

Next Meeting

When:	Sat. Dec. 8, 2012
Time:	7:30 pm
Where:	UMD Observatory
Speaker:	Dennis Bodewitz (UMD)

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Directions to Dinner/Meeting

There will be a special 75th Anniversary Pot-Luck dinner at the UMD Observatory. Details are on p2.

We will resume our pre-meeting dinners at the new location at Mulligan's Grill in Jan 2013. Directions are on p7.

Need a Ride?

Please contact Jay Miller, 240-401-8693, if you need a ride from the metro to dinner or to the meeting at the observatory. Please try to let him know in advance by e-mail at <u>rigel1@starpower.net</u>.

Observing after the Meeting

Following the meeting, members and guests are welcome to tour through the Observatory. Weather-permitting, several of the telescopes will also be set up for viewing.

Star Dust

National Capital Astronomers, Inc. December 2012 Volume 71, Issue 4 http://capitalastronomers.org

Celebrating 75 years 1937-2012



December 2012: Dennis Bodewitz University of Maryland Ultraviolet Observations of Asteroids, Comets, and Everything in Between

Abstract: Swift is a space-borne observatory initially designed for rapid follow-up of gamma-ray bursts. It is equipped with co-aligned gamma-ray, X-ray, and UV telescopes, and can quickly slew between targets, allowing for rapid response observations and monitoring campaigns. In the past five years, we have used Swift to study numerous small bodies in the Solar System. I will give an overview of our results, ranging from the UV spectroscopy of many asteroids to constrain their surface composition, to the UV imaging and spectroscopy of comets that allows us to study their activity and composition up close and far from the Sun, and to the successful observations of the spectacular impact on Asteroid (596) Scheila.



Star Dust is published ten times yearly September through June, by the National Capital Astronomers, Inc. (NCA).

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PDF Distributor: Jay Miller

Please Get Star Dust Electronically

NCA members able to receive Star Dust, the newsletter of the NCA, via e-mail as a PDF file attachment, instead of hardcopy via U.S. Mail, can save NCA a considerable amount of money on the printing and postage in the production of Star Dust (the NCA's single largest expense) and also save some trees. If you can switch from paper to digital, please contact Manjunath Rao, the NCA Secretary, at kurchi@hotmail.com.

Thank you!

Reminder

After the meeting, everyone is invited to join us at Plato's Diner in College Park. Plato's is located at 7150 Baltimore Ave. (US Rt. 1 at Calvert Rd.), just south of the university's campus. What if it's clear and you want to stick around and observe? No problem -- just come over when you're through. This is very informal, and we fully expect people to wander in and out. **Biography:** Born in Hoogezand-Sappemeer, the Netherlands, I studied experimental physics and astronomy at the University of Groningen. I got my Ph.D. after writing a dissertation on charge exchange emission from solar wind ions interacting with cometary atmospheres at the Nuclear Accelerator Institute (KVI) at the University of Groningen. Being awarded a NASA Postdoctoral Program grant, I moved to Washington DC and started observing comets and asteroids with the Swift space telescope at the Goddard Space Flight Center. In 2010 I joined the Small Body Group at the University of Maryland, where I got involved in the comet fly-bys of the Deep Impact and Stardust-NEXT missions, and in the Rosetta mission that will orbit and land on a comet in 2015. I am one out of a dozen people who ever flew a man-powered helicopter (the University of Maryland's Gamera II).

Hello NCA!

The 75th Anniversary party will be held at the December meeting on December 8!!

It will be in the form of a pot-luck supper, so we need the attendees to bring something to share with the others. Setup for the supper starts at 5:30 and the dinner bell rings at 6:00, giving us time to eat, talk, and clean up the room before the regular meeting begins at 7:30. If you know of any NCA members who haven't been coming to recent meetings, here's an opportunity to bring them back into the fold.

Elizabeth Warner has graciously offered both to make the Observatory's lecture hall available to us for the party, and to keep a list of who is bringing what so that we don't wind up with everybody bringing the same thing. (More on that below.)

