

7-76

THE PRAIRIE ASTRONOMER

Volume 16, Number 9

July 27, 1976

COMMUNITY OBSERVATORY NEEDS YOUR HELP AT AUGUST 12TH CITY COUNCIL MEETING

As most club members know by now, a committee composed of educational, business, and professional representatives has been working to build a community observatory in Holmes Park. One of our club members, Professor Carroll Moore of Nebraska Wesleyan University, is chairman of the committee, and Earl Moser, Merton Sprengel, Jack Dunn, Jess Williams, and Lee Thomas are also working on the committee.

Approximately \$60,000 is required to build and equip the observatory. This will provide for a 12' x 30' room with a roll-off roof to house a 14-inch Celestron reflector, an 8-inch reflector, and an 8-inch rich-field reflector, the latter telescope to be built and contributed by the club.

The committee has raised about half of the necessary \$60,000, and has decided to make a presentation to the Lincoln City Council in an effort to obtain city funding for the remaining half. Former Nebraska Governor Bob Crosby, a member of the club, Dale Rathe, science curriculum coordinator for the Lincoln Public Schools, and Lee Thomas, Station & Program Manager of KLMS Radio, will make the formal presentation at the Council's public budget session on the evening of August 12.

We need your help. We need to demonstrate to the Council that there is community interest in this proj-

ect. And for that, we need people to simply attend the Council meeting. You don't need to speak (unless, of course, you really want to.) All you have to do is be there, be interested, and demonstrate that interest.

Certainly, the club and the community stand to benefit greatly from this project. Anyone who has used telescopes at our Gateway Sky Shows, or attended a Behlen Observatory open house knows the public interest in astronomy. Schools, scouting groups,

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"CHILD OF UNIVERSE" IS JULY PROGRAM

The regular meeting of the Prairie Astronomy Club will feature the program, "Child of The Universe", which was produced at the Miami, Florida planetarium. The meeting will be held at Mueller Planetarium, at the University of Nebraska downtown campus, at 7:30 p.m. on July 27.

Four years ago, the Museum of Science Space Transit Planetarium gave birth to yet another way man interprets the Universe with his mind and senses. From the first performance of Jack Horkheimer's "Child of the Universe", it became apparent that a new medium had come into its own right, the multi-media large scale planetarium art-science drama.

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CLUB MEMBERS ARE NEEDED FOR CITY COUNCIL SESSION ON OBSERVATORY

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civic organizations will be able to use the observatory, whose facilities will be unique for this purpose in our area. The interest in astronomy is particularly acute now, in the wake of the Jupiter probes, and the Viking missions to Mars. The Prairie Astronomy Club has one of the largest memberships for astronomy clubs in cities the size of Lincoln anywhere in the country. If Lincoln is not a hotbed of astronomical interest, it certainly sustains a considerable level of curiosity.

Now, for the purely selfish part: what's in it for you? Well, for one thing, the club will gain access to, and experience with, a 14-inch telescope. The location, Holmes Park, is not ideal for detailed deep sky observing, but is nevertheless adequate for many learning projects that members might want to initiate. The club has already volunteered its services to man the equipment during public nights, and its support of the project will earn a lasting association with the observatory--and access to its telescopes.

Working with the observatory also fulfills two club objectives: to educate the public in astronomy, and to provide interested persons

with membership in the club, and access to its benefits. In short, here is a rare opportunity to reach people who are potential club members.

Third, and further into the future, the advent of a community observatory close-in and available to the public, frees the club to pursue the possibilities of seeking a permanent site for construction of a club-owned observatory. Past discussions about such a project usually turned on two incompatible objectives for such a club facility: convenience and accessibility for public users, vs. dark-sky for serious amateur observing. Freed from the first requirement, the second might be met by a club-owned observatory designed and located exclusively for the use of serious amateurs.

Certainly, such a club observatory would be a long-range, involved undertaking. But the possibility of embarking on that long road might be greatly improved by the arrival of a community observatory on the Lincoln scene.

There is much to be gained, and virtually nothing but a small amount of your time to be lost by your attending the City Council meeting Thursday night, August 12, at 7:00 p.m. We need you!

THE PRAIRIE ASTRONOMER is published monthly by the Prairie Astronomy Club, and is free to club members. Yearly subscription to the newsletter only is \$3. Regular membership (including one-year subscription to Sky & Telescope, club newsletter, and four quarterly issues of the Astronomical League publication, The Reflector) is \$9, family membership is \$11. Editor: Lee Thomas (489-3855), Assistant Editor, Merton Sprengel (489-3177).

