



The Prairie Astronomer

Volume 21, Number 4
April 28, 1981

4-81

How Our Cosmosphere Junket Went

Eighteen members of the Prairie Astronomy Club departed in four cars and one airplane (Harlan Franey and his wife chose to travel Above It All) for Hutchinson, Kansas and the Cosmosphere on Saturday, April 11. Departure time was approximately 12 Noon, although we were somewhat delayed while the complex communications network was assembled. (How did the Pioneers ever get anywhere without Hams and CB's?) Plentiful provisions had been packed for the long trek, with a stop planned near Hebron about 2:30 p.m.

A half hour after departure, CB's and ham rigs began crackling the news that Earl Moser was hungry. Thus, with Lincoln still in view down the Interstate, the entire caravan pulled into an I-80 oasis west of Seward for chow. Various delicacies were consumed, including Rick Johnson's secret recipe bar-b-que ribs, and Cindy Veys' Amazing Chocolate Cake (frosting on the inside).

Flash forward to Hutchinson after an uneventful trip punctuated by the kind of idle communications without proper call letter identification so frowned upon by the FCC. Arriving at 6:00 p.m., everyone checked into the lavish accommodations of the Scotsman 8 Motel, in which members were instructed not to yawn and stretch when awaking for fear of accidentally

punching holes in the walls of the spacious rooms. (Actually, Jeanne, it was a pretty nice place for the money--free coffee in the lobby next morning!)

We had a fascinating look at the Omnimax projection system being fired up for the spectacular "To Fly!" and "Nomads of the Deep", marred only by some minor adjustment problems in the equipment. Mary Jane Butler, who impressed everyone as a most knowledgeable and energetic Director of the Cosmosphere, answered questions and, next morning, gave a behind-the-scenes tour of the Discovery Center. We were
(Continued on Page 4)

April Meeting

The April meeting of the Prairie Astronomy Club will be held at Hyde Observatory Tuesday night, April 28, at 7:30 p.m.

It should be a busy meeting. At least one of those who sojourned to Hutchinson, Kansas has received back his slides, and plans to inflict them on the membership at large. Undoubtedly there will be others.

Jack Dunn has stitched together about 10 minutes of videotape highlights from the shuttle liftoff and landing for those who missed it.

(Continued on Page 3)

PRESIDENT'S REPORT:

It is with deep regret that I have to report that one of our most valued members is leaving us. Jeanne Miller, our club's Program Chairperson, is moving to Minneapolis after graduation from UNL to join her husband, Steve, who has been working there since his graduation in January.

Jeanne has been with us only a year and a half, but in that time she has become one of our club's most active members. Unlike most of us, who have to "test the waters a toe at a time" when we enter a new group, Jeanne immediately became involved in all of our group activities. Despite not owning a telescope, and knowing practically nothing about Astronomy at the time, she participated in star parties, Astronomy Day, Lincolnfest, volunteering at the observatory, etc., etc., until finally, last October, we saw the wisdom of giving her the official job of Program Chairperson. And, I'm sure we'll all admit, our club's programs and activities have increased in quality and quantity since that time.

Jeanne's crowning achievement, however, has to be the recent trip to the Cosmosphere in Hutchinson, Kansas. Even though her responsibilities to her job and her child kept her from going on the trip with us, she spent many hours planning, making reservations, etc., in order to make this trip a smooth-running, thoroughly enjoyable experience for all 18 club members who took advantage of it.

I have the utmost respect for this young woman who has thrown herself wholeheartedly and with great vitality into all she has done for us, and our club will miss her deeply. But more than that, she has become a close personal friend to many of us, myself included, and we will miss more than her hard work and abilities--we will miss her friendship. We all wish you well in your new home, Jeanne.

However, there is one bright spot here. Jeanne's job as Activities and Programs Chairperson will be assumed by another very capable, hard-working member. Russ Genzmer joined the club only about a year and four months ago, but, just like Jeanne, he immediately plunged into the club's activities.

