

10-79

# THE PRAIRIE ASTRONOMER

Volume 19, Number 11

October 30, 1979

## OCTOBER MEETING HIGHLIGHT IS ELECTION OF 1980 CLUB OFFICERS

The annual election for the 1980 club officers will be held at the October meeting, Tuesday, October 30, 7:30 p.m. at Hyde Observatory.

The following candidates have been nominated (incumbents are asterisked):

President: Ron Veys\*

Vice President: John Lammers

Secretary: Donn Baker  
Budd Duvall\*

Treasurer: Lee Thomas\*

Program Chairman: Rick Johnson\*

Additional nominations for each office will be accepted from the floor before the election. Please remember, you must be a member in good standing of the club in order to vote in the election.

Rick Johnson was not able to give us a definite title for the main program, however one feature is likely to be a product report on the new Automatic Star Tracker for astrophotography by Astro-Physics Corp., which Rick purchased for testing.

The Hyde Observatory Committee will meet promptly at 6:30 p.m. prior to the PAC meeting at Hyde Observatory.

### MESSIER OBSERVE GUIDES ARRIVE

Members who wanted the Astronomical League publication *OBSERVE: A GUIDE TO THE MESSIER OBJECTS* will want to attend October's meeting to get their copies, which have arrived from League headquarters. The price is \$2.00 per copy.

This guide is almost a must to complete the list and record the necessary information to receive your Messier Club Award. Members who are participating in the Messier Finders star parties will need a copy. We ordered only 10, so don't miss the meeting, or it might be another long wait!

### CHANGES IN SKY & TEL HANDLING--AND A PROBABLE INCREASE IN CLUB DUES

As anticipated, Sky Publishing Corporation has increased its subscription prices to the Prairie Astronomy Club, effective January 1, from the present \$8.00 per year to \$9.00. In past years the club has generally maintained a \$4.00 margin between the subscription price and club dues, which has equalled the one-year non-membership subscription rate to Sky & Telescope. (For example, during the past year, Sky &

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## OBSERVING CHAIRMAN'S REPORT...

This month, we start observing in Cassiopeia. This constellation seems to be blessed with galactic clusters. Those with large telescopes should have no trouble finding NGC 7654, M52. To find it, go on a rough line from Alpha through Beta on towards 4 Cassiopeia, or about the same distance from Alpha through Beta beyond Beta. The cluster is rather faint, so search carefully.

There are a profusion of small clusters scattered throughout the constellation, so this is a good place to sweet at low power. About one degree east and a bit north of delta Cassiopeia is M103, a small cluster with a triple star near its center. In nearby Perseus, H and Chi Persei are perhaps the best pair of clusters in the sky. Located  $4\frac{1}{2}$  degrees west and one north of Eta Persei, the clusters are rich in bright stars that show color in larger telescopes.

After a quick look at M31 near Nu Andromedae, try a more difficult object, NGC 205, now renamed M110. It should be visible in smaller telescopes, except for its low surface brightness. It is less than a degree north of the nucleus of M31, and

looks very much to the eye as it appears in most photographs, an elongated patch of light bright at the center, but gradually fading towards the edge. It is a prime example of an elliptical galaxy.

Moving a bit southeast, we find another Messier galaxy, M33. It is best to find this large dim galaxy with a good pair of binoculars, due to the low surface brightness. Look about  $3\frac{1}{2}$  degrees west and less than one degree north of the star Alpha Triangulii and use the lowest magnification possible. It shows some details in telescopes of six inches or more in aperture with some of the spiral arm structure showing as faint knots of light in the haze surrounding the nucleus. However, you should look (with a moderate telescope) less than  $\frac{1}{2}$  degree northeast of the nucleus of the galaxy for a small 11th magnitude spot of light near a few stars. For awhile, this object had both your observing chairman and your program chairman thinking it was a new comet. It was NGC 601, a gigantic region of glowing hydrogen gas ionized by supergiant stars in M33. It is almost 900 lightyears across  
*(Continued on Page 4)*

THE PRAIRIE ASTRONOMER is published monthly by the Prairie Astronomy Club, and is free to club members. Yearly subscription without club membership is \$4.00. Regular membership (includes one - year subscription to Sky & Telescope, club newsletter, and four quarterly issues of the Astronomical League newsletter), is \$12.00. Family membership (includes all regular privileges, plus one additional vote in club elections) is \$14.00. Newsletter editor, Lee Thomas, 489-3855. Address all correspondence to PRAIRIE ASTRONOMY CLUB, INC., P.O. Box 80553, Lincoln, Nebraska 68501.

