

APRIL - 71
4-71

THE PRAIRIE ASTRONOMER

The meeting this month will be held at Olin Hall of Science, Nebraska Wesleyan University. The program will be presented by Dr. Dwight Hoxie of the N.U. Astronomy division and it's title is "When is a Star Not?" There will also be the usual eats and talking after the program, so come ahead and see your old friends.

The President's Report

4-27-71

One night recently, Brian Rugg and Dan Cowell came out to my place to do some Messier observing. Brian brought along his recently purchased 6" telescope. This is the same instrument that I had bought new long ago, and it served me well as I went through the Messier catalog in 1963.

I became very interested in their progress when I was asked to confirm their location of the "pretty finder double, Rho Virginis." I now began to recall fond memories of my own adventures down the starry paths of Virgo, that are so well mapped out by Dr. Holyoke in his Observe book. Once again I went "2 degrees north to find M59 and M60 in the same field." I then took complete possession of the telescope and found M58, which is "1 1/2 degrees west and very little north." I would have probably continued on the entire evening, but I had been a bit under the weather and the chill evening air soon got to me. I reluctantly gave the scope back to Brian and Dan.

I still contend that my excursion through the Messier objects was one of the most rewarding pleasures among my astronomical experiences.

I hope that more of our members will try for the Astronomical League Messier Award. It certainly would be well worth your while. Don't let the lack of a telescope stop you. My 6 and 8 inch telescopes are always available and of course there is the club's 12 1/2 inch for everyone to use.

There have been a lot of requests recently for a star party, so we'll have one. Friday May 21st is the date and the place is my home near Hickman. If the weather is bad then we'll have it on the following night which is Saturday, May 22. Mark your calendar and come out for a good show one and all. And don't forget to bring your telescopes.

A Reminder

Don't forget to bring your loose change to the meeting. We are trying to put up an observatory and to do so takes a goodly amount of money. If we do get a site soon we will try to start building this year so the financing will have to be here. Let's support our club in this excellent venture.

The Skies This Month
Planetary Positions

The Sun- On April 25th, the sun is in a quaint astrological position recognized primarily by an elite group of mystics known in the jargon as 'Golf Nuts! Due to their considerable influence in years past, at 3:00 A.M., Time itself will turn around in a quantum jump to stagger the imagination, and it will suddenly be 2:00 A.M. Several powerful organizations of good wizards, known as Nevada, Michigan, and Hawaii have exorcised the spell, and other organizations, among them a group in the center of all things (or at least of the country) is trying to join this elite group. Let's try to help.

P.S. The counter-spell is called L.B. 162. Write your State magician.

Mercury- Is at greatest eastern elongation on the 17th, which is unfavorable.

Venus- Is a morning star, rising about 1½ hours before the sun.

Mars- Rises about 1 A.M. Now is the time to start following Mars to really appreciate the opposition due in August.

Jupiter- Rises shortly after sunset. Mag -2.1 Good to look at.

Saturn- Lost in the solar glare

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Smithsonian Notes

For the Kearny Club. Postal address: Central Bureau for Astronomical Telegrams, Smithsonian Astrophysical Observatory, Cambridge, Mass. 02138

Comet Toba shows no promise of getting brighter than magnitude 8, so no further mention of it will be made.

The variable star SU Tauri has undergone a dimming in brightness of 3.5 magnitudes recently, while brightening to magnitude 3.8 at 5u. The original brightness of the star was 9.5. All evidence shows that the star has thrown off a shell of gas, which might eventually turn into a planetary nebula .

A chemical substance known as formamide has been detected with the aid of radio telescopes in interstellar space. The formula of this compound is: NH_2COH .

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Venus- Is a morning star, rising about 1½ hours before the sun.
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If you want to look at a 17th magnitude comet, we've got one.

The predicted possible occultation of Pluto which was mentioned in last month's newsletter fell through. Pluto passed 0.5" of arc south of the star. This limits the possible size of Pluto to 38,500 miles, which is some help, at least.

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Planetarium Convention

There will be a planetarium convention held in Fremont on April 24th, which is this Saturday. Russ Maag, from Saint Jo will be there, and there will be a star party at Earl's that night. We will be leaving Lincoln at about 7:30 A.M., from Brian Dodson's House. The address

is 511 Cottonwood, and come if you're coming, but let somebody know (preferably Jess Williams, as he is usually home.) For anyone who doesn't want to go to the conference, you are welcome at the star party, which you can start when it gets dark. We might be back, and we might not. If not, start without us. We'll be along.

On May 6th, There will be a Gateway sky show. At the last one we had a large group out, and enjoyed the surprise of seeing Dick Hartley out with his eight-inch. It was a good show for the people, and let's try to get another good show together. Remember that date, May 6th. We'll have some different scopes out this time for you to look at, too.

As was mentioned in the President's report, there will be a star party on the 21 or 22 of May, weather permitting. More on this at the meeting.

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Observatory Project

The observatory project is going great guns. We are now negotiating for a site on Earl's Father's land west of Hickman, which is looking very good, especially as it goes with your wishes as expressed by the poll of a while back. We should have a site in the next month or two.

At the last meeting, a vote was taken and passed with a two-thirds majority to authorize the Board of Directors to handle all design financial, detail, legal and location matters which are necessary to the construction of the observatory. So we're going to go ahead, as a club, and stop the haggling and get some work done. We now have a temporary observatory, which is a 10'x7' metal garden shed from wards. This will be used for the protection of the telescope until the permanent observatory is completed, which should be sometime next year at the latest.

We still need money. This is a fact of life which we cannot avoid. One very good way of obtaining money is to pass the hat at our meetings. I urge every member to bring his loose change, or what he can afford, to the club meeting and put it into the hat. This is a great help to the observatory project, and to the club as a whole. We're doing very well so far, but we have to keep it up. Come to the meeting.

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If anyone has articles for the newsletter, or programs for our club meetings, tell someone about it. We are interested in hearing what you are busy with.

Come to the meeting, and bring a friend. It promises to be a good one, with a very good program presented by a member of the NU astronomy faculty, and with discussion and a 'bull session' afterwards. These meetings are always a lot of fun, but we miss seeing some of you who have stopped coming. Make an effort to come to this one. See you there?