(Continued on Page 3)

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.

From Our Department Of "Here We Go Again"

In a letter dated April 16, 1981, and addressed to George Allen of the Omaha Astronomical Society, Don Archer, Executive Secretary of the Astronomical League says, "As you know there is now a slight disagreement as to which region (Mid-States, or North Central) the Omaha Astronomical Society and the Prairie Astronomy Club of Lincoln are located in.

"According to all the geographical boundary maps and past references I can find in my files they do indeed lie geographically in the North Central Region.

"At a recent Executive Committee meeting this problem was discussed at length, and the committee voted unanimously to let the members of these two societies decide which region they prefer to be a part of.

"Would you please see to it that this is discussed thoroughly among the members attending the upcoming Mid-States Regional Convention and also provide some kind of forum for those who do not attend the regional to let their feelings be known."

"If the general membership consensus is to stay in Mid-States then no doubt the boundaries will be altered. If North Central is the preference then nothing need be done except on paper."

This newly discovered "problem" will undoubtedly arouse drastic cases of *deja-vu* among such old-timers as Rick Johnson and Earl Moser, who recall the tussle that eventually led to the PAC and OAS becoming a part of the Mid-States Region. We thought

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE (From Page 2)

Although he displays a wry sense of humor, he takes very seriously his observing, his learning, and his commitments to our club. He is already taking charge of the club's Astronomy Day activities and our upcoming display at the Regional Convention in June.

I'm sure that, under Russ's guidance, our club's activities and program presentations will continue to grow and improve, and I feel that we are just now sampling, in Russ, the potential of a future leader of our club. We are lucky to have him.

--RON VEYS

APRIL MEETING (From Page 1)

These will be replayed (and relived) at the meeting.

In addition, Astronomy Day Chairman Russ Genzmer will be discussing plans for the event, and seeking volunteers.

And, with the Astronomical League Midstates Convention about 2 months away, we can expect Earl Moser to have more on that to discuss.

We are coming into our most active time of the year for the club--there are plenty of different events for everyone to be able to find something he can get involved in. Come to the meeting, and take your pick!

TELESCOPE MAKING MAGAZINES HAVE ARRIVED! If you're a subscriber, make sure to attend this meeting-- with your \$1.25, please!

this had long since been laid to rest, but history, as they say, has a way of repeating itself... and repeating itself...and repeating itself...

Recalling Hutchinson

(Continued from Page 1)

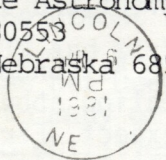
mightily impressed with the dedication of the Hutchinson community in planning and financing this spectacular collection of space artifacts, not to mention their resourcefulness in glomming onto an estimated \$85 million worth of capsules, suits, etc.

After watching a flawless liftoff of Columbia at the motel that morning, it was especially interesting to be able to actually handle one of those infamous tiles, blow-torch heated to demonstrate its heat dissipating abilities. (A hearty band of early risers had joined expert ABC shuttle launch reporter Frank Reynolds at 5:30 a.m. Sunday armed with donuts from the Winchell's down the street. Three hours later, the bleary

eyed group was still glued to the set, reluctant to miss Reynolds' every accurate, carefully-selected adjective, as when he assured TV's huddled multitudes that the shuttle's "boster rockets" had performed without a hitch.

Our return trip was accomplished Sunday afternoon, intransit munchies sufficing for sustenance, since everyone was anxious to get back to the mundane concerns of Lincoln. It was the sort of trip that will now go down in legends (and, unfortunately, in an almost limitless number of slides which hapless participants can expect to have hauled out in future meetings. Proving that there is no escape, even from a Great Escape!

THE PRAIRIE ASTRONOMER
c/o Prairie Astronomy Club, Inc.
P.O. Box 80553
Lincoln, Nebraska 68501



FIRST CLASS MAIL

COPIER

COFFEE POT
REGISTRATION

Mr. Earl Moser
Hickman,
Nebraska 68372

9/81