

December 22, 1970

Phone 489-7651

THE PRAIRIE ASTRONOMER

This month's meeting will be Tuesday, December 22nd at 7:30 p.m. at Olin Hall of Science at Nebraska Wesleyan. Our program will concern gravitational radiation. Please note the change of date from our usual "last Tuesday of the month" because of Christmas.

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--The President's Report--

"Peace on earth and good will to men." Yes, it is the Christmas season again and I am a bit concerned about the fact that this slogan is becoming far from the truth.

Since I joined the club in 1962, I have met many fine people and even more so since our club joined the Astronomical League in 1967. I also have seen arguments, dissention, bitterness, and even hatred between people who were former friends. This has happened not only in our club, but in other clubs and throughout the region. It certainly seems a shame that a difference of opinion, a legal technicality, or a petty misunderstanding, should end a long-time friendship.

At the conclusion of my part of the program at the October 24th meeting of the Kansas City club, I had the privilege of meeting Mr. and Mrs. Mark Kinsey. The Kinseys were part of a group of people who had received special awards earlier that evening for long-time membership in the Kansas City club. As Mr. Kinsey led his wife over to meet me, I became aware that she was blind. In the brief conversation that followed, Mrs. Kinsey told me that she had been blind for about 10 years, but she still enjoyed astronomy and the people associated with it. I was amazed that she enjoyed every one of the slides that I showed even though she could not see them. She told me that she could tell by the reaction of the audience just what I was showing on the screen. In the days that followed I gave much thought to the fact that even though blind, here was a person so dedicated to astronomy that even blindness would not stand in the way of maintaining a membership in the club and attending meetings occasionally. I looked forward to visiting with her again at some future time, but three weeks later I learned of her death. So now my first visit with Mrs. Kinsey was also my last.

Now here is the point that I want to make. I believe that it is time that we all forget the insignificant differences that we have with other people. It would be heartwarming indeed to see people extend a hand of renewed friendship and a genuine apology of past rudeness and ill feelings--before we find it is too late. May the message of Christmas and the spirit of the season be with us all throughout the coming year.

---Earl Moser

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For those members who have not yet gotten their polls in from last month, if you wish to make your opinions known, you may do so by calling Brian Dodson at 488-1250 after 5:30 p.m. up through Dec. 31st. This is an arbitrary cut-off date for the polls so that the executive committee can begin to make some decisions. Please respond.

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A board meeting was held at Jess Williams' house December 16th and a decision was made to build an observatory in the country. It is hoped a site may be found by spring of 1971. The possibility of



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A board meeting was held at Jess Williams' house December 16th and a decision was made to build an observatory in the country. It is hoped a site may be found by spring of 1971. The possibility of building another observatory in the city or suburbs at some later date, finances permitting, was also brought up.

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1971 National Convention

The 1971 Astronomical League National Convention will be hosted by the Memphis Astronomical Society, and will be held at Southwestern College, under the auspices of the Department of Physics. It will be held from the 18<sup>th</sup> to the 22<sup>nd</sup> of August, 1971. It now appears that the total cost for three days lodging, at the dormitories of the College, and the meals will be about \$30.00. This convention will be close enough that we should be able to get together a good-sized group to go.

\* \* \* \* \*

The Nominations Chairman for the Astronomical League this year is:

Robert Fried  
Braeside Observatory  
4610 Orkney Lane  
Atlanta, Ga. 30331

This is the man to contact with any nominations for national offices. You must send a letter describing his qualifications for office, his activities within the region, and you must enclose a letter from the nominee stating that he would be willing to serve if he were elected. If you know of anyone whom you feel is capable of holding national office, don't just sit there. Go ahead and nominate him.

\* \* \* \* \*

The Book Service Chairman for the League is:

Leonard B. Abbey  
3204 LaVista Road  
Decatur, Ga. 30033

All members of the Astronomical League are entitled to use this service, which gives a 10% discount on any book related to astronomy. In order to receive this benefit, follow the following steps.

1. Send a letter to Mr. Abbey, giving the name of the book, the name of the author, the name of the publisher, the list price, the societies' name, and your name and address.
2. Write out a check for the list price of the book minus 10%, and make it payable to the Astronomical League Book Service.
3. Send your request and your check to Mr. Abbey, at the above address.
4. Sit back and wait for your book to arrive.

\* \* \* \* \*

If you have a paper or presentation to give for the Mid-States Regional Convention Upcoming in June, send a description of the paper and the estimated time it will require to:

Bob Sandy  
7901 East 88<sup>th</sup> Terrace  
Kansas City, Mo.  
64138

At the present time, he is handling the papers for the convention. This may change in the future, but he will be able to get the papers to the right people, so we can keep on using his address. Let's submit half-a-dozen papers to him and let our club be truly represented at the convention.

I am not sure who to send papers to for the National Convention. This will be printed in a later issue of the



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#### Observers Handbooks

The Observers Handbooks will be in for the December meeting. 18 Copies were ordered, which will give us two or three extra. However, in past years we have had no trouble in getting rid of a few extras, so it's better to have an extra than run out. The cost to the club members will be \$1.50 per copy. Those who asked me to get one for them get first grabs, the extras will be sold on a first-come, first-served basis.

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Please get the polls which were included in last month's newsletter in. This is how we on the Board will determine the feelings of the club as a whole, and not just that of those who come to meetings. We are setting an admittedly arbitrary deadline of Dec. 31 for the polls to be in. On that date, we will begin to act upon the decision of the club.

