



THE *Prairie*
Astronomer

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APRIL 1985

Our program chairman is back from England, and he's brought with him some questions he'd like to pass along to all of you.

Test your knowledge while learning something at the same time. (Answers on last page)

- 1) Who was the first Astronomer Royal for England?
 - a. John Flamsteed
 - b. William Herschel
 - c. Edmond Halley
 - d. Lord Moser (Earl's great grandfather)

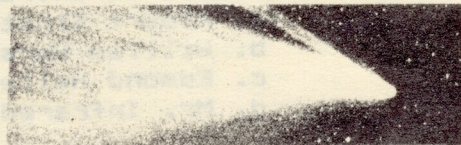
 - 2) Where does the current Astronomer Royal for Scotland hold office?
 - a. Royal Greenwich Observatory
 - b. Royal Observatory Edinburgh
 - c. Stonehenge
 - d. Mt. Palomar

 - 3) What famous observatory at one time employed Dr. Ed Schmidt?
 - a. Royal Greenwich Observatory
 - b. Royal Observatory Edinburgh
 - c. Stonehenge
 - d. Mt. Palomar

 - 4) Who discovered Infrared Radiation?
 - a. Albert Einstein
 - b. William Herschel
 - c. Edmond Halley
 - d. Mr. Infrared

 - 5) What famous astronomer believed that the brightness of a star determined its distance? (hint..he also discovered Uranus)
 - a. Tycho Brahe
 - b. Patrick Moore
 - c. William Herschel
 - d. Carl Sagan
-

- 6) With what size telescope did the answer to #5 discover Uranus?
- a. 4 inch
 - b. 8 inch
 - c. 10 inch
 - d. 20 inch
- 7) Which of the following have served as presidents of the PAC in the past 10 years?
- a. Ron Veys
 - b. Russ Genzmer
 - c. John Lortz
 - d. None of the above
- 8) What is Stonehenge?
- a. Ancient observatory
 - b. Tourist attraction
 - c. Monument to the gods
 - d. All of the above
- 9) What is the second derivative of $f(x)=x^2$?
- a. x^2
 - b. 0
 - c. $2x$
 - d. 1
- 10) What is located on the Salisbury Plain in England?
- a. St. Andrews golf course
 - b. Jodrell Bank Observatory
 - c. Stonehenge
 - d. Andy's camera lens cap



The Prairie Astronomer is published monthly by the Prairie Astronomy Club and is free to all club members. Membership expiration date is always listed in the right corner of the newsletter mailing label. Address all membership renewals to: PRAIRIE ASTRONOMY CLUB, INC., P.O. BOX 80553, LINCOLN, NE 68501.

For further club membership information or suggestions contact one of the following: John Lortz (Pres.) 572-1451(Omaha), Ron Veys (V.Pres) 464-1449, Bev Hetzel (Sec.) 435-7881, Lee Thomas (Tres.) 483-5639, or Andy Corkill (Prgm. Chair.) 488-1096. All articles for the newsletter should be sent to newsletter editor, JOHN LORTZ 3119 MAPLEWOOD BLVD. #41, OMAHA, NE 68134, no later than 10 days before each club meeting date.

OBSERVING CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

May brings in daylight savings time, unfortunately but it also brings in warm weather and the monthly star party on May 17th.

Galaxies dominate the spring skies. A good starting point is the famous Realm of Galaxies near the center of the Virgo Cluster. Look about halfway between Denebola and epsilon Virginis where it is possible to see 9 galaxies in a one degree field using an eight inch telescope. Those with larger instruments will find many galaxies not listed on most charts and this will make identification of individual objects more difficult. Many of the galaxies in this area begin to show detail in moderate sized telescopes, so look carefully.

Look one degree north and one and a half degrees east of 6 Comae for the 10th magnitude spiral galaxy M-100. It will show vague indications of spiral structure when viewed with an eight inch instrument.



by
David Knisley

About a degree east of the star 35 Comae is the bright spiral galaxy M-64, also known as the Black Eye Galaxy. Visible in binoculars, this object's dark lane that gives it its name can be seen at high power in an 8 or 10 inch reflector. While in the area, be sure to check out the beautiful double star 24 Comae. It looks a great deal like Alberio, except that this double is fainter.

