

THE SPECTRUM

Volume 3 Issue 1

Winter Edition

January/February 2001



President's Column

Daniel Marcus

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BAA Dinner Insert

After the last Spectrum it seems the President needs a new calendar, good thing Alan and crew have designed on for this year. What you don't have one? TOO bad, check with Alan Friedman to see if any are left! Now that I have an up to date calendar that has the right dates for BAA events, here are the actual dates for the next board meeting! February 1, and April 5! As usual they are still held on the 1st Thursday of the even months at Buffalo State starting at 7:30pm! The next speakers committee meeting will be Thursday January 18 at 7:30 at Jack Mack's. As usual, if you have something for the Board to act on, please submit it in writing 2 weeks before the actual meeting so members have time to research it.

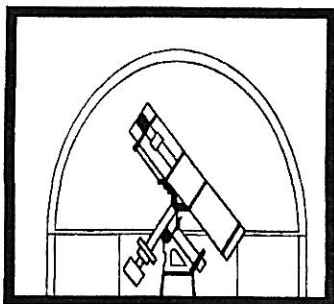
Thanks to all who helped with the Telescope Clinic, with special thanks to Pat Lannon, Bev and Joe Orzechowski, Janice and Jeff Gardner, and Larry Carlino, who took over when I bailed out to go on the Asteroid Adventure. Speaking of which—

Oh Where oh where did the Asteroid go!

Here is the latest scoop on the rare occultation of Mu Geminorum! When the three intrepid observers (Frank Chalupka, Tom Bakowski and Dan Marcus) arrived in Dayton Ohio, they teamed up with Harry Bates, a Physics Professor from Towson College in Maryland. There were two good sites to view the occultation, one being at Germantown Police station, complete with 120V power!, the other approximately 10 miles closer the northern limit. When traveling for events that do not require an exceptionally dark site, try any business, or government building! The people always seem happy to help especially when you explain what you are doing. When we got permission to set up, we also received all sorts of great info, including how to contact the local weather man. Of course the Weatherman gave us his version of what the weather was all about, all bad news of

course! By 6pm on Sunday we could tell it was time to abandon ship. Between the local weatherman and our Internet contacts letting us know the clear spot that was over the hotel in the morning was heading down to the West Virginia/Virginia border! So off we went chasing the Clear Sky Carrot. When the Moon finally rose, it hung tantalizing in the East showing where the clear hole was. Every time we managed to get under the hole, and stop to take a look, we found that it only took 10 minutes to for the clouds to reappear. One of our stops was at a McDonalds which fortunately had a TV which we immediately set for the Weather Channel (our favorite station). They had radar maps showing the clearing heading towards the West Virginia/Virginia border. The chase was on in earnest, as we could see the clearing. Harry Bates finally set up at a location on RT119, 20 miles south of Charleston, WV around 3 am. Of course as soon as we had him setup, the clouds showed up. He chose to wait it out there in hopes a "sucker" hole showed up in time for the Occultation. The rest of us continued back to Charleston and back on to RT 64 heading south in hopes of getting past the clouds and setting up in record time to be just in time to catch the event. The dilemma with going south was that the Sun would rise closer and closer to the event time the further south we went. We made it to mile marker 16 around 6 am, saw the skies were clear as far as we could see and made the turn off at the next exit. Lo and behold there was a baseball diamond within sight of the exit so we made a beeline for it and set up. It took us around 30 minutes to set up the gear, only got one camera of 3 sort of working, and just barley found the star in the camera before it got too light to see it visually. Now it was 2 minutes (6:38am) before the event was to occur. The camera was not focused as well as we would have liked, and

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Presidents message continued

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Submissions wanted for publica-
tion in the Spectrum!!!!

