

THE SPECTRUM

BUFFALO ASTRONOMICAL ASSOCIATION INC.
BUFFALO MUSEUM OF SCIENCE
HUMBOLDT PARKWAY
BUFFALO NEW YORK 14211

MARCH 1970

MARCH MEETING: For our meeting on March 13, 1970 (8:00 PM, EST) we welcome to Buffalo a well-known German astronomer, Dr. W. D. Heintz. Dr. Heintz is associated with the Munich Observatory and currently is Visiting Astronomer at the Sproul Observatory, Swarthmore, Pa. His specialties include visual observations of the planet Mars and Binary Stars; his trip to Buffalo is co-sponsored by the State University College at Buffalo, the Buffalo Astronomical Association, and the Museum's Kellogg Observatory. On Thursday, March 12, Dr. Heintz will give a lecture entitled "Visual Binary Stars and Stellar Evolution Effects" at 8 PM, EST, in Room 213, New Science Building, State University College, 1300 Elmwood Ave.; our members are cordially invited to this lecture. The following evening Dr. Heintz will speak to our group on "Astronomical Observations of Mars." Both of these lectures promise to be exciting and informative, and we sincerely hope that our members and friends will make an effort to attend them. We extend our warmest welcome to DR. W. D. HEINTZ!

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* ASTROPHOTOGRAPHY EXHIBIT ENDS ON A SOUR NOTE *

Our first exhibit of astronomical photographs ended with nearly all color prints stolen by "persons unknown." It is unfortunate that "one rotten egg" usually spoils it for the rest. Thievery of, and vandalism to museum exhibits are, sad to say, rather common these days. No sooner was the Rochester Planetarium open to the public when a large number of microphones in the seats were torn out; no sooner had our museum installed a multi-media exhibit when display photographs disappeared; etc.; We only hope that those members who lost photographs in this exhibit can look at this loss with the same kind of philosophy expressed by Walt Whyman: "First, my regrets on the loss of a part of the astronomical exhibit ... as my daughter, an amateur artist, said when I expressed the hope that nobody made off with any of her pictures while on display, 'If anybody stole one of my paintings, I'd feel flattered by their display of good judgement' - so, that's the way I'm going to look at it."

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* NOVA SERPENTIS 1970 *

A nova was discovered on February 13, 1970, by M. Honda; the position of this nova is: RA 18h28.2m, Decl. +2° 40' in Serpens Cauda, near the border of Ophiuchus; according to latest information the nova is steadily decreasing in brightness. The following visual magnitudes were available: Feb. 13.8 = 7.0; Feb. 15.8 = 5.0; Feb. 18.4 = 4.2; Feb. 20.4 = 4.6; Feb. 21.4 = 4.9; more at the March meeting.

* REPORT ON THE 107-inch REFLECTOR * (From I.A.U. Circular No. 2209)

Dr. Harlan J. Smith, Director of the McDonald Observatory, University of Texas, communicates the following: "In view of the highly exaggerated and incorrect news stories of grave damage to the 107-inch McDonald reflector, a prompt summary of the facts may be of interest to the astronomical community. Shortly before ... midnight Feb. 5 ... a newly-hired employee fired seven point-blank shots into the front surface of the fused silica primary mirror, using a 9-mm pistol apparently brought with him from his previous home in the north. He has been committed by local authorities to a state mental institution, on grounds of insanity. The harm suffered by the mirror from his bullets and his several preliminary blows with a hammer was extraordinarily small. The damage is limited to small craters about 3 to 5 cm in radius, which reduce the light collecting efficiency by about 1% and introduce a very small amount of diffraction. Surface and Foucault examinations by Mr. Donald Davidson and Dr. Robert Tull, the opticians responsible for producing the mirror, show that there is no change in figure. Astronomical observations of all types are essentially unimpaired by this tragic episode; the telescope resumed its observing program the following night, producing some of the best photographs (of quasar fields) so far obtained with this instrument in its first year of use."

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COMET BENNETT (1969 i): This comet will rapidly move into the northern hemisphere sky toward the end of March. It will pass from Aquarius into Pegasus around March 25/26 when its magnitude will be about 1.6; we hope to have more information at the March meeting; preliminary positions are as follows: March 25, RA= 22h 06 m, Decl.= -2° 50' (1.6^m); March 30, RA= 22h 14m, Decl.= +12° 36' (2.0^m); Apr. 4, RA= 22h 28m, Decl.= +26° 27' (2.4^m). Check March SKY AND TELESCOPE for better positions.

