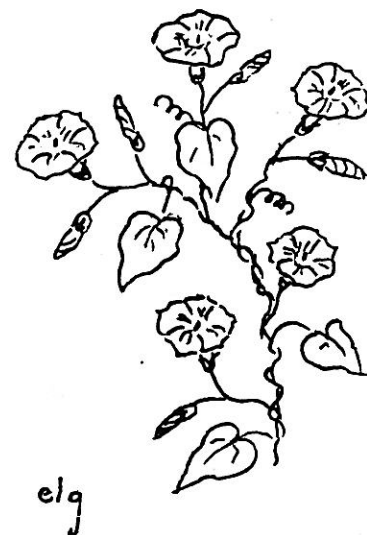


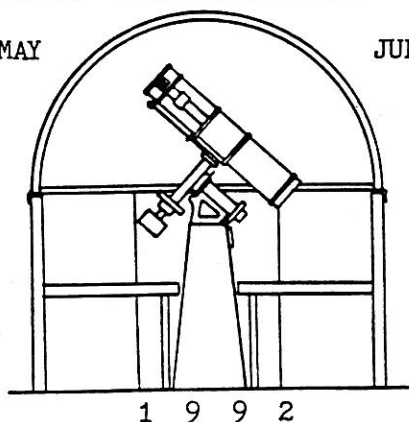
The Spectrum



elg

MAY

JUNE



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BUFFALO ASTRONOMICAL ASSOCIATION, Inc.

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The telephone at Beaver Meadow is for emergency use at NO COST. For domestic calls, a token fee of 50¢ for the first three(3) minutes and 10¢ per minute thereafter. Please abide by this rule. THANK YOU! (716) 457 3104 **

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MEETING NOTICES

MAY MEETING: The May meeting is our annual DINNER Meeting. It will be held at the LORD AMERST 5050 Main Street next to the I-290 and Route 5. Our meeting will be on May 8th beginning at 7:30 PM EDT. An open cash bar will be from 6:30 followed by the Buffet. Unfortunately our guest speaker for the evening will not be here so we will hear a talk by Bill Smith and Dan Marcus on their trip down under in Australia on the Comet Halley with photos they took.

JUNE MEETING: Our annual business meeting will host Charles Fassel from the Niagara Falls Centre of the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada. His paper will be, "NIAGARA CENTRE at WORK, Eh" This will be followed by our usual coffee and donuts, often referred to as refreshments. BUT- lets not forget to give Charlie a great big welcome.....

Elections for President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer are also on the agenda. Please be present to cast your vote!!!

"SPECTRUM" DEADLINE

The deadline for the JULY-AUGUST (SUMMER) issue of the "Spectrum" is JUNE 12, 1992. Be sure all articles are in by this date as the "Spectrum" has to be out NO LATER than the following week!

REMEMBER - STAR PARTIES!!!

For SALE

Anyone interested in a battery powered SEXTANT of Army quality, call or see Rowland Rupp at 831 1842.

Schedule of Observatory Events:

- May 2 Beaver Meadow Open House: 10AM till 5pm and dusk till 10pm we will be doing our usual public daytime activities followed by Public Night. Could use help with computers, telescopes, and photos. Come out and use our Solar Filter.
- May 16 Public Night, The Nature Company is having an outing to the Observatory. If clear, we will need help.
- June 6 Noon till 10pm. **FIX UP DAY AT THE OBSERVATORY!** We need help cleaning up, sorting magazines, and fixing electrical outlets. This will be followed by public night.
- June 14 Partial Lunar Eclipse. If I can find volunteers to do a public night, we can open the Observatory to the Public. Please let me know if you wish to do this, and I will get it in gusto.
- June 20 Public Night
- June 27 Star Party: Rain or shine at home of Larry Carlino, 7118 Kinne Road, Lockport. Tel 433-3432. Time: Sunset till 1:00 AM. Larry would like to invite you to come check out his

dark skies with his 22.5" scope. If you are wondering why the club is trying to purchase a bigger scope here is the chance to try one out and see for yourself what it is like to view through one. His 6" refractor gives impressive views of the Planets. Larry is very knowledgeable about all types of scopes and accessories so if you would like some help with using your equipment, bring it along!

Star Parties: Please let me know soon if you are having a star party! For those who don't know what a star party is all about, here it is. Our star parties are informal affairs, and are held Rain or Shine. We bring our scopes and computers to someone's house, and have fun doing astronomy. The more toys you bring, the more fun everyone has! There is always someone around to show you a new way to use your equipment. You can see if that \$200 field flattener works on your \$50 scope! They can range from a "Bring a dish" supper to late night viewing snack party. These events are held on non public night weekends. They can be Friday or Saturday nights (or days too). I usually suggest that they be held rain or shine. This avoids any confusion as to when the party is going to happen, but this is up to you.

Computer: We are still looking for parts. We have some, but we can always use spares in case something breaks. we are looking for:

- Memory SIMMS/CHIPS
- Hard drives
- Floppy Drives 5.25/3.5 high or low density
- Modems
- Power Supplies
- Vidio Cards
- Monitors
- Serial/Parallel and controller cards
- Mother Boards
- Programs

These can be old parts you have lying around from when you upgraded, or had one die an untimely death. These Donations are **TAX DEDUCTIBLE**. So ask around, you might be

surprised at what is available.

