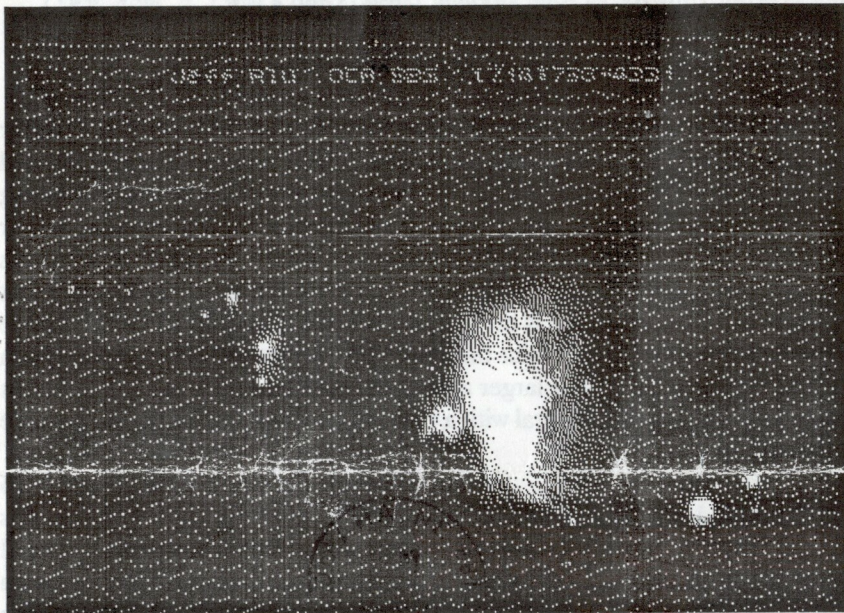


center, while a 10 inch makes it seem very rich and a bit loose at high power.

One of the best globulars in the summer sky has got to be M4, located about a degree west of Antares. Easily visible in binoculars, this cluster begins to show stars in a three inch, with a six inch resolving it well. Moderate to large apertures reveal an interesting line of stars running roughly east-west through the cluster's center. At low to moderate powers in an eight inch, this object looks a bit like a barred spiral galaxy.



The Prairie Astronomer

c/o The Prairie Astronomy Club, Inc.

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Lincoln, NE 68501

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Next Meeting June 26, 1990

THE Prairie Astronomer

Ask Uncle Sol

[The Smoky Mountain Astronomy Club's newsletter has a sporadic humorous question and answer column called "ASK UNCLE SOL." I thought you might enjoy the January '90 version. Editor]

This month's question comes from Leah Hollenberg and spouse. "Dear Uncle Sol," they write, "we have enjoyed your column immensely and thought you might be able to answer a questions for us. When we joined the Astronomy Club we thought we were joining the Astrology Club. What's the difference?"

Uncle Sol Answers: Your confusion is shared by a great many other people, and I wish I knew where it started. The fact is that, contrary to popular myth, there is absolutely no difference: astronomy and astrology are the same thing. Essentially these are variant spellings for the same science.

Oh, there are a few minor differences in terminology, emphasis, and in the lifestyles of the devotees of these two branches of astro-science, but these are completely insignificant compared with the wide-spread theoretical agreement on all major questions concerning astrophysics, celestial mechanics, and propitious influences.

Sure, professional astronomers sometimes tease their astrological brethren (in good humor, of course) in popular magazines, but this is an in-joke. I can assure you that astronomers really respect their astrological colleagues, and when they're up for tenure they consult their horoscopes just as avidly as anyone else. Still, the following may help you tell them apart at scientific meetings.

First, though the astro in both astrology and astronomy comes from the Greek word for the stars, astronomers study the stars, while astrologers are studied by the stars (Shirley McClaine, Nancy Reagan, etc).

Second, astronomy is actually a psado-science: the nom in astronomy comes from the city in Alaska that astronomers love for its long, cold, nights. These brainy nerds go to lush, tropical Hawaii to huddle on frigid mountaintops, bags under their eyes, gasping for air. The logy in astrology, on the other hand, tells you astrologers are logy-cal. While the astronomers shiver on mountaintops, down below the astrologers are on the beach at Waikiki, slathered with sunscreen, downing Singapore Slings and purple chicken poo-poo, and calling their brokers on cellular phones. So which group do you think has the brains of a higher mammal?

Astrologers tell you how to attain wealth, power, and the sexual favours of "that special person." Astronomers think it's a big deal if they can tell you when the moon will rise. Half of the time they're lucky to defrost, while the astrologers are cuddled by a warm modem with "that special person," monitoring their real estate investments.

Finally, astrologers reach the public through the newspaper stand mass circulation magazines; astronomers get an hour a year on Nova to explain their crazy theories.

I hope this enables you to tell them apart, and I think you can see that astrology is just indoor astronomy without all the hassle, and with a more practical bent, just like cosmology and cosmetology are essentially the same thing, though the one focuses more on where we've been, and the other on where we're going Saturday night.—Sheldon Cohen (channeling for Uncle Sol)

SKY & TELESCOPE NEWS BULLETIN JUNE 22, 1990

COMET LEVY

Veteran comet observer John Bortle hints that we shouldn't hold our breath waiting for Comet Levy. On Friday morning, June 22nd, the comet was about a magnitude fainter than Bortle expected, at about 8.7 in 20 x 80 binoculars. On the positive side, Comet Levy stills shows a fairly condensed inner coma with a very intense false nucleus. Bortle says to look for a 6-arc-minute coma and abroad dust tail 1/3- degree long to the west-north-west. Also, astronomers at the Joint Observatory for Cometary Research have photographed a 1-degree ion tail at position angle 259 degrees.