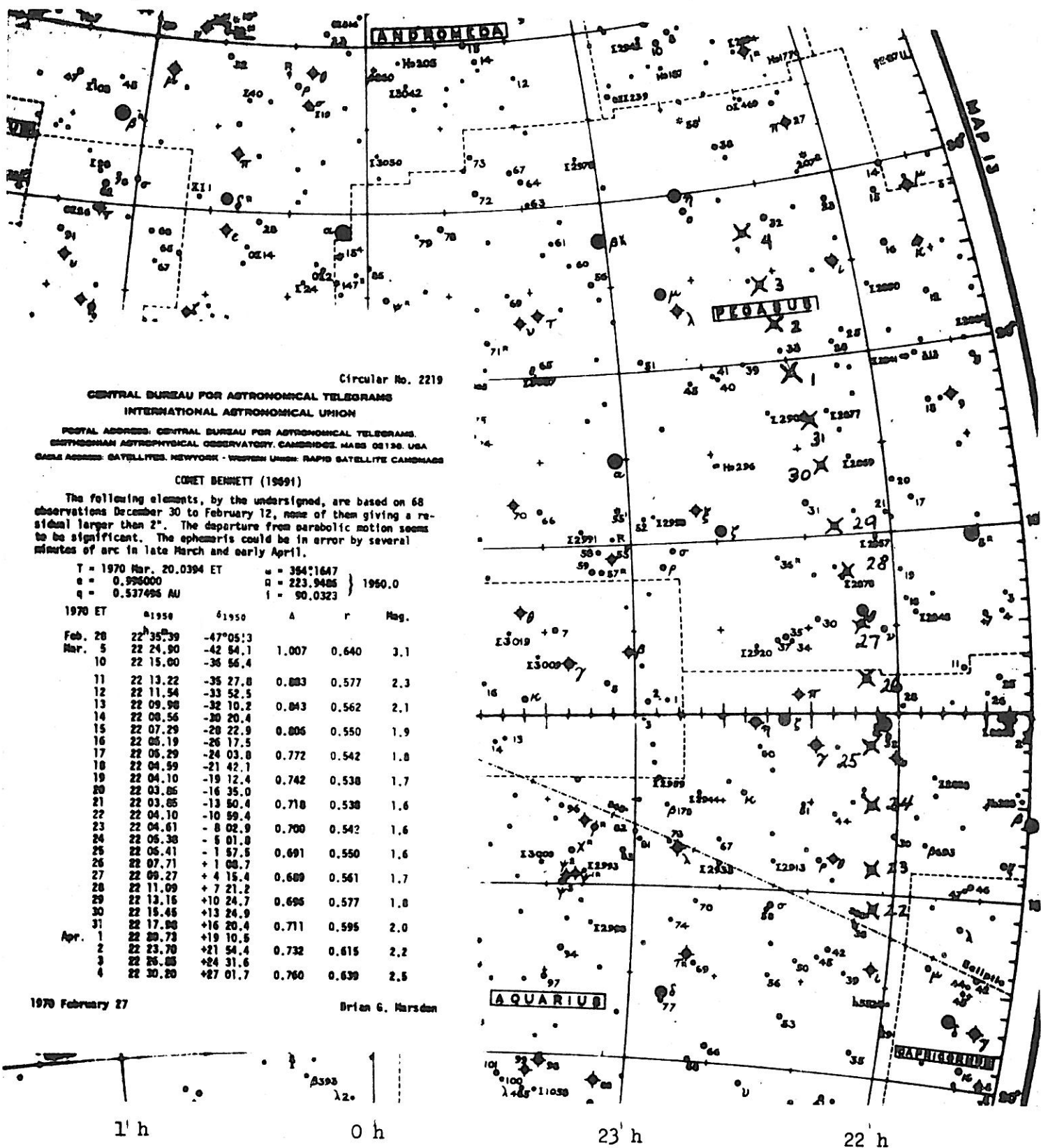
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F I R S T C L A S S

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Plot of comet Bennett (1969 i) for March 22 to April 4, 1970, on maps 13/14 of Norton's Star Atlas. Special insert, B.A.A. SPECTRUM, March 1970.

