



# The Prairie Astronomer

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March 31, 1981

3-81

## Join Our Trek South to the COSMOSPHERE!

Here is the itinerary for our forthcoming trip to Hutchinson, Kansas and the COSMOSPHERE. You are invited.

The group will leave from a location to be decided at the meeting Tuesday night, at 12:00 Noon, Saturday, April 11. The route will be:

I-80 TO YORK.

SOUTH ON U.S. 81 TO SALINA, KANSAS, WHERE U.S. 81 JOINS I-35.

SOUTH TO McPHERSON, KANSAS.

WEST FOR 1 MILE ON U.S. 56.

SOUTH ON KANSAS 61 TO HUTCHINSON.

There will be two stops as a group enroute: South of Hebron, for a pot-luck picnic; and a stop at McPherson for gas and regrouping before Hutchinson. Expected Time of Arrival: 5:00 p.m.

The motel we are staying at is the Scotsman 8 Inn, 322 East 4th Street, 669-8281. A single for 1 person is \$16.88 + tax, for 2 people (1 bed) \$18.88 + tax. A double for two people is \$20.88 + tax. (A double has 2 double beds).

Mary Jane Butler, Director of the Cosmosphere, will be on hand to greet us for the double feature. She has asked that the group be on hand at 8:30 p.m. Saturday night, since group tickets must be reserved at least 2 weeks in advance. "NOMADS OF THE DEEP" will be shown at 9:00 p.m. "TO FLY!" will be shown at 10:00 p.m.,

after regular hours. If the weather permits, an impromptu observing session will be held after the shows. Cost of the double feature is \$4.50.

Ms. Butler will guide the group around the Discovery Center on Sunday morning, April 12, from 11:45 a.m. to 12:45 p.m. The group is expected to be there at 11:30 a.m. No formal exhibits will be completed; this is a behind-the-scenes tour.

Our group should be able to set out for the return trip from Hutchinson by 1:30 p.m., and arrive in Lincoln by 6:30 p.m.

Jeanne Miller has made motel reservations and ticket reservations for 10 people. She needs a definite count at the meeting of those who (1) need a motel room, and (2) merely need tickets. Ms. Butler has stressed

*(Continued on page 4)*

### March Meeting

This month's meeting falls on the last day of the month, Tuesday, March 31, 7:30 p.m., at Hyde Observatory.

The program will be videotape of the recent "Nova" ETV show on the birth of the universe. Tape by Earl Moser, equipment by Russ Genzmer.

Note: Roger Grant and Carroll  
*(Continued on page 4)*

## **OBSERVING CHAIRMAN'S REPORT:**

One big problem for the amateur is finding things; not just objects in the nighttime sky, but general information. To this end, I have found a few books that should help the situation.

Leading off, of course, is the number one atlas for serious deep sky observers, the SKALNATE PLESO ATLAS OF THE HEAVENS, available from Sky Publishing Corp. in several versions. You may already have this, and have found it a bit confusing at first glance. That's understandable, since it contains more information than one really needs, but still, it is probably the best for accuracy of positions for non-stellar objects.

If you have an object's NGC number only, and you want to know more, check out the catalogue that goes with the ATLAS OF THE HEAVENS. (It is expensive, so you might like to look at Rick Johnson's copy before, or instead of buying your own.) It has the object's position, magnitude, approximate distance, and identity, listed in numerical NGC sequence for all the non-stellar objects in the ATLAS.

If you want to be lead by the nose through the entire sky, get BURNHAM'S CELESTIAL HANDBOOK. This three-volume set (about \$25 for all three if you go for the soft-cover edition) is probably the best all-around guide to the heavens you can get. It contains a tremendous amount of information about objects the average amateur might want to observe, including double stars, star clusters, and galaxies. It lists each constellation in alphabetical order, describing in detail the form of the constellation, the major stars in it, and the various clusters, nebulae and galaxies present. It even has finder charts for many well-known variable stars.

If you are interested in technical matters, THE AMATEUR ASTRONOMER'S HANDBOOK by J.B. Sidgwick may be for you. It contains a detailed discussion of optics for telescopes, which may be a bit deep for some, as well as information about mounts, observing huts, optical tests, eyepieces, drives, photography, time, and the human eye. It also contains a large listing of publications and books on both amateur and professional astronomy, and is extensively footnoted.

