

8-62

PAC

PRAIRIE ASTRONOMY CLUB

Lincoln, Nebraska

August 20, 1962

Pete Schultz, Secretary

Jess Williams, President

Meeting on the first, the Prairie Astronomers quickly found themselves discussing the plans for the Star Party at Gateway Shopping Center.

The Astronomical League and Great Plains Astronomical Society then became the center of conversation. All agreed that a membership in a national society could hold several benefits and more information will be obtained about the two groups.

As for the financing of the monthly letter, Dick Hartley suggested that perhaps a service club might be the solution.

With the business out of the way, the members settled down to the second half of Jesse William's talk on reflectors. Mr. Franey followed with a very informative summary on eyepieces. Next week Peter Schultz will break the optical "kick" by reporting on the northern lights. This talk will be accompanied by colored photos, movies, and demonstrations.

Around 7:15 on the 8th, Gateway shoppers found an unusual sight on the mall when close to a dozen telescopes invaded the grounds. As the sun set, close to 2000 shoppers found themselves amateur astronomers peeking through telescopes ranging from 2½" to 10". If not viewing Venus, Saturn, or the moon, they could examine the photographic exhibits of Rick Johnson, Jesse Williams, and Pete Schultz. If this too wasn't enough, Jesse also displayed his homemade sundials. Montgomery Wards did a fine job supplying the grounds and publicity. Dick Harley also deserves a pat for his eye-catching posters. Thanks.

SOLAR SEANCE

Mercury: Hiding too close to the sun to be seen.

Venus: On the 30-31 of August, Spica and Venus pair up to a mere 75 seconds of an arc apart (3 Venus diameters). For naked eye observers, Sky & Telescope suggests recording the time when Spica becomes lost in the Venusian glare. For astro-photographers, this will make a nice addition to the scrapbook. The next chance will be in 1970 when Venus will slip by Spica a good 9 minutes of an arc. This should be an extremely opportune time to watch the motion of another planet.

Mars: Hanging like a crown between Taurus's horns, it is hardly worth getting up at three in the morning (unless you like crowns).

Jupiter: The Red Spot is still a vivid sight. Take advantage of this year's activity.

Saturn: He rises an hour before sunset and watches you the rest of the night.

Uranus: Nope.

Comet Humason: As predicted, this comet is already showing an unusual display to even a 4" telescope. Traveling into Copernicus, it is readily seen with binoculars at 7th magnitude. On August 12 a 10" telescope revealed three tails (using an imaginary clock, one was at twelve while the others were at eight and seven). All three appeared to be less than a half degree in length. There is still an exciting month of observing before dipping below Sagitarius.

DID YOU KNOW?

- *Only 200 of the stars visible have been named.
- *When three bodies are in line, they are said to be in SYZYGy.
- *The largest star visible to the naked eye is probably Alpha Herculis, being anywhere between 360 million to 6 billion miles in diameter.
- *The constellation of Corvus is also known as Spica's Spanker due to its shape and location near Spica in Virgo.
- *Bolometric magnitude of a star measures the degree of all the energy waves shorter than violet and longer than red rather than just visible radiation.

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President's Notes. I have just been informed that our gateway show was the best event, which they have had up to now. That should make all concerned feel proud. The one thing missing was a good play by play description of what they, the spectators were being treated to, and I know Walter Erback had some very fine comments worked up. It was not our fault we had no Public address system, but the fault of Gateway, and they promise to square this for Future Events. We'll play it safe next time and bring our Own.

We want to send a special invite to all the folks at Seward, and let's all be out next Meeting which will be September 5 and welcome some new faces from the Air Force Base.

QUESTIONS ASKED ME. HOW ABOUT YOU?

- What kind of a telescope should I buy and where? How much will I have to pay?
- Why don't you take pictures of ASTRO objects in COLOR?
- Is there life on other Planets?
- Are Astro Fans way out, and some sort of Mystic Cult or, what? Egg Heads?
- What are the Qualifications for Membership in our Club.

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Let's get set for a Membership drive, so that at our November meeting we can send our subscriptions and become affiliated with Sky and Telescope Amateur Clubs, together with a little money for our Treasury.

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The two moons of Mars were described in the Book, Gullivers Travils in Year 1726. They were first discovered with a 28 inch refractor in 1877. Jupiter revolves on its Axis 25 times the speed of the Earth. Venus whose polar Axis is not definitely known to have any inclination to the plane of its orbit, but may be perpendicular to it, and since its orbit is more nearly circular than that of the Earths, Venus does not have any seasons. There are probably belts of varying Temps. on Venus from 200 degrees at the Equator and a low of 50 degrees at the poles.

That's all for now. See you September 5th, 7:30 p.m. You know where.

P.S. Let's have lots of QUESTIONS, and that way we get hep, by having to dig up the answers.

Ask me about Prof. Carol Moore.