

NEW MEMBERS

Brownell, Gilbert, 176 U St., N. E. (2), Washington, D. C. MI 4763  
Metz, Henry I., 607 Beacon Road, Silver Spring, Md. SL 6625

\*Cronyn, Willard, 4801 48th St., Washington, D. C. WO 4801.  
\*Nelson, Douglas, 2140 Military Road, Arlington, Va. JA 22607

DISCUSSION GROUP held on Saturday, October 21, was attended by between 15 and 20 people. The subject was "The History of Astronomy," about which a very interesting presentation was made. President Ted Jones led the discussion.

"OUR MYSTERIOUS UNIVERSE", the lecture given to NCA by Dr. L. L. Rice at the October meeting was one of the most interesting to which we have listened. A large crowd was in attendance.

NCA'ERS will be happy to learn that Mr. Ernest G. Reuning, who is mentioned in an item elsewhere in this issue, has agreed to give us another lecture later this season.

MR. JAMES M. CRACROFT was married recently.

THE ASTRONOMICAL LEAGUE is sponsoring the preparation and publication of an observing manual. Awards are being set up for outstanding work in amateur astronomy. The League is also preparing a composite movie film showing amateurs at work in the many groups which comprise the organization.

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Jewell Boling, Editor, 1717 P Street, N. W. (6) DU. 2969

STAR DUST  
National Capital Astronomers  
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NOVEMBER CALENDAR

- Nov. 4 Sat. "SOME ASTRONOMICAL COLOR EFFECTS," Dr. John S. Hall, Director, Equatorial Division, Naval Observatory. 8:15 P. M. Commerce Auditorium.
- Nov. 11 Sat. Junior NCA Meeting. Science Service Center.
- Nov. 14-15 Leonids.
- Nov. 14 Tue. Astronomy Course, 8:00 P. M. Science Service Center. Dr. Wells, instructor.
- Nov. 15 Wed. Open House Naval Observatory.
- Nov. 17-27 Andromids.
- Nov. 18 Sat. "THEORIES OF COSMOGONIES," Discussion Group, 8:00 Commerce Foyer. Bob Rhynsburger and the Junior NCA leading.
- Nov. 22 Wed. Open House Naval Observatory.

All Through November, Astronomical Exhibit, Public Library, 8th and K, N. W. This exhibit features a diversity of astronomical subjects.

Thursday and Friday, 7-10 p. m. Telescope Making Class, Roosevelt High School, Room 319, 13th and Upshur, N.W. Miss Irene Warthen, instructor. Telephone Lockwood 5-1237. Note: Miss Warthen will be present only on Tuesdays. For further details call Miss Warthen.

"SOME ASTRONOMICAL COLOR EFFECTS," the title of Dr. John S. Hall's lecture for November, appeals especially to those of us who are interested in what is meant by color and how it is measured. The use of color analysis by astronomers is an important method of determining the characteristics of stars and other heavenly bodies. Dr. Hall will discuss briefly the results obtained from measurement of the color of selected objects in the solar system and among the stars and will illustrate these results by some demonstrations and color photographs.

Dr. Hall is a graduate of Amherst College and secured his doctorate from Yale University. Prior to his association with the Naval Observatory, he was successively on the staff of the Rutherford Observatory of Columbia University, Sproul Observatory of Swarthmore College and the Radiation Laboratory of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

--Abraham Robinson, Publicity Chairman

LEO SCOTT ELECTED AS TRUSTEE. At the October meeting, Leo Scott, past president of NCA, was elected as trustee to fill the vacancy created by the resignation of David Rotbart.

1950-1951 DUES PAYABLE. Membership in NCA expires if dues are not paid within 90 days from September 1. Dues may be paid to Mrs. Alston at the regular meeting or mailed to her at 20 Plattsburg Court, N. W.

ASTRONOMY COURSE is to be held on the 14th of November at Science Service Center, 8:00 P. M. Those wishing to take it are to be on hand at this first lecture by Dr. Wells and prepared to pay the fee of \$8.50. Repeaters from last year pay \$2.50. Dr. Wells wants someone good in drawing to help him make illustrative material.

THE JUNIORS have been restricted by the Trustees from any use of the Naval Observatory during the month of November. This is not due to the action of any one Junior.

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE HOBBY SHOW. Mr. E. H. and James Weinstein represented NCA at the Department of Agriculture Hobby Show October 12, and James Crowell, Richard St. John and Miss St. John, and Judith Rogers with two scopes, took over on the 13th.

