

11-69

November 25, 1969

THE PRAIRIE ASTRONOMER

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The November meeting will be held on the 25th, at Nebraska Wesleyan University, Olin Science Hall, at 7:30 P.M. There will be an open discussion of several unusual astronomical theories, in addition to the regular planetarium show.

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President's Report

Mr. Robert Allen of the Omaha Club, and I exchanged visits to each other's regular club meetings in October. This was done so that we both could get some idea of what the members of both clubs have in mind in respect to the Mid-States convention to be held in Lincoln next June. Some good ideas were brought forward, but most of the response was passive. I sort of expected this because most of the members of our two clubs have never attended an astronomical convention. I therefore wouldn't expect anyone to make a lot of suggestions if they are un-familiar with the proceedings of a convention. Even though our club lacks in experience in astronomical conventions, I still am ready for suggestions on all matters concerning the June convention. I would like a volunteer to contact the Lincoln Chamber of commerce for possible help with the convention. I can also use a "press agent" to inform the local news media of our plans and progress. So let me hear from you, any contribution will help.

I have been following the progress of Comet Tago-Sato-Kosaka 1969-G. It's not very bright, about 11th magnitude, and hard to observe because it is quite low in the southwest, shortly after sunset. We will have a list of predicted co-ordinates in the newsletter each month so that everyone has a chance to observe it if they care to.

The Geminid Meteor Shower is coming up in December. Lets plan to schedule a star party on the weekend of December 12. More about this at the meeting.

Hope to see you there,
Earl Moser

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1970 Observers' Handbook

I am taking orders for the 1970 Observers' Handbook. This is put out by the Royal Canadian Astronomical Society. The price is \$1.50 a copy. If you want to order one, please get word to me by November 25 as this will be the last chance to order as the supply is limited. Below is a list of those whose orders I have. Larry Stepp, Jess Williams, Monte Cole, Werner Klanner, Ed Woerner, Earl Moser, Eric Rudd, Rick Johnson, Dennis Mathias, Carroll Moore, and Brian Dodson.

Rick Johnson

Convention Planning Session

On Saturday, November 22, the Midstates Region Chairman and I went to Kansas City for a planning session for the 1970 Regional Convention to be held here in Lincoln. We fielded a lot of comments from several people who have been active in the League for a long time, and they came up with some good ideas.

The idea which caused the most discussion was that of Gil Mason of Kansas City to have a telescope competition similar to Stella-fane. Among the issues raised were what criteria should be used for judging, which is more important—optics or mechanics, how about a written report along with each entry, who in the region is qualified to judge such a competition, and how much of a telescope must one build to qualify his instrument as homebuilt. Earl Moser appointed Gil Mason and Gary Hall to work out the details.

Gary Hall told Earl that he will come up with a list of possible subjects for papers, to be published with the next convention announcement in January. This list's purpose will be to encourage participation in the paper sessions by those who might otherwise be hesitant due to uncertainty that their specialty might not be of interest to others. Bob Allen, co-chairman with Earl, has announced that his club will help with the paper sessions.

Earl told the group that the theme of the convention will be the 1970 total solar eclipse. Therefore a good choice for a guest speaker might be a professional astronomer from a large solar observatory. Other possibilities mentioned are Dr. George Van Biesbroeck, Dr. Edgar Everhart, and David Dunham.

After a ninety-minute break we came back for the Kansas City Astronomy Club's meeting which began with their annual pot luck supper. This was followed by the business meeting and then a talk by Professor Richard Gentile who discussed geology of the Canadian Rockies. His talk was well illustrated with slides.

After the meeting came more convention discussion. Earl Moser appointed Bill Scurlock and Edwin Fretton as the committee to nominate next year's officers and a regional representative.

The next morning following breakfast we went to see the club's observatory housing a 16" f/7 reflector, a fine telescope wasted in the middle of a large city.

We now know what the midstates region wants; from here on it's up to us.

