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July 29, 1969

The Prairie Astronomer

488-2112

The July meeting will be held on the 29th. at Nebr. Wesleyan Uni., Olin Science Hall at 7:30 p. m. There will be a special film shown on the history of Stetebange and its astronomical importance, in addition to the regular Planatarium show. Refreshments will follow the meeting.

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Presidents Report

Plans are complete and work is under way on the construction of the temporary shelter for the club's telescope. We are in great need materials such as plywood, 2x4's, hardware, and cement. Those who have access to such items and wish to help the club are urged to contact Monte Cole or Roger Severns.

Those who plan to attend the National convention in Denver, August 20-23 should get your reservations in promptly, if you have not already done so.

The 'annual' family picnic and star party is set for Saturday, August 9. Due to the large number of mercury vapor lights at Holmes Lake, we will have our get-together at Wagon Train Lake near Hickman. From 56th. and hiway 2 it is 9 miles south and 3 miles east. I am sure that you will find the extra 20 minutes on the road wellworth your while. We wiol have boating, swimming, and fishing for those who come early in the afternoon. There will be a pot luck or covered dish supper at 6:00 p. m. After supper, more boating and swimming. Then at dusk the star party will begin. So come early or come late, whenever you can make it you will be wellcome.

Bring your swim garb, (there are beach houses) bring your fishing gear, bring your boat, if you have one. I'll have my sailboat there. Bring a covered dish (1 for individuals-2 for a family) and your plates and silverware. And finally, don't forget your telescope. I will have the clubs 12 inch scope out there and Monte Cole and Larry Stepp will have their new 12 1/2 inch telescope for viewing as well!

A special invitation is being sent to the Omaha and St. Joe clubs to in the picnic and star party. Wagon Train Lake has a fine camp ground for those who may be on their bacations and wo ld like a plane to stay over night. There are several extra bedrooms available for those who would like to make a night of it.

This invitation is open to anyone who reads this newsletter not just the Omaha and St. Hoe clubs.

Mark your calendar and plan to attend thei get toedther. There should be something to do whether its cloudy, rainy or clear. Again, the uday, is August 9, afternonn and evening, August 9, and the place-is

### A Beginners Observations

As all of you know, observing with a 2.4 inch refractor requires a great deal of skill, experience, and perseverance, to obtain useful results. Imagine, then, the plight of an inexperienced observer who has only a 3 inch reflector of very dubious quality at his disposal. I first observed the common and easily located objects, mainly the moon and planets. This was done on an alti-azimuth mounting with a tripod which shook when the slightest wisp of wind struck it. This ~~was~~ was not conducive to the study of the ~~darker~~, more elusive objects, such as those of the Messier series. Therefore, I proceeded to construct a steady equatorial mounting for it. This was an all-wood fork mounting, which was very stable indeed. The eyepiece was only 20 inches off the ground when pointed at the horizon. A portable (?) table was made to get the eyepiece to a more convenient height. This decreased the stability of the mounting, but it was still suitable for use. This was about July 6. Since that time I ~~have~~ have been able to locate M 13, M 95, M96, and M 4. Unfortunately, from my observing station the southern skies are too well illuminated to even see the milky-way.

With this telescope, a very useful technique, which was used by both Herschels, is the stationary field method. In this, the telescope is pointed at a bright star near due east of the object to be located. The object is then allowed to drift into the field of view. This method was used to locate M 95 and M96. I used this technique because I have no finder on my telescope.

It is very interesting to observe with a 3 inch telescope, but enough is enough. In this spirit I am now building an 8 inch F/7 reflector. The mirror is presently being ground by machine. The experience which will have resulted from the use of this scope will be invaluable. By the time I have the 8 inch finished, I will have 1 lots of experience.

Brian Dodson.

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#### FOR SALE:

4 1/2 inch F/10.5 Newtonian reflector, 2 eyepieces  
no mounting. Monte Cole 488-1652 or Larry Stepp 4886465

6 inch F/8 parabolic mirror, aluminized and over-  
coated. Jess Williams 488-2112

clock drive for mountings with one inch axes, built  
in slow motions Jess Williams 488-2112

10x50 binoculars. Larry Stepp 488-6465

#### WANTED:

Back issues of Sky and Telescope and Review of popular  
Astronomy. Monte Cole 488-1652

*The way of the Beginner*

While at the observatory, I was impressed with the brilliancy of the summer milky way. The evening being exceptionally transparent, I decided to see what I could pick out without a telescope.

According to Ed Woerner's calculations, many telescopic objects should be visible to the naked eye, given appropriate seeing conditions.

Judging this night suitable I proceeded to locate several Messier objects in rapid succession; M 6, M 7, M 8, M 22, M 24, and the region of M16 and M 17. As I developed my newly discovered covered skill, I was able to locate M 13 with some difficulty, but ~~M 11~~ and the Scutum star cloud stood out clearly.

I am sure that with some further refinements, this project could prove of interest to some of the more modestly equipped amateurs. It would be interesting to see just how many objects could be seen with ~~just~~ the eye alone.

#### The sky for August, 1969

MERCURY	On the 15th. is at R. A. 9h 27m, Decl. $16^{\circ} 52'$ N. Too close to the sun for useful observation.
VENUS	On the 15th. is at R. A. 6h 58m, Decl. $21^{\circ} 35'$ N. mag. -3.5, rising 3 hours before the sun and passing $7^{\circ}$ south of Pollux on the 23d.
MOON	Penumbraal eclipse