

NEW MEMBERS (*junior)

- Caskins, L. M., 913 I Street, N. W. ME-3229
- *Beardsley, Irene, 6327 Western Avenue (15) EM-8218
- *Monroe, Eloise, 3807 Van Ness Street (16) WO-8609
- *Morgan, Anne, 3702 Livingston Street (15) OR-0530

QBF
.S79

STAR DUST
National Capital Astronomers
Washington, D. C.

April 1949

Vol. 6, No. 8

WOODEN TELESCOPE MOUNTING

To assist some of the members grinding mirrors who became discouraged by the difficulties encountered in providing a mount for their telescope, a wooden mount has been built, using no metal except stock parts readily obtainable at hardware stores.

The wooden tripod legs are attached by means of ordinary iron T hinges to a hexagonal wooden head cut from a piece of 2" x 8" pine. A triangular piece of 2" pine held on top of the head by heavy wood screws supports the polar axis at an angle of 39 degrees to the horizontal, for use in the latitude of Washington, D. C.

The polar and declination axes were cut from one four-foot piece of 3/4-inch shafting. The shafts are mounted in pillow blocks attached by 5/16-inch machine bolts to the 7/8" x 1/2" oak cross pieces.

The tube is held in its wooden cradle by metal straps obtained for a few cents at a hardware store.

The total cost for all the metal parts, including screws and bolts, was under \$7.00. Most of the wooden pieces were made from scraps of lumber picked up at random.

---E. P. Jenkins

MARION WAGNER TRANSFERRED TO WEST COAST. Miss Wagner leaves Washington on April 8. She will be very much missed at NCA gatherings.

ASTRONOMER ROYAL OF GREAT BRITAIN, Sir Harold Spencer Jones, whose subject for the Arthur lecture on April 14 will be "The Determination of Precise Time," is one of the outstanding astronomical investigators of our time. No tickets are required for the lecture.

Jewell Boling, Acting Editor, 1717 P Street, N. W. DU-2969

MISS STERNS RESIGNS AS EDITOR OF STAR DUST

Since October 1943 Mabel Sterns has been Editor of STAR DUST. Only those who have performed a like service on a month in month out basis can appreciate the amount of effort that went into the preparation of this publication. With her it was a labor of love. It was her brain child and she nurtured it faithfully for more than five years.

It is a tribute to Miss Sterns and to NCA, by reflected glory, that time and again STAR DUST has carried scoops of astronomical news. SKY AND TELESCOPE as well as POPULAR ASTRONOMY have frequently carried items printed in STAR DUST first, and credited to STAR DUST in the articles published in these journals.

It is with regret that the trustees have accepted Miss Sterns' resignation as Editor of STAR DUST. Nothing that we can say would adequately express our sincere appreciation for a job well done.

Beginning with this issue, Jewell Boling, who has functioned as Assistant Editor of many previous issues, will take over as Acting Editor. Lots of luck to you, Jewell Boling!

---Grace C. Scholtz, Trustee

DR. FRED L. WHIPPLE, HARVARD COLLEGE OBSERVATORY, will be guest lecturer at the monthly meeting on Saturday, April 2, at 8:15 P. M. in the Commerce Department Auditorium. Dr. Whipple will discuss METEORS, a subject in which he is considered the world's foremost authority. Awards in the Third Annual Science Fair, run by the science teachers of the District of Columbia, sponsored by the Washington Academy of Sciences and the Science Service will be made at this meeting.

APRIL 1949 CALENDAR

- Date
- 2 Sat. "Meteors," Dr. Fred L. Whipple, Harvard College Observatory, 8:15 p.m. Commerce Department Auditorium. Awards Third Annual Science Fair.
- 6 Wed. Regular members' observation with the 5-inch. Carl Werntz.
- 6 Wed. Public observation night at Naval Observatory, 7 to 11 p. m.
- 9 Sat. National Capital Parks Star Outing at Campfire site, 16th and Colorado, 8:00 p. m.
- 12 Tue. Total eclipse of the moon. First contact with umbra, 9:27 p. m. Totality, 10:28 to 11:53 p. m., E. S. T.
- 13 Wed. Public observation night at Naval Observatory, 7 to 11 p. m.
- 14 Thurs. Arthur Lecture, Sir Harold Spencer Jones, Astronomer Royal of Great Britian, "The Determination of Precise Time." 8:15 p. m. Auditorium National Museum.
- 16 Sat. Discussion group, foyer of Commerce Auditorium, 8:00 p. m. Leo W. Scott, "Spectroscopes."
- 22 Fri. Junior observation night at the 5-inch, 8:00 p. m. John Lankford.
- 30 Sat. Philadelphia trip, Fels Planetarium, Franklin Institute, and other points. Registrations must be in by April 2. (See flyer enclosed.)

Every Thursday open house at Young Memorial Observatory, 4410 River Road, N. W. Call Mr. or Mrs. Rotbart, EM-0119. Mondays and Thursdays, telescope making class 8-10 p. m. 505 Morse Street, N. E. Miss Warthen, SH-9451, classroom TR-2224.

TRIP TO BALTIMORE. As STAR DUST goes to press we are looking forward to a trip to Baltimore to visit the Watson Planetarium at the Maryland Academy of Sciences. Transportation will be by car. There is no admission charge to the planetarium. Show will start at 8:30. Several very worthwhile exhibits are on display at the Academy. Those who are unable to go on March 25 are urged to make a trip at their convenience. The planetarium is open in the evening on Thursdays only. All shows on other days of the week are during the day. The show on Friday, March 25, is a special one for the National Capital Astronomers.