I would like to thank all those who helped make the Telescope/Computer Clinic a success at the Buffalo Museum of Science. My special thanks to Dave Sepulveda, Lynn and Wade Sigurdson, and Jack Empson for letting the public paw at their computers. Thanks also goes to Marilou Babak, Dave Bull, Joe Drabek, Dave Fliss, Bob Hughes, Bruce Newman, Tom Nigrelli, Joe Orzechowski, Bob & Brian Rzoska, Joel Stuckey, Luann Szucs, and Eugene Witkowski, for their help with the Solar Observing, Telescope answers, and general crowd control! Please excuse me if I left your name out, it was so busy I know I didn't get a chance to see everyone, much less talk to you all!

Daniel R Marcus



COMPUTER PROGRAMS

More and more club members either have computers or access to them. Undoubtedly there are quite a few programs that people have bought or developed themselves.

Commercial programs are often expensive. It would be nice to try a program before buying. If we had a catalog of who had what and perhaps a short note from that person on how they liked the program, did they find it useful and was it a good value then others could contact them for a tryout. It's also a great way to get to know other members better!

Certain programs can be copies and distributed freely (home written and some shareware) while most commercial programs rely on the integrity of the purchaser not to give away free copies. To each his own!

I will volunteer to make such a catalog of BAA member programs. A copy of this list will be distributed at meetings and on file in the observatory.

Everyone is encouraged to send me their program titles, machine requirements and impressions. This can be a wonderful opportunity to try different programs, start a new project and learn more about astronomy. If one is unfamiliar with computers this is a good way of getting a hands-on introduction.

Send to: Bill Smith 184 Creek Rd Jamestown, NY 14701 664-0841



Bill Smith

MEMBERSHIP CORNER

The 1991/92 Membership Directory was distributed at the March and April general meetings. My thanks to Bill Smith, who came to my rescue. Bill was kind enough to take the computer disk file and compose/print/collate this year's directory. If you find any information in the directory that is not current, please drop me a line and I will correct it in our computer file.

Speaking of membership, this year has found about a 25% decrease in BAA members. We've even had some past officers in the club who have chosen not to join us this year. Where are all these former members? There are a number in the club that think it's high time that maybe we should rethink our charter, meeting format, reason for being, etc. There has to be a reason why we are not attracting/keeping our membership.

Month after month, we have little or no observation/general interest reports. Month after month the same small group of people are the only contributors to the meetings. Month after month we spread ourselves all over the lecture hall so no one gets to know the person 10 seats away. When was the last time you introduced yourself to a new member? There's no excitement, no spontaneity, hardly any learning going on. This club needs a kick in the behind. Look around... who contributes? We can only be an association that's as good as the people in it. When was the last time YOU contributed? Harsh words that many don't want to hear, but sadly I don't think there are many who can argue the point that so few contribute to so many.

We've got a number of projects currently in the works (a new telescope fund to get us into the 1990's; an avid group trying to put us into the computer age; the two year old equatorial mount that still hasn't been installed at Beaver Meadow). Is there anything YOU can do to help out? Three people were out at Beaver Meadow last September for the fix up, paint up day. What kind of support is that? How many different people help out with Public Nights? You don't have to be Carl Sagan to do a Public Night!

Let's put some LIFE into what has been referred to as the "old man's club". Look around...where are the young(er) people? Don't sit back in your chair in N213 while everything goes stale and watch while we fade away. This club has a long and prosperous heritage that can only continue if we ALL put some effort into it. I'm getting tired of the same old stuff, aren't you?



Bruce Newman

SPY and TELL

On March 9th, Gene Witkowski paddled his kayak out to the ice boom and stood on top of it and took a most interesting picture of the ice boom and surroundings. Gene is excited about his purchase of a CCD camera and monitor with which he hopes to do some experimentation.

Fred Price has been working for three years on his new book, The Planet Observer's Handbook. It will be completed and in the hands of Cambridge University Press by June.

Bill Smith spent 51 hours, March 10-13, in Paris, where he was sent on business to the Valeo plant, the largest automotive parts manufacturers in the world (the company has a plant in Jamestown where Bill is employed). In his free moments he used 6 hours of his time walking about the city taking in the sights. He was deeply impressed by the Science Museum with the great depth of its programs and its many staff demonstrations. The Planetarium was spectacular, and he found both institutions to be more remarkable than the Eiffel Tower. However, he was stunned to find that a can of Coke at the hotel cost \$3.50.

Tom Nigrelli, who is a runner, has been re-elected president of the Buffalo Philharmonic Athletic Club, the oldest running club in the area, having been organized in 1968.

Jack Mack had a bit of a disturbing pain in his chest, so he, wisely, paid his doctor a visit, and after a recommended stress test, he found that all is well and his heart is fine. Good news!

Steve Kramer put in a new furnace in his home in January, as the old one just up and quit. The new furnace is nice and quiet and has kept the Kramers cozy and warm through winter's chill.

On March 25th, Irene Rupp attended a board meeting in Hamburg, of the Western New York Genealogical Society of which she is the recording secretary. At the end of March, Irene and a friend went visiting in Connecticut and came home by way of Binghamton where they represented Western New York at a New York State Council of Genealogical Organizations. All societies and libraries and anyone interested in genealogy were invited to attend.

Steve and Marilyn Kramer went to Philadelphia for the April 2nd Bicentennial of the United States Mint. The first director of the Mint was David Rittenhouse, the famous astronomer and clockmaker. Steve has given us a couple lectures about him and says that if you're looking for an honest person for your mint, choose an astronomer. (Isaac Newton was a mint director.) Steve also fixed some loose screws in the famous "Rittenhouse Orrery."

A friend of Rowland Rupp brought a computer disk to Rowland and he made a copy and used it on a computer at work, and when he got home he put it in his computer and got the virus from it (virus name is "Stone"), but he has recovered and appears to be cured.

