

STAR DUST  
National Capital Astronomers

September 1953

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SEPTEMBER CALENDAR

Date

Sept. 4-7 Astronomical League Convention in session at Carnegie Institution, 16th and P Streets, N. W.

Sept. 13 "EXPLORING THE SKY," with National Capital Parks, 8 to 10 p. m., Fort Reno Park, north of the intersection of 40th and Chesapeake Streets, N. W.

Sept. 19 DISCUSSION GROUP, Foyer of Department of Commerce Auditorium, 8:00 p. m.

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

CONVENTION TIME HAS ARRIVED - Our guests will be arriving during the day on Friday, September 4, and by evening everything will be in full swing. Some of these people have attended several conventions, but for many it may be their first. It will also be the first convention for many NCA members. As the host society for this convention, it is up to us to make our visitors feel welcome. We will have special badges to identify NCA members. Let us use these badges as a means to greet those who attend, and do all we can to help them during their stay in Washington. Although you may not have registered earlier, you are welcome to register at the time of the convention and attend any of the sessions at Carnegie Institution,

NORFOLK OBSERVATION PICNIC - Seven NCA members attended the Norfolk Picnic (via the boat): Janet and Bob Wright, Paul Davis, Grace Scholz, Marian Ambleau, Elizabeth Fazekas, and Thelma Cressy. The boat meals were excellent; the water was smooth; the stars were bright; the weather was mild. When the boat passed Lyle Johnson's place at Blossom Point, he wigwagged the electric lights and the boat gave him a long answering searchlight salute. Aubrey Husted was a one-man welcoming committee at the water's edge when the boat docked at Norfolk. After breakfast we went to the picnic grounds at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Preston Nash ("Andy") Anderson. We were greeted by a large banner with the words "Welcome Astronomers, NCA, RAS, NAS," decorated with a picture of a star and a half moon with a smiling face. From there we went to the air-conditioned Delmar Motel - our home until Sunday. The NCA group then proceeded to the Norfolk Weather Bureau, where we learned about hurricane Barbara and how records are made. Virginia Beach, dinner, swimming, and sunbathing were next.

The picnic and observation party began at 5:00 p. m. There were five telescopes, one a 13-inch size, with a movable stair which swung around with the telescope. The yard was banked with chairs, settees, and a table loaded with picnic delicacies. Each person gave a short talk, Elizabeth Fazekas and Aubrey Husted sang solos, and our host, "Andy", played the accordion. Recordings were made and played back. It was a PERFECT picnic and we owe the Andersons and the Norfolk group a vote of thanks for their warm hospitality.

The Wright group returned to Washington via the Eastern shores of Virginia and Maryland, through hurricane-struck country (21-mile ferry ride), Ocean City, Coin Roads, Lewes (with its historical museum), and Annapolis bridge. The Scholz group spent Sunday at Virginia Beach, dined at the Fazekas home, and returned by way of West Point and Fredericksburg.

— Thelma Cressy

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Jewell Boling, Editor 1717 P St., N. W. (6) NO 7-9621

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16th and P Streets, N. W. The general outline of these sessions is as follows:

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 5

- 9:00 - 10:00 a. m. Middle East Regional Meeting
- 10:00 - 12:00 noon Opening Convention Session, Roll Call and Reports
- 1:30 - 2:45 p. m. Observing Session
- 3:15 - 5:00 p. m. Observing Session (continued)

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 6

- 1:00 - 2:30 p. m. General Business Session, Election of Officers, Report of Council Actions, Resolutions
- 3:45 - 5:00 p. m. Radio Astronomy Session
- 8:00 p. m. Papers on Selected Subjects:  
Practical Value of a Small Satellite  
Living Matter in a Universe of Matter  
Sounding the Galaxy by Photoelectric Photometry  
The Small Planetarium in the Museum Program

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 7

- 8:00 - 9:00 a. m. Middle East Regional Meeting
- 9:00 - 10:45 a. m. Instrument Session
- 11:00 a. m. Operation Eclipse - What can be expected for the next General Convention
- 12:30 p. m. Adjournment

Your attendance is especially desired at the Middle East Regional Meetings, since this is our region and needs our support. Every NCA member is entitled to an individual vote in the regional meeting.

