

8-70
August 25, 1970

THE PRAIRIE ASTRONOMER

488-1250

The August meeting will be held on the 25th of August, in Olin science Hall at 7:30. Nominations for club offices will be held, and a program will be provided. Afterwards will follow refreshments, courtesy of our president.

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The President's Report

Don't forget the family picnic and star party of Sat., Aug 29th. Bring your family and invite a friend. The place is the Wagon Train State Rec. Area, east of Hickman. The time is any time in the afternoon that you can get there. Bring a picnic basket with food of some kind and plates and silver for yourself. The picnic supper will be at 6:00 P.M., and the star party will follow as soon as it is dark.

At our July meeting, I suggested that we take nominations from the file in August for the Sept. election. Since then, I have reconsidered the matter and decided that I should appoint myself a nominating committee of one. I feel that prospective officers should be contacted before the nominations in order that their opinions and desire to serve as club officers be known to the club in advance of the election. I have talked to several people about serving in one or more of the seven offices in our club. I will submit these names at the August meeting and other names can be added at that time. I hope that we have good attendance at both meetings, in order that a representative opinion of the club may be had.

See you at the meeting

Earl Moran

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As acting club treasurer, I was authorized by the Board of Directors to purchase a mimeograph machine for the club newsletter. Well, this is it. It was purchased from Sears, at a cost of just over sixty dollars. Since I am writing this before the machine is tested, I am taking a gamble in saying that it performs just as well as the work that we have had done professionally in the past. If I am wrong, I will surely hear about it.

Brian Dodson

Perseids

On the night of August 12-13, a group of observers consisting of Ed Woerner, Brian Dodson, and Monte Cole left Lincoln at about 1:30 A.M. to go out to Hickman to look for Perseids. Upon arriving, they were surprised to find our president in a sleeping bag on his front lawn. We settled down, and in the first hour, possibly 25 meteors were seen. After that the rate dwindled to almost nothing. The average Perseid seen was about third magnitude, being fast and yellowish. All in all, the Perseids this year were somewhat better than they have been in the past.

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Partial Eclipse

The partial lunar eclipse of the 16th was fairly impressive in Lincoln. For the most part, it was observed through thin clouds, but from time to time, the clouds went away and a much better view was obtained. Several members noted that the shadow of the Earth on the Moon was unusually dark. Most people were sensible and looked out a window at the eclipse, but a few hardy souls felt that they must set up their scopes to look at it. One of them said that it looked better by eyeball.

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Hints and Kinks

There is a tendency for the beginner in mirror-making to test the mirror, see an atrocious figure, and then try to figure out a stroke that will take care of it. This is not the way to do it. If a terrible figure shows up, just polish for three or four hours before testing again. This will generally reduce your difficulties.

Rick Johnson suggests that for both high-resolution astrophotography and low contrast visual observing the wide-angle lens of a good-quality movie camera will surpass any other eyepiece. I have seen his lunar pictures taken with such a lens, and I can vouch for it's high performance.

P.S. Although Rick has not tried it, I suspect that a telephoto lens of the same movie camera would make an admirable eyepiece for deep-sky work, especially for locating galaxies and faint nebulosity. The field of view would be somewhat restricted, but the view would be worth the trouble of using it. The Editor

Photograph of the Month

On Friday evening, the 5th of September, there will be a good view of the moon, Venus, and Jupiter. Venus will be about 2°N of the moon, and Jupiter will be about 6°N of the Moon. On the evening of the 13th, Jupiter will be about 5°N of Venus, Another opportunity for a good picture. Jupiter and Venus will be close all month.

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The Planets This Month

Mercury- Beginning the 23rd, it is visible in the morning sky.

Venus - Very bright in the early evening sky

Mars - Too close to the sun for easy observation.

Jupiter- Very low in the SW at sunset.

Saturn - Rises about two hours before midnight in Taurus.

Uranus, Neptune- Too close to the sun to observe.

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Dues

This is the final, definitive word on the dues increase. There won't be one. With the acquisition of the mimeograph, costs have been cut enough to enable us to keep the dues at the same level as before. Therefore, when paying your dues, send only 8 dollars, or 10 for a family membership.

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Shorts

The editor has not received any want ads for the newsletter for some time. One of the basic rights of all club members is to be able to submit want ads to the newsletter for publication. If you have anything you want to sell or anything you want to buy, just tell someone.

Saturn is getting into position for good observing, so limber up both your instruments and your observing technic.

Nominations are to be held at the next meeting, so come prepared with names for offices. Elections will be held in September, and we would like to have a large group at that meeting, to elect the officers. So mark Sept. 29th on your calendars, and come to the meeting.

This is the time of year to get outside at night and test your visual acuity. It is comfortable outside, and you can take your time in attempting to determine just how well your eyes are. The first and simplest test is in Ursa Major. The second star in the handle is a visual double, whose separation is about 15 min of arc. If you cannot see this, forget taking the rest of the tests. There are many possible tests, but some are more representative than others. One very good test of eyesight is to see if you can split the double-double in Lyra into two components. The separation here is about 4 minutes of arc, and is very difficult. I cannot get more than a glimpse of separation here.

Another good test is to count and make a drawing of the positions of the Pleiades. One very clear night recently out at Earl's I was able to count and confirm eight Pleiads, which is rather good. A third advanced test is to examine and sketch the face of the moon as you see it with the naked-eye. I did this recently one day past full moon, and by later comparison with a map of the moon, was able to compile the following list of features visible on the moon by the naked eye.

In order of difficulty:

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| 1. Mare Imbrium | 10. Mare Foecunditatis |
| 2. Mare Nubium | 11. Mare Nectaris |
| 3. Mare Serenitatis | 12. Mare Crisium |
| 4. Mare Vaporum | 13. Oceanus Procellarum |
| 5. White streak in 3. | 14. Mare Undarum |
| 6. Mare Humorum | 15. Mare Frigoris |
| 7. Mare Tranquillitatis | 16. Sinus Media |
| 8. Oceanus Procellarum | 17. Possibly Aleatignus |
| 9. Kepler | |

#8 is O.P. SE of Kepler, #13 is O.P. NW of Kepler. All of these through 10 were fairly easy, and if you can see from 14 on, you have very good eyes.

A test for the perception of dim objects is to see what Messier objects you can see. M 8, 20, 17, 42, 7, 31, and 45 are all fairly easy. M 13, 22, 4, are all fairly hard. If you can see M 33, 3, 6, 46, 47, 48, you have very good dim vision.

See you at the meeting.
Brian Dodson