

THE SPECTRUM

THE BUFFALO ASTRONOMICAL ASSOCIATION

FEBRUARY 1963

B.A.A. MEETS FEB. 8

The February meeting of the B.A.A. will be held on Friday the 8th at 7:45 P.M. in the Buffalo Museum of Science. The program will consist of a panel discussion on eyepieces, viewfinders, and other accessories for the telescope. Ron Clippinger will be the moderator and on the panel will be: Thad Toporczyk, Fred Flederbach, and Lou reinagel.

This will be followed by a film entitled "Eyes to the Sky", produced by Tinsley Laboratories and dealing with the construction of large, professionally made telescopes.

The meeting will be followed by an informal social period and, possibly, observing with the museum's 8" telescope.

Star charts and data on the constellation, "Auriga", which was discussed in January, will be available at this meeting for members to take home.

ELEMENTARY STUDY GROUP

The Elementary Study Group which meets the 1st and 3rd Thursdays at 8:00 P.M. in the Science Museum, is currently studying variable stars and double stars. If you wish to learn more about these subjects you are invited to attend.

ADVANCED STUDY GROUP

On February 16th at 2:00 the Advanced Study Group will meet to talk over the subject under study for the March meeting. The talk will be given by John Lawrence and will be based on Lecture Nee 3 of the Millman Radio Lecture Series.

OBSERVATORY NEWS

We are happy to announce that through the efforts of Lou Reinagel the B.A.A. has been given a 16" (outside diameter) tube for our telescope by the Linde Air Corp. We are very grateful for this gift which would otherwise be a fairly expensive item for us.

The Observatory Committee has been busy since our last meeting and has adjusted the dome drive so the the dome now makes a 360degree turn without skipping.

INCIDENTAL INTELLIGENCE

Students at Rosary Hill College in Amherst have just completed the construction of a 8" telescope. The B.A.A. has sent congratulations to this group and has invited them to attend our next meeting.

NUGGETS DEPARTMENT

A paper entitled "Daylight Visibility of Stars Through a long Shaft" shows that there is no experimental or theoretical justification for the commonly-held belief that bright stars can be seen in daylight by looking up a long chimney or well-shaft. Practical tests in which observers have looked for stars have all given negative results.

If such an effect exists, it must have either a physical or physiological explanation. The only acceptable physical explanation would be that the contrast between star and sky is increased by a lowering of sky brightness as seen through the chimney. Photometric comparisons of Zenith sky brightness measured inside and outside a 157-foot chimney showed no significant difference, so that the

physical explanation is untenable. A physiological explanation would be more attractive: the shielding of parts of the retina might be expected to result in greater dark-adaptation and contrast appreciation. However, laboratory tests show that contrast sensitivity is impaired when the test field consists of a small luminous area in the middle of a large dark surround and that a considerable lowering of the contrast threshold results from increasing the luminance of the surround until it approximates to that of the test field. Thus the physiological explanation would be incompatible with these tests. Everything indicates that the belief in the daylight visibility of stars through a long shaft is without foundation.

(Submitted by Paul Redding)

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