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MS Word or Wordperfect ok

scanning available

**DEADLINE FOR March/
April ISSUE IS Feb 15**

the exposure was wrong, but we had an image that we could use, and could not chance interrupting the data we were collecting to make adjustments, as the occultation prediction may not have been accurate to a couple of minutes. Oh well after ten minutes of taping and NO dimming, the confounded clouds that were chasing us all night showed up and obliterated the sky! At least we found a location to help pin point the Southern boundary of the occultation path. Of course we had no clue where we were, and the WV street signs were no help (as usual), so we packed up to find how Harry made out. When we found him 4 hours later, he was all packed up and waiting for us to show up. He told us of the hole in the clouds that showed up around the time of the occultation, but moved to the wrong portion of the sky at occultation time. Of course he had tales of all the "interesting" people who showed up at the scenic overlook he was at, and listed them as the reason for his fast packing. After helping him repack the truck properly, we all went to breakfast to discuss the nights adventure. When checking the IOTA web site, it seems that the Asteroid seems to have misplaced its shadow!! The latest report as of 12-01-00 is they don't have a clue where it went due to clouds, and those who had it clear did not see the event. The upshot of the story is that we probably would have been too far south at the Germantown location as well. Our adventure did not stop there! When arriving at the New York border on I90 we hit snow. When we found the rest stops over flowing with trucks, we decided something was wrong. We were right, they closed the thruway down at Tom's exit and had every one exit off. At Tom's house we found out his Dad was still "stranded" at work, more like stuck since people were not showing up for work, and that there was 26" of wet snow dumped in a narrow band going through the center of Buffalo, effectively blocking all north/south bound traffic. Of course I live north and to the west of the city, (Frank lives right where the snow was) there is only one way for me to get home, and that was to travel east, and go around the city. Well, we did not get far enough east and got caught in the traffic snarl. We left at 11pm and I did not make it to my house until 5:30 am that night (Frank made it home much later). It normally takes 20 minutes to get home from Tom's! Never have I seen such stupid and incompetent drivers, since the blizzard of 77. These people forgot how to drive in the snow. The was 4" of hard packed snow on the road, and all the heat from the idling cars melted the top turning the street into a sheet of glass. Did anyone have kitty litter? no, salt? no, anything for traction? no, remember the physics of sliding friction vs stationary friction?, no. The favorite method of getting unstuck was burning down to the pavement, and then rocking the vehicle to get out of the hole. What a mess. Would anyone go out to find out what the hold up was? no, how about help push and direct traffic to keep it moving, Not My Job Man! Spent the whole time pushing stuck cars and directing traffic to keep us moving. I'd go to the next traffic tie up and get things moving, when Frank showed up with the Van, I'd hop in until we stopped moving and then do it all over again. I do not know how police and firemen stay so nice when dealing with the public. I can't stand it when they will not help themselves, or others when it is crunch time. Besides all those fools around here who have 4X4's who think they are hotshots in the snow found out that all that traction is useless when the streets are filled with abandoned cars. There were not enough passable roads, and the ones that were, soon had tractor trailers jackknifed and blocking them, because people would not give them enough room to maneuver. The prize came when I took my wife out to dinner next to home (we only had 6" on the lawn and dry roads), and the melting water was turning to ice. I pulled up to the restaurant, noticed the ice and did not pay it much attention as it was expected. When I got out of the car, the person who parked next to us commented on how slippery it was. As soon as we were seated a lady with a 4X4 pulled into the lot at her usual summertime speed, applying the brakes at the last moment

Continued Next Page President

MEETINGS CANCELLATION POLICY

If, for any reason, (most likely snow or ice storms), there might be cause for cancellation of the meetings of the B.A.A., tune your radio to either WBEN (930) or WGR (550). Also if Buffalo State College has been closed due to inclement weather, so will the meeting of the B.A.A. be cancelled.

BEAVER MEADOW TELEPHONE

The telephone at Beaver Meadow, 716-457-3104, is for emergency use only at no cost. Local calls may be placed for a small charge - see the

collection box by the phone. This phone cannot make long distance calls.

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Presidents message cont

and promptly crashed over the sidewalk and into the wall almost breaking the window. All we could do was roll our eyes, and shake our heads.

Attention - Fun and Adventure Wanted!! When and where will the next BAA adventure be! Adventures are all in the mind, they don't have to be expensive, or involve lots of driving, it is all in the plotting, planning, and executing that give the adventure the thrill. Stay tuned and keep those adventures coming!