On the MacNeil/Lehrer News Hour of March 4th, a section was devoted to cosmic hazards from space, and Dr. Clark Chapman was a participant on the program as he is an authority on the subject. He has co-authored a very successful book, Cosmic Catastrophes, with another noted astronomer Dr. David Morrison. Clark was part of a five-person U.S. delegation to a conference in St. Petersburg, Russia, in October 1991, to discuss the asteroid hazard situation, and has been placed on a Congressional Committee to investigate the problem. He is the son of distinguished former BAA member, the late Dr. Seville Chapman and his widow, Mary.

On the morning of March 28th, Bob Hughes made radio contact with the space shuttle Atlantis, which had four radio operators on board. He talked briefly to a crew member from the U.S. Naval Academy. It was an exciting few minutes for Bob; an experience he will enjoy remembering.

A brief article on Darwin Christy and his collection of around 300 old cigar boxes appeared in the April 5th Magazine Section of the Buffalo News, under Parting Shots. It mentioned various brands in his possession from years gone by, part of which he inherited from his father and father-

in-law. Most boxes are filled with everything from screws to fishing hooks, and all are cataloged and recorded on his computer. Darwin gave up smoking 28 years ago. Since the write-up in the paper, the Christys have been deluged with calls from people who want to get rid of their old cigar boxes.

Edith L. Geiger

ASTRONOMICAL HAPPENINGS

- MAY 1 - Jupiter stationary
Phi Bootid meteor shower
- MAY 2 - NEW MOON
- MAY 3 - Omega Scorpiid meteor shower
- MAY 4 - Eta Aquarid meteor shower ****
- MAY 8 - Moon at perigee (369,586 km)
- MAY 9 - FIRST QUARTER MOON
- MAY 10 - conjunction of Jupiter & Moon
On this date the Sun will leave Aries and enter Taurus
- MAY 11 - Pluto at opposition
- MAY 15 - O Cetid meteor shower (daytime)
- MAY 16 - FULL (FLOWER) MOON
- MAY 17 - Zeta Herculd meteor shower
- MAY 20 - conjunction of Uranus & Moon
conjunction of Neptune & Moon - This event will be visible as an occultation in central Asia.
- MAY 23 - Moon at apogee (404,320 km)
conjunction of Saturn & Moon
- MAY 24 - LAST QUARTER MOON
- MAY 28 - conjunction of Mars & Moon
Saturn stationary
- MAY 30 - Eta Pegasid meteor shower
- MAY 31 - Mercury at superior conjunction
NEW MOON
-
- JUNE 3 - Tau Herclid meteor shower
- JUNE 4 - Moon at perigee (365,329 km)
- JUNE 5 - Chi Scorpiid meteor shower
- JUNE 7 - Arietid meteor shower (daytime)
conjunction of Jupiter & Moon
Ceres stationary
FIRST QUARTER MOON
- JUNE 8 - Librid meteor shower
- JUNE 9 - Zeta Perseid meteor shower
Alpha Scorpiid meteor shower
- JUNE 10 - JUNE Aquarid meteor shower
- JUNE 11 - Sagittarid meteor shower
- JUNE 13 - Venus in superior conjunction
Omicron Ophiuchid meteor shower
- JUNE 14 - FULL (STRAWBERRY) MOON
Lyrid meteor shower
- JUNE 16 - conjunction of Uranus & Moon
conjunction of Neptune & Moon - This event will be visible as an occultation east of North America, south of Greenland, Iceland and the British Isles.
- JUNE 18 - Pallas at opposition
- JUNE 19 - conjunction of Saturn & Moon
Moon at apogee (405,130 km)
The Sun will pass from Taurus and enter Gemini.
- JUNE 20 - Ophiuchid meteor shower
- JUNE 21 - Our star, the Sun, will reach its most northern point, thus beginning the summer season.
- JUNE 23 - conjunction of Mercury & Pollux
LAST QUARTER MOON
- JUNE 25 - Vulpeculd meteor shower
- JUNE 26 - conjunction of Mars & Moon
Corvid meteor shower (new 1990)
- JUNE 28 - Beta Taurid meteor shower
Bootid meteor shower
Draconid meteor shower *****
- JUNE 30 - NEW MOON

A total eclipse will be visible in parts of South America and Africa. It will NOT be visible from the United States or Canada.

ZETA HERCULIDS

On May 17th this annual shower, though it has little significance, radiates from right ascension 16h 28m at declination +28°. They produce a yellowish tail as they rapidly pass into the upper atmosphere and are about 4th magnitude. It averages between 7 to 10 hourly over a period of 14 days. Though it is not a brilliant shower, it should prove interesting as they are not difficult to observe. What their relation is to another object is not known, such as a comet or broken asteroid.

ETA PEGASIDS

On May 30th, this meteor shower is located from right ascension 22h 00m at declination +28°. It is a variable shower with slow, short, 4th magnitude meteors and being of a reddish hue. The duration is only 24 hours with a peak performance of 15 hourly. They are not related to any comet of sorts and is not one of the best known showers, but they are easily observed in the short period they present themselves.

ALPHA SCORPIIDS

On June 9th an annual shower occurring from right ascension 16h 48m at declination -23°, is well visible with white 4th magnitude streaks. They are short and fast lasting 15 days but averaging only 5 hourly. Little is written about this shower, so much data is needed.

JUNE AQUARIDS

This is a shower which I have no data on what-so-ever. What the radiant is I do not know. The only thing I could find was that it is a very recent and active shower, perhaps from 1991. It is supposed to occur around the 10th of June. GOOD LUCK TO ALL YOU AVID OBSERVERS!!!

Darwin Christy



BOOK PREVIEW (NOT REVIEW!)