Near Alpha Comae are the interesting pair of globular star clusters M-53 and NGC-5053. M-53 is 1 1/2 degrees east of Alpha and shows hundreds of very faint stars in an eight inch, but 5053 is fainter and resolvable only in rather large telescopes.

A NOTE FROM EARL...

Thanks to all who planned, promoted, and attended the banquet in my honor at last month's meeting. I regret that I didn't get a chance to say hello to some of my long time friends that evening. I had hoped to visit with each and every one of you, but it was all over too soon. Time passes quickly when you're having fun. I will treasure the plaque forever and display it in a prominent place in my home for all to see.

Once again thanks!

Earl Moser

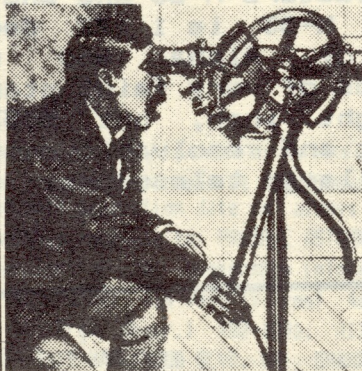
ANSWERS...

- 1) a. John Flamsteed.
- 2) b. Royal Observatory Edinburgh.
- 3) a. Royal Greenwich Observatory.
- 4) b. William Herschel
- 5) c. William Herschel (most people would have put down Carl Sagan had I not given the hint)
- 6) b. 8-inch
- 7) a,b,and c. (if you marked d. you can run for president next time around)
- 8) d. all of the above
- 9) b. 0 (this question would be a little hard to look up in an encyclopedia)
- 10) c. Stonehenge (a trick question...Andy's lens cap is very appealing)

THE PRAIRIE ASTRONOMER
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FIRST CLASS MAIL



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Hickman, NE 68372

AMATEUR ASTRONOMY....
....a Hobby as Big as the
UNIVERSE



PRAIRIE ASTRONOMY CLUB
of LINCOLN

THE AMATEUR ASTRONOMER: IN AWE OF THE UNIVERSE

Amateur astronomers come in all sizes and ages, and both sexes. They have a broad range of interests and experience.

It is not necessary to own a telescope in order to be an amateur astronomer. It can be done with simple binoculars, or just a star chart and your eyes alone. You don't have to be a mathematician, scientist, or optical expert.

At the foundation of every amateur's interest in Astronomy is an appreciation of the sheer beauty and majesty of the universe. In fact, no matter how caught up an amateur might become in his equipment, or in celestial mechanics, astrophotography or the many subdivisions of his hobby, he or she will always take time to just gaze up at the sky and enjoy a harmony with nature.

THE PRAIRIE ASTRONOMY CLUB OF LINCOLN

The Prairie Astronomy Club was founded in 1961 as a non-profit organization to encourage and participate in the study of Astronomy for the benefit of its members and of the general public.

The club now has over 50 active members of both sexes and ranging in age from about 10 to over 65 years. Their interests cover virtually every facet of astronomy, From simple naked-eye sky gazing to the sophisticated use of computers and electronic image-enhancing technology. A brief list of some program topics at the club's meetings reveals the wide variety of interests:

- * ASTROPHOTOGRAPY...How to make good deep-sky photographs
- * TELESCOPE MAKING...Mirror grinding, building mounts, etc.
- * THE SPACE SHUTTLE...Updates on all the current missions
- * DEEP SKY OBSERVING...What to look for and how to do it
- * WHAT TO LOOK FOR IN EYEPIECES FOR YOUR TELESCOPE
- * CALCULATING THE POSSIBILITIES OF LIFE IN THE UNIVERSE
- * HOW TO PHOTOGRAPH THE MOON AND PLANETS
- * SKY TOURS...How to identify the constellations of each season
- * SOLAR ECLIPSE...Recollections of a Nebraskan touring Russia
- * BEHIND THE SCENES OF VOYAGER AT JPL
- * COMPUTERS IN ASTRONOMY...Programs written by a club member