Star Parties - Who would like to organize this year's Star Parties? We need someone to coordinate/organize star parties for this year. What does it entail? Encouraging members to host one, either at their home, the Observatory, or where ever they wish to set up. The only criteria is that it does not conflict with an Observatory event! Unless of course it is held at the Observatory! The party can range from just getting together to view, or organizing a bring a dish to pass meal at the Observatory, to a fully catered affair complete with black ties, and evening gowns! The main goal is to get together and have fun doing astronomy! and if possible to incorporate a little adventure into it.

January 26/27 The Brrrrrr Stargaze at Cherry Springs State Park. (weather permitting), Contact Tom Bemus for details. If you are interested in a winter adventure, this is it! Tom claims this is the darkest site around Western New York. Bring your extra warm clothes as there is no place to get warm, except your car. **March 24, Bill Smith's Messier Marathon 2001**, cloud date March 31, may not be classified as a true adventure, but you can get lost in the forest behind Bill's house and create one! Here are the details! **MESSIER MARATHON 2001** **When:** Saturday, Mar 24th starting at 3pm - ?? Cloud date: Sat. Mar 31st **Where:** Bill Smith's & Carol Lorenc's farmette (map in e-group files area) 1880 Thornton Rd, Cherry Creek NY 14723 (physically in Town of Charlotte) (716) 962-3412 .

MUSEUM'S KELLOGG OBSERVATORY TO CLOSE

This past November I appointed a cross-departmental committee to review attendance, staffing costs, and admissions revenues that result from our Friday evening operation, i.e., having the Museum open from 5:00-10:00 pm on Friday evenings. I also charged this committee to review the status of the Kellogg Observatory, where it has been a cherished tradition for two or three generations of people of our Niagara Region to make astronomical observations through the eight-inch refractor telescope deployed there.

Based on their review of operational data for the most recent one-year period, the committee unanimously recommended to me that the Museum close on Friday nights. Furthermore, after soliciting input from former Curator of Astronomy, Ernst Both, and part-time educator, Marilou Bebak, it became clear that serious concerns existed regarding access and safety issues, and the need for significant maintenance in the Kellogg Observatory. Accordingly, the committee also recommended to me that the Kellogg Observatory be closed until these issues and needs can be properly addressed.

Because of the valued historic relationship between the B.A.A. and the Buffalo Museum of Science, and my interest in revitalizing that affiliate relationship, I wanted your membership to be aware of my decision to accept the committee's recommendation and close the Museum on Friday evenings, and the Kellogg Observatory, effective January 12, 2001. Thus the last Friday evening that the Museum and Observatory will be open is January 5, 2001. More importantly, I wanted you and the members of the

B.A.A. to be aware that, again based on the recommendation of the staff committee, it is my intention to seek support for renovating and correcting deficiencies that are clearly evident in the Kellogg Observatory.

In conjunction with this capital initiative, I also intend to explore ways to dramatically upgrade opportunities for astronomy education at the Buffalo Museum of Science. I envision that this review will also include how to better utilize the exhibit area currently occupied by the Gibson Hall of Space on the fourth floor adjacent to the Solar Observatory and the current access point to the Kellogg Observatory.

When we are ready to move forward with planning to implement these initiatives in astronomy, I hope that I can count on the interest and support of the B.A.A.

I look forward to working together with the B.A.A. to upgrade the educational opportunities in astronomy at the Buffalo Museum of Science, and at the same time strengthen the relationship between our respective organizations.

If you have questions at this time, please feel free to contact me at 896-5200 x309, or

dchesebrough@sciencebuff.org

Sincerely,

David E. Chesebrough, Ed.D.

President Buffalo Museum of Science

NAKED EYE ASTRONOMY FOR JANUARY / FEBRUARY

by Tim McIntyre

Using The Sky version 4 software I was able to come up with a few interesting naked eye events that one could enjoy in the early morning before work or in the early evening after work.

AM EVENTS

Jan 12th 6:30 am : The Moon is 2.3 deg from Regulus in the Western sky.

Jan 18th 6:30 am : Look for Mars 1/2 deg from mag 2.9 star 9-Alpha-2 Librae in the Southern sky.