We need to know how many people will attend and what they will bring. If you'll be at the party (and please do come!), please send an email to Elizabeth (warnerem@astro.umd.edu) saying how many people will be coming with you and what you'll be bringing. Elizabeth will publish the list of who is bringing what on the NCA web site (capitalastronomers.org/special/NCA75th.html).

We don't have a formal schedule for entertainment during the dinner, but we're asking that anyone with interesting historical information about NCA, NASA, or anything else that's somehow related to astronomy would be willing to stand up and tell us what happened in "the good (or maybe bad) old days." Similarly, if you have any interesting material that could be put on a bulletin board that would be nice.

NCA and its members have been part of the astronomy and spaceflight scene in Washington for three quarters of a century. In that period we've seen – and in many cases, been part of – many extraordinary events. The anniversary dinner is an extraordinary opportunity for long time members to pass along/share their memories with the newer members.

2012-2013 Officers

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Vice-President:

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Asst. Secretary-Treasurer: Jeffrey B. Norman jeffreynorman@comcast.net

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- Wayne Warren (2015)
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Exploring the Sky Joseph C. Morris j.c.morris@verizon.net

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301-565-3709 (h)

Meeting Facilities Jay H. Miller rigel1@starpower.net 240-401-8693

Star Dust Editor Michael Chesnes <u>m.chesnes@verizon.net</u>

First Star Dust Issue

The early issues of Star Dust were scanned at the USNO by summer student Nick Kutchak under the supervision of the USNO Librarian and NCA member, Sally Bosken. We appreciate all their efforts. Later issues were scanned by Wayne Warren and other volunteers. Thanks to efforts of all of these volunteers we have a near complete digital archive.

Here is a copy of the first *Star Dust* issue from October, 1943. Page 4 appears at the beginning of the scan because of how our newsletter was folded at that time. *I have included both thumbnails of Wayne's scans and close-up views of each page in numerical order.*

Thank you Wayne for your many hours scanning decades of back *Star Dust* issues for the NCA website and for contributing a copy of our first issue in celebration of NCA's 75th Anniversary.

-le-	October 1943
ANNUAL DUES are payable to the secretary. Persons more than six months in arrears will be dropped from	STAR IUST
the mailing list. SXY AND TELESCOPE subscription is \$2.00 regular, 51.50 for Amatour Astronomore. The treasurer will	National Capital Amateur Astronomers Association Washington, D.C.
have yours renewed if you wish, at the special rate.	
NOTICES OF COMMITTEE MEETINGS, observations, reports, and social activities should reach the ditor by October 20th to be included in the November bulletin. We should also like to hear from members who are	President, Dr. Edgar W. Woolard, 1232 30th St., N. W. Michigan 8287 Vice Free., Capt. U.S. Lyons, 4315 Chesapenke St.,N.W. Woodlay 3284
seeing stars irom other includes of longicules.	Treasurer, Mr. George L. Skirm, 4304 Brendywine St., N.W., Woodley 1216 Secretary, Miss Dorothy Harris, 1621 T Street, N.W.
Mabel Sterns 2517 K Street N.W. District 9422	Dapent 4200
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-2- Astronomical Society of the Facific, Mathematical Asen. of Jawrice, American Matcorological Society, American Astronomical Society; Mashingten Fullosophical Society, and N.C.J.A.G. He has contributed to various technical journals on mathematical statistics and hybrids, meteor- logical optics and physics, dynamical meteorology, and astronomy.	-34 THE COST per plate is 1.25, including tip. Any members who have already paid \$1 and find 1t incorrer icat to attend, should notify Mr. Herreshoff, Beerson 0992, by September 291h. Collection to bring the total cost per person to 31.25 will be made at the dcor. Others withing to attend should call Mr. Herreshoff on September 29th between 5 and 10 p.m. or notify the secretary before that date.
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October 1943 STAR DUST National Capital Amateur Astronomers Association Washington, D.C. ******************************** President, Dr. Edgar W. Woolard, 1232 30th St., N. W. Michigan 8287 Vice Pres., Capt. U.S. Lyons, 4315 Chesapeake St., N.W. Woodley 3284 Treasurer, Mr. George L. Skirm, 4304 Brandywine St., N.W., Woodley 1216 Secretary, Miss Dorothy Harris, 1621 T Street, N. W. Dupont 4200