Books. Everyone has astronomy books of some sort. Libraries have books too but often not the ones I've found to be the most useful. These seem to be available from the specialty suppliers like Sky and Telescope's Book Faire, Astronomy Magazine or Willmann-Bell.

Books cost money and we want to be sure what we buy is what we can use. If you have a book you found enjoyable or useful then probably others would too. It might be a good idea for folks to bring in a book now and then which could be placed at the membership table so others could look it over for a few minutes before or after the meeting. Thus if one was considering buying a certain book, previewing it first would help make the right decision. Let's help spread the enlightenment of Astronomy!

Bill Smith



We are saddened by the passing of Lillian von Gerichten on March 22, 1992, at the age of 94. Her husband, Norman von Gerichten, preceded her in death many years ago. Lillian was, at one time, a cashier for the Erie County Water Authority. The hours spent in astronomy, music, nature, travel, and singing in the choir at the Westminster Presbyterian Church, of which she was a member, brought her great enjoyment. She was a longtime member of the BAA, until her health prevented her from attending our meetings. We have many pleasant memories of Lillian, and we send our sincere condolences to her family.

elg

The SAGA of the NFCAA

The NIAGARA FRONTIER COUNCIL of AMATEUR ASTRONOMICAL ASSOCIATIONS (NFCAA) had a stormy beginning. Day zero was January 5, 1968, give or take a few days. The place was the Buffalo Museum of Science and the occasion was a special Board meeting of the Buffalo Astronomical Association.

It was a real wintry evening. The wind was soughing around the eaves bringing us a lake effect blizzard from off of our friendly Lake Erie. Civic events and club meetings were being cancelled. Streets were blocked and traffic snarled. "If you don't have to go out, stay home." Yet here we were, THE INTREPID THREE. We were Ron Clippinger, our President; Dick Zygmunt, Secretary and myself a Board Member.

Ron waited a little in case there might be any late comers. But there were none, the sensible ones stayed home. This was a "panic" meeting. We had a club meeting coming up in about a week, and our scheduled speaker had had to cancel. Our program for the evenings was a blank sheet of paper.

We had had several emergency meetings like this through the years where we would need a speaker on short notice. Our usual procedure was to check what programs the Board Members could put on in a hurry. I offered a slide show on Observatories. Ron was our refractor man, having had much experience with the peculiarities of observing with a refractor and he could talk about that subject. Dick was our history buff and he could talk about the beginnings of things. I don't remember what talk we set up. I remember having given a talk on Observatories of Europe to the club at some time. This may have been the time.

With the emergency taken care of, we were free to proceed to plan the subsequent meetings. These meetings had been tentatively planned; for February, Fred Price had been scheduled to explain the new theory of water and life on the moon. For March, Orrin Christy was scheduled to explain the effects of sunspots on terrestrial radio communications. For April, by a very rare and fortunate coincidence the evening of our meeting (April 12th) coincided with a total eclipse of the moon, so we were to meet on the museum roof and view the eclipse through the Museum's 8-inch telescope and through several members' telescopes. In the event of clouds, we had arranged for Walt Whyman to show a set of eclipse slides.

At this point we had completed the work for which the meeting had been called. Dick fired up the Museum's coffee maker. Some thoughtful individual had brought in a bag of donuts. The meeting turned into a jam session. We mentioned going home to escape the storm, but our discussion became interesting and we forgot all about the weather.

The conversation soon came around to the subject of programming. Had we been overlooking some sources of programs? I said to the fellows, "Do you remember the joint meeting we had with the Rochester club some fifteen years ago?" They didn't remember. It was before their time in the club. "Tell us about it!" I explained that I had been the program chairman and was casting about for program ideas. I came across a nationwide listing of astronomical clubs in Sky & Telescope magazine. Any club could be listed by furnishing their club name and time and place of meetings and a telephone number of someone who could be reached for information. I noticed that there was a club in Rochester, NY so I called the number given. I asked the contact man if he thought the two clubs could have a joint meeting. He said it sounded good to him and he would ask some of the board members and get back to me. I got agreement from several of our board members and so I had the date for a regular Buffalo meeting night. This took care of one program and there was no conflict with the other club's night. The meeting was attended by about 15 members from Rochester and a few more from Buffalo. The speaker was from the University of Rochester speaking on Infrared Observing and Research.

I thought that the program was very interesting and informative. Several members had the same reaction. I said to the fellows, "Do you know what was wrong with that program?" "NO. What was wrong with the program?" The trouble, I said, was that we dropped it. In retrospect I can see that we should have had a joint meeting every year- maybe two. We could have alternated the meetings between the two cities, with the host club providing the program. I have been looking over Sky & Telescope again, looking over the nationwide club listings. There are about ten clubs within easy driving distance from Buffalo - a hundred miles or less. In each of these clubs there may be someone who has expertise on some branch of astronomy unfamiliar to many other area member clubs.

"Let's invite these clubs to Buffalo and get acquainted," suggested Dick. "The whole clubs?" I asked! "YES, the whole membership." I opposed that idea, saying that I was on the committee of a radio club that put on an annual meeting for other radio clubs and it was a big bash--And it didn't bring us any programs. I favored just inviting a few club officers. This was agreed to by the others. "Let's have it during the coming spring."

The more we discussed the idea the better it seemed. There were suggestions for agendas, but then it was decided not to make a lot of restrictions but to let some of these ideas develop at the meeting. Dick worked for a large firm with a bulletin facility. He said that they would print the invitations for us and mail them out to our address list. We all got together to put together wording for the invitations. We set the date for April 26, 1968, the last Friday evening in April. The storm had abated somewhat, the plows were out, and we left for home with a feeling of accomplishments.

