

NEW MEMBERS

- *Britton, Mary, 6132 30th St. N.W. (15) Ordway 6535
 - *Brock, Marilyn, 4111 Warner St., Kensington, Md.
 - Byers, J. H., 4627 Verplanck Place N.W. (16) WO-7574
 - Dawson, John M., R.F.D. 2, Laurel, Md. Laurel 440-R
 - Farrar, Walter B., 5011 Elm St., Bethesda, Md. WI-0974
 - Geare, Mrs. Reginald W. (Dorothy S.), 1805 Quincy St. N.W. (11) Taylor 1805
 - Mason, Bob, 7624 Bradley Blvd., Bethesda, Md. WI-3137
 - *Nalls, Patricia Ann, 6150 30th St. N.W. (15) EM-0007
 - Sherman, Mrs. Martha A., 3901 Military Road N.W. (15) Woodley 3023
 - Wells, Dr. Francis P., 2220 20th St. N.W. (9) MI-3191
- Mr. Robert A. Jones and son, Colin M., joined the society but resigned later when the former was transferred to New Mexico. We wish them many clear skies.

CHARLES LITTLE CLAIMS DISCOVERY. In his paper, "The Construction and Operation of Radar Equipment for Observing Meteors" (Star Dust Supplement July-August 1948) Mr. Little observed, "In the morning from 9 to 10 o'clock, the distances of observed meteors average about 130 miles. In the evening from 9 to 10, the distances average about 75 miles." He claims priority to this discovery in "Diurnal Variations in Meteor Trails" soon to appear in Physical Review.

TELESCOPE MIRROR GRINDING CLASS. There is a plentiful stock of mirror blanks, tools, and abrasives, and plenty of room for more glass-pushers at 505 Morse St. N.E. For more information, call Irene Warthen at SH-9451, or TR-2224 on class nights, Mondays and Thursdays.

THE OBSERVER'S HANDBOOK FOR 1949, published by the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada, has been ordered for NCAs. Mr. Robinson is taking orders as long as the supply may last.

 Mabel Sterns, editor, 2517 K St. N.W. (7) DI-9422
 Jewell Boling, Grace Scholz, Bob Wright, contributors.

STAR DUST
 National Capital Astronomers
 Washington, D. C.

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- DECEMBER CALENDAR
- 4 "Measuring Starlight," Dr. John Hall. Saturday, 8:15 p.m. Commerce Auditorium.
 - 8 Five-inch night for regular members; Carl Werntz, Wednesday, 8 p.m. Naval Observatory grounds.
 - 10 Junior night at the 5-inch; John Lankford. Friday, 8 p.m. An adult will be in attendance.
 - 11 Observation-picnic. Pinecrest at Four Corners, Maryland. Details to be mailed later.
 - 16 "The Story of Palomar," two public showings of the film, Commerce Auditorium.
 - 18 No discussion group this month.
- Mon. and Thurs. 8 to 10, mirror grinding class, 505 Morse Street, N. E.

IN HIS TALK, "MEASURING STARLIGHT," Dr. Hall, Head of the Equatorial Division, Naval Observatory, will discuss the method of making very accurate measurements of the brightness of stars. He will display the equipment used for measuring starlight, known as the photoelectric photometer. Slides will illustrate the lecture.

Before his recent association with the Naval Observatory, Dr. Hall was successively on the staffs of Rutherford Observatory of Columbia University, Sproul Observatory of Swarthmore College, the Radiation Laboratory of M.I.T., and Amherst College. He is a graduate of Amherst and secured his doctorate from Yale University.

OBSERVATION-PICNIC scheduled Saturday, December 11 at Pinecrest cottage near Four Corners, Maryland. Complete details will be sent in plenty of time. Be sure to save that evening for a good time with the NCA rain or shine.

