

January 26, 1971

Phone 489-7651

THE PRAIRIE ASTRONOMER

This month's meeting will be held in Olin Hall of Science at Nebraska Wesleyan University at our usual time of 7:30 p.m. Please be prompt so we can start the planetarium show on time. Our program will be presented by Professor Moore, "The Electromagnetic Spectrum."

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--The President's Report--

At the beginning of a new Year it is usual for one to think about the year past and consider its main events. I believe that I can say without contradiction, that it was "that Wonderful Year--1970." It was a year filled with the usual good programs and other regular club activities, and highlighted with several special events. Of course, the June 5 - 7th Mid-States Convention is at the top of the list, and it is one in which we can all be proud to have participated. The March 7th eclipse is another special event that was generally very successful, both at Gateway and for those who travelled to Mexico. I even consider my trip to Georgia as no total loss. I had a wonderful time, and the only thing I missed was the eclipse itself. We had an excellent family picnic and star party in August. And, I suppose that there are a few who think of 1970 as "that Wonderful Year" when our club discontinued the grazing occultation program!

Well, now this is 1971 to consider. I don't think that we should try to top 1970 just now. Instead we can look forward to a year of well planned and attended monthly meetings and other regular club activities. Note that I said "well attended." A person giving a talk cannot do his best if the size of his audience is not what it should be. So, please attend the meetings regularly and take part in the programs whenever you can.

Earl Moser

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--The Planets This Month--

Mercury: Rises 1½ hours before the Sun, magnitude 0.5 for earlybirds.

Venus: Rises 3½ hours before the Sun, magnitude (get this) -4.3 !  
The disc of the planet is 50% illuminated, 23" arc diameter.

Mars: Rises 4 hours before the Sun, magnitude only a 1.6. On Feb. 5th it will be located 5 degrees north of its counternamesake, the star Antares.

Jupiter: Also a mid-morning object of magnitude -1.4, 33" diameter. On February 2nd it will pass 0.8 degree south of Neptune.

Saturn: Culminates 2 hours after sunset, magnitude 0.3. Its rings extend 43" in their greatest breadth. Planet is 17" diameter.

Uranus: An early morning object 4 degrees south of gamma Virginis, 6th magnitude, diameter 3.8".

Neptune: Early morning again, magnitude 7.7, diameter 2.4", located 0.8 degree due north of beta Scorpii at the end of January. Its motion presently is retrograde and will be so until the first of March. Go find this one, Brian.

Pluto: Magnitude 14--forget it.

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--The Planets This Month--

- Mercury: Rises  $1\frac{1}{2}$  hours before the Sun, magnitude 0.5 for earlybirds.
- Venus: Rises  $3\frac{1}{2}$  hours before the Sun, magnitude (get this) -4.3 !  
The disc of the planet is 50% illuminated, 23" arc diameter.
- Mars: Rises 4 hours before the Sun, magnitude only a 1.6. On Feb. 5th it will be located 5 degrees north of its counternamesake, the star Antares.
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- Pluto: Magnitude 14--forget it.

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To remind the membership, one of the services of the newsletter is a want-ad section where you may freely advertise to buy, sell, or trade for anything you need or want, assuming it's legal of course. Just call the phone number of the newsletter and let us know. LP

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A word of apology here for the brevity of this edition of THE PRAIRIE ASTRONOMER; this month's edition falls squarely in the middle of finals for the two of us who normally put this publication out to the membership. We are both college students, and it was a bit difficult for either of us to find time for the paper this month owing to the importance some people put on grade point averages.

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How about the optometrist who fell in his lens grinder and made a spectacle of himself? What about that, Doc Manthey?



## Observatory Committee

A meeting of the Observatory Committee was held on the 29<sup>th</sup> of December, in conjunction with a Board of Directors meeting. At that time it was decided to start "passing the hat" at meetings. Those of you who have been in the club for a few years will remember that we used this method to raise funds to obtain our 12". We feel that this will be a valuable aid towards financing the construction of our observatory. So start bringing your loose change to the meetings.

Another item of business taken care of at the meeting was to choose a committee head. Since the Board of Directors was chosen as the new Observatory Committee, Earl Moser, as President, has been acting as temporary head of committee, until a permanent head could be selected. He felt that he cannot, in good conscience take the extra time necessary from his other club duties to accept this post. Accordingly, Brian Dodson, the Treasurer, was chosen to fill this post. Please take your ideas and suggestions to him.

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### Club Library

The club library has a number of books and magazines, which are for the club's perusal. We also have 8 1971 Astronomer's Handbooks, which should be sold shortly, so as to get the full benefit from them. The price is \$1.50, and they may be bought either at the next club meeting, or from the Treasurer.

We are also obtaining, for the library, two packages of back issues of Sky and Telescope, covering the first three-quarters of 1970. Sky and Tel overprinted during 1970, so we are getting these for a very reasonable price. These will be made available to club members who have lost Sky and Tels for this period, and to those who want to extend their collection, for 40¢ per issue.

Brian Dodson

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### NOVAE

Would you believe that Nebraska has three clubs, or four, if you want to look at it that way. Kearney has an astronomy club, & so does Central City. However, the members of the Kearney club are dues paying members of the Central City club. Anyway, we welcome them to the region.

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I say that we welcome them to the region because they are planning to join the Astronomical League. A group from Kearney came to Earl's for a star party, and we offered them, to make a long story short, membership in our club, as western divisions. We have not as yet heard their reaction to this plan, but we know that whether or not they accept, it is good just to know that there are some other clubs in Nebraska. We were beginning to wonder.

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Come to the meeting. It promises to be a good one, with a fine program to be given. And don't forget to bring your loose change. The observatory will be for the entire club, and small amounts add up, in the fullness of time.