IMPORTANT REMINDER: ANNUAL STAR PARTY AND PICNIC IS SATURDAY, AUGUST 28

Since you may not receive next month's newsletter in time? (the meeting date is at the bitter end of the month, August 31), here is an important reminder: the annual Prairie Astronomy Club picnic and star party will be held at Wagontrain Lake, east of Hickman, Nebraska, Saturday, August 28.

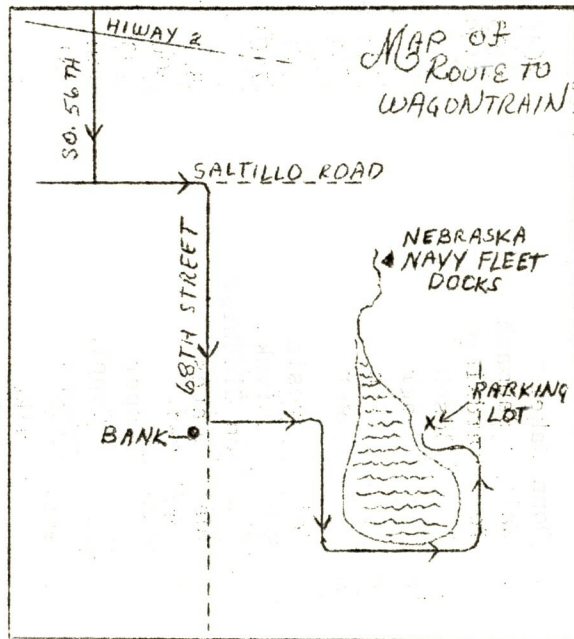
Things generally begin rolling around mid-afternoon (about 2 p.m.) with a potluck dinner around 6, and telescope set-up before sunset. You can come anytime, leave anytime. Since we won't be hitting new moon precisely this year to avoid conflict with the national League convention, we will be seeing a 3-day old crescent setting around 9:50 p.m. Spica will be 1° south of the moon, and an occultation will be visible in some sections of North America on that date.

We usually have many telescopes, both from the Lincoln and Omaha clubs. Virtually every brand of commercially made scope is on view, and it's a perfect chance for anyone planning a purchase to compare the virtues and drawbacks of the various makes. This is the big event of the year, and barring an all-out cloudburst, everyone gathers to gaze at the sky, even if only for an occasional glimpse through holes in the clouds. (Actually, the past few years have yielded excellent viewing, so the odds have been with us.)

Even the county engineer and his road crews are going to cooperate: 56th street is now open straight to

Hickman. Go south on 56th, across highway 2, turn left at Saltillo Road, and right again on 68th into Hickman. Turn left as you get to the bank on the north edge of town, and follow the blacktop east almost to the lake. Jog south, then east, the north around the foot of the dam, and enter Wagontrain state recreation area at the main entrance. Follow the winding blacktop to the top of the hill, then turn right into the gravelled parking lot. We generally try to commandeer this lot for our exclusive use after sundown to keep car headlights off the telescopes. Nobody ever argues with a strange bunch of people staring at the sky, and besides, we outnumber virtually every group at the lake after dark.

See you August 28th!



PRAIRIE ASTRONOMY CLUB -- MEMBERSHIP ROSTER, July 27, 1976

1. Donn Baker	2616 North 59th Street	Lincoln, NE 68507
2. Walter Baumann	2305 Marilynn Avenue	Lincoln, NE 68502
3. Tom Beardsley	5400 N Street	Lincoln, NE 68510
4. Roger Besch	1030 North 78th Street	Lincoln, NE 68505
5. Brad Binder	415 Lyncrest Drive	Lincoln, NE 68510
6. Rex Brinton	1315 Plum Street	Lincoln, NE 68502
7. Burt Berger	7411 Old Post Road	Lincoln, NE 68508
8. Felix Cavosie	911 Division Street	Hurley, Wisconsin 54534
9. Sekhar Chivukula	7801 South Street	Lincoln, NE 68520
10. Dr. John Clothier	355 South Cotner Blvd.	Lincoln, NE 68510
11. Duane Coates	Burt Hall, Nebraska Wesleyan Univ., Lincoln, NE	68504
12. Monte Cole	800 Eldon Drive	Lincoln, NE 68510
13. Brian Cooper	5930 LaSalle Drive	Lincoln, NE 68516
14. Russell Copple	Route #1	Alvo, NE 68304
15. Geoff Crooks	2816 North 63rd Street	Lincoln, NE 68507
16. David Daiker	1537 North 57th Street	Lincoln, NE 68505
17. Allan Daubendick	1821 Jackson Street	Beatrice, NE 68310
18. Jack Dunn	5514 Briarwood Avenue	Lincoln, NE 68516
19. Rollin Ellis	Route #1, Box 152	Roca, NE 68430
20. Harlan Franey	1734 South Cotner Blvd.	Lincoln, NE 68506
21. Norman D. Frerichs	1623 Lincoln Street	Beatrice, NE 68310
22. Clark Fuller	2811 S Street	Lincoln, NE 68503
23. Richard Goeglein	6821 Kearney Avenue	Lincoln, NE 68507
24. Joe Hamersky	3748 South 40th Street	Lincoln, NE 68506
25. Dick Hartley	320 Wedgewood Drive	Lincoln, NE 68510
26. Richard Heim, Jr.	335 N. W. 19th Street	Lincoln, NE 68528
27. Duane Hutchinson	3445 Touzalin Avenue	Lincoln, NE 68507
28. John Johnson	566 Naples Street, Apt. 114	Chula Vista, California 92011
29. Rick Johnson	1860 Pawnee Street	Lincoln, NE 68502
30. Steven Kell	RFD 8	Lincoln, NE 68508
31. Marguerite A. Kellett	P.O. Box 267	Valparaiso, NE 68065
32. Warner Klammer	1648 North Columbia Street	Seward, NE 68434
33. David Knisely	1616 North 14th Street	Beatrice, NE 68310
34. Ken Kopta	1544 Crestline Drive	Lincoln, NE 68506

