

The Prairie Astronomer

New Officers Take Over

Elections for the 1989 Prairie Astronomy officers were held at the last meeting. The following club members were elected:

PRESIDENT: Ron Debus

VICE PRESIDENT: Dave Knisely

2nd VICE PRESIDENT: Jack Dunn
(program chairman)

SECRETARY: Ellen Owen

TREASURER: Lee Thomas

Congratulations to all. Let's have a great year!!!

President's Message

by Ron Debus

Thank you Prairie Astronomy Club! Being president of this fine organization will be both exciting and rewarding for me. I can hardly wait until the next meeting. Sometime after my first year with the club, my wife (now the First Lady) said that one day I would be president. Well, what can I say... she's right again!

As of right now, I know of no changes to make. I think everyone likes to make or leave their mark. I'll just have to find mine. However, I am not without ideas. Last year it was fun being 2nd V.P. and putting together programs. I had to ask for your help and the club membership really came through. Many of the regular members

know I am not afraid to pick on you for help, so you new members: BEWARE!

At our October meeting I received a key to the post office box, and since I live close, I've been there several times. I can tell already that it's going to be fun getting all the junk mail first and then passing it on!

On Sunday, October 13, my family and I drove to the observing site and hung some No Trespassing/Keep Out signs. There were some new spray paintings on the walls of the building on the site. I still think that once we are more established in the area, vandals will leave the property alone. The way things are set up now, there is no way to keep out the unwanted. But don't get discouraged, this is a beautiful place and all the members who worked so hard to get the property in shape can be proud of a fine job.

I'll close with this thought: Bring a friend and yourself to the next meeting. Let's have a good turnout. Thanks for listening!

At The Last Meeting

by Kim Ellen Owen

The meeting was called to order by President Del Motycka at 7:33, with many members, 2 new members, 2 guests and a representative of the Halloween Astronomical Group (HAG) present. Jack Dunn announced that Erik Hubl had withdrawn his name as a candidate for Second Vice President.

Prairie Astronomy Club caps are for sale for \$4.95. The Astronomical Calendar can be purchased with a discount of 40% on 10 or more (\$12.00/\$7.20). The Observer's Handbook can be purchased for \$6.90 if 10 or more order; otherwise it will be \$10.00. See Dan Neville if interested.

November star parties will be held November 4 and 11, Dave Knisely announced.

The Treasurer's report listed \$2150.00 in savings and \$979.00 in checking, with about \$200.00 or more still to be spent for subscriptions. Ron Veys moved that the Treasurer's Report be accepted; the motion carried.

The Secretary's Report was read and accepted.

Under Old Business, it was reported by Del that the October 9 star party was clouded out, but the Firth COOP manager, his 2 sons and a supervisor came. On the following Friday, 1 property owner came, but his brother did not come. Del has purchased Private Property/No Trespassing signs, and he will put these up as soon as he contacts the second owner. Discussion about putting up a sign

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The Prairie Astronomer is published monthly by the Prairie Astronomy Club, Inc., and is free to all club members. Membership status and expiration date are listed on the mailing label. Membership dues are: Junior Members and Newsletter Only Subscribers...\$10/yr; Regular Members... \$24/yr; Family Memberships...\$27/yr; Address all new memberships, renewals, or questions to THE PRAIRIE ASTRONOMY CLUB, INC., P.O. BOX 80553, LINCOLN, NE 68501. For other club information contact one of the following officers: Ron Debus(Pres)435-5688, Dave Knisely (V.Pres)223-3968, Kim Ellen Owen (Sec)423-7440, Lee Thomas(Tres)483-5639, Jack Dunn(2nd V.Pres)475-3013. All newsletter comments and articles should be sent to Newsletter Editor JOHN LORTZ, 9255 CADY AVE #14, OMAHA, NE 68134 no later than 7 days before monthly club meetings. Club meetings are held the last Tuesday of each month at Hyde Observatory in Lincoln, NE.

Observing Chairman's Report

by Dave Knisely

THE NEXT SCHEDULED STAR PARTIES ARE ON DECEMBER 2ND AND DECEMBER 9TH AT THE ATLAS SITE. For those of you who want to use our observing site whenever you feel like it, you may rent a key from the club for \$15 per year. The money goes toward the expenses for running our nice observing area, so if you are interested, contact Lee Thomas to get your key.

Start your early winter observing with the bright planetary nebula M76. Located about a degree north and a third west of Phi Persei, this object is a smaller version of the Dumbbell nebula in small instruments. Moderate to large telescopes and nebular filters will show the faint wings of light that give this object the name "The Butterfly Nebula". Also in Perseus is the easy open cluster M34, located 4.3 degrees west and two north of Beta Persei. This cluster is a medium sized group of stars that shows about 20 to 30 faint members when viewed in a 60mm refractor. An eight inch aperture makes the stars seem brighter and a bit scattered, while a 10 inch shows about 50 stars in the cluster.

