

April 24, 1973

Phone: 435-6649

* * T H E P R A I R I E A S T R O N O M E R * *

Our next meeting will be held in Olin Science Hall on the Nebr. Wesleyan campus at 7:30 p.m., Tues. April 24th. Our program will include a planetarium show and a travelogue of Australia supplemented by a few things of astronomical and scientific interest and will be presented by Dr. James Gardner, a genuine, bona fide down-under type Aussie from Adelaide, South Australia. Also, there will be our usual drawing for the door prize; this month's award being a sky atlas and a telescopic eyepiece. You must be present to win, so don't miss it.

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--The President's Report--

We will hold a regular meeting on the last Tuesday (the 24th) of April. A special program on Australia will be the feature attraction at this monthly meeting, so don't miss it.

We have been invited by the Omaha club to attend and participate in a special meeting at the O.S.A.C.S. Science Center at Gretna on Saturday, April 28th, from 1 p.m. until 5 p.m. The program will feature optics, Kitt Peak, skies of the Andies, infra-red photography, diffraction, and numerous other items of astronomical interest. The evening hours have been set aside for a star party, so bring your telescope and join the fun. I will be arranging a car pool, so if you can either drive a car or else need a ride, please let me know so that any transportation problems can be worked out. For those driving, take Interstate 80 to the first exit east of the Platte River, then take Nebraska 31 north for two miles (you will join U.S. 6 shortly). As you approach Gretna the highway will curve to the right, but OSACS is straight ahead (north), and to the west of the large grain bins which are quite evident.

Let's have a good turn-out for this special event. I'm sure that everyone will have an enjoyable time.

As mentioned in the March newsletter, the Mid-America State Universities Association held its conference on astrophysics at the U of N on April 5th thru 7th. I am sorry that only five of our club members took time to attend some of these very interesting meetings and lectures. I personally took great pride in meeting and listening to such famous astronomers as Drs. Bart, Bok, Phillip Morrison, Jesse Greenstein, and Thomas Gold. It will probably be a long time before such an assemblage of noted personalities in astronomy will again be in Lincoln. If and when that time does come I hope our club makes a better showing.

However, there was a group of amateur astronomers from out of town (one from St. Louis, 2 from St. Joseph, and 5 from Kansas City), for whom I had the pleasure of providing overnight accommodations. We all had a great time and are looking forward to meeting again in August at the League Convention in Omaha.

---Earl Moser

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Our next regularly scheduled Gateway Show will be held on the Mall at Gateway on Tuesday evening May 15th, weather permitting. In the event of ugly weather, let's go the next night. Bring your telescope and give the public a chance to get interested in astro.

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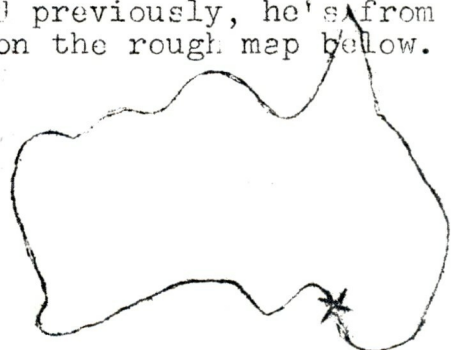
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About Our Speaker. . . .

This month's program may well prove to be about the most interesting we have ever had. Dr. Gardner has a post-doctoral appointment in physics here at N.U. where he does research in atomic and molecular physics. As mentioned previously, he's from Adelaide, a city of half a million, shown on the rough map below. It's about 35 degrees South latitude, generally as far south of the equator as we are north. We should enjoy his slides of the scenic wonders of Australia.



* * * Observing Report * * *

As May approaches, we can observe countless galaxies, more than enough to keep people busy. This month's observing report will center on Coma Berenices, a small constellation north of Virgo. When looking at Coma in dark skies, the most obvious feature of Coma is the large, bright cluster of about 10 fourth and fifth magnitude stars which seem to glow when the sky is clear. All of this month's objects can be found in this cluster. They range from ninth to twelfth magnitude and are all NGC objects. However, even the faint objects can be easily found with the aid of a good atlas such as that found in the May, 1972 issue of "Sky and Telescope". The stars in this map go all the way down to the ninth magnitude and are plotted very accurately. This month I have decided not to give a complete listing and description of all the objects, but rather to wait until the meeting. Hopefully my report at the meeting will be more interesting this way. Other items of interest to be discussed at the meeting include the following:

- (1) another thin crescent moon,
- (2) several beautiful conjunctions that will occur in late May, and
- (3) an observation of Neptune.

- Brian Rugg

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The editors of this publication gladly welcome all contributions to the 'PRAIRIE ASTRONOMER'. If you have something that you wish to contribute, whether it may be a want ad, a note of special astronomical interest, or whatever, please contact either Phil Kelton, 435-6649, or Lawrence Pilgram, 489-7651. The deadline is one week prior to our usual monthly Tuesday night meeting, so please note that the deadline for our next issue is Tuesday, May 22. Also encouraged are any suggestions that you might have for improving our newsletter.

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