



THE *Prairie*
Astronomer

In Scutum is probably the most spectacular open star cluster in the northern sky, M11, the great Wild Duck cluster, located 1.5 degrees west and a half south of Eta Scuti. Small instruments show it as a moderate sized fuzzy fan of light with some stars visible at high power. The view through anything p73 larger than 4" will be breathtaking, with over 100 stars being easily seen. The cluster tends to lose its triangular shape in larger instruments as faint outlying cluster members and background stars become more numerous.

A Horrorscope For Planetarians *Part One*

Aries Expect a great surprize this month. It will either be dismemberment or a large cash prize.

Taurus Your neighbors are constantly watching you. Your church's congregation is considering revoking your membership. Your friends doubt your sanity. Your wife is planning to take the kids and go live with her mother. Your employer is reevaluating your abilities. The police are following you.

Gemini Commit your favorite Taurus to an institution. He has been beset with paranoia.

The Prairie Astronomer
c/o The Prairie Astronomy Club, Inc.

P.O. Box 80553

Lincoln, NE 68501

First Class Mail

90046AB 91/09 F 08-90/07
EARL MOSER
HICKMAN NE 68372

Next Meeting July 31, 1990

Special Meeting Notice!

A corporation, PDP, Inc., has asked the Prairie Astronomy Club to consider granting an option to them to lease Atlas Site for purposes of "disposal of approved materials."

The club's Executive Committee has met to discuss the proposal made by PDP, and will present both the proposal and the committee's recommendations to the full membership at the regular meeting, Tuesday evening, July 31, at 7:30 p.m.

All members are urged to attend!

Congratulation... It's a Girl!

Jake and Sheila Winemiller have a new family member, Hannah Mary Winemiller, born July 8, at 4:03 p.m. Now her older brother Jack will have to give up being the youngest PAC club member!

President's Message

by Ron Debus

Our observing site now has an out-house. Club member Dave Kipel built the house, hauled it to the site, and with the help of Steve Bornemeier, Earl Moser, my nephew from Michigan Jeff Newman, and myself, set the house on the shaft north of the pad. Special thanks goes to Dave for taking the time to do a tremendous job!

I've also put more 'keep out' signs around the pad and on the buildings. The next step is to get our families to the site, and then eventually name it. We have discussed the idea of naming the site more than once, but the idea was laid to rest both times. Perhaps we should again consider it. I have one or two names in mind, and I know others have been suggested. Eventually I feel we will have a very nice park at the site.

On August 18th we will have the annual club picnic and star party. The picnic will be at Hyde Observatory and then we will caravan down to the site, as we have done in the past. The picnic is pot-luck and be sure to bring your own plates and silverware (and your families!). At last years picnic we had only 17 people, so this year we need a better turn out! If the sky is clear and we don't have a moon we might end our outing with the Persied and Cygnus meteor shower.

Twice now, when I've scanned the sky with binoculars at the party, fire-balls have broken the field of view, so that you could actually see the flames. I can't help but think this is not such a rare event. Has anyone else seen fireballs when binocular viewing? I'd like to hear from you. It's something I know I won't soon forget.

I hope to see all of you at the next meeting. Let's have a good turn out! Thanks for listening.

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 THE PRAIRIE ASTRONOMY CLUB'S ANNUAL PICNIC AND STAR PARTY, SATURDAY, AUGUST 18TH. THE PICNIC BEGINS AROUND 5:00 PM AT HYDE OBSERVATORY, WITH THE STAR PARTY BEING HELD LATER AT THE ATLAS SITE. The summer Milky Way is highest now and can be the source for hours of observing pleasure. Start your viewing with a pair of beautiful open star clusters, M6 and M7. M7 can be seen with the unaided eye about four degrees east and 2.5 degrees north of Upsilon Scorpii as a faint fuzzy spot of light. Binoculars will show a tight grouping of stars, while moderate sized instruments will bring out a rich background behind the 15 or 20 cluster members. M6 is a bit easier to see with the naked eye, and is rich target for telescope users. Located about five degrees north and one east of Lambda Scorpii, this object is beautiful in any aperture over two inches, with the stars seeming to outline the shape of a butterfly.

In Sagittarius are a number of interesting clusters and nebulae. M8, the Lagoon Nebula, is an easy naked eye object that can be found about a degree south-east of 4 Sagittarii. Binoculars will show it as a fuzzy ball between two faint stars, while small telescopes will reveal a small open cluster next to the fuzzy ball (NGC 6530). Six or eight inch apertures will reveal some faint detail in the form of an arc next to the main nebulosity, while large instruments equipped with the Lumicon nebular filters will make the object look a lot like its photograph. Just north of M8 is the faint but interesting nebula M20, the Trifid Nebula. Small telescopes have a rough time with this object unless very low power is used. A good eight inch Newtonian will show the three dark lanes vaguely with averted vision, with nebular filters not helping much as when used on M8. Some distance to the east is the bright globular star cluster M22, located 1/2 degree east of 24 Sagittarii. Easily seen in binoculars, this cluster shows some stars even in a three inch, with larger instruments making this object one of the best globulars in the sky. While in the area, don't forget to look at the small Sagittarius star cloud, M24, north of Mu Sagittarii. It is an excellent object for binoculars or rich field instruments, with some dark nebulosity and a small embedded cluster being visible near one end.

M17 is an interesting diffuse nebula located five degrees north and 1.75 degrees east of Mu Sagittarii. Small telescopes generally show this object as a faint cigar-shaped fuzzy patch with a puff of light on the west end. Larger instruments will reveal a wealth of detail in and around the main nebula. Some distance to the north is the nebulous cluster m16, located 2.5 degrees west and 3/4 north of Gamma Scuti. The main group of stars is not terribly interesting, but observers with six inch or larger apertures may notice a haze overlying the group. When the Lumicon OIII filter is used, some interesting dark detail becomes visible, especially near the center and along one edge.

