

5-71

May 25, 1971

Phone: 489-7651

THE PRAIRIE ASTRONOMER

This month's meeting will be held in Olin Science Hall at Nebraska Wesleyan University at 7:30 p.m. Our program will be presented by our President, Mr. Earl Moser, on the topic of astrophotography, at which he is becoming something of an expert. Please come and support your club, and share your common interest with some nice folks. See you there?

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--The President's Report--

I have been quite busy recently with different kinds of astronomical activities and have had little time for observing or photography. My report will be a summary of these activities.

On the afternoon of May 4th, Brian Dodson, my wife, and I journeyed to St. Joseph, Mo. to attend one of their regular meetings. The special interest was in the program, presented by Mr. Gary Hall of K.C. Gary's program was a slide show with a taped narration and appropriate background music. The show was titled "Astronomy in the Bible." Gary is going to work the program over a bit to improve it and then present it at the Mid-States Convention in July. It was an excellent and interesting program.

The Gateway Show on the 6th was rained out, but I still had a date with the Norris School Board. As it turns out, the chances for our club to build an observatory there have been 99% eliminated.

On May 10th, Jess Williams and I went to the recreation center at 23rd and "O" to organize an astronomy seminar (or something) to work in with their recreation program. We decided to meet every Wednesday evening at 7:30 at the center if there is enough interest. Our next meeting there will be May 26th. Club members most welcome!

At 6:00 a.m. on May 11th, my wife and I left for Des Moines, Iowa. We met Russ Maag and Lee White at my brother's home at 10:00 that morning. Russ and Lee then went over to the new Science Center in Des Moines to see the planetarium and observatory while I remained at my brother's house to work on my slides for the program later on that day at Ames.

After lunch we then went on to Ames and the Iowa State University. A program had been set up months ago by Russ Maag and the head of the physics department, Dr. Beavers. The object of the program and slide show was to organize a club to be sponsored by the University, which recently dedicated its new observatory with its 24 inch scope.

We held an informal discussion and slide show in the afternoon followed in the evening by a more formal program with a larger than expected attendance. Afterwards we drove out to the new observatory which is located about 20 miles west of Ames in a very remote rural area; an excellent location for both the optical and radio telescopes that they have at that site. Later, rooms were provided for us by the physics department at a hotel on the campus. We left for home early the 12th after a fine visit with some really nice folks.

On Thursday, May 14th, our own (temporary) observatory arrived. I made plans for a "nut & bolt party" at my house for Friday evening. A united club effort to assemble the building was hoped for, but no one showed up either Friday or Saturday evening, so I put it together myself. No apologies are needed as I realize that many of you are very busy at school with finals coming up, or have other work that must be done, and besides, I enjoyed the work anyway. I will modify the building a bit in the next few days so that it will be sort of



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Don't forget the meeting on the 25th. Yours truly has the program, and I think that our club deserves just as good, or perhaps a better program than I presented last fall at K.C.

---Earl Moser

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There will be a sky show at Gateway on June 3rd beginning about 8:00 and continuing until everyone goes home. Please come, and bring your scope, your family, and your friends. The more the merrier. Let's give Gateway a good show for their financial support.

\* \* \* \* \*

For Sale:	One 6" f-7.5 mirror, good condition	\$20.	Call Jess
	One Herschel Wedge	\$10.	Williams
			488-2112



--The Skies this Month--

- Mercury: Too close to the sun to be seen.  
Venus: A morning star, mag. -3.3 rising  $1\frac{1}{2}$  hours before sunrise.  
Mars: Mag. -1.2, prominent in the southeastern sky from before midnight until sunrise.  
Jupiter: Well up in the southeast at sunset and sets before sunrise at magnitude -2.1.  
Saturn: Too close to the sun for easy observation.  
Uranus: R.A. 12h 36m Dec. 3<sup>o</sup> 6' South at mag. 5.7.  
Neptune: R.A. 15h 57m Dec. 18<sup>o</sup> 43' South at mag. 7.7.  
Pluto: Still exists, somewhere, maybe.