The first meeting of the N.F.C.A.A. occurred on Friday evening, April 26, 1968 at the Buffalo Museum of Science. The attendees were:

HAMILTON, ONT. - Ken Chilton & Gordon Thede
 NIAGARA FALLS, ONT. - Bob Doran, Al Kindy & Hugh MacLean
 TORONTO, ONT. - B. Clark & D. Fitzgerald
 BUFFALO, NY. - Darwin Christy, Ron Clippinger, Edith Geiger, Ed & Olga Lindberg, M/M Paul Redding, Fred Price, Walt Whyman & Dick Zygmunt
 BUFFALO, NY (UB) - C. Crocker, Dick Howe & Lee Manchester
 CHEEKTOWAGA, NY - Dale Hankin & John Riggs
 ELMIRA-CORNING, NY - Bob Hartman, Dennis O'Connell & Tom Rose
 FINGER LAKES, NY - John & Marie Cain
 LOCKPORT, NY - Leroy Johnson & Sylvia Mosure
 ROCHESTER, NY - Ken & Trudie Brown & Ralph & Helen Dakin
 SYRACUSE, NY - William Minerd
 ERIE, PA (M-31) - M/M Stu Cadwallader & George Price

Ron Clippinger of Buffalo presided and Dick Zygmunt was the secretary. After a roll call of societies, each club was asked to have a spokesman describe the club, giving number of members, facilities available, special problems, etc. Bill Minerd of Syracuse had a pessimistic view, he said the Syracuse club meets in the University's Physics Building. There are often only 6 to 10 in attendance. Often there is no program, only a general discussion. He said that the club may soon be history. The Erie club said that they were small, sometimes getting speakers from the P.R. departments of local industries. Several societies noted that their biggest problem was procuring variety in programming.

A general discussion followed. It was agreed that the council could be very helpful. Sylvia Mosure of Lockport, suggested that perhaps two meetings per year would help program chairmen in planning programs. It was recommended that meetings be held on Saturday afternoons rather than evenings. Bob Doran proposed that each club appoint a delegate and an alternate to attend meetings. A meeting was tentatively set up for a Saturday in June. This was to take the shape of a workshop with members bringing sample slides of talks that they could give. The meeting was adjourned at 10:05 PM EST and coffee and donuts were served by Olga.

The workshop meeting of June occurred as planned. There is no space to give details here. But there were several sample talks given. Several clubs got speakers for some of their meetings. The Buffalo club obtained promises of talks by Ralph Dakin of Rochester on, "Tools of the Astronomer." George Keene of Rochester on "Astrophotography," and Marie Cain of the Geneva club on "William Brooks - Comet Seeker." The group set up the next meeting for November. The meeting continued to be held in April or May and November for the 24 years that the group has been in existence. This has been not a bad record for an idea that had its start in a beautiful Buffalo BLIZZARD.....



Ed Lindberg

BAA ANNALS

5 YEARS AGO - Buffalo State's Moot Hall was the scene of our May dinner meeting in 1987. Dr. James Orgren, of Buffalo State's Department of Geophysical Sciences, spoke on the

history of astronomy. (Not all of it, I'm sure.) In addition to covering our annual business at the June meeting, we heard from John Stull of the Physics Department at Alfred University.

There were no articles in the SPECTRUM, but there were observation reports by Fred Price, Carl Milazzo, Richard Jakiel and Adrienne Morris. James Dow, who was instrumental in reorganizing the club following World War II, was the subject of Edith Geiger's profile.

10 YEARS AGO - In May 1982 Dr. Thomas Noonan from SUNY Brockport spoke on "Black Holes". In June George Keene, the well known amateur astronomer from Rochester, was our speaker. His topic: "The Construction of a 20-inch Telescope and Observatory". This sounds like an appropriate topic for today in light of our current hopes to procure, if not build, a 20-inch telescope.

The SPECTRUM had an article by Ernst Both on "The Sungrazing Comets" and a profile by Edith Geiger of Klaus Baerwaldt. The Instrument Section and the Study Section were active in 1982. Ed Lindberg reported that the Instrument Section had tested Tristan Dilapo's 14-inch mirror. At the same meeting, Larry Carlino spoke on the advantages of large aperture telescopes that were then becoming available because of the new Dobsonian design.

Darwin Christy was editor of the SPECTRUM in 1982, just as he is today. Back then, before the universal availability of word processors, Darwin was known to introduce a few typos into our publication. For his critics he offered this: "We (I) publish something for everyone, and what some people look for, everyone finds—MISTAKES!!!!"

15 YEARS AGO - Dr. Orgren was our speaker in May 1977. (May must be his month.) His topic was "History of Planetariums on the Niagara Frontier". There was no speaker for June; we stuck to business then.

Bob Kirchgessner wrote an essay "Where Is Everybody? One Man's View of Space Intelligence". Bob weighed the pros and cons of other intelligences being out there, and voted PRO. Several fine astrophotos by the BAA's Tom Dessert appeared in this SPECTRUM. Tom developed (no pun intended) a process that allowed us to publish high quality reproductions of his fine photos. Larry Carlino was planning an astronomy course to be given at Beaver Meadow.

25 YEARS AGO - The BAA was host to the Northeast Region of the Astronomical League on May 12, 1967. It was a three day event, possibly the largest undertaking of the BAA ever, with the exception of building Beaver Meadow Observatory. In

addition to meetings at the Hotel Statler and at Newstead Observatory, there was a large gathering at Walter Semerau's solar observatory. Walter also was the speaker for the Saturday night meeting at the hotel. He so impressed one of the editors of Sky & Telescope that he later was asked to write an article for the magazine.