"THE STORY OF PALOMAR." Mr. Wright has arranged with the Carnegie Institution to secure this film free of charge for showing by the NCA. Tentative plans are to make it available to public schools from December 13 to 16, and to hold the first public showing in Washington the evening of December 16 in the Commerce Department Auditorium. The film is a color, sound movie, 40 minutes long, that starts with the pouring of the 200-inch mirror at Corning Glass Works, followed by grinding and testing operations at California Institute of Technology. There is an interesting sequence that shows the transportation of the mirror up Palomar Mountain, and the mirror being swung into place. The workings of the instrument are illustrated by means of a model and the telescope itself is then put through the same paces. Plans for the showing are not fully formulated, but a flier will be sent to members.

INSTRUCTION AT THE 5-INCH November 12th resulted in several names being added to the list of those who may obtain the key. Mr. Lyons and Carl Werntz were the "examiners."

THE ASTRONOMICAL HOBBY SHOW brought out a number of new exhibits--a 6" reflector and wooden tube for a 4" richest field now under way by Mr. Peterson; a number of foreign books in several languages from Dr. von Numers' collection; interior workings of a spectroscope, Mr. Benfer; photos of star trails, Venus, and the comet taken with his aerial camera by Lyle Johnson, also his apparatus for testing short focus mirrors, eyepiece holder, each with complete explanation; published poem and article by Dorothy Lamore; a diagram 52 inches square of the solar system, with threads to show the position of a planet at any time, devised by James Crowell; a handmade camera for attachment to a telescope, and star photos by Carroll Slemaker; Mr. Rotbart's machine gun camera for photographing sunspots and eclipses, photos and films; Mr. D'Andelet's 3" refractor. John Lankford brought his log books of sunspot, nebulae and cluster observations, Flamsteed Atlas, and other books;

also shown again: Bob Wright's books, Irene Warthen's umbrella and telescope, electric lens-grinding machine built by Mr. Alvord, and various charts and mirrors.