THE SEVENTH YEAR of the Amateur Astronomers began with forty members in good standing and \$229.1 $\overline{4}$ in the treasury.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS followed by a social hour took place at the home of Capt. and Mrs. Lyons on September 11th. Capt. Lyons presided at the business meeting. After the annual reports were read, the officers listed above were elected unanimously.

DR. EDGAR W. WOOLARD was meteorologist at the Weather Bureau from 1919-28; instructor of mathematics at George Washington University in 1928-29; assistant professor 1929-34; meteorologist, Weather Bureau, from 1934 to date. He was editor of the Journal of Washington Academy of Sciences 1928-30; has been editor of the Monthly Weather Review since 1936. He is a member of Geophysical Union,

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DISCUSSION GROUPS for various subjects will be organized if sufficient interest warrants them. Different members may be asked in turn to lead the discussion, or each group may select its leader. Such groups may meet once a month, or whenever the members desire. Dr. Woolard has offered his assistance in the field of mathematics. Some of the materials for grinding mirrors are stored at the home of Capt. Lyons, who is willing to help telescope makers. Will some of the others volunteer their skills? Check the discussions you would like to take part in, either as leader or beginner, and return to the editor.

General astronomy
Constellation and star finding
Celestial pavigation
Mathematics
Telescope making
Other
Your name

-2-Astronomical Society of the Pacific, Mathematical Assn. of America, American Meteorological Society, American Astronomical Society; Washington Philosophical Society, and N.C.A.A.A. He has contributed to various technical journals on mathematical statistics and physics, meteorological optics and physics, dynamical meteorology, and astronomy. THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES is composed of four members elected for a term of four years each, except in the case of a vacancy when a trustee is elected to serve the unexpired term. The present trustees are: Capt. U.S. Lyons, serving fourth year of present term; Mr. E. C. Stanton, 4815 Battery Lane, Bethesda, Md., Wisconsin 2307, serving third year of present term; Mr. C. A. Peterson, 4845 V St., N.W., Woodley 2614, elected for three years to fill vacancy; Dr. E. W. Wcolard, elected for full term. COMMITTEE CHAIRMEN will be announced later. TELESCOPE ADJUSTMENTS. If you need assistance in making minor repairs to your telescope, these people have offered to help: And the second s C. A. Peterson, address above Ralph C. Masters, 220 Sheridan St., N.W.? Georgia 2613 Edwin V. Smith, 225 5th St., S.E., Franklin 1465. GET-ACQUAINTED DINNER OUR NEW PRESIDENT and Mrs. Woolard will be guests of the Association at dinner on October 2d, 7:15 p.m. at the Kenesaw Apartment, 16th and Irving Streets, N.W. The Mt. Pleasant car, 16th Street bus, and Crosstown bus stop within a block of the Kenesaw. -1-ANNUAL DUES are payable to the secretary. Persons more than six months in arrears will be dropped from the mailing list. SKY AND TELESCOPE subscription is \$2.00 regular, \$1.50 for Amateur Astronomers. The treasurer will have yours renewed if you wish, at the special rate. NOTICES OF COMMITTEE MEETINGS, observations, reports, and social activities should reach the editor by October 20th to be included in the November bulletin. We should also like to hear from members who are

seeing stars from other latitudes or longitudes.

Mabel Sterns . 2517 K Street N.W. District 9422

D following the time denotes a disappearance, while R indicates that the event is a reappearance.

When a power (x; actually, zoom factor) is given in the notes, the event can probably be recorded directly with a camcorder of that power with no telescope needed.

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The times are for Greenbelt, MD, and will be good to within +/-1 min. for other locations in the Washington-Baltimore metropolitan areas unless the cusp angle (CA) is less than 30 deg., in which case, it might be as much as 5 minutes different for other locations across the region.