Rowland A. Rupp



MESSIER MARATHON 1992: THE 100 CLUB

The Marathon was a success with 100 of a possible 108 members seen! Seeing so many objects in one night gives one a feeling of the great diversity of types of objects and of the variety in each type. It helps to visualize the makeup of our galaxy like no other way can.

The forecasts were all doom and gloom but the weather took a sudden change for the better and the Marathon was a 'GO!' for Saturday March 28. A slight overall haze but clear except for high cirrus near the horizons, a bit breezy early but warmer, 22F low, than last year. Observing conditions around Buffalo change fast, it pays to call the star party host for current conditions.

Dan and Melissa Marcus, Joe Drabek and the author represented the BAA and Tom Bemus came from the Marshall Martz club. We used

two dobsonians, a 10" f/5.6 and 8" f/4, a 4.2" Astroscan and binoculars.

THE OBJECTS

We improved on the 1991 tally by 5. Additional NGC's were also picked up. Messier and his assistant Mechain were comet hunters in France and found 109 objects over 15 years that they catalogued so when they saw them they wouldn't think they were comets. Later, 5 were marked as errors by Messier. Further historical investigation by 1983 assigned objects to 3 of these and M91 is often identified as NGC 4548. Thus only M40 is not an object, leaving 108 sights to see.

We did get an earlier start in the evening this time and M31, M32 and M33 were picked up. M74 and M77 were missed again this year, imbedded in the horizon hugging cirrus. I won't say our preparation was better as we 'forgot' about M79 and M52 until late. M79 below Orion got swamped by the cirrus monster but M52 was rescued by Dan and Tom early in the morning in the skyglow of Jamestown.

Each observer selected an object to find and when found, announced it so the rest could take a turn to view.

Joe used his binoculars to easily identify over a dozen Messiers. Binoculars are neglected instruments and offer viewing without a lot of hassle - perfect when all you have is a few minutes. Held steadily on a tripod they are powerful. He remarked several times on the quality of the sky while I offered apologies for what I considered sub-par conditions! Certainly we had different references between Cheektowaga and Jamestown!

Tom Bemus was quite adept using the small Astroscan to pick up hard to find objects. Its very low power makes it act like its own finder. Joe commented several times that he's going to get one of these. The little Astroscan proved to be a Messier juggernaut. He cruised through Auriga, Canis Major, Scorpio and Sagittarius. Tom picked up M15 and M2 with it with the 2 day past last quarter Moon starting to rise and no naked eye stars dimmer than 2nd magnitude. Thanks Tom!

Dan worked the 10" locating the Ursa Major, Hercules, Lyra and Cygnus objects. All thought the 10" gave a much brighter, more detailed view than the 8"; much more so than what you'd think 2" more aperture should.

I used the 8" for Leo, the Realm of the Galaxies, Ophiuchus and Southern Sagittarius. Now mounted on a dobson mount it was delightful to use. Like Tom, I too got turned around by star patterns trying to see M6 and M7. Scorpio's tail was rising through the trees and when M7 cleared the tree I realized the truth. Viewing constellations at unfamiliar angles is a learning experience.

At 5 am the moon was rising and interfered with M55, M75, M72 and M73 which we missed. M30 rose with the sun and was impossible. Our eastern horizon is 8 to 15 degrees depending on which tree you looked at. We might have gotten a couple more with more horizon. Never underestimate the hindering effect of even slight moonlight on extended objects.

VISITORS

Laura Hayes and her 9 year old son Brian stopped to get their first look through a telescope. The 'oos' and 'wows' were catching as we veterans then started looking at objects with the curiosity we had in our own 'first view'. Brian liked the Orion nebula, the Whirlpool galaxy and Jupiter best. He spent some time just sweeping around with the 8" looking at the starfields that swept past. Being able to share the wonders of the sky is a delight that lasts with you. Make a resolution to show other first-timers the night sky - why you might become a BAA public night John Dobson!

MOST FUN OBJECT AWARD

M102 got the most fun object award. Fun meaning fun for all but Tom who spent 45 minutes trying to find it. Star fields can be confusing and if you start in the wrong direction it seems you can always convince yourself that the star patterns you see are the ones on the chart. Knowing the actual field of view of the finders and scope for each eyepiece help a lot but even experienced viewers get

humbled now and then. Tom really did have fun looking for it - we just had more fun watching him try. We awarded NGC 5907, a very elongated 1x11' galaxy near M102, the nicest new object award.

A NOTE ON FINDERS

The 'zero power' finders, TELRAD and the gunsight on the Astroscan, proved again to be quicker to use than the optical style. It can be confusing to go from charts to the optical finder even if the map is turned to match the finder view. Considering the price of finders the TELRAD is a bargain. If you never tried one, call someone that has one and try it out. Do it today.

LET'S TRY IT AGAIN

The intent beyond a good time and astronomical communion was to stimulate enthusiasm and imagination, hone observing skills and locating methods and greet the morning sun with eyes made more perceptive by knowledge and experience. I believe we extended our abilities, exploited our scopes and ourselves further and helped each other in tackling the challenges of new observation with confidence and success.

Group parties like this act as an incentive to extend the boundaries of one's observation and give some idea to the scale, number and diversity of objects. Let's try it again soon!

Bill Smith



WHAT DID I SEE?

Do you remember Buffalo's brief snowstorm, a sort of farewell to winter, that occurred Friday, March 27th? I heard about it, and the closing of the airport, while en route from Atlanta to Buffalo. Since the aircraft was diverted to Cincinnati, we had to turn toward the west from our normal south-north route — into the sunset. I couldn't see the sun at first because the nose of the aircraft must have been heading directly toward it. But I did see red wispy clouds near the horizon, a darkening sky above them and a solid layer of clouds below. I couldn't be sure if the sun was still visible or if it had already set.