Brian Dodson



### Preliminary Results of Poll

The poll that was enclosed in last month's newsletter was had poor response. In an attempt to enliven responses, the results of the poll as of 12-6-1970 will be printed.

One person wants the scope in an urban location  
Three people want the scope in a suburban location  
Fifteen want the scope in a rural location.

Sixteen people want the scope for member's observation  
Two people want the scope for publicity.  
One response was not marked.

Fifteen people have offered to help build the observatory.  
Four have stated that they may be able to get help from businesses.

Please get the rest of the polls in. It is important to the club, as well as to yourself.

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### Delayed Information

I see in the December Sky and Tel that there is a new comet, Suzuki-Sato-Seki. I also see that if we wait for Sky and Tel to tell us about these events, we will be notified much too late to observe them properly. This comet's maximum brightness was 6, which would have at least been worth looking at. But now, when we are told of it's existence, it has faded to mag 12, which is not worth looking for. I am not blaming Sky and Tel, for they must have their information as much as two months ahead of printing. However, this leaves us up a tree as far as finding these objects are concerned. I would therefore like to propose that we, as a club, obtain a subscription to the very useful cards that the Smithsonian puts out. These cards are put out when something happens that is considered worth publishing for professional astronomers. This means that all objects which would be within the reach of an amateur's telescope would be listed on these cards. These cards are bought by the 100, and this quantity will last from two to three years. The investment is small, and I feel that we would find it worthwhile for the club to use this service. I will bring this up at the next business meeting.

Brian Dodson

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### Late Night Notification

At the last meeting the question was brought up concerning rare phenomena which occur in our skies. As a general rule, one observer looks up late at night and sees an aurora, or an unexpected meteor shower. He looks at it for a while, maybe takes a picture, and then tells us about it at the next meeting. The response from the people there is usually that they would have liked to see it, too. This problem has now been taken care of. If you see an event of this nature, that is, rare, call Lawrence Pilgram, at the newsletter phone number. Describe it to him, and tell him the position. He will then go out, and take a look at it. If, after awakening in the middle of the night, he feels that it is good enough to wake other people for, it will have to be a worthwhile occurrence. He will then call people on a list that he will compile, notify them of the occurrence, and then probably go back to sleep. If you wish to get your name on this list, contact Lawrence. If you are interested in this type of phenomenon,



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### A Letter

Dear Santa,

How have you been this year? I have been fine, and I put on the best convention that the Mid-States Region has seen in a long time. One bad thing I did was laugh when I heard that the Kansas City crew thinks that their convention will be the best one in the last five years. They are hopelessly outclassed.

As I have been so good, however, and my tenth birthday is soon coning up, I would like to ask for more presents than usual for my members.

First, I would like for everyone to get a pair of electric socks for Christmas, to help them observe. I also would like to ask that everyone gets the telescope that they truly want, be it a Questar or an eight-inch Celestron.

Finally, I would like to ask for something for myself. I want an obseratory site for my 12" scope. Thank you very much

The Prairie Astronomy Club of Lincoln, Nebr.



## The Skies This Month

There will be two meteor showers visible within the next month. The Ursid shower will be visible on the 23rd of December. This is a small shower, with an hourly rate of 15. A last-quarter moon is in the skies on that date.

The other shower is the Quadrantid shower, which is usually a good shower, with 40 meteors per hour being visible. There is a first-quarter moon, and this shower would probably be worth looking at. This shower occurs on Jan. 3rd.

There are several good conjunctions occurring during January. On the 4th, there will be a Venus-Jupiter-Mars conjunction occurring. This will be in the early morning. On Jan. 22nd, there will be a Mars-Jupiter-Antares-Moon conjunction, with Mars and Jupiter being within a degree of each other. On the 11th, Neptune will be  $1.1^\circ$  N of Mars in the morning sky, which will be an opportunity to find this elusive planet. It will be cold, but don't let that stop you from observing. Remember, the 1971 Observer's Handbooks are in. If you want one, come to the December meeting.

Mercury- Is visible from the 15th to the 21st in the early morning sky.

Venus - At mag -4.2, it rises three hours before the sun.

Mars - At mag 1.5, it is moving from Libra into Scorpius, and rises four hours before the sun.

Jupiter- At mag -1.4, it rises four hours before the sun.

Saturn - At mag 0.3, it is well up at sunset.

Uranus is visible in the late evening and early morning skies.

Neptune- Is visible in the early morning skies.

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I trust that all of you have seen the article that was in Sky and Tel concerning our convention. I have received a gratifying response from this, but those who have written in have been very single-minded. They all want to know more about Arnold's (Arnold Johnson) radio telescope. Suppose that there could be something to this? Perhaps we could get someone to talk about this.

B.W.D.

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### SUGGESTIONS

Here is a list of things that we would like to see someone in the club do during the next year.

1. For someone to take up astrophotography of the small-scale objects in the sky, such as planetaries, globulars, etc. Since Rick Johnson went up to Omaha, we have several who take star fields, but no one that we know of who takes pictures of the smaller objects.
2. For someone to make a compound telescope. There are several telescope-makers in the club, why don't you try to make a Cass or a Gregorian during the next year.
3. For someone to give a paper at the National Convention for 1971. This would help our club no end.
4. For there to be many clear skies, and for people to go out and use their telescopes.

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