35. Mike Larson	2935 South 44th Street	Lincoln, NE 68506
36. Steven Lau	3701 South 44th Street	Lincoln, NE 68506
37. Allan Logan	7920 Cherrywood Drive	Lincoln, NE 68510
38. Marian McIntyre	2342 21st Street, P.O. Box 516,	Waverly, NE 68462
39. Jeff Mallatt	2731 Anderson Drive	Lincoln, NE 68506
40. Dr. Robert Manthey	Gateway Shopping Center	Lincoln, NE 68505
41. K. Miller	1149 South 17th Street	Lincoln, NE 68502
42. Professor Carroll Moore	1140 North 79th Street	Lincoln, NE 68505
43. Earl Moser	-----	Hickman, NE 68372
44. Bill Noel	1646 David Drive	Lincoln, NE 68504
45. Tom Peterson	6161 South 70th Street	Lincoln, NE 68516
46. Philo Prell	4425 Randolph Street	Lincoln, NE 68510
47. Virginia Reller	1906 D Street	Lincoln, NE 68502
48. Curtis Roelle	6831 Bethany Park Drive	Lincoln, NE 68505
49. Steve Roper	5731 Glade Street	Lincoln, NE 68506
50. Joe & Jennie St. Lucas	4827 Judson Street	Lincoln, NE 68504
51. Tom Schleich	1830 St. James Road	Lincoln, NE 68520
52. John Schroeder	3760 South 40th Street	Lincoln, NE 68506
53. Mildred Seacrest	Gateway Manor, 56th & R Streets,	Lincoln, NE 68505
54. Jim Shaffer	Calvert Place	Lincoln, NE 68506
55. Wendell Slubbendieck	1636 South 20th Street	Lincoln, NE 68502
56. Merton Sprengel	4522 Hillside Street	Lincoln, NE 68506
57. Larry Stepp	5341 Ervin Street	Lincoln, NE 68504
58. Fred Stuart	3720 South 40th Street	Lincoln, NE 68506
59. Matt Sweet	3630 South 27th Street	Lincoln, NE 68502
60. Lee Thomas	1025 No. 63rd, Apt. B107	Lincoln, NE 68505
61. Rodney Thorburn	5401 Rosebriar Court	Lincoln, NE 68516
62. John Vajgrt	1020 K Street	Lincoln, NE 68508
63. Jess Williams	7844 South Sycamore Drive	Lincoln, NE 68520
64. Ed Woerner	4911 Lowell Street, Apt. F	Lincoln, NE 68506

(Membership roster will be published twice yearly, in the January and July issues of the Prairie Astronomer. List includes persons whose membership was paid and in force at date shown.)

PRESIDENT'S REPORT: STAR PARTIES, MID-STATES NEWSLETTER, OBSERVATORY

We had three telescopes out at Gateway for a show on July 8. I want to remind everyone again, that we could use more help for our Gateway shows.

A star party was scheduled for my place on the 16th. What a great idea: a combination birthday and star party. But it was clouded out. Let's hope that it's clear for the family picnic and star party on August 28.

The Omaha Astronomy Club is planning to publish a newsletter for the Mid-States region of the Astronomical League. Some regions already have a newsletter, but I don't recall the Mid-States ever having had one before. Good luck to you fellows in Omaha. We'll be waiting for the first issue.

I want to thank everyone for the

cards of sympathy I received last month.