Then the aircraft banked, turning more toward the south, bringing the sun into view. There it was, just on the horizon of clouds; perhaps 10% of the disk was already obscured. Those wispy clouds were now brushed across its face, emphasizing the limb serrations caused by atmospheric turbulence, present whenever the sun is near the horizon. It looked like a photograph glamourizing a commercial for an exotic vacation.

As I watched the sun sink I remembered a recent Sky & Telescope article about the "green flash". I recalled it could only be seen with an ideal horizon, preferably a flat one — like water. Could it be seen at 30,000 feet, with a horizon of solid clouds and through filmy light clouds as well? I strongly doubted it, but since the sun was sinking rapidly, and sunsets are always impressive, I certainly had no better way to spend the next minute or two than to watch.

At last the upper limb was about to disappear; I'm not sure if it was setting below the cloud layer or behind those light clouds just above it. Going, going — a turquoise flash — gone! Was it really a turquoise flash? — it lasted less than a second! Or was it at first a greenish flash that immediately changed toward blue? Or had I just anticipated it so much that I saw something that wasn't there at all? The moment after I saw it I wanted to confirm my observation, as one does when one first thinks he's glimpsed a faint object in his telescope. But that doesn't work for the green flash: when it's gone, it's gone. Still, I'm confident I saw that transient flash, anticipation notwithstanding.

When I finally got home I looked up the phenomenon in the February 1992 issue of Sky & Telescope (page 200). After reading it I have the impression the green flash is hard to see unless conditions, particularly the horizon, are just right. But I was encouraged to read that, theoretically, the green should give way to blue, although the blue is generally not seen because of atmospheric extinction. Perhaps at 30,000 feet and with a cloud layer for a horizon, this extinction is less, and the blue would appear after all. Incidentally, the appearance of the sun in the photograph accompanying the article looked very much like the sun I saw, except, of course, I didn't see the division of colors shown in the photograph.

I believe I saw the green flash, and a blue one as well. Is that possible, given my circumstance? If anyone has an opinion, observational or theoretical, for or against, I'd like to hear about it. But until I have strong evidence to the contrary, I saw the green flash!

Rowland A. Rupp

CHARLES LEANDER DOOLITTLE

An American Astronomer, Charles Leander Doolittle was born in Ontario, Indiana on November 12, 1843 and passed away on March 3, 1919.

He received his training in astronomy from Professor J. C. Watson at the University of Michigan. His college was delayed by his enlistment during the Civil War. Later it was interrupted by service with the United States Northern Boundary Commission along with Lewis Boss who was in charge of the astronomical observations. With the commission from 1873 through 1875, he assisted in the surveying of the northern border between the United States and Canada from Lake of the Woods to the Rocky Mountains. However, in 1874 he did graduate with the degree of Civil Engineer. During the twenty years following this great endeavor, he was made professor of mathematics and astronomy at Lehigh University. He remained there until 1895 when he accepted a position at the University of Pennsylvania in the same capacity. In 1896 the departments were separated whereas he became Flower Professor of Astronomy and first director of the Flower Observatory, remaining there until his retirement in 1912.

His principle work in the branch of astronomy was just basic or practical astronomy, on which subject he wrote an excellent textbook for use by advanced students. He was one of the first who systematically observed variations of latitudes upon the earth. His observations started way before Chandler's investigations of this phenomenon with a Zenith Telescope. The Zenith Telescope was discarded by the United States Coast and Geodetic Survey. It was purchased by the Lehigh University to instruct in engineering classes. He researched observations in this field beginning in 1876 and continued with little disruptions in the 35 year period. A heavy teaching schedule he carried and the small instrumental equipment of the Sayre Observatory put sharp limits on research programs. Being ambitious with perseverance and painstaking care, he achieved results of permanent scientific values. After much observing, he concluded that those early observations proved the evidence of a variation of latitude. At the Flower Observatory, at a later time, he came to the conclusion that such variations could be isolated from sources of systematic error only by making observations under a variety of instrumental conditions.

He procured a Reflex Zenith Tube which he made observations. With this instrument and a Zenith Telescope, he continued to make simultaneous observations for many years. They were used for the purpose of finding whether certain small changes in the latitude of a station were real or whether they were due to imperfections in instruments employed. Evidence still persisted and a whole series of observations procured, proved to be a contribution of the highest value in unraveling the tangled mass of evidence. It was found that these changes were indicted by the observations through both instruments.

Dr. Doolittle was professor emeritus in the University of Pennsylvania after 1912; treasurer of the Astronomical and Astrophysical Society of America from 1899 to 1905. After 1909 he was made a Vice President of the American Association for the Advancement of Science in 1893, also a curator of the American Philosophical Society.

Among some of the books which he authored are; "A Treatise on Practical Astronomy as Applied to Geodesy and Navigation" (1885), "Results of Observations with the Zenith Telescope of the Sayre Observatory from January 19, 1894 to August 19, 1895" (1901) and "Results of Observations with the Wharton Reflex Zenith Tube and the Zenith Telescope of the Flower Astronomical Observatory," in publications of the University of Pennsylvania, Astronomical Series (Vol. III, pt. 1, 1908).

On September 18, 1866 he married Martha Cloyse Farrand, his first wife who passed away in his first year at Bethlehem. He later married Helen Eugenia Wolle on May 5, 1882 of Bethlehem.

ERIC DOOLITTLE

An American Astronomer, the son of Charles & Martha, was born in Ontario, Indiana, July 26, 1869; died September 21, 1920.