Some stars in Flamsteed's catalog are in the wrong constellation, according to the official IAU constellation boundaries that were established well after Flamsteed's catalog was published. In these cases, Flamsteed's constellation is in parentheses and the actual constellation is given in the notes following a /.

Mag is the star's magnitude.

% is the percent of the Moon's visible disk that is sunlit, followed by a + indicating that the Moon is waxing and - showing that it is waning. So 0 is new moon, 50+ is first quarter, 100+ or - is full moon, and 50- is last quarter. The Moon is crescent if % is less than 50 and is gibbous if it is more than 50.

Cusp Angle is described more fully at the main IOTA Web site.

Sp. is the star's spectral type (color), O,B,blue; A,F,white; G,yellow; K,orange; M,N,S,C red.

Also in the notes, information about double stars is often given. "Close double" with no other information usually means nearly equal components with a separation less than 0.2". "mg2" or "m2" means the magnitude of the secondary component, followed by its separation in arc seconds ("), and sometimes its PA from the primary. If there is a 3rd component (for a triple star), it might be indicated with "mg3" or "m3". Double is sometime abbreviated "dbl".

Sometimes the Watts angle (WA) is given; it is aligned with the Moon's rotation axis and can be used to estimate where a star will reappear relative to lunar features. The selenographic latitude is WA -270. For example, WA 305 - 310 is near Mare Crisium.

Mid-Atlantic Occultations and Expeditions David Dunham

Asteroidal and Planetary Occultations

Date	Day	EST	Star	Mag.	Asteroid	dur dmag s	. Ap. " Location
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Thank you Nancy Grace Roman for finding this article.

Fossil Star Light

From NASA News hqnews@mediaservices.nasa.gov 11/1/2012

"The optical and ultraviolet light from stars continues to travel throughout the universe even after the stars cease to shine, and this creates a fossil radiation field we can explore using gamma rays from distant sources," said lead scientist for this investigation, Marco Ajello,

Gamma rays are the most energetic form of light. Since Fermi's launch in 2008, its Large Area Telescope (LAT) has observed the entire sky in highenergy gamma rays every three hours, creating the most detailed map of the universe ever known at these energies.

The total sum of starlight in the cosmos is known to astronomers as the extragalactic background light (EBL). To gamma rays, the EBL functions as a kind of cosmic fog. Ajello and his team investigated the EBL by studying gamma rays from 150 blazars, galaxies powered by black holes, that were strongly detected at energies greater than 3 billion electron volts (GeV), or more than a billion times the energy of visible light. Gamma rays at these energies are few and far between. Therefore it took four years of data to analyze the scattering of these gamma rays as they traversed the intervening space.

Continued on next column

Gamma rays produced in blazar jets travel across billions of light-years to Earth. During their journey, the gamma rays pass through an increasing fog of visible and ultraviolet light emitted by stars that formed throughout the history of the universe. Occasionally, a gamma ray collides with starlight and transforms into a pair of particles -- an electron and its antimatter counterpart, a positron. Once this occurs, the gamma ray is lost. In effect, the process dampens the gamma ray signal in much the same way as fog dims light from a distant lighthouse.

From studies of nearby blazars, scientists have determined how many gamma rays should be emitted at different energies. More distant blazars show fewer gamma rays at higher energies -- especially above 25 GeV -- thanks to the conversion by the cosmic fog. The farthest blazars are missing most of their higher-energy gamma rays.

The researchers determined the average gamma-ray attenuation across three distance ranges between 9.6 billion years ago and today. From these measurements, the scientists were able to estimate the fog's thickness. To account for the observations, the average stellar density in the cosmos is about 1.4 stars per 100 billion cubic light-years, which means the average distance between stars in the universe is about 4,150 light-years.

"The Fermi result opens up the exciting possibility of constraining the earliest period of cosmic star formation, thus setting the stage for NASA's James Webb Space Telescope," said Volker Bromm, who commented on the findings. "In simple terms, Fermi is providing us with a shadow image of the first stars, whereas Webb will directly detect them." Measuring the extragalactic background light was one of the primary mission goals for Fermi.