Feb 15th 6:30 am : The Moon is 1.5 deg away from Mars

Feb 20th and

Feb 21st 6:30 am : Mars has a very close encounter with 2.6 mag star 8 -Beta Scorpii which is separated by less than 1 deg for both days

PM EVENTS

Jan 5th 6:30 pm : Look for the Moon 2.5 deg from Saturn

Jan 6th 6:30 pm : Look for the moon 2.5 deg from Aldebaran

Jan 13th 6:30 pm : Venus lies 1/2 deg away from 3.7 mag star 73 lambda Aquarii and for you scope users Venus is 1.5 deg away from asteroid 3Juno

Jan 14th 6:30 pm : Venus and lambda Aquarii are less than 1 deg apart

Feb 2nd 6:30 pm : The moon is 3.25 deg from Jupiter

January and February are ideal months for observing Jupiter and Saturn. They are well placed high above to offer excellent telescopic views of planetary detail as well as their satellite systems. So dress warm and enjoy the beauty of our 2 largest planetary neighbors.

BAA YEAR IN REVIEW EDITORIAL

by Tim McIntyre

Happy New year to all and wishing you all the best of luck in the up and coming year. As we start the new year, I was pondering the previous years activities and thinking that time sure does go by fast. Just think it was already a year ago that all the hysteria surrounded the Y2K bug. The media really hyped that out and boy were they really off base.

Another point I was pondering was the huge successes and accomplishments of the BAA. The past year put the BAA into the international spotlight with the Gamma Ray Burst imaged by the club's GRB team. Bill Aquino and crew deserve a big thank you for their time, dedication and knowledge of this awe inspiring phenomena and for letting the world know just who we are as a club.

The BAA also utilized substantial grant monies, which provided the club with much needed computers, observatory equipment and educational tools. I am no grant expert, but what I do know is that it is not easy to acquire one. Bev Orzechowski deserves a big thank you for her knowledge on the subject, which brings me to another point. Grants would be impossible to come by if it were not for the gracious volunteering of the members themselves. Rowland Rupp and crew deserve a big thank you for all their educational outreach programs brought to schools and organizations through out Western New York. Oh yeah, then there are the members that bring the stars to the public and help out on our public nights at the observatory. That is a pretty big commitment for people with families and other interests to man the observatory 2 Saturdays a month for 7 months. A big thank you to Mark Swiderski and the crew of regulars at BMO who donate their time and knowledge. The volunteer work of all members greatly enhances the chances of future grants.

As I recall, the fundraising drive for the Buffalo Audubon Society's new nature center was a huge success. Our members donated more than \$4000 of their hard earned money to this project. Our long lasting relationship with the BAS was tightened even further and every member who contributed deserves a big thank you along with Bev Orzechowski and Bill Smith who took charge of the fundraising drive.

So as a club, can we improve? You bet we can. What we do

need is a little more help from our fellow club members. It is usually the same old story in any club or organization. I belong to radio control model helicopter /airplane clubs and face the same situation in that only a handful of "regulars" contribute and do all the work. We could use more help at our public events. Many times we are understaffed when large numbers of people attend our public events at BMO and astronomy day activities. I remember a night when there were only 3 of us manning the scopes with nearly 100 public guests present. Boy were we busy beavers that night and more member support would have greatly reduced the burden. The club also needs your input. If you have any suggestions contact a club officer or board member and let your thoughts be known. The board members and officers are not "Trolls" looking to control the BAA, but are active members trying to give the club a sense of leadership and direction, which is very difficult to do without input from the membership. As I write this letter there are 148 members in the club and only a small handful of these members seem to carry the load. Who will be the next to step up to the plate and help out? You only get out of the club what you put into it. You just might find it rewarding and fun as I do.

In closing, if the club had "club hero" awards (maybe it should?) my votes would be for: Bill Aquino for his leadership in the GRB effort and public night help. Alan Freidman who co-chairs the membership directorship. His outgoing personality and membership outreach skills make newcomers feel welcome. He contributes great ideas to the club and his latest calendar project in association with Bill Aquino deserve a big thank you. Also the membership directory / nametags are the best I have seen. Thank you Alan. Bev Orzechowski also deserves an award. The time she donates to the club is priceless with her precise book keeping skills, grant knowledge and overall volunteering spirit. If something needs to be done she steps up to the plate and does it. Thank you Bev. And finally an award for Tom Bakowski. His enthusiasm for Astronomy and astrophotography for a teenager is inspiring to us all. It is people like this that make me proud to belong to such a great organization.

