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STAR DUST
National Capital Astronomers
Washington, D. C.

September 1951 Vol. 9, No. 1

SEPTEMBER CALENDAR

- Sept. 6 Thurs. Junior Observing Night at the NCA 5".
Ted Jones in charge.
- Sept. 8 Sat. "POSSIBILITIES OF TRAVEL IN OUTER
SPACE," Ernest G. Reuning lectures
in the Commerce Department Auditorium,
at 8:15 p. m.
- Sept. 8 Sat. "EXPLORING THE SKY," National Capi-
tal Parks Outing, Fort Reno Park,
40th & Chesapeake St., N.W. 7:30.
- Sept. 19 Wed. NCA members observing night,
Fort Reno Park, from dusk on.
Ned Johnston, Observing Chairman.
Bring your telescope.
- Sept. 22 Sat. DISCUSSION GROUP, Commerce Foyer.
With Bob Wright.
- Sept. 29 Sat. Junior Observing Night at the NCA
5". Ted Jones in charge.

Call Irene Warthen at LO-5-1237 for information on
telescope making. We shall know about the new season
for next month's STAR DUST.

"ALL ABOARD THE ROCKET SHIP! LET'S TAKE A TRIP INTO
OUTER SPACE!" Our navigator will be Ernest G. Reuning,
who will brief us on the problem confronting us in our
travel in outer space. Mr. Reuning will approach the
subject from the point of view of a positional astro-
nomer. Emphasis will be on navigation in space and

THE ASTRONOMICAL LEAGUE BULLETIN will be pub-
lished again this year but with a change of subjects
to include more group observational projects, espe-
cially timed for the two-month period following each
issue. Instrumentation will also receive special
emphasis as well as other program features. Last
year each NCA member received a copy of each issue
at a total cost to the NCA of \$7.50. We have been
advised that this year the cost will be 25 cents for
the five issues, or a total cost to the NCA of about
\$30.00. The Trustees are required to place their or-
der by September 14. The opinions of the members are
requested, either individually or at the September
meeting, as to whether we want to provide copies for
all members this year, or how best to arrange dis-
tribution of this valuable bulletin.

OBSERVING NIGHT for NCA members and guests is set
for Wednesday, September 19, at Fort Reno Park, 40th
and Chesapeake Streets, N. W., from dusk on. These
arrangements are being made by Ned Johnston, Observing
Chairman for the coming year, in an effort to furnish
incentive for NCA members to use their own telescopes,
find objects in the sky, trade ideas, and generally
provide an occasion for "shop talk". Fort Reno Park
is chosen for the first night of observing, but we
are willing to change later events to other good lo-
cations. Come, bring your telescopes if you have one,
and enjoy the evening.

THE REGIONAL COUNCIL MEMBER for the NCA for the
past two years has been Miss Irene Warthen, who was
elected to complete the 3-year term of Bob Wright,
vacated when he became Regional Chairman. At the
September meeting nominations will be called for,
and election held for the NCA Regional Council Mem-
ber for the next 3-year term.

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the gravitational effect on the prospective ship. Questions of rocket propulsion may be brought in indirectly, but rocket ships and fuels will be left to experts in these fields. Establishing an artificial satellite may be our first goal. But in actual travel, we have to consider the danger of radiation in space, the probability of being hit by meteorites, and the problem of communication. In connection with navigation, corrections to the course must be extremely accurate. There is need to stabilize the ship's speed and figure the direction exactly. The velocity, exceeding seven miles per second, requires computation precise within inches per second. Reserve energy must equal ten times the amount expended. If we are to stop at the moon, there is the problem of steering around it and landing and taking off from the lunar surface. Mr. Reuning has studied astronomy under Dr. Van De Camp at Swarthmore College, and was until recently employed as an astronomer at the Naval Observatory. He is now with the Army Map Service.

MR. MORGAN CILLEY, who has provided us with so many adventures in observing, both at the Naval Observatory and on observational outings, has resigned from the NCA. The NCA will not be the same without Mr. Cilley. We shall miss him greatly and the work he has carried out in the NCA to further its contribution to astronomy and astronomical observing.

FOUR TELESCOPES were provided on August 9 for observing by the D. C. Recreation Department Day Camp. The skies cooperated with a first-quarter moon and adequate objects for easy observing. The marvel of the evening was the attentiveness and good behavior of 59 children, ages 7-12.

EXPLORING THE SKY public observations with the National Capital Parks on Saturday, September 8. This is also regular NCA meeting night. Due to the duplication of events, we will need to make special arrangements to take care of the Park Service (provided the weather is clear). Bob Wright is coordinator of this event.

METEOR TRIP, AUGUST 11-12, 1951. The following people went to Rattlesnake Point to observe the Perseid Meteor shower: Bob Wright, Janet Perkins, Hattie Tackett, Harriet and Irving Malitson, Irene Warthen, Dorothea Lamore, Nancy Greenwood, Leo Scott, Guinevere Scott, Martha Scott, Margaret Scott, and Philip Scott. The party left Washington at 11:00 A.M. Saturday. We stopped for lunch at the Warrenton Coffee Shoppe and proceeded to Panorama, Virginia. We got our permits from the Ranger to get to our observing and camp site. We had to drive down a fire road about one mile after leaving the drive. This road was so overgrown that it was like driving in a canyon. Long black berries grew in profusion over the whole area; they were enjoyed by both old and young fry.

After dinner the cots were set up in readiness for the night's observing, the sky being quite clear at sundown. Shortly after sundown the clouds came over and it started to sprinkle. Before the rain came we were visited by Ranger Bean and Dr. McPherson of the National Bureau of Standards who were staying at Range View Cabin. After we had corrected our clocks at 8:30 from WWV, we enjoyed propaganda broadcasts from Radio Moscow and Radio Prague. The rain upset the observing program and we retired to our cars and tent. Although Miss Warthen kept a watch all night, the cloud cover did not break until just before dawn. Then three meteors were seen through a hole in the overcast. The same conditions prevailed at Sterling and Fredericksburg, Virginia, where the National Bureau of Standards parties were located.

After breakfast, Janet and Bob returned to Washington, and the rest leisurely broke camp and prepared to visit White Oak Canyon. When we arrived back at Panorama the weather again changed our minds and we headed for home. On the way we met some of the heaviest rain that I have ever encountered. Cars were stalled along the road in droves. Despite the fact that no observations were made a good time was had by all.

--Leo W. Scott