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Directions to Mulligan's Grill and Pub http://mulligans.umd.edu/directions Take I-66 East -or- I-270 South to the	Calendar of Events NCA Mirror- and Telescope-making Classes: Tuesdays Dec. 4, 11, 18, 25 and Fridays, Dec. 7, 14, 21, 28, 6:30 to 9:30 pm at the Chevy Chase Community Center, at the northeast corner of the intersection of McKinley Street and Connecticut Avenue, N.W. Contact instructor Guy Brandenburg at 202-635-1860 or email him at <u>gfbrandenburg@yahoo.com</u> . In case there is snow, call 202-282-2204 to see if the CCCC is open.				
 Washington, D.C. Beltway (I-495). Proceed East on I-495 toward Baltimore / Silver Spring. Take Exit #25 (US 1) South toward College Park. Proceed approximately 2 miles on US 1. Exit right onto route 193 West (University Blvd). 	 Open house talks and observing at the University of Maryland Observatory in College Park on the 5th and 20th of every month at 8:00 pm (NovApr.) or 9:00 pm (May-Oct.). Details: www.astro.umd.edu/openhouse Dinner: NCA's 75th Anniversary Party, Saturday, Dec. 8. (See page 2.) Setup for potluck supper begins at 5:30 and eating at 6:00, with the meeting to follow at 7:30pm. Montgomery College Planetarium: 7621 Fenton Street, Takoma Park, MD (240) 567-1463. Friday, Saturday, and Sunday 21, 22, 23 Dec. 2012 at 3:00 pm. "Mayan Calendars" in the Planetarium. www.montgomerycollege.edu/Departments/planet/planet/MayanAstronomy.html Owens Science Center Planetarium: "Rudolph Flu" 				
Second stop light (Golf Course Road); turn right.	 Fit. Dec. 14 at 7:30 pm. <u>www1.pgcps.org/nowardbowens</u> MASPS: 19 Dec, Ian B. Spielman, Joint Quantum Institute, NIST and UMD, "Observations of Zitterbewegung in a Degenerate Quantum Gas 				
Proceed into the Golf Course parking lot. For those of you using a GPS unit you can input: the intersection of 193 and Stadium Dr or 38.990987,-76.954399.	Upcoming NCA Meetings at the University of Maryland ObservatoryDec. 8, 2012Dennis Bodewitz (UMD) – Ultra-Violet Observations of AsteroidsJan 12, 2012Abderahmen Zoghbi (UMD), X-ray Echoes Map the Environment of a Black HoleFeb 09Lindy Elkins-Tanton (DTM), Magma and Water Oceans in the Early Solar System				
National Ca Name: Address:	Date:/				
Home Phone: E-r Membership (circle one): Student. Please	mail: Print / E-mail Star Dust (circle one) \$ 5 Individual / Family\$10 Optional Contribution\$ e indicate which activities interest you:				
Attending monthly scientific lectures on s Making scientific astronomical observation Observing astronomical objects for person Attending large regional star parties Doing outreach events to educate the pu Building or modifying telescopes Participating in travel/expeditions to view Combating light pollution	some aspect of astronomy ons onal pleasure at relatively dark sites ublic, such as Exploring the Sky v eclipses or occultations				
Do you have any special skills, such as	videography, graphic arts, science education, electronics, machining, etc.?				
Are you interested in volunteering for: Te	elescope making, Exploring the Sky, Star Dust, NCA Officer, etc.?				
Diagon mail this form with shock never le	a to National Capital Astronomers to:				

Henry Bofinger, NCA Treasurer; 727 Massachusetts Ave. NE, Washington, DC 20002-6007

National Capital Astronomers, Inc.

If undeliverable, return to NCA c/o Elizabeth Warner 400 Madison St #2208 Alexandria, VA 22314

First Class Dated Material



Next NCA Mtg: Dec. 8 7:30 pm @ UMD Obs Dr. Dennis Bodewitz (UMD)

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