There is an excellent conjunction of Mercury and Saturn next month. On the 6th of June at 7:00 U.T. (which is 1:00 a.m.), Mercury will appear 0.4 degrees north of Saturn. Unfortunately, this will not be visible from the planet Earth since it will be directly opposite the sun from us, not to mention the fact that at one in the morning you would have to look through 6,500 miles of rock from our position in Nebraska to see this. So there is your fact not worth knowing for the month of June. This dearly won piece of scientific information painfully gleaned through the efforts of dedicated men goes to prove once again that ignorance is no excuse for knowledge.

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The proposed regional newsletter has been discontinued as a project due to lack of time on the parts of the editors and general lack of interest within the mid-states region.

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Our treasurer, Brian Dodson, recently received a letter from Hinterland University (seriously) in Sao Paulo, Brazil, requesting materials for use in an astronomical exposition to be held on or about August 11th of this year for the astronomical community of Latin America. Anyone wishing to loan slides, photographs, etc., contact Brian at 488-1250. These will be returned, or so say the Brazilians. Brian refuses to take responsibility.

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It appears that we are temporarily without a site for our proposed observatory, but the committee is still searching, and with optimism I might add. Our funds for the construction of the observatory, when a site is found, are in the neighborhood of \$160. A possible estimate of costs for the building are somewhere around \$350, so we have a good start, but lets keep those dimes and quarters rolling in at the meeting. Will we see you there?



## THE PRAIRIE ASTRONOMER

The meeting this month will be held on June 29th, at Olin Hall of Science, on the Nebraska Wesleyan campus. A sky show will proceed the program, and afterwards we will have refreshments and a good talk session. Come and see your friends. It will be well worth it.

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### The President's Report

The club observatory, or telescope shelter, if you prefer, is now ready for use and the "tilt up and over" arrangement seems to be working out just fine.

I had a little trouble at first with the sliding doors falling open or shut as the building was raised or lowered, but a system of weights and ropes attached to the doors solved that problem.

Brian Dodson is working on the clock drive, and it should be ready soon. Even without the clock drive, the scope has been put to good use by a few club members during the past couple of weeks. Before long we should have several more names to add to the Messier award listings.

I plan to leave early on the morning of July 16th for Fayette, Mo., and the Mid-States Regional Convention. I have room in my car for a few passengers, but when I have a carload, I'll have to say no to any late-comers. In the past, the club has defrayed the cost of members car-expenses to the regional convention, and a vote will be taken at the upcoming meeting on whether to continue this practice. If we do continue this practice, hopefully we will have several carloads going to Fayette. See you at the meeting

Earl Moser

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### The Skies This Month

Mercury- Too close to the sun to observe  
Venus - Rises  $1\frac{1}{2}$  hours before the sun  
Mars - Rises in the southeast before midnight  
Jupiter- Well up in the southeast at sunset  
Saturn - Rises shortly before the sun

Gateway show on July 1. Come and bring your telescopes, as we always get a good crowd at these events.

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### Supernova

There is a supernova  $2'$  of arc south of the nucleus of M 63. This must not be confused with an 8th magnitude star visible to the west of the nucleus. Two of our members, Brian Dodson and Dan Cowell, have seen the supernova in the club's 12 inch, and it was a difficult object. However, the night was not too good, and it may well be that a higher power on a clear night would allow it to be seen in as small a scope as an eight-inch. (we used about 50x) The supernova at maximum was magnitude 11.8, around the 25th of June. Although the magnitude is declining, it should be visible in the club scope for a while yet on a good night.

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I would like to apologize for the newsletter this month, but our editor was called out of town suddenly and I was impressed into service on the day before it had to be put out. Therefore, please do not scream too loudly at the meeting. We are trying our best

Brian Dodson