Surveyor photographs show that solid rock lies only about 50 feet below the lunar surface. With only one-sixth of the earth's surface gravity, the moon could now support mountains six times higher than the Himalayas. However, lunar mountains formed while the moon was still warm and soft and not capable of supporting high mountains. There are no mountain-building processes taking place on the moon at present.

--- Leith Holloway

The National Capital Astronomers is the host society for the 1967 General (National) Convention of the Astronomical League and it is hoped that the NCA will wholeheartedly support this convention.

Friday activities will be confined primarily to Copley Lounge and the Georgetown Observatory from 6 PM to 11 PM. To reach Copley Lounge, enter the campus through the main gate at 26th Street and immediately turn right and follow signs to the Lounge. There you will find the registration desk and exhibits. If you arrive Saturday, then you may go either to the Lounge or directly to the Science Building. The Registration desk will be at the Science Building Saturday after 8 AM. All sessions will be held at the Science Building.

We will visit the Georgetown Observatory, one of the oldest observatories in the United States. A trip will be made to the U.S. Naval Observatory. There will also be a trip through the Goddard Space Flight Center where pre-flight tests of many of the U.S. satellites are made. We will visit the Smithsonian Institution for a lecture and guided tour of their astronomical exhibits.

**VERY IMPORTANT IF YOU PLAN TO ATTEND THE CONVENTION BANQUET...** Because the banquet will be held on a holiday weekend, we are required to advise the caterers on Wednesday June 28 (two days before the convention opens) the number of persons who will attend. If you wish to attend the banquet and have not made your reservation, please call: Miss Thelma Cressy 00 5-3343, Ext. 201 (after 6 PM) and advise her to reserve a place for you. Your reservation must be in by June 28.

The papers program will cover all phases of astronomy. Both AAVSO and ALPO will arrange and present sessions.

A Junior session will give our younger members a chance to present papers. A session on Instruments and Accessories (telescope making included) should be a favorite with many who attend. There will be other sessions covering many phases of astronomy.

There will be an astronomical exhibit in Copley Lounge. Several Commer- cial exhibits will be there as well as numerous exhibits from individual members. The ALPO will have a large exhibit of photos, maps, and drawings.

Following is a list of the special events and their costs:

- **Registration fee—Individual $2.00 Family $3.00**
- Smithsonian Trip, Saturday July 1 $1.00
- Goddard Space Flight Center Trip, Sunday, July 2 $2.00
- Convention Banquet, Monday, July 3 $3.00
- Naval Observatory Trip, Monday, July 3 $1.00
- Proceedings of the 1967 Astronomical League General Convention $3.00

- Bob Wright, Convention Chairman
This year marks the 30th anniversary of the organized amateur astronomers in Washington--August 27 to be exact. Stephen Nagy, a "telescope nut," W. Sherman Lyon, Presidential astronomer, and a few others edited some of the newspapers in publicizing a meeting at the Naval Observatory. About 25 persons responded. The outcome was a committee appointed to draft by-laws and a constitution. At the next meeting, on October 1, 1937, the first of the lecture series, nearly 50 persons signed the charter. Mr. Nagy became president, W. S. Lyon, vice president, and C. A. Peterson, treasurer. They held those offices for six years. Mrs. Catherine Ruhl was the first secretary.

Monthly lectures were held at the National Museum until Room 13 could no longer accommodate the crowd. Then we moved to the Commerce Auditorium until it was closed for remodeling in 1966. At present, the Interior Department is our host.

Almost immediately Mr. Nagy with the help of some others, obtained permission to open a telescope-making class at Central High School. By November 1937, 16 members were busy pushing glass. The class came to a halt in 1942 when the war caused shortages of material, but was resumed in 1947 under the guidance of Bob McAllan.

NCA has sponsored classes in descriptive astronomy, celestial navigation, and constellation study at irregular intervals.

When a 5-inch Alvan Clark refractor was offered for sale in 1938, the club bought it. Naval Observatory allowed us to mount it in a small building and let us use a similar shelter for storing members' telescopes. The war put a temporary stop to these conveniences, but since then the Observatory has allowed us the use of one building for the 5-inch.

Regular observation nights were set for members. Then in 1939, a public observation in Meridian Park was publicized and we were overwhelmed with a turnout of 1,000 or so, that was the beginning of our star parties. About 1962, the National Capital Parks included observing sessions in its series of nature programs, and NCA was glad to take part. It still cooperates with the Park Service during the summer season.

For many years, a monthly discussion group gave members an opportunity to ask questions and discuss astronomy informally. Field trips have led to many observatories within a day's round trip. Our first organized visit to Georgetown Observatory was in 1946; to the Georgetown seismology station in 1939.

"National Capital Amateur Astronomers Association" was shortened to National Capital Astronomers in 1966. The same year, juniors were admitted to membership and since then they have formed their own subsidiaries in Maryland and Virginia. Prior to that time, there had been attempts to organize junior astronomers, the most notable of which was a group under the leadership of Bob Patch, high-school son of our member, Robert Patch.