--DAVID KNISELY

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THE PRAIRIE ASTRONOMER is published monthly by the Prairie Astronomy Club, and is free to club members. Yearly subscription without club membership is \$5.00. Regular membership (includes 1-year subscription to SKY & TELESCOPE, club newsletter, and 4 quarterly issues of THE REFLECTOR, Journal of the Astronomical League) is \$14.00. Family membership (which includes all regular privileges, plus one additional vote in club elections) is \$16.00. Newsletter editor, Lee Thomas, 489-3855. Address all correspondence and membership renewals to: PRAIRIE ASTRONOMY CLUB, INC., P.O. Box 80553, Lincoln, Nebraska 68501.

## Observatory Nets Humanities Grant

A "mini-grant" in support of a \$2,000 project to create a slide/tape series of four programs on the constellations was announced by the Nebraska Committee for the Humanities, an affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities. The funds from the grant come in the form of matching dollars for services and expenditures contributed by the Observatory and its steering committee in preparation and presentation of the slide/tape programs.

Carroll Moore is Chairperson of the Grant Committee, Lee Thomas is Treasurer, and Jack Dunn is Publicity Director. The programs, one for each of the seasons, will be available for use on Public Nights at the Observatory for the next year, and then will become the permanent property of the Observatory. Included in the project grant are funds for acquisition of a new cassette deck, slide-change/dissolve programmer, and a second projector which will facilitate smooth presentation of the programs. This equipment will become a permanent addition to the Observatory's audio-visual booth.

Plans for the project call for development of a 40 - constellation series of slides, 3 for each constellation. The first slide would be an actual color photo of the constellation as it is seen in the sky, with just enough stars visible to approximate its naked-eye appearance. The second slide would interconnect the principal stars of the constellation with simple lines, and designate the major deep sky objects within the constellation boundaries. The third

slide would overlay the first with a line drawing of the mythological figure for which the constellation was named. The soundtrack will describe the constellation, its features, and the background of its mythology.

The first program in the series should be ready for use this summer, according to the committee.

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## Voyager Director Speaks Tomorrow

Mr. Esker K. Davis, Manager of the NASA Voyager Project, will deliver a talk to the public at 8:00 p.m., Wednesday, April 1, at Love Library Auditorium on the City Campus of the University of Nebraska.

Following a summary of the history and scientific objectives of the Voyager Mission and a description of the space craft, Davis's presentation will focus on Voyager 1's encounter with Saturn in November, 1980. Color slides of Saturn, its rings and satellites, along with motion pictures, will provide an exciting trip through the Saturn system. The talk will not be technical, and should be suitable for interested laymen and students of all ages. There is no admission charge.

Prior to joining the Voyager Mission, Mr. Davis did extensive work for the Jet Propulsion Laboratory at Pasadena, California, within the Deep Space Network on both Apollo and Mariner 10 missions. He has been associated with Voyager since 1975, and became Project Manager this year.

MARCH MEETING, from Page 1

Reinert--Jeanne Miller needs your money for shirts. Anybody big--we have an extra size XL for sale. See Jeanne at the meeting.

Also, Earl Moser will be looking for definite committments of help to run the Mid-States convention.

COSMOSPHERE TRIP, from Page 1

tickets. Ms. Butler has stressed that tickets are very limited--all shows are sold out 3 weeks in advance. No tickets will be available at the door.

In plain English, if you don't let Jeanne know of your plans by April 1 at 3:00 p.m., there will be no show tickets for you.

For those needing rides, Jeanne will supply a list of people driving.

PAPER CALL FOR CONVENTION

Papers for presentation at the Regional Astronomical League convention in Lincoln June 5-7 are needed. They should be submitted to:

Robert D. Allen  
14 Arnold Avenue  
Council Bluffs, Iowa 51501  
Phone (712) 328-1960

SPRING CLASSES AT HYDE

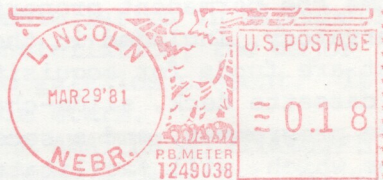
PLANETARY & LUNAR PHOTOGRAPHY--  
Rick Johnson, 5 weeks on Thursday nights 8-10 p.m beginning April 2.

TELESCOPE MAKING-- Ron Veys, 6 weeks on Monday nights 7-9 p.m. beginning April 6.

Call Parks & Recreation Department to register.

Camp site locations will be provided at the March meeting.

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