Ed Woerner

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Quote Of The Month

Seconds before being given a ticket for an improper turn, arriving in Lincoln following the Chicago National Convention, Rick Johnson said, "I'm sure glad there weren't any police around just then!"

Bright Spot On Saturn

Dr. Smith has discovered a bright spot 4000 km in diameter at latitude 57° south. Period of rotation is 10 hours 36 min 30 sec. I have not yet been able to spot it. It should be a good test of your telescope's resolving power and contrast ability. One thing I have noticed in observing Saturn lately is the very noticeable difference in color between the ball of the planet and the ring. The ring is very white while the ball is a dirty gold color. Cassini's division is real easy but look for a second division in the middle of the outer ring, and on an excellent night I thought I saw a third division dividing the outer half of the outer ring. Saturn also has a dark cloud band which should be visible in any small scope. The sun angle is such that the shadow of the ring can be seen on both sides of the ring marking the passage of the ring in front of the disk with two fine black lines.

Rick Johnson

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The Sky This Month

There will be two meteor showers this month, the Geminids on Dec. 13, and the Ursids on Dec. 22. The Geminids should be quite favorable, with an observer rate of 60 per hour, especially since new moon occurs on the 9th.

On the night of Dec. 3, Venus will pass within one degree south of Neptune.

Mercury- On the 15th, it is R.A. 18h 37m, Decl. $25^{\circ} 27'$ South. Greatest eastern elongation on the 27th. Visible in the evening low in the southwest.

Venus- On the 15th, it is R.A. 16h 47m, Decl. $21^{\circ} 57'$ South. At magnitude -3.4, it is visible in the morning sky, but is rapidly approaching the sun.

Mars- On the 15th it is R.A. 22h 8m, Decl. $12^{\circ} 42'$ South. At magnitude 0.9, it is visible in the evening sky, setting about 5 hours after the sun.

Jupiter- On the 15th, it is R.A. 13h 52m, Decl. $10^{\circ} 17'$ South. At magnitude -1.4, it rises about three hours after midnight.

Saturn- On the 15th, it is R.A. 2h 5m, Decl. $9^{\circ} 52'$ North. At magnitude 0.4, it is well above the eastern horizon at sunset.

Uranus- On the 15th it is R.A. 12h 32m, Decl. $2^{\circ} 41'$ South. At magnitude 5.9, it appears low in the east in the morning sky.

Neptune- On the 15th, it is R.A. 15h 50m, Decl. $18^{\circ} 24'$ South. At magnitude 7.8, it is too close to the sun to be seen.

Comet Tago-Sato-Kosaka

Date	hours	min	degrees	min	Magnitude
11-20	17	07	-24	11	
11-25	17	16	-27	27	6.2
11-30	17	26	-30	55	
12-5	17	37	-34	37	5.0
12-10	17	50	-38	34	
12-15	18	06	-42	41	3.8
12-20	18	26	-46	48	
12-25	18	53	-50	34	3.0
12-30	19	30	-53	30	

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Photograph Of The Month

There will be a good chance to obtain photographs of meteors this month, on the evenings of the 12th and 13th, when the Geminid Meteor Shower will be at maximum. Mount your camera on a tripod or other sturdy stand, pointed in the general direction of Gemini, using your fastest lens, wide open. It is suggested that tri-x film be used, force-developed to give an effective A.S.A. of about 1000. If you don't develop your own film, several club members can do it for you, including Monte Cole, Rick Johnson, and Jess Williams. Exposures of five to ten minutes, and a lens opening of at least f/2.8 will probably be required. Good luck!

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Advertisements

(Enquiries may be made in care of Larry Stepp, 910 Eldon Drive, Lincoln, Nebraska, 68510; phone 488-6465. Note: want ads are printed free upon request as a service to club members.)

For sale:

- One Exa Camera-body and telescope adapter only.
- One Jaegers clock drive-new.
- One 6 inch f/9 mirror-new.
- One camera adapter.
- One pair 10X50 binoculars.
- Three timing motors-110 volts
 - 1 R per day
 - 20 RPM
 - $\frac{1}{2}$ RPM