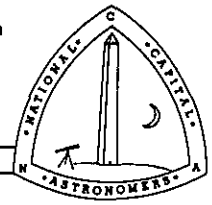


QB1  
579

★ STAR DUST



September 1961 Vol. XIX, No. 1

NOTED ASTROPHYSICIST TO SPEAK ON VENUS

Fifteen NCA members were among the nearly 100 attending the convention on Aug. 19. Those attending were Jim Krebs, Hoy Walls, Mr. & Mrs. Nelson Griggs, Thelma Cressy, Mr. & Mrs. Morton Schiff, Mr. & Mrs. Grady Wittney & daughter, Martha Lou, Mr. & Mrs. Bob Wright & daughter Susan, and Mr. & Mrs. Bill Lipscomb.

The convention was held at the Cocoa Inn, on the corner of Cocoa & Chocolate St. in Hershey, Pa. The morning began with a business session, followed by a talk by Mr. George Doschek. This was followed by a round-table discussion on the programs of the various societies, and a discussion of satellite stations. After lunch, more papers were presented, including one by Jim Mullaney on the classification of deep sky objects as they appear through telescopes of various sizes. This idea is the same as was given in "TIPS". Our Virginia group is the only one outside Pittsburgh that is cooperating with Mr. Mullaney in this work.

Donald Neidig of Harrisburg, spoke on problems in building a six inch Maksutov telescope. At the final business session new officers were elected: Chairman, Anthony Doschek, Pittsburgh, Vice Chairman, James Mullaney, Pittsburgh; Treasurer Edward Neilos, Harrisburg; Secretary, Emil Valchek, Wilmington, Del. At dinner, Dr. Nickolas Wagman spoke on "Astronomy Today." In the evening there was to have been a star party, but it was cloudy so movies were shown instead.

Dr. Krebs extended an invitation to the League to hold a meeting here in Washington on May 12. The invitation was accepted and Bob Wright will be chairman of the meeting.

\* \* \* \* \*

MARYLAND - D. C. JUNIORS

J. L. Holloway, who has recently returned from studying meteorology on the west coast, will resume his old post of Junior Director beginning this September. This is good news for us Maryland Juniors, who can remember the mathematical marvels that he used to concoct. In this post he succeeds Jim Krebs, who will step up to the N. C. A. Presidency. Thank you very much, Jim for your competent leadership.

The World Night program has been hampered by inclement weather. Only one out of six nights has been clear. Drawings made at other times will make up somewhat for those missed due to bad weather. It appears now that the Perseid meteors will be clouded out completely. I must consult the Weather Bureau about this depressing situation.

One of the items on the agenda of the September meeting is that of new members. With the graduation of five more of our group we have only about four hard-core personnel left. Please bring any interested friends to the September meeting so that they may meet the N. C. C., and we may meet them.

Chris Walker  
Md.-DC Junior Editor

\* \* \* \* \*

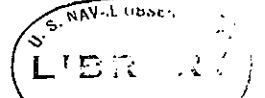


Dr. Ernst J. Opik

meter is 0.961, mass 0.814, mean density 0.916, and surface gravity 0.881 of the corresponding terrestrial values (these figures are quoted as recently revised by the speaker). A thick atmosphere with continuous clouds covers the surface. It was believed, until quite recently, that the clouds were water clouds, and that Venus was a true sister planet of Earth, harboring life in a somewhat more humid and warm climate, perhaps similar to the climate of the carboniferous period on Earth, 250 million years ago.

Modern data, critically discussed by the speaker, lead to a picture which is very different from this imaginary paradise. Almost complete absence of water, whose scarcity has been recently confirmed by Dr. John Strong from observations during the Ross - Moore balloon flight: absence of oxygen in observable amounts; huge amounts of carbon dioxide, not removed from the atmosphere by plants as on Earth; various photometric, bolometric and radiometric data, -- all point to Venus as a borderless desert, levelled by winds during millions of centuries, with choking dust filling the atmosphere and forming the clouds of Venus. The portion of the atmosphere below the clouds, called "aeolosphere or wind region by the writer, completely prevents sunlight from reaching the surface. There, in complete darkness, at a temperature of about 500° F which is maintained by wind friction, a situation prevails that is properly described as a veritable hell.

The reasons for such a conclusion will be pointed out in detail, including recent radar observations made at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory in California. Contrary to announcements, these latter do not necessarily point to a long period of rotation of 200 - 400 days but, rather, to a surface which is less rough than the Moon's comparable in smoothness to terrestrial plains undisturbed by rain or rivers, and to a period of rotation of about 15 - 40 days.



Dr. Öpik is a native of Estonia, a small country formerly independent, now under Communist rule. He graduated in astronomy at Moscow University in 1916, was an astronomer in Tashkent in Central Asia, and Tartu, Estonia; visiting lecturer at Harvard; Estonian Rector of Baltic University, which was run by Baltic refugees and the British Military Government in Hamburg after the war. His most recent popular book is "The Oscillating Universe" (a Mentor paperback).

