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NEW MEMBERS

- Charles A. Little, 1808 W Street, S. E. (20) LU 4-5919
- John C. Lund, 2014 Drexel Street, Apt. 103, Hyattsville, Md. HE 4-4713
- Roy O. McCaldin, 2210 Gaylord Drive, Bradbury Heights 23, Maryland. JO 8-4892
- *Joel Iubar, 2212 Colston Drive, Silver Spring, Md. JU 5-8263
- *Pete Booth, 15 West Kirk Street, Chevy Chase 15, Md. OL 4-1755

FORT BELVOIR PLANETARIUM TRIP - About thirty NCA

Members and friends visited the Fort Belvoir Planetarium on Thursday night, October 8. A moving picture was shown illustrating the revolution of the planets around the sun. Corporal Richard Whitaker gave an ingenious lecture on a fictitious trip to Mars. His lecture included information on the trip itself, the inhabitants of Mars, and living conditions on the planet. A flashlight picture was taken of Morton Schiff and Paul Davis inspecting the planetarium mechanism. No doubt, it will be used on a travel folder illustrating the next trip to Mars. Better order your tickets early and let Corporal Whitaker tell you what you will need for clothing and money.

We wish to thank Hoy Walls, Abraham Robinson, John Lund, Paul Davis, William Isherwood, and Grace Scholz, who furnished the transportation, and Mr. and Mrs. Robert Dellar, Mr. and Mrs. L. W. Holland, and Dana Law, our Virginia members who offered to drive to the Commerce Building if their cars were needed. So many have said they would like to have the planetarium trip repeated, we hope to arrange another visit in the spring. The lectures are changed monthly.

-----Thelma Cressy

SKYSCOPE FOR \$18. Willard Cronyn, 3801 Military Road, N. W. (EM 2-7125), a former NCA member, has a Skyscope for sale. He says, "It is as good as new and I think \$18.00 is a fair price."

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

STAR DUST

National Capital Astronomers

November 1953

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OCTOBER CALENDAR

- Nov. 7 (Sat.) "PRACTICAL ASPECTS OF TELESCOPE MAKING," Mr. Leo W. Scott and Mr. James B. Saunders of the National Bureau of Standards. Commerce Auditorium, 8:15 p. m.
- Nov. 14 Observing the transit of Mercury through our 5" in the Naval Observatory may be possible if the necessary filter can be secured. Call Miss Scholz (JU-5-0706) or Mr. Isherwood (AP 7-9419) for details.
- TRIP TO INTERNATIONAL LATITUDE OBSERVATORY, Gaithersburg, Maryland, leaving Washington 7:45 P. M. See details inside.
- Nov. 15 (Sun.) "ASTRONOMY AS A HOBBY," Mr. Benjamin Adelman speaking at the First Congregational Church 10th and G Streets, N. W., at 7:30 P. M. Slides will be shown.
- Nov. 21 (Sat.) DISCUSSION GROUP. Leader, G. R. Wright. 8:00 P. M., Foyer, Commerce Auditorium.
- Nov. 28 (Sat.) GROUP OBSERVING AT THE NCA 5", Naval Observatory Grounds, 8 - 10 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.

"PRACTICAL ASPECTS OF TELESCOPE MAKING" - Mr. Leo W. Scott of the National Bureau of Standards will present a talk prepared by Mr. James B. Saunders on new developments in optical equipment. Mr. Saunders has developed a novel technique for making telescope mirrors which will interest everyone who has made a telescope or would like to make one. He has also invented a new method for making lenses and a super-precision technique for measuring the flatness of optical surfaces to an accuracy finer than one-thirtieth of the wavelength of light, that is, to within less than a millionth of an inch. Mr. Saunders is a project leader in the Optical Instrument Section of the National Bureau of Standards. He is a specialist in research on the optical properties of glass.

--Benjamin Adelman

TRIP TO INTERNATIONAL LATITUDE OBSERVATORY - A visit to the nearby International Latitude Observatory at Gaithersburg, Maryland, will be made on Saturday, November 14. The observatory is one of a few, strategically located throughout the world. Mr. Earl Williams, the director, will permit us to look at, but not through, the telescope, and will tell us about his work. The rest of the evening may be spent counting meteors (we hope), as this is a favorable date for meteor observations.

Please meet at the Wisconsin Avenue streetcar and bus terminal, Wisconsin and Western Avenues, at 7:45 P. M., unless you care to make individual arrangements. Those who can furnish and those desiring transportation, see Ione Alston, Margaret Glock, or Thelma Cressy at the November 7 meeting; or call Margaret Glock, New Amsterdam Apartments, CO 5-7400, extension 602, or Thelma Cressy, evenings HO 2-2993. Even if you make your own car pool, please let us know so we shall have an idea of how many to expect. No trip is scheduled for December, so let's have a big turnout. Route - Enter Gaithersburg on Route 240 from Rockville. One block beyond traffic light, make left turn (schoolhouse will be on right) into DeSellum Avenue. At the first cross street, George Street, the lane to the Observatory begins. It has bluestone in the wheel tracks and is an extension of DeSellum Avenue.