## CHANGES IN SKY &amp; TEL, DUES

*(Continued from Page 1)*

Tel's price to "civilians" has been \$12, the same as club membership dues.)

Now, however, Sky & Telescope's cover subscription price has increased to \$14.00. Since the strains of inflation are attacking your club as much as everyone else, it is perhaps time to consider increasing our club margin to \$5.00 over the group plan price, which would still allow us to offer membership and the magazine at the same price the magazine would cost alone to non-members. You may expect a motion to that effect at the October meeting from your money-conscious treasurer.

In another development, Sky Publishing has revealed a policy that was unknown to the PAC officers, and one which could virtually eliminate the "holding pattern" newsletter-only subscription. Anyone who wishes to join the club, but who already has a subscription to Sky & Telescope will receive a pro rated refund of their remaining subscription from Sky Publishing Corporation upon payment of dues to the Prairie Astronomy Club. (Naturally, if you have only a few issues remaining, the best thing to do is simply let your subscription run out, then join the club.) In the past, as you know, we have established a non-member newsletter-only subscription that allowed potential members to stay in touch with the club while awaiting termination of their

Sky & Tel subscriptions. At best, this was an awkward situation: truly interested people were put on "hold", unable to vote or participate in club decisions merely because they didn't want to have two subscriptions to the magazine. Allowing them to join the club without a Sky & Tel subscription would have violated our agreement with Sky Publishing. We believe the pro-rated refund on pre-existing subscriptions is an excellent solution to this problem, and recommend it strongly for newsletter subscribers who wish to be full-fledged club members. (Naturally, subscriptions to the newsletter will continue to be available, but costs are rising, and this service will likely become more expensive next year.)

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**FOR SALE-- PRINZ ZOOM SLIDE DUPLICATOR.** Duplicates from 1:1 variable to 1:2. For 35mm camera. T-mount adapter is necessary to make it function. Duplicator will be available for inspection at this month's meeting. \$25. Ed C. Epp.

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**SKY & TEL SURPLUS ISSUES FROM CLUB LIBRARY ARE UP FOR AUCTION**

As announced at the last meeting, the Sky & Telescope file in the club library has been sorted out, with the following results:

The club has an almost complete file of the magazine from October, 1962 through August, 1978, with only the following issues missing:

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## SKY &amp; TELESCOPES FOR SALE

*(Continued from Page 3)*

November, 1966

November, 1968

July, 1970

June through December, 1971

February, 1975

Members who might wish to donate these issues to the club library from their own collections, especially if you plan to dispose of them, should contact Rick Johnson. Obviously, it would be nice for the club's file to be complete.

The following issues were found to have duplicates in the library, and thus will be available for sale at auction at the October meeting:

December, 1966

January through June, 1970

February, 1973

October, 1973

January and October, 1974

January, 1975

February through April, 1976

June, 1976 through January, 1977

To bid on an issue, write down the month and year and how much you bid on that magazine. Ron Veys will collect these bids at the meeting, and each magazine will be sold to the highest bidder. Any magazine not bid on will be sold at open auction at the meeting.

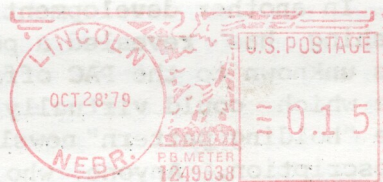
*OBSERVING CHAIRMAN*-From Page 2 and would dwarf even the Tarantula Nebula.  
-- David Knisely

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