HOW TO FIND OUT IF THE P.A.C IS FOR YOU

You don't have to spend a cent to attend Prairie Astronomy Club Meetings! The club's general meetings are held on the last Tuesday of every month, unless the date conflicts directly with that of a major holiday. THE TIME: 7:30pm. THE PLACE: Hyde Observatory in Holmes Park on the eastern edge of Lincoln. Admission is absolutely FREE. We suggest that you attend a few meetings if you have an interest in Astronomy.

Each club meeting consists of a short business session, planning for upcoming events, one or more short programs, and refreshments.

When you arrive, we will probably spot you as a visitor, but if we don't, please introduce yourself to one of the club members. We will take it from there to put you in direct contact with someone who shares your specific interests. You may attend as many club meetings as you wish without joining, although you must pay dues to enjoy all the club benefits.

BENEFITS OF PRAIRIE ASTRONOMY CLUB MEMBERSHIP

> Each member receives a one-year subscription to Sky & Telescope Magazine. Sky & Telescope is the oldest publication for amateur and professional astronomers, generally regarded as must reading for anyone interested in Astronomy. (The cost of club membership is \$2 more than you would pay for the magazine subscription by itself).

> Members receive the monthly club newsletter, The Prairie Astronomer. It tells about club activities, late-breaking astronomy news, helpful observing hints, and events of interest to amateurs.

> You become a member of the Astronomical League, the only nationwide organization for amateur astronomers, with which PAC is affiliated. Membership entitles you to receive the quarterly newsletter, The Reflector, to buy astronomy books through the League office at discount prices, and to attend both the national and regional annual conventions.

> Star Parties are held monthly, weather permitting, on the Friday evening closest to New Moon. Two club telescopes are available for use by members at these informal gatherings. A yearly star party and picnic draws amateurs from around the area to share good food, astronomy talk, and observing.

> Special publications such as the RASC Observers Handbook, Astronomical Calendars, and subscriptions to Astronomy Magazine, Deep Sky, and Telescope Making Magazine are offered to club members at special discount prices.

"DUTIES" OF PRAIRIE ASTRONOMY CLUB MEMBERS

While there are no requirements for membership, every member of the PAC on occasion serves as teacher and goodwill ambassador for Astronomy.

* Volunteer club members run Hyde Observatory during regular public nights (Saturdays) and for special group lectures.

* The club stages Astronomy Day every year to inform the public about Astronomy as a hobby, and the progress of mankind's ventures into space.

* Other organizations such as Cub Scouts and camp groups call on the Prairie Astronomy Club to provide outdoor "Sky Tours" for their members.

MEMBERSHIP DUES

> Junior Membership...\$6.00 per year, must be 21 years of age or less. Gets the newsletter, 1 vote at club meetings, but not Sky & Telescope.

> Regular Member...\$19.00 per year, gets the newsletter, 1 vote at meetings, a Sky & Telescope subscription. No age restriction.

> Family Membership...\$21.00 per year, same as a regular member but gets 2 votes at club meetings.

> Newsletter Only...\$6.00 per year, no voting privileges or magazine subscriptions, gets the monthly newsletter only.

HOW TO GET ANSWERS TO YOUR QUESTIONS, OR JOIN

If you have any questions about membership in the Prairie Astronomy Club, or if you wish to join, you can contact any of the club officers:

PRESIDENT -- John Lortz, (Omaha) 572-1451

VICE PRESIDENT -- Ron Veys, 940 Colony Lane, 464-1449

SECRETARY -- Bev Hetzel, 1413 G St., 435-7881

TREASURER -- Lee Thomas, KLMS/KFMQ, 489-3855 or 476-8565

PROGRAM CHAIRMAN -- Andy Corkill, 2220 Sth 49th, 488-1096

ADDRESS MAIL INQUIRIES OR MEMBERSHIP DUES TO:

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