EXPEDITION April 1. The party will stop overnight at Borinquen, P.R., and Nepal, Brazil. They will reach Rio de Janeiro the third day and transfer men and equipment to smaller planes for the shuttle to the eclipse station. All food and materials will be flown in as there is no settlement nearby and the land is unproductive. Return trip will start May 31. Mr. Scott will be glad to hear from any NCAs, c/o Air Section, JBUSMC, APO 676, Miami, Florida.

JUNIOR ASTRONOMERS CONTINUE VARIABLE STAR OBSERVATIONS. One hundred or more such observations were sent in during the last month by the juniors, plus a few by other members. Some occultations were noted, too.

We have one set of instructions, charts, and forms for reporting sunspots and hope that a few observers will adopt the program. This activity is especially well suited to reflector telescopes.

Over a period of seven weeks, Mr. Rotbart led a group of Girl Scouts in earning their star finder badge. The project was climaxed by a trip to see the large telescopes at the Observatory. Besides photographing sunspots, Mr. Rotbart almost discovered a comet recently.

"SPACE TRAVEL IN OUR TIME?" was the subject of Willy Ley's lecture at the regular meeting March 1st. Willy Ley, one of the founders of the original German Rocket Society which was formed 20 years ago, predicted that a journey into space, looping the moon but without landing there, would take place some sixteen years from now. The manned journey would be preceded, by some five or six years, by an unmanned guided missile, sent to crash on the moon.

Only by rocket propulsion can this be done and the rockets will follow elliptical and not parabolic paths. The centers of the earth and moon will be at the respective foci of those ellipses, much the same as the earth and moon revolve around the sun and earth at their respective foci.

Propulsion will not be by atomic fission, as many supposed, but by the explosive mixture of liquid oxygen and alcohol. This, Ley explained, is the most satisfactory known rocket fuel.

The rocket will be given only sufficient thrust to carry it just across the line dividing the gravitational fields of the earth and moon. It will then fall towards the moon in an elliptical orbit and pass around the moon. To prevent the rocket's becoming a permanent satellite of the moon, an additional charge will be fired as it again approaches the gravitational dividing line, carrying it across this line when it will begin its fall towards the earth, also in an elliptical path. The earth's atmosphere will retard the fall, throw the rocket out of its elliptical path, and cause it to land. The landing will be directed to some body of water and the fall broken by a series of parachutes. The passengers will then debark and tell us what the other side of the moon looks like, thus gratifying another of man's ancient ambitions or peeves.

---Morgan Gilley

"SUN, MOON, AND STARS" by William T. Skilling and Robert S. Richardson. The following has been taken from Mr. Robinson's review of this book:

For amateurs who prefer their astronomy without involved mathematical dissertations, but seek reading material to explain puzzling phases of the subject, "Sun, Moon and Stars" is recommended. It may be obtained from the Public Library.

Besides covering the subjects suggested by the title, the book contains a discussion of the sun's family of planets, comets and meteors. Latest developments such as radar contact with the moon and the possibility of interplanetary trips by rocket powered by atomic energy, are reported. A portion of the book is devoted to the everyday problems that confront the professional astronomer incident to his observations and to a description of the various instruments that are in use in modern observatories. There are many photographs illustrating the text, some of which are stereoscopic.

The authors assert that they want to talk with the reader, not to him, and they hope that the reader will feel as if he were talking to a friend over the phone instead of listening to a speaker from a platform. This reader can affirm that he had that feeling.

POSSIBILITY OF PLANETARIUM AT SAN FRANCISCO. According to Astronomical Information Sheets, "The Mary T. Morrison Trust Estate offers a contribution of \$200,000 to be devoted to the construction of 'The Alexander F. Morrison Planetarium' in Golden Gate Park in San Francisco. The gift is conditioned upon the raising of sufficient funds by the California Academy of Sciences to complete and house the project." Fully a year ago representatives from San Francisco were studying the construction and operation of Griffith Planetarium at Los Angeles. An inquiry brought the reply that there was no information to give at that time.