NATIONAL CAPITAL PARKS STAR OUTING will be held Saturday evening, April 9, at the Campfire site at 16th and Colorado. Time 8:00 P. M. NCA members with telescopes are asked to bring them out for the occasion. Slides will be shown in case of cloudy weather. Members who are interested in obtaining a copy of the 1949 programs may address their requests to National Capital Parks, Naturalist Division, Room 2023, South Interior Building, Washington 25, D. C.

JUNIORSON THE AIR: On Thursday, March 10, the juniors participated in their second radio program broadcast to District and Virginia schools. The subject was THE SUN. Taking part were Joy French, John Edmonds, and Miles Davis. The third program will be on Thursday, April 7, at 9:45 A. M. over station WURL (780 kc). Participants will be John Lankford, Donald Miller, and Thomas Walsh. The subject will be ECLIPSES, pointing up to the forthcoming lunar eclipse on Tuesday, April 12.

CHAIRMAN OF ACTIVITY SECTION FOR ASTRONOMICAL LEAGUE APPOINTED. Mr. Rolland R. LaPelle, 54 Fernleaf Avenue, Long Meadow 6, Massachusetts, a member of the Springfield Stars Club, has been named temporary chairman.

ARTICLES OF INTEREST

- "The Upper Atmosphere", David I. Blumenstock, Scientific American, Jan. 1949, pp. 30/39.
- "A Continued Search for the Beginning", William T. Skill- ing, Scientific Monthly, Feb. 1949, pp. 84/90.

30 MAR 1948

MR. AND MRS. DAVID ROTBART ANNOUNCE OPENING OF SAMUEL R. YOUNG MEMORIAL OBSERVATORY

We should like to announce the opening of the Samuel R. Young Memorial Observatory. The observatory is open to NCA members every Thursday night from 8:00 until as late as the observer wishes. Arrangements can be made for its opening on other occasions, for special events or to accommodate groups. Call EM-0119 to make arrangements..

This observatory is a radical departure from the conventional type observatory. It is built on the top of the Rotbart garage, which immediately limits the powers of the telescopes used to about 100 diameters, because of vibrations. The roof of the observatory contains five individual apertures. In place of the usual slide-off apertures, it was decided to use flipping apertures thus making the roof more weatherproof, and also accommodating more apertures.

The inside contains five steel pieces. The main pier will hold a pair of 6-inch binoculars, which will operate with powers from 20 diameters to 100 diameters. The binoculars will be controlled remotely from two stations, in altitude and azimuth. The position angles in altitude and azimuth will be indicated remotely by Selsin Indicators thereby enabling the operator at either of the two remote stations to direct the binoculars to any position of the sky and track any celestial object.

Another pier will contain a clock-driven equatorially mounted camera. The third pier will be used for several portable instruments. The fourth pier will mount a precise Theodolite, to be used for measuring star positions and position angles of double stars. It also contains several other unique features which, as yet, have not proved functional. The fifth pier will mount two Theodolites, one in alti-azimuth, the other clock-driven equatorially, thus facilitating the change from alti-azimuth angle to right ascension declination or vice versa. This pier will also contain remote mechanisms which will control the six-inch binoculars.

Approximately 500 man hours have gone into the building of this observatory and its equipment. A good percentage of these hours must be credited to our friend and fellow-

member, Mr. McLellan, who built the mountings and the mechanical features of the six-inch binoculars. The building of the observatory proper is credited to a friend of the family who may one day join the NCA. About 200 work hours were contributed by David Rotbart.

It is our desire that this building be known as the Young Memorial Observatory, in memory of our friend and fellow astronomer, Samuel R. Young. We want this observatory to be used by NCA members, in the pursuit of the knowledge of astronomy, to the extent of the capabilities of the instruments. If, at any time, the NCA is forced to leave the Naval Observatory, the club may have the use of the original Rotbart Observatory which, with roof modifications, would house our five-inch telescope. Thank you.

---Berthe and David Rotbart

SAMUEL R. YOUNG MEMORIAL OBSERVATORY DEDICATED. The observatory was dedicated Sunday afternoon, March 13, at 3:00 P. M. Among the many attending were the following NCA'ers: Mr. and Mrs. Morgan Cilley, Nettie Mansker, Mrs. Martha A. Sherman, Leo W. Scott, Andrew Reed, Donald Miller, Bob Wright, Grace Scholtz, Irene Warthen, Selah P. Young, Janet Perkins, Carl Werntz, Lyle T. Johnson, Jewell Boling, Frank Reed, Abraham Robinson, Dr. and Mrs. Isadore Levin, Mabel Sterns, R. M. McLellan, and Leroy Benfer.

Mr. Wright, NCA president, spoke of the astronomical activities which were engaging Mr. Young's attention up till his untimely death last December 11, not many months after the occasion of his address at Palomar Mountain Observatory on the first day of issue of the Palomar Observatory stamp. Mrs. Rotbart introduced Mrs. Samuel R. Young to the group and presented her with the key to the observatory. Mrs. Young unlocked the door and threw the observatory open. It is filled with equipment and devices all bespeaking the famed Rotbart ingenuity.

After the inspection refreshments were served in the Rotbart's interesting recreation room, which, with its ceiling of stars and planets well carries out the motif of astronomical interest everywhere apparent on the Rotbart premises. The table was beautiful with flowers sent by Miss Sterns.