Several hopes and dreams faded into oblivion during the years. NCA has had its difficulties as well as a fair share of success.

"Star Dust" first appeared in October 1943. Late in 1948 or early 1949, "Junior Star Dust" made its bow as a bimonthly paper. Now it comprises part of the parent publication. (Continued on page 3).
Early in the program of radar astronomy, NCA was called upon to count meteors at the National Bureau of Standards station at Sterling, Va., in correlation with observations by radar. Moonwatch of World War II took form within NCA. Prototype of the moonscope evolved here. The Johnsonian telescope designed by Lyle Johnson has gained wide recognition. Grazing occultations, sunspot observations, and many other programs have contributed to scientific research.

NCA takes pride in its members who have set up their telescopes or given slide programs for schools, churches, Scouts, National Capital Parks programs, other amateur societies, and various groups, sometimes driving considerable distances.

NCA was host to the national amateur astronomers in 1947 before they were formally organized, to the Astronomical League in 1951, and is pleased to entertain the League again this year. Two of its members have served as president of the League, and three hold the annual League award.

The writer pleads for the indulgence of all of those who have contributed so much to the NCA but who were not alluded to here. This sketch was written on very short notice and is notable for its omissions.

—Mabel Sterns

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STERLING ANDERSON ELECTED PRESIDENT

The annual NCA elections were held at the June meeting and the following officers were elected for the 1967-68 year and will take office on July 1. Mr. Anderson, who has served NCA as Vice President and has secured many excellent speakers this last year, was elected President. Mr. Jerome Hudson will be the new Vice President, his main duty will be to arrange the programs for the coming year. He would appreciate any suggestions you might have of speakers and/or topics. Mrs. Nora Keel, who joined the society only this past year, will be the Secretary. Mr. Robert Bolster, our most efficient Treasurer, will remain in office for another term. Mr. James Sharpe joins Mrs. Margaret Noble, Mr. Roy Wells, and Mrs. Ellen Stolarik on the Board of Trustees. Congratulations to these new officers and best wishes for a successful year. Their pictures and biographies will appear in the next issue of Star Dust.

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NEW MEMBERS

The following new members were received at the June meeting:

** Regular Member **
James M. Stephens
111 Dogwood St. N.W.
Vienna, Virginia 22180

** Junior Member **
Robert Parisseau
200 Fort Meade Rd. #910
Laurel, Maryland 20810

The Science Fair winners were formally presented their award certificates and memberships at the June meeting.

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DIAL-A-SATELLITE

For precise time and exact locations of satellite passages visible to the naked eye and other astronomical data, dial 737-8855. An up-to-date report is prepared daily by the Smithsonian Astrophysical Observatory.
ASTRONOMY CLASSES

Classes are being offered this summer in astronomy by the Prince Georges County Board of Education and by the Smithsonian Associates of the Smithsonian Institution. For information about the classes this summer or in the fall at the Smithsonian, call 381-5157. They have classes divided by age group for children from 4 to 17.

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A NOTE OF THANKS

I wish to take this opportunity to thank each person from the NCA that has helped in any way with the planning and carrying out of the 1967 Astronomical League Convention.

- Bob Wright, Chairman

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EXPLORE THE SKY PROGRAM

For many years, NCA has co-operated with the National Park Service in presenting summer star parties for the public. These programs are held at picnic grove #16 in Rock Creek Park. This is located on Glover Road—south of Military Road. The dates this month are July 15 and 29 at 9:00 P.M. All NCA members are urged to attend and bring their telescopes. These are very interesting and rewarding sessions. (You can show off the new telescope you built this year in one of the NCA telescope making classes). For further information, please contact Mr. Robert McCracken at #1 2-5395.

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MOVING

Emil Volcheck, one of our outstanding NCA members, is moving to Chattanooga, Tennessee. We wish Emil the best of luck in his new home, but are sorry to see him leave NCA.

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JUNE - A NEW LOOK AT THE OLD MOON

In the first several hundred years of lunar history more changes occurred than in the remaining 4.5 billion years since. So stated our June speaker, Dr. Ernst J. Opik, the internationally renowned astrophysicist.

The moon formed quickly, in only about 350 years (The earth formed in only 50,000 years), from planetesimals which condensed from six or more rings circling the young earth within Roche's limit. Once tidal friction caused them to recede from the earth beyond this limit within which large satellites break to pieces by gravitational shearing, these moonlets were free to combine into one large moon. The formation proceeded so rapidly that tremendous heat was generated softening the surface of the moon. Meteorites striking the moon during this early period were slow moving (3 km./second) and hit a hot surface soft as sandstone. Craters thus produced were shallow. Examples of the early craters are those in the lunar highlands near the south pole of the moon. (Continued on pps. 5 and 6.)