## CALENDAR FOR SEPTEMBER

- 9 SURFACE CONDITIONS OF VENUS by Dr. Ernst J. Öpik, Dept of Commerce Auditorium, 8:15 P.M. Business meeting follows
- 9 MARYLAND-DC JUNIORS MEETING at the Chevy Chase Community Center, 5601 Connecticut Avenue, N.W., 2:00 P.M. Leith Holloway will lead a general discussion on astronomy and junior plans.
- 10 EXPLORING THE SKY - 8:00 P.M., Ft. Reno Park, 40th and Chesapeake Streets, N. W.
- 15 OBSERVING AT THE FIVE INCH - 8:15 P.M. at the Naval Observatory with Larry White. Your NGA card will admit you.
- 16 COOKOUT & STARS presented by the National Capital Parks, at the Nature Van, Picnic area 16, Glover Road just south of Military Road near the Nature Center.
- 18 TELESCOPE MAKING CLASS begins at the Chevy Chase Community Center, 5601 Connecticut Avenue, at 7:30 P.M. with Hoy Walls.
- 23 DISCUSSION GROUP 8:15 P.M. Department of Commerce Foyer. Topic to be announced. Executive meeting to follow.
- 25 VIRGINIA JUNIORS Observing at the home of Edward Cragg. 5117 N 33rd Street, Arlington, Virginia.
- 30 EXPLORING THE SKY - 8:00 P.M. at Ft. Reno Park.

\* \* \* \* \*

## COMET

There is reported to be a 4th magnitude comet visible near Castor and Pollux in the N. E.

## ASTRONOMY BOOKS

Astronomy books may be ordered through the Astronomical League at a 10 per cent discount. If interested contact the Secretary, Ellen Stolarik RE 6-4321.

\* \* \* \* \*

## MOTOR CITY HOSTS ASTRONOMICAL LEAGUE

The fifteenth annual convention of the Astronomical League took place July 1 through July 3 in Detroit, Michigan. Five N. C. A. members were among those attending: Grace and Armand Spitz, Betty and Bill Lipscomb, and Edward Cragg. The convention was well attended with delegates from all sections of the country. Our headquarters were located in the Henrose Hotel, in downtown Detroit, where most of the delegates were staying. We were greeted with a heat wave, the likes of which we had left in Washington, but which is reputed to be something unusual in these parts.

Sessions began Saturday morning, with business sessions, and a paper by Dr. Dennis Walsh of the University of Michigan, entitled "Radio Waves from Our Galaxy." Saturday afternoon was taken up with a field trip to the University of Michigan, Radio Telescope Observatory, at Peach Mountain, Michigan. Evening hours saw delegates visiting the headquarters of the Detroit Astronomical Society and for some a glimpse of the thousands of square dancers, whose convention was in its final hours as ours began. Sunday was taken up for the most part by a long and interesting session of the Association of Lunar and Planetary Observers, broken at midday by the address of Dr. Helen Sawyer Hogg entitled "Astronomy in Canada Today." Many N. C. A. members will remember her fine lecture a few years ago, this was of no less stature. Sunday evening after we had been snapped for posterity on the steps of the old city hall, we banqueted at the hotel, and heard an amusing address by Dr. Harvey Merker, formerly of the Parke Davis Co. He spoke on "Medicine through the Ages", in his more serious moments. Monday was taken up with a variety of papers, mostly on instrumentation. Early in the afternoon the final business session took place at which the officers for the coming year were elected, namely; Norman Delke of Seattle, Washington, President; Ralph Dakin of Rochester, New York, Vice President; Dr. Herman Sehested of Fort Worth, Texas, Secretary; and Leonard Pardue of Miami, Florida, Treasurer.

Many N. C. A. members will recall a former N. C. A. member named Paul Davis who left us some years ago to move to Detroit. He is now a member of the Detroit Astronomical Society. We visited briefly with him and he asks to be remembered to all of you.

-----Betty Lipscomb-----

## ASTRO MURALS CHANGES HANDS

Grace and Armand Spitz and Betty and Bill Lipscomb have announced that they have jointly acquired the firm Astro Murals. They are selling educational materials, namely beautifully reproduced astronomical murals in three sizes of ten different celestial objects; a small book of observatory photographs, entitled "Portrait of the Universe"; and the Seelo Celestial Globe, an outstanding star finder. They are expecting to expand the operations of this company in the coming months to cover a wide variety of astronomical and other scientific educational aids. Their mailing address is 805 Maine Avenue, S. W., Washington 24, D. C., and phone inquiries will be answered by Betty Lipscomb at South 5-3928.

\* \* \* \* \*