---Thelma Cressy

OBSERVATIONAL DATA

Mercury is at inferior conjunction on November 14. At the end of the month it is a morning star visible low in the southeast just before sunrise. The planet makes a transit across the sun's disk on the 14th, first contact occurring at 10:37 a. m. and the last at 1:12 p. m., E.S.T. The track is such that the planet remains near the sun's limb, starting at a point about 50 degrees east of the north-south line through the sun's center and leaving some four degrees west of the north point. Venus is a morning star seen very low in the southeast just before sunrise. A close conjunction with Saturn occurs at approximately 5:18 A. M. on the 14th. Mars is in Virgo, visible in the southeast for some hours before sunrise. Jupiter rises about two hours after sunset and dominates the sky the rest of the night. Saturn is a morning star in Virgo just east of Spica. It may be seen low in the southeast just before sunrise. The maximum date for the Leonid meteor shower is November 16. The shower averages 20 meteors per hour.

LUNAR OCCULTATIONS

Date	Star	Mag.	Age of Moon		E.S.T.
			days	disappear	
11-8	Alpha Sco.	1.2	2.0	12:41.1 A.M.	2:11.0 P.M.
11-12	26 B. Cap.	6.9	6.2	6:53.5 P.M.	
11-13	BD-14 ^o 5997	7.0	7.3	8:09.0 P.M.	
11-14	theta Aqa	4.3	8.4	10:47.2 P.M.	
11-26	o ² Canc.	5.6	19.6		3:47.5 A.M.
11-26	o ¹ Canc.	5.2	19.6		3:58.9 A.M.
11-29	p ⁵ Leon	5.4	22.7		4:30.9 A.M.

---A. L. White

MEMBERS WHO WISH to be able to use the NGA telescope in the Naval Observatory grounds and whose names do not now appear on the list of those who may obtain the key should see Mr. Isherwood, Mr. Walls, or Mr. Wright as soon as possible. The list is being revised and supplemented, and now is the time to make application.

THE LEROY BENEFER MEMORIAL TELESCOPE, a prized possession of our late member, was given to the NCA shortly after his death. This fine instrument is in the custody of Mr. Hoy Walls and may be borrowed from him by any member for a period of 30 days with the understanding that the member will assume financial responsibility for any damage done to the instrument during the period of the loan. See Mr. Walls if you would like to borrow this telescope, or call him at OL 2-5395.

OBSERVING AT THE NCA 5", Saturday, November 28, 8 - 10 p. m. - The moon will be down so this will be a good time to observe nebulae, clusters, galaxies, etc. Also Jupiter will be favorably situated for observation. For newer members this will be a good opportunity to get acquainted with the NCA's fine telescope. Your NCA membership card will admit you through the main gate of the Naval Observatory. Members who demonstrate their ability to use the telescope with proper care can be placed on the list of those who are authorized to obtain the key to the building for individual observing. See Mr. Hoy Walls if you are interested in getting on this list. --William L. Isherwood

SHOWING OF "THE UNIVERSE" last month was attended by about 500 persons. The Commerce Auditorium was filled. The films were excellent, both technically and in content. Much new celestial photography was included. New pictures of the moon and planets obtained with the Hale 200-inch telescope of Mt. Palomar revealed amazing detail. The films were arranged and produced by Dr. Ruoy Sibley with the full cooperation of the major American observatories. Incidentally, the large and unexpected turnout has been attributed to the advance write-up given the film showing in the WEEKENDER. Perhaps not all NCA members know it, but the WEEKENDER, which is on the newsstands every Saturday, contains nearly every week an article of current astronomical interest. An NCA member contributes these articles.

DID YOU KNOW?

It is possible to see Pluto with a 15-inch refractor? The earth is closer to the sun on New Year's Day than on the Fourth of July?

Every night a star rises four minutes later than it did the night before?

With proper weather conditions you might see a rainbow at noon on New Year's Day, but if you did, it would be due north and very low in the sky?

Our spring and summer are a week longer than autumn and winter?

We see more of Venus at the crescent phase than when it is nearly full?

The average eye on a clear, moonless night can see between 1500 and 2000 stars?

NOVEMBER SKIES

In November we are just coming out of the barren skies of October. The brilliant winter constellations -- Orion, Gemini -- are still below the horizon. But November is called Pleiad month because this group is now prominent in the eastern sky. This is the best month of the year for observing several interesting objects. Just under W-shaped Cassiopeia is the Double Cluster of Perseus, visible to the unaided eye on a moonless night. Nearby is Algol, the "demon star", best known of the eclipsing variables. Pisces is well placed now. It contains the red variable, Mira, "the Wonderful". This strange "blinking" star becomes as bright as Polaris and then vanishes for several months. Far to the south, Fomalhaut, the "lonesome" star of Piscis Australis, is approaching the meridian. It is so low down that it has come and gone almost before we know it. Now is the time to try to locate Job's Coffin. The Zodiacal constellations Capricornus, Aquarius, and Aries are in best view but they are too subdued to attract much attention. Just south of Cassiopeia, high in the east, the Andromeda Galaxy is best seen now with the unaided eye. It passes overhead about 9:00 p. m.