May 5, 2001 is Astronomy Day!

May 5 is Astronomy Day and a dedicated team of volunteers has already begun the planning for this to be the best Astronomy Day celebrations yet! We'll be back at the Beaver Meadow Observatory this year, once again inviting the public to see for themselves what an energetic, diverse and dedicated group of backyard astronomers can do despite the cloudy skies, bitter cold and howling winds that chase us all indoors from time to time. The fine folks at the Audubon Center have agreed to let us use the two upstairs rooms of the new Educational Center for Astronomy Day events, and we're working on a full slate of events to fill these rooms, our Observatory, and the surrounding countryside with a variety of activities.

While it's very early in the game, plans currently include demonstrations of our "go-to" LX-200 telescope and remote imaging with the Astrovid camera, all operated from within the Observatory. The Observatory will also be where we'll be demonstrating several popular planetarium programs on the PCs. Of course, our workhorse 12" scope will be on display, and we'll be viewing sunspots if Mother Nature cooperates.

Outside of the Observatory Jack Mack will be leading his renown Walking Tour of the Solar System, without which Astronomy Day just wouldn't be the same. We'll also (again, weather permitting) have a variety of telescopes set up to show interested visitors "what all those knobs do" and maybe help a few people take their first steps into amateur astronomy.

Some of the events we have planned for the Educational Center include a variety of activities for children. We're still working on details, so if

you've got some ideas on how to bring the younger crowd into astronomy, please let us know. Also, we plan to do away with formal lectures this time around and instead present a number of poster sessions. In a poster session, a club member or two will lead guests through a discussion of a topic with a visual aid (typically a poster in academic settings) serving as the focus of the discussion. This will allow members to interact more closely and more personally with our visitors, and it means we won't have to subject our members to the bright lights and big crowds of more formal lectures. Many members have already done these kinds of talks before at Public Night, and it sounded like a fun way to present things at Astronomy Day - we hope you agree and consider doing a session yourself!

Make your plans now to join us, or, even better, add your name to the list of volunteers to help out. We're sure to need help with setting up, taking down, and keeping things under control on the big day, and cleaning up the Observatory the day after. We'll also need people to act as hosts/hostesses, pointing guests in the right direction and letting folks know what's going on where. We'll need patient, helpful people who like to have a little fun to run the children's activities. Materials and training will be provided, all we need is a few volunteers who can keep the fun level high. We're also looking for folks interested in giving poster session presentations. Whether you've got your own work you'd like to show off, have some ideas for a great educational display (computer images? binoculars? star atlases? sketching? books for beginners?), or would like to use one of the club's posters as your visual aid, we'd love to have

as many members as possible take a few hours to share their knowledge and enthusiasm with the public.

Bob Titran for the Astronomy Day Committee
astronomyday@juno.com

Coming Attractions

The January 12th meeting will feature Dr. Jack Mack hosting the BAA's own version of the Caen Film Festival. Members will be presenting brief segments of their favorite astronomical videos. The selection will include both professional as well as homemade video compositions. If you have never seen a video captured by one of our members, rest assured that the term "homemade" in no way implies a lower quality production. And if you've already seen some of the work done by the BAA's film crews, stop by to see their latest and greatest creations.

In February Bob Hughes and Carl Klingenschmitt answer the question "How's the Weather Up There?" They'll fill us in on the causes and effects of the geomagnetic storms which rage in our upper atmosphere. Join Bob and Carl on February 9th for what is sure to be an informative presentation.

— Joe Orzechowski —

MEMBERSHIP CORNER

At year end, the BAA membership - at almost 150 strong - is approaching the club's record achieved during the much publicized last visit of Halley's comet. Work has begun on this year's Membership Directory so please keep us informed of any changes of address, phone or email. For the handful who have not found the time to mail your dues in - please make haste. **Your membership must be current to continue to receive the Spectrum after this issue.** Hope the holidays bring peace and joy... and some clear skies for you and your family!

