

FROM PRESIDENT TED JONES

It is months since we started off the year with "Buzz Groups" and with an underlying motive to get more people in the NCA doing more things. Your President has not done what he should, nor as much as he intended: time, little Janes, inertia, all have taken their toll. However, many NCAers have done things.

Thanks to the Oldtimers like Grace Scholz, Mabel Sterns, Janet Perkins, Mrs. Alston, Jewell Boling, Bob Wright, Mr. Robinson, Irene Warthen, Nettie Mansker, for their indispensable service in routine, and in volunteering especially. They are the kind of steady, persistent people who carry on the vital bloodstream of activities and fulfill the traditions of an organization.

But thanks, too, for the comparative Newtimers like Thelma Cressy, Miss Heisey, Jim Cracroft, Jim Crowell, Bob Rhynsburger, Mrs. Norris, who are breaking into the stream of action in the NCA.

There are many others who are potentially a new crop. The Discussion Groups contain some; so does the Astronomy Class. We hope to develop the Observers' Wednesday Night into a real school for observers, but our luck with the clouds has been dismal. We also hope to develop the Meteor Group and the Instrument Section into constructive implementation of their functions. Please keep your "poop sheet" on NCA Committees and Functions in your top drawer. It is the key to eventual full participation by all members in Astronomical Activity of one sort or another.

DR. GEORGE GAMOW'S lecture, "Explosions of Stars", given in February was extremely interesting and brought a large turnout.

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MARCH CALENDAR

- March 3 Sat. "PROBLEMS OF THE GALAXIES," Dr. Harlow Shapley, Director, Harvard College Observatory, 8:15 P. M. Commerce Auditorium.
- March 8 Thu. Trip to Davis Planetarium, Baltimore, Maryland. See notice inside.
- March 14 Wed. Observation Night, Naval Observatory, 7:00 p.m. (Passes must be requested in advance.) Also observing at the NCA 5".
- March 17 Sat. Discussion Group. "MYTHOLOGICAL ORIGINS OF CONSTELLATIONS." Commerce Foyer, 8:00 P. M.
- March 21 Wed. Observation Night, Naval Observatory.
- March 28 Wed. Observing at the NCA 5".
- March 31 Sat. Junior NCA Meeting, Science Service Center.

Tuesdays and Fridays, 7-10 p. m. Telescope Making Class, Roosevelt High School, Room 319, 13th & Upshur, N. W. Miss Irene Warthen, Instructor. Telephone LO 5-1237. Note: Miss Warthen is present only on Fridays.

DR. HARLOW SHAPLEY in his talk on "Problems of the Galaxies" will discuss some of the results and conclusions drawn from the past eighteen years of "Galaxy Hunting" engaged in by the Harvard Observatory astronomers.

The study of galactic and extra-galactic structure is one of the most fascinating subjects in the field of astronomy as it is directly related to the great mystery of star origins. The record of the galaxies already photographed permits the computation of vast numbers of galaxies yet to be recorded and another large group that is impossible to record, but is confidently predicted to exist. No evidence has appeared that there is an edge to this galaxy of galaxies and the volume of a billion light years radius that can be recorded still appears to be a small fraction of the galaxy populated universe.

The Harvard astronomers' survey has revealed a clumpiness in the distribution of galaxies and a study indicates that a revision is necessary in the previously held conception that most galaxies are spirals. From all evidence collected, the conclusion is reached that the universe is still in a youthful state and that giant stars are still being born.

Dr. Harlow Shapley, director of Harvard College Observatory since 1921, is past president of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, American Academy of Arts and Sciences, American Astronomical Society, Pacific Astronomical Society, Astronomical League, and other scientific organizations. Among his works are "Source Book in Astronomy," "Star Clusters," and "Galaxies." He had edited many scientific works.

The very nature of modern astronomy and cosmogony traces its origins to the researches of Dr. Shapley. With his working out of the period-luminosity curve of the Cepheid variables a method of measuring intergalactic distances came into being. It has been said that his work with the globular star clusters did for the Milky Way system what Copernicus did earlier for the solar system. Definite knowledge of galaxies far beyond the Milky Way was inaugurated by him in 1923 when he proved a distant star cloud to be much more remote than any part of the Milky Way system, clearly establishing the existence of the first "island universe" to be known to astronomers.

TRIP TO BALTIMORE. On Thursday, March 8, Mr. Paul S. Watson, Curator of Astronomy, has reserved seats for the NCA at the 8:30 P. M. demonstration at the Davis Planetarium, located in the Enoch Pratt Free Library Building, 400 Cathedral Street (near the West Franklin Street YMCA). The subject for March will be "Reasons for the Seasons," and Mr. Watson has offered to make the demonstration for our group "just a little fuller than the usual ones" if time permits. Judged by past experience this should be an interesting event.

Several members are driving cars and have offered to take passengers. Any member desiring a ride may make arrangements with a friend driving over or see Janet Perkins, MI 3200, extension 320 (daytime), or Thelma Cressy, HO 2993 (evenings) at an NCA meeting before the date or telephone by March 6.

NEW MEMBERS

- *Beebe, Donald M., 1424 Washington Ave., Alexandria, Va.
- Bell, Dr. R. A., 119 N. Potomac St., Hagerstown, Md. Phone 829
- Curry, Mrs. John J. (Erma L.) 410 Cleve Dr., Falls Church, Va. FA 0029
- *Jones, Colin M., 1431 Washington Ave., Alexandria, Va. KI 8-4266
- Jones, Robert A., 1431 Washington Ave., Alexandria, Va. KI 8-4266
- Roan, Mrs. J. S.W., 520 Valley Lane, Falls Church, Va. FA 7884

MRS. LEROY BENFER, feeling that NCA meant so much to Mr. Benfer, has presented the NCA with the 4" richfield telescope which NCA'ers will remember seeing at so many public observations. Bob Wright presented the telescope in Mrs. Benfer's behalf, stating that he would like the telescope become the responsibility of some NCA member, that person to bring it to public observations, make it available to other groups as a public service, and loan it to NCA members. Mr. Wright is accepting this responsibility until the trustees set up rules. The NCA voted that the telescope should be named "The Leroy Benfer Telescope" and that it should bear a plaque identifying it as such.