This week Comet Levy is nearly stationary on the border of Andromeda and Pegasus. Here are positions in equinox 2000 coordinates for 0 hours Universal time (8 p.m. Eastern daylight time on the previous date):

	R.A. (2000) Dec.	
June 23	0h 9m	+29.5d
June 29	0 9	+29.7

SUPERNOVA IN NGC 5493

Amateur astronomer Robert Evans of Australia has discovered another in his impressive series of supernovae. The 13.5-magnitude exploded star is in galaxy NGC 5493 in Virgo. It is offset from the galaxy's nucleus by 15 arc seconds to the west and 4 to the north. Here are NGC 5493's equinox 2000 coordinates: right ascension 14 hours 12 minutes, declination -5.0 degrees.

HUBBLE SPACE TELESCOPE

The Hubble Space Telescope achieved another milestone in its long engineering check-out on Sunday, June 17th. The second of its two cameras -- the one designed to detect ultra faint stars and galaxies -- took its first picture. As before, the subject was a cluster of stars, this time NGC 188 in Cepheus. The faint-object camera team reports that the telescope aimed within 4 arc seconds of its target point and that the camera performed very well. The star images had tiny, bright centers surrounded by larger, fainter halos of light, but even with the halos they were smaller than typical star images on photographs taken from Earth. NASA engineers are continuing to focus the telescope and work on several nagging problems with the navigation system. They expect that sometime during August they'll be able to bring under control the p73 jitters the spacecraft experiences every time it passes into or out of darkness on its 97-minute orbit. Once that is done, the detailed scientific check-out of the telescope can begin in earnest.

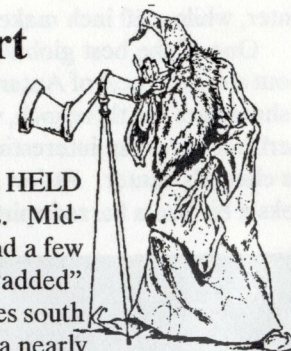
CENTER OF THE MILKY WAY

Hundreds of astronomers headed to Albuquerque, New Mexico, this past week for the summer meeting of the American Astronomical Society. Among other things, they learned that the center of the Milky Way galaxy has been pinpointed with much better precision than ever before. An astronomer at Northwestern University in Illinois presented convincing evidence that a compact, very powerful radio emitter is the actual galactic nucleus. It goes by the rather prosaic name Sagittarius A-star. The region is invisible to our eyes and to optical telescopes because of intervening clouds of obscuring dust.

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, 12023 PARKER PLZ #105 OMAHA, NE 68154 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 PARTY WILL BE HELD ON FRIDAY, JULY 20TH AT THE ATLAS SITE. Mid-summer is prime time for viewing globular clusters and a few left-over galaxies. In Draco is the fairly bright "added" Messier object, M102 (NGC5866), located 3.25 degrees south and 2.5 degrees west of Iota Draconis. This galaxy is a nearly edge-on spiral that appears as a small faint fuzzy oval in a three inch. Larger instruments will make the ends seem pointed and will make the nuclear region stand out, but not much other detail is visible. A somewhat fainter but no less interesting galaxy is NGC 6503, located 1.2 degrees south and 2.6 west of Phi Draconis. A four inch aperture will show it as a faint fuzzy streak of light, with larger instruments revealing its brighter center and some mottling in the outer haze. 5.1 degrees east and 3/4 north of Zeta Draconis is the bright planetary nebula NGC 6543. Visible in fairly small instruments as a faint fuzzy star, this object has a wonderful bluish color when viewed in six inch or larger apertures. At high power in a ten inch, this object looks like a fuzzy bluish oval with a very faint central star and some possible irregular outer haze.

Of course, the highlight of summer globular clusters is M13, located 2.5 degrees south and 1/3 degree west of Eta Herculis. Under good conditions, this globular is visible to the unaided eye, but at least a four inch instrument is needed to show many of its stars. In moderate to large apertures, this object is glorious, with thousands of faint stars crowding into a medium power field of view. Another fine globular is M92, located three degrees south and 3.5 degrees west of Iota Herculis. A six inch will show many of its stars while an eight resolves it fairly well, although it is somewhat more compressed than M13.

On the west side of the Milky Way are two interesting large open clusters. IC 4665 can be found about a degree north and half a degree east of Beta Ophiuchi, and is best seen in binoculars or rich-field telescopes. It consists of a very large group of 25 fairly bright stars, and is roughly circular with a rich background of faint stars filling the field. The second cluster, IC 4756, can be found about four degrees west and 1.5 degrees north of Theta Serpentes. This group is a good one for small wide-field instruments, and appears as a rich and slightly oval group of stars. A rich background and some vague dark nebulosity are visible in an eight or ten inch aperture.

If you look about a degree west of the star 30 Ophiuchi, you will find one of the better small globular star clusters, M10. A six inch at high power will begin to show some of the stars on the edges, while a 10 inch resolves it very well. In the same region is another good "small" globular, M12, located four degrees east and four south of Lambda Ophiuchi. An eight inch aperture resolves it except for the very