HOBBY SHOW FOR OLDER PERSONS. November 17-20 are the dates for the Hobby Show for Older Persons (60 or over) in the Lobby of the Department of Commerce, sponsored by the D. C. Recreation Board and United Community Services. Members of the NCA who are eligible are urged to exhibit their astronomical hobbies. Call Mabel Sterns DI 9422 for entry blanks.

THE NCA DISPLAY AT THE PUBLIC LIBRARY, 8th and K, N.W. during November is the cooperative effort of the Chairman of Exhibits, Mabel Sterns, Col. and Andrew Reed, H. B. Alvord, Donald Miller, John Lankford, Bob Wright, and R. G. McCabe, as well as the Naval Observatory, Hydrographic Office, Bureau of Standards, Science Service, and Nature Magazine.

LECTURE BEFORE NCA BRINGS WIDESPREAD RECOGNITION to speaker. In his speech last April, Mr. Ernest G. Reuning of the Naval Observatory said, "Space travel is no longer in the realm of science fantasy." Science Service syndicated the statement and the New York Herald-Tribune picked it up as did the New York Times in which it appeared as a notable quotation in the Magazine Section. Next, General Electric invited Mr. Reuning to be guest speaker on its Science Forum over WGY July 12. Then the Anti-Aircraft Journal requested an article on "The Possibilities of Travel in Outer Space," which will appear soon, and the Science Teacher asked for permission to reprint the G. E. radio talk.

COMMITTEES are still not completed for the year 1950-1951. If you are interested in some committee and have not been contacted about it, won't you please call President Ted Jones, DE 3171, and let him know you are interested???

## METEORS ON THE MOON

The coming months are favorable for an unusual observational program, that is watching the dark portion of the crescent moon for meteoric phenomena. Such observation can give valuable information on the possible existence of a lunar atmosphere.

Quoting W. H. Haas, "If the moon has no atmosphere at all, there must occur flashes of light when meteorites strike its surface at their cosmic velocities. But if the moon possesses even a very thin atmosphere, one quite incapable of causing twilight effects in shadows or of dimming and discoloring occulted stars, then one may expect meteors luminous in the rarified atmosphere to manifest themselves as moving bright specks. Observation can hence decide between the two possibilities."

More than 20 such luminous specks (some stationary, some moving) have been reported to the ALPO. More data is needed and it is especially desirable to have any such phenomenon observed by two or more observers so as to make sure of its reality.

Conditions for observing are best when the moon is from 2 to 5 days old. The most favorable nights during the next four months are November 12-14, December 12-14, January 9-12, and February 7-10. I will observe as much as possible on these nights and urge you to do the same. It is best to have a clear, dark sky and a fair sized telescope. If it is hazy there is very little chance of seeing anything. Chances of success are greatest if the area near the dark limb is watched and if no part of the sunlit portion of the moon is in the field of view.

Anyone participating in this program should report his name, location, telescope, magnification, seeing (or steadiness) transparency (or clearness), number of minutes spent in actual watching, beginning and ending times of searches, region watched, the estimated stellar magnitude of the dimmest object that could have been

detected, and the results. If any unusual luminous object is seen, its time of appearance, position, length and direction of its motion (if any), duration of visibility, color and any other noteworthy characteristics should be reported. The data for all searches should be reported even though the results may be negative. Data should be sent either to me or to Mr. Haas of the ALPO.

I hope some of the NCA members will have the time, patience, and inclination to join me in this interesting project. I will keep you informed through Star Dust of favorable dates on following months and will report on searches made by NCA observers from time to time. I will be glad to answer any questions on the subject.

Lyle T. Johnson  
Box 187, La Plata, Maryland

Editor's Note: Lyle T. Johnson, one of the physicist members of the NCA, is the inventor of the new type Gregorian telescope known as the Johnsonian. An article about this telescope appeared in the September 1949 issue of Scientific American.

CHAPEL HILL, NORTH CAROLINA, 1951 CONVENTION SITE.  
Grace Scholz, Executive Secretary of the Astronomical League, announced at the last NCA meeting that a definite decision has been made to hold the 1951 convention at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. The convention will begin September 1, the date of the annular eclipse of the sun. The University will make one of its dormitories available. Chapel Hill is the location of the new Morehead Planetarium, which houses the sixth Zeiss projector to be installed in the western hemisphere. Bob Wright, Chairman of the Middle East Region, has been appointed Convention Chairman.

THE ORDER CLOSING the Naval Observatory has been rescinded.