— Janet Wright

New acquisitions have included a projection screen for the NCA, and a copy of New Handbook of the Heavens for each of forty members, bought at a special club price.

New members each year have averaged 25, with fewer members dropping out than in previous years. Membership now stands at 121 regular members and 24 junior members.

The last two years have gone rapidly. There have been lots of pleasant times, and some times with headaches and problems. The loyal support of many NCA members has made my term as president one which I shall never forget, and I wish to thank the officers, the committee chairmen, and members for their assistance.  
— Janet Wright

DISCUSSION GROUP for September will be held Saturday, September 19, in the Foyer of the Department of Commerce Auditorium at 8:00 p. m. The topic for the evening has not been decided, but it is a good guess that it will center about summer astronomical activities and a discussion of topics heard at the convention.

JULES FELDSMANS, LATVIAN ENVOY TO U. S. AND NCA MEMBER

died August 16 at his home, 4704 Seventeenth Street, N.W. A career diplomat, Mr. Feldsmans succeeded the late Dr. Alfred Bilmanis who died in 1949. The United States continues to recognize the Latvian government-in-exile. To his widow, Mrs. Feldsmans, the NCA extends its sympathy.

COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS - The following persons have been appointed to head special committees during the coming year. Additional appointments will be announced in the next issue.

Compilation of observing information	Larry White
Discussion group	Bob Wright
Distribution - STAR DUST	Ione Alston
Equipment and facilities	Lyle Johnson
Junior activities	Robert Dellar
Membership	Mabel Sterns
Publicity	Benjamin Adelman
Special Events	Thelma Cressy
STAR DUST Editor	Jewell Boling
Telescope making	Irene Warthen
Speakers Committee	William Isherwood, Leo Scott, Roger Smith

— Grace Scholz

NOTE: There will not be a September lecture meeting for the NCA due to the Astronomical League Convention. We hope to see every NCA member at some or all of the convention sessions.

"EXPLORING THE SKY" - Our next evening with the National Capital Parks will be Sunday, September 13, 8 to 10 p. m. at Fort Reno Park, north of the intersection of 40th & Chesapeake Sts., N. W. The moon and fall constellations will be observed. Please bring your telescope, especially if the night is very clear. Our evening with the National Capital Parks on August 11 was a successful "outing," although it may not have been so successful as "Perseid Meteor Counting." The skies were slightly hazy. Eleven telescopes were set up, and many NCA members were there. About 250 attended. The majority gathered around the telescopes and gazed heavenward occasionally for meteors. Several smaller groups migrated to the edge of the field and gazed in earnest. About 50 meteors were seen between 9:30 and 11:15.

LET'S GLANCE AT THE YEARS 1951-1953 - Have you enjoyed the past two years? I did. Let's take a quick look back. The trip to Hood College - The NCA Dinner in 1952 - The trip to Eastern Mennonite College at Harrisonburg - The visit to the 26" telescope at the Naval Observatory - The trip to Norfolk two weeks ago.

We had our lectures too - nine lecture meetings each year, plus an evening each year of movies. Seven Discussion Groups the first year, and eight the next, centered around observing programs, books, and photography. Then there was the one on telescope making, when we talked instrumentation all day long.

NCA observing nights were slimly attended, and later discontinued. The NCA 5" was moved to new quarters providing a much wider sky at a new spot on the Naval Observatory grounds. Observing and cooperation were prominent in January 1952, when we served over 1000 Cub Scouts. Observing with the National Capital Parks took up six evenings each summer.

The NCA received some unexpected publicity too. We had a recorded interview on WASH-FM, and the telescope making class appeared in a television movie and in the newspaper. Feature stories on the recent Perseid meteor count were carried in both the Washington Post and the Evening Star.

Astronomical League participation has taken a lot of time. Bob Wright was elected President at Chapel Hill. Eighteen went to Chapel Hill; and five to Dallas for General Conventions. Four attended the Middle East Regional Convention in Detroit, and six attended the Northeast Regional Convention at Rochester. This past year many activities have taken second place in our planning for the General Convention taking place here this coming Labor Day weekend.