Nearby is the interesting planetary nebula NGC 1514, known to some observers as "The Crystal Ball Nebula". It can be found about 1.25 degrees south and 3.75 degrees east of Zeta Persei. A four inch will show it as a faint star surrounded by a small puff of haze. Eight to ten inch instruments brighten the nebula considerably but add only vague hints of detail. This object responds well to the use of the UHC or OIII filters, showing a dark spot and two faint arcs of light inside the fuzzy ball. For you galaxy lovers, take a look at NGC 1023, a nearly edge-on elliptical or S0 galaxy. Located 1.2 degrees south and a bit west of 12 Persei, this object show up nicely in an eight inch as a moderate to small lens shaped fuzzy patch with hazy east-west extensions and a small tuft on the east side.

In Auriga are several beautiful open star clusters for most telescopes. M36 is about 5.3 degrees west and three south of Theta Aurigae and shows about 20 to 30 stars in a small refractor. Telescopes over six inches will show from 50 to 60 stars in a rich milky-way background. M38 is a large rich group of bright stars that lies about 1.5 degrees south and 1/2 degree east of Sigma. A six inch will show over a hundred stars in the cluster plus a notable wedge-shaped void on the north end. Those of you with moderate to large instruments will want to catch NGC 1907, a small faint open cluster that is about half a degree south of M38. An eight inch at high power shows it as a tiny rich ball of faint stars in a rich field. The best cluster in the area has got to be M37, located about five degrees south and 1.5 degrees west of Theta Aurigae. Visible in binoculars, this object is hard to resolve well in very small instruments, but is spectacular in any aperture

larger than five inches. It is rich and nearly circular, reminding me a bit of M11.

In Taurus is one of the more difficult Messier objects, namely M1, the Crab Nebula. It can be found about one degree north and a half west of Zeta Tauri and is just barely visible in a 2.4 inch refractor at very low power. It appears as a dim fuzzy "W" shaped patch of light in most instruments. Large apertures do show some tattered edges and brightness variations, but the nebula is usually rather disappointing, especially to beginners.

Welcome New Members!

Roger Kohles
2912 S. 59th St.
Lincoln, NE 68506
483-1561

Brendelyn Hartwig
5011 Claire
Lincoln, NE 68516
483-4902

Keith May
5700 Deerwood Dr.
Lincoln, NE 68516
483-4902

Lynelle & Wendell Wood
2313 N. 63rd St.
Lincoln, NE 68505

RASC Handbooks Here!

Ron Debus reports that the RASC handbooks have arrived and will be available for pick-up at the November meeting. Please try to pick your copy up then!!!

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designating the area as belonging to the Prairie Astronomy Club was held, and some preliminary discussion was also held as to what the Site might officially be named. It was decided to wait until hunting season was over, then pursue the topic again.

Lee Thomas contacted Del Eddy at the Lincoln Journal. The telephone conversation was favorable. Lee sent copies of the Des Moines Register and a letter offering computer information. The Daily Sun in Beatrice called, had heard about the Site, and in preparing an article on Cortland, may include some copy on the site. Lee described the Site and put them on our mailing list.

An article found in the World Herald on the erosion of Mars was written by former members Schultz, who is now an astrogeologist at Brown University.

David Knisely inquired about the status of the outhouse, and Ron Veys reported nothing new.

Ellen Owen announced an error in her telephone number; it is 423-8328.

Elections were held. [SEE PAGE 1 FOR RESULTS]

Del thanked Dan for his work during this past year. He then officially passed the shawl of authority (donated by Andy Corkill, who brought it back from one of his trips to India) to Ron.

Ron Debus mentioned that he had worked the past Saturday, and that a lady who attended wanted to come out to the Site. He will arrange it for the next star party.

The woodcarvers who did a presentation for one of our meetings will be setting up for a show at Eastpark, November 4 - 6.

Ron asked Dave Knisely about the possibility of inserting sky charts to go with his newsletter column. Dave says that he selects bright stars usually found in the map located in the center of Sky and Telescope magazine, and stars which are generally close to the meridian that month. He will check with John Lortz, but felt that this might make for difficulties in the printing of the newsletter, especially in the use of more paper.

The meeting was adjourned. Roger Besch from the Omaha club presented a program on Poncet Mounts.

Norma Coufal thanked Del for all the hard work he was put in this year. Ellen Owen thanked the club for the chance to continue working as Secretary.

The Prairie Astronomer

c/o The Prairie Astronomy Club, Inc.

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Hickman, NE
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Expr: 9/89F

Next PAC Meeting November 29th, 1988