A graduate of Lehigh University in 1891, he was made an instructor in astronomy there from 1891-92. He was an instructor at the University of Iowa from 1892-93. In 1896 he became an assistant professor in astronomy at the University of Pennsylvania and in 1912 became professor and director of the Flower Astronomical Observatory at the University, succeeding his father.

He was called to the University of Pennsylvania in 1897 to be an instructor in astronomy. His father placed him in charge of the new Brashear Eighteen-inch telescope. It was especially suited to the work he wanted, the study of double stars. With the great focal length, it was well adapted to use in micrometric work. He at once lead himself into the observations of double stars. Working through the night, he often caught but a short nap before time to start for class at the University, never slighting his class work being an enthusiastic and inspiring teacher. He had accumulated and published great masses of double star observations. So much so that his authority was so well recognized in this field that Burnham of Yerkes Observatory gave him the manuscript notes for the extension of the "General Catalogue of Double Stars." Without any assistance, Eric entered on cards all published double star data and publications.

His principle contributions to astronomy from the theoretical side, was a computation of the secular perturbations of the elements of the orbits of the four inner planets. Employing in this work was a method which was first fully developed by G. W. Hill and not hitherto applied in this connection. Minute errors in the motions of these bodies was outstanding but not fully accounted for by the disturbing gravitational pull of the known planets, but were verified by the new computation.

Seeking the most useful thing he could do during World War I, he spent much time studying to be a wireless operator. He was later called up by the United States Shipping Board Navigation School in Philadelphia to teach large numbers of men and to attend to details of organization and administration. The strain was so great, he broke down. He never fully recovered but he did return to his regular duties. With a strong tendency to overwork and with an unusual ability to use his time profitably, it was a pity that he had so much to do without assistance of clerical and financial help. His only diversion was to read the writings of Dickens.

He had extreme modesty and with self-affacement. He had a great gift for friendship, not only on complete modesty but of much consideration for others. Appreciations published after his death show in detail how much his friends really loved him. In 1902, he married Sara Bitler Halliwell of

Bethlehem. She was in full sympathy with him and his ideals and thereby, was willing to endure great sacrifices she had to make.

Darwin Christy

WHY A NEW AND BIGGER TELESCOPE FOR THE BAA?

For some time there has been talk of the BAA acquiring a larger telescope, a twenty-inch Newtonian, for the Beaver Meadow Observatory and appeals have been made for funds for its purchase. Assuming that the telescope is purchased and installed, what is the purpose of having it in addition to the present twelve-inch Newtonian and what use is going to be made of it?

Over the years since the twelve-inch was first installed I have not heard of any systematic program of observing being done with it either by individuals or collectively. We rarely, if ever, see observational reports in the Spectrum of work done with this instrument. In particular, as I wrote in an earlier Spectrum, I was appalled that the once-in-a-lifetime apparition of Mars of 1989-90 came and went without a single observational report, verbal or written, of this remarkable event being made by any BAA member (apart from my own observations) using the club's twelve-inch or any other telescope. Yet we continue to call ourselves an astronomical association!

At public nights the Beaver Meadow telescope serves as a sight-seeing sky show for the lay public who want to see for themselves "them things up there". I was told recently that the twenty-inch would show spiral arms in some galaxies so that the public would now see galaxies as they see them in textbook photographs. Apart from the fact that no telescope, however large, shows galaxies visually as they appear in photographs, I think that though this idea is cute, it is hardly a justification for such expense.

From what I have heard over the years the present telescope is used by BAA members for little else but enlightened star gazing and astrophotography. Don't misunderstand me - there is nothing wrong in these pursuits. What I am saying is that such a telescope deserves to have more constructive use made of it than sight-seeing or even astrophotography. The latter is a fine hobby but apart from the gratification that individual astrophotographers get from their efforts, what is being accomplished? Amateur-owned telescopes and cameras can never hope to compete with the big observatory instruments in this field. On the other hand, visual observation with amateur-sized instruments can and do yield useful results and astronomical data of real interest, often of scientific value. I think that this should be carefully considered by the BAA leadership now that a larger telescope is contemplated.

If and when this instrument is installed its use in visual observation should be encouraged in addition to sight-seeing and astrophotography. The latter is, after all, photography, NOT observation. Visual observation is hard work which is probably why many shy away from it but it is what we astronomers should be doing.

Even if long-term systematic programs are not carried out, there could be a log book kept in the observatory in which single observations can be recorded and signed and dated by the observer. Such observation can range all the way from a sketch of Jupiter's Great Red Spot to resolving difficult double stars. Observers should go with a definite program in mind rather than just looking at whatever takes their fancy on a particular evening. Even if only a small band of dedicated observers is involved, the observational log book will become a valuable record of work done with this telescope of real interest to future generations of BAA members. Observers will have a sense of having accomplished something. Presentations at general meetings might be based on results obtained with the telescope. Members reading of their fellow members' observations may be inspired to pursue special lines of observational work.

I emphasize again that I am not ridiculing casual star gazing, but if the BAA is going to invest a large sum of money in a telescope of the size contemplated, then I think that something more than just sightseeing should be done with it if we are to justify calling ourselves an astronomical association.

Let us make a New Year Resolution: that BAA telescope users grow out of the sight-seeing stage into real observers when they use the twelve-inch Beaver Meadow telescope and the twenty-inch when it comes along. Perhaps then we will no longer give anyone an excuse for calling us, as one of our own members did many years ago, a "Coffee and Doughnuts Club"!

F.W.Price.

The next issue of the "SPECTRUM" will contain Star Parties with Maps. Perhaps an article on a wobbling star and anything any member of the BAA will submit to be printed in the newsletter.

8

* The "SPECTRUM" *

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