There will be a meeting of the Lincoln City Council on August 12th at 7:00 p.m. in the City-County building. (See separate story) On the agenda is a request for funds for the Community Observatory. The Prairie Astronomy Club has been requested to have all of its members present at this hearing. I don't think it's possible for our, or any other group, to have a 100% turnout for any occasion, but let's have as many as possible be on hand for this hearing. It is hoped that a large group of people interested in astronomy will help to influence the city council in favor of the project.

See you at the meeting.

-- Earl Moser

(ASSISTANT) OBSERVING CHAIRMAN'S REPORT...

Since we have many new members in our club, I have decided to devote this month's report to informing you about the "Observe" booklet available through our club. This booklet is devoted to observing Messier objects, with a special certificate awarded for observing 70 or more objects, and an honorary citation for seeing all of the 107 "M" objects.

The booklet contains some information about the Messier objects, and in the back has a log for description of each object as you see it. When you have logged 70 or more observed objects, a club officer must sign your list. Then you can send it in to obtain your certificate.

The Observe booklet is available from Jess Williams, our club secretary, at the regular meetings. However, in checking with Jess, I found that we are currently out of the booklet. They have been on order for two months, so a new supply may be in by our next meeting. The previous

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WANT ADS.....

Request any information on telescope building. Call 488-1485, or send to Tom Peterson, 6161 South 70th, Lincoln 68516.

Jason 60 mm "Astronaut" (Vari-Power) Telescope for sale. Best offer. Contact Lee Thomas, 489-3855.

OMAHA CLUB ANNOUNCES PREMIERE PUBLICATION FOR MIDSTATES NEWSLETTER

On June 19th, at the Mid-States Regional Convention business meeting, held at the University of Missouri at Rolla, a proposal was made to begin a regional newsletter. The Omaha Astronomical Society has announced that its newsletter editor, Jim Henninger, has taken on the job of launching the new publication. Clay Sherrod, editor for the newsletter of the Mid-South Astronomical Research Society, will be assisting Henninger.

At the regional business meeting, costs for newsletter publication were estimated at below 50 cents per member per year. However, it now appears that prevailing rates for printing will force the cost closer to \$1.00 per member per year. The newsletter would be sent using bulk rate postage, and addressed by utilizing the Astronomical League's mailing label addressing service.

Once costs have been established, individual participating clubs would be charged on the basis of their membership. Membership addresses would be updated every three months using the same system presently employed to update the mailing list for the AL Reflector.

Since this proposal would require an increase in club dues, probably from the present \$9.00 to \$10.00 or more, depending upon the final determination of costs, members of the Prairie Astronomy Club should be aware of the plans. Your Board of Directors will be submitting this idea to the full membership for discussion, as soon as definite cost

figures become available.

You might be interested in some of the features the Midstates Newsletter would contain. The OAS newsletter notes that, "... We hope to have permanent type editorial columns to help stimulate growth and interest in amateur astronomy, both on the regional level as well as on the national level. One such column will be the Complaints Dept., which can be used to air your gripes and complaints that you may have about the region and/or the Astronomical League. This column should help unify the region and perhaps the A.L., especially if responses come in from other persons offering their solutions to the problems. Your suggestions could help with ideas on how to improve and how you think the leaders should handle business for the betterment of all amateur astronomers, even without pointing fingers at any particular individuals.

"Another column for this newsletter will be one dealing with a constellation each month, in which descriptions of the stars and objects of interest in that constellation will be covered to a detailed extent. Burnham's Celestial Handbook will be used for the source of material. The book covers the constellations in detail more than any other handbook printed.

"All other club societies are urged to supply other interesting articles for this newsletter. (It should be as informative as can be handled. Any special announcements

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"CHILD OF UNIVERSE"

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"Child" attempts to answer questions like:

How can man possibly feel significant when confronted with the infinity of the cosmos?

When individuals have been reduced to a few holes in a computer card on this tiny planet, how important can a person really feel when he learns that civilizations beyond imagination probably populate the night sky?

Historians know how man has reacted to himself and his ever-changing philosophies and technologies but how will homo sapiens react to the philosophies and cultures of intelligence other than his own?

MIDSTATES NEWSLETTER (From Page 7) can be submitted as well as items for sale. Monthly meeting notices can be made through this newsletter. Anyone who wishes to have a question answered concerning astronomy can do so.

ASSISTANT OBSERVING CHAIRMAN REPORT (From page 6)

price was \$1.00, but it could go up slightly due to inflation.

The summer is a great time to get started on your Messier list, with many objects observable and the weather in your favor.

Also, a good time to find many of the harder objects would be our monthly star parties at Earl Moser's house, where the sky darkness is much better than in town.

-- Roger Besch

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