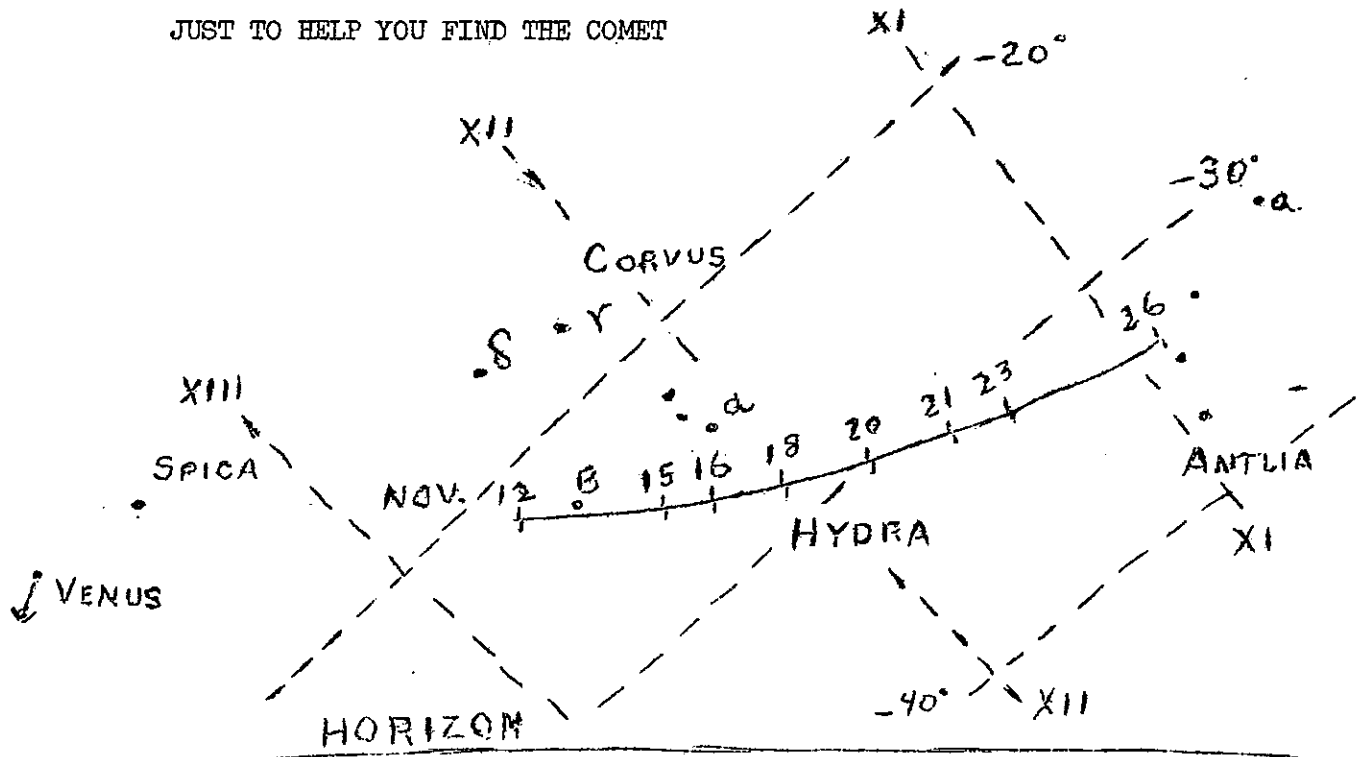
AMATEUR ASTRONOMERS

Samuel R. Young is now out of the hospital but confined to his home, convalescing his way through astronomy books. S. P. Young had the misfortune to drop his 12-inch glass tool and break it, after grinding it to the right curvature. Leo Carroll, a very active junior, has moved to Long Island. Edward P. Jenkins has been busy eliminating the vibration from our 5-inch Clark. He also has added a pole hand-grip to one set of steps.

Herbert Alvord plans to resume grinding on his 8" reflector soon. Margaret Glock is grinding hers and learning to operate the 5". Bertha and David Rotbart have settled down to using the astronomical devices they developed, instead of creating new ones. Eugene Henning recently recommended the purchase of some good astronomical books to a local library which added them to its shelves. Dr. Francis P. Wells, with a background in biological research, pursues with particular interest the biological problems involved in considering possibilities of life on other planets, and recently has been concentrating his attention on study of this aspect of astronomy.

COMET 1948-L. Ten NCAs assembled at 5 a.m. November 21st to see the comet by then visible only through binoculars. That added Dr. and Mrs. Wells, Grace Scholz, Nettie Mansker, Dr. von Numers, Leo Scott, and Mabel Sterns to the list of Irene Warthen, Mr. Reed and son Andrew, Janet Perkins, David Rotbart, Bob Wright, R. M. McLellan, S. P. Young, Morgan Gilley, and Lyle Johnson who had seen it. Jewell Boling observed the comet on three successive mornings in North Carolina, and also got one good observation of the difficult object, Canopus, on the meridian about 2:30 a.m. Canopus never rises above the horizon north of latitude Richmond and is seen only when all factors are favorable at latitude Raleigh.

JUST TO HELP YOU FIND THE COMET



After the new moon, Nov. 30, there should be several good days to observe the comet for those who are willing to get up in the morning. You should be able to see it from 5:00 a.m. until daylight, if you have a fairly low southeast horizon. It is best picked up with a pair of 7x50 binoculars. However, those with good eyes and a location of very few lights may be able to see it with the naked eye. At first glance it will look like a hazy star. If you find that, study it, and you will see that it has a tail to the right. --- Here's good comet hunting to you.

OBSERVATIONS

Mr. Cilley reported fifty variable star observations to Harvard for the month of October, and has already chalked up thirty-six for November.

John Lenkford made three observation drawings of sunspots during November. (John has only weekends available because of school.) He is also making a series of drawings of the moon as a school project.

OCCULTATIONS

Morgan Cilley and H. E. Burton

Dec.	Object	Magnitude	Immersion	Hour Angle
7	3353	7.2	7:22 p.m.	1½ W
8	3473	6.5	5:38 p.m.	1 E
9	36	7.2	5:09 p.m.	2 E
11	167	5.7	12:20 a.m.	4½ W
12	374	6.1	6:10 p.m.	3 E

All on the dark edge.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★
 ★ I wish to take this opportunity to wish every member of the National ★
 ★ Capital Astronomers a Very Merry Xmas and a Most Joyous New Year. ★

Bob Wright