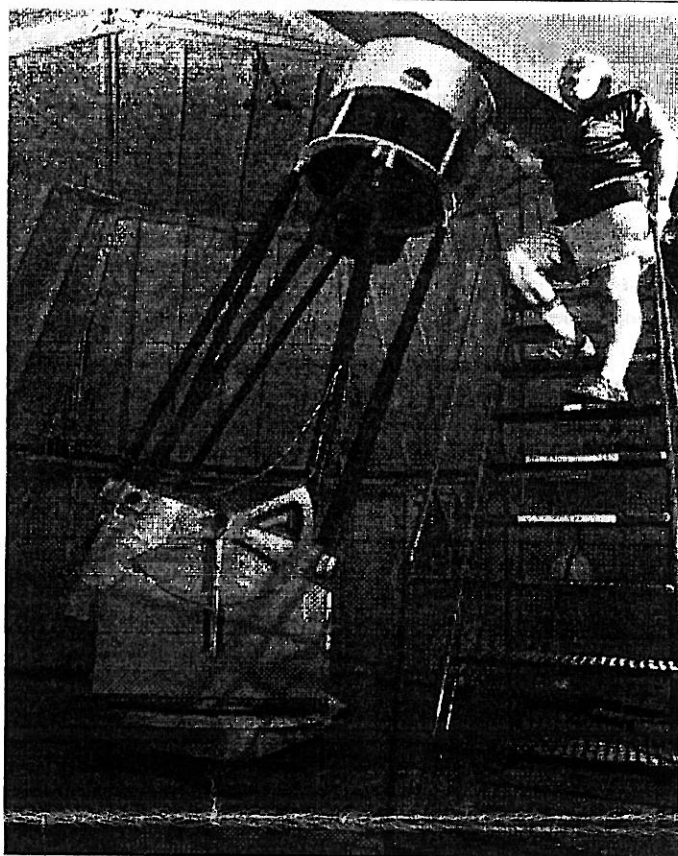
— Alan and Tristan —

OBSERVATORY NEWS

There isn't much happening this time of the year at the observatory, other than lake effect clouds and snow. But when we do get an occasionally rare clear night, by all means stop on out and check out the marvelous winter sky. The observatory is open all year round to checked out members in good standing. Pull out the 20 inch dob and have a look at the Orion Nebula. Chances are, the view will knock your socks off. Or you can look at all the marvelous open clusters that stretch through Auriga, Cassiopeia, Gemini, and Perseus. If you can make it out late in the evening you could even get a sneak peak at all the spring galaxies that are located around Ursa Major, Canes Venatici, Leo, and Coma Berenices. Remember to dress warm. If you attended the November general meeting our panelists provided many hints and tips as to what to wear to keep out the cold winter chill and make winter observing a rewarding experience.

The observatory opens to the public again in April, which is really not all that far away. If you have a talk or slide show you would like to provide for the upcoming season, don't hesitate to contact Mark Swiderski about it. He would be more than happy to get a head start on scheduling public events. Hopefully the weather will cooperate this year and bring us more clear nights. That's All.

Tom Dey to Speak at Dinner Meeting



Tom Dey has graduate degrees in optics and math and 35 patents. He is currently with Kodak's Image Acquisition -Systems division. His work there has included the good Hubble mirror, Chandra x-ray observatory, the Keck primary mirrors and commercial imaging satellites.

Tom made and used Dobsonian mounts, nebular filters and go-to pointing before they were invented. He computed the Hubble spherical aberration prior to launch. Many of his papers, articles and images have been published. He has finally finished and is happily using his 29-inch telescope housed in a domed observatory. Tom will present slides documenting the building and completion of his 29-inch Dobsonian telescope housed in a 24-foot dome under dark skies. Telescope and building incorporate many innovative bells and whistles all intended for ease, comfort and safety. Views are astounding. The talk may include vignettes on sketch, film and CCD image recording, an insider's scoop on the Hubble Trouble, and independent measurements of commercial nebular filters. Visual illusions, handouts and door prizes will be provided.

BEAVER MEADOW OBSERVATORY

The observatory is open to "checked out" members any time. Call Neil Dennis (322-7596) or Mark Swiderski (535-0006) to get checked out. Public nights are held on the 1st and 3rd Saturday nights April through October. There is "members only" viewing after every public night. Help is always needed and appreciated for our public events. You don't need a lot of experience to help out. Stop by and be an "observer" and see just how easy it is. The "vets" will show you how.

BAA ANNALS

by Rowland A. Rupp

5 YEARS AGO - "Video Astronomy" was Gene Witkowski's topic at our January 1996 meeting, where he showed us his shots of the moon and planets taken through his surveillance camera. THE SPECTRUM says he claimed it's easy to do!?! "Stump the Roundtable" was scheduled for February, but no mention is made of whom was to be stumped.

No articles appeared in this SPECTRUM, but there were book reviews, even a computer program review. Rowland Rupp reviewed John A. Piret's *How the Universe Was Born*. Evidently he thought poorly of it, especially of Mr. Piret's contention that electrons, "God's angels", were the source of creation. The *Lawnchair Astronomer* by Gerry Desciteaux fared little better in Bill Smith's review. Bill concluded the book offered a poor introduction to astronomy for a beginner, and less for an advanced observer. Speaking of books for a beginner, a note by Tom Bemus refers to a book he and Bill Smith were in the process of writing "especially for beginners". How come we haven't had a chance to review that yet?

The program review was by Bruce Newman for SkyMap Version 2.2 (GSC), designed to run under Windows 3.1. He liked the program, but I'm sure that version is pretty obsolete by now. Is there a new one?

10 YEARS AGO - Geneseo's Dr. David Meisel was to be our January 1991 speaker, although the subject of his talk was not given. For February, Tom Dessert returned after a long absence to speak on the fine astrophotography he did as a BAA member in the 1970s.

An article by Leslie Martin, "What Time Is It?", highlighted the differences between sidereal and solar time, and explained the reasons for the equation of time that compensates for the daily discrepancy between civil clocks and the sun. Edith Geiger wrote a *BAA Profile* on Dave Bull. An obituary for Jane P. Dow, an honorary member of the BAA who donated the Dow Collection of professional astrophoto slides in the 1970s, appeared in this SPECTRUM.

Ed Lindberg's *Instrument Notes* addressed the boner NASA made in figuring the Hubble mirror which, as of then, was uncorrected. Ed's disapproval is clearly evident. Ed, an expert mirror maker (he ground the BAA's 12.5 inch now at BMO), must have been disgusted to find NASA's billion dollar effort produced defective optics he could have detected with his homemade mirror tester.

15 YEARS AGO - Several of the BAA's telescope makers were on

hand for the January 1986 meeting on "Telescope Making". Bob Mayer, Ed Lindberg, Miro Catipovic, Matt Kantar and Carl Milazzo were the participants. Carl also contributed a SPECTRUM article on the telescope making activities underway at the time by BAA members. In February, Dr. Zoram Pazameta from UB's Astronomy Department spoke on the night skies as seen in the southern hemisphere.

Michael Idem, Carl Milazzo and Darwin Christy contributed Observation Reports. All included observations of Comet Halley. Darwin also gave some tips on observing meteors. Fred Price reviewed a book, *COMET! The Story Behind Halley's Comet* by Greg Walz-Chojnacki. Although the book was intended for a Juvenile audience, Fred found it "...a handy little guide to the current return..."

25 YEARS AGO - Color slides from some of the world's largest telescopes were presented by Ernst Both at our January 1976 meeting. Buffalo State's Dr. Antoinette Paterson was our speaker the following month. Her topic: "The Infinite Worlds of Giordano Bruno".

Tom Dessert, Observatory Director at the time, wrote a summary of the history of building BMO, which had just been completed. In fact, he announced that the first public night was scheduled for January 3, 1976, and every Saturday night thereafter. Tom specifically thanked twenty members who contributed their time and effort to the project, three of whom are still club members: Rick Janas, Carl Milazzo and Rowland Rupp.

35 YEARS AGO - Ed Lindberg led the January 1966 meeting, for which the topic was the story of the club's telescope and observatory. (Seems to be a recurrent theme, doesn't it?) The telescope, of course, was the venerable 12.5 inch mentioned earlier. The observatory was our first; it was located at Newstead. Other than notices of Section meetings, the main item in the January SPECTRUM was a plea for SPECTRUM articles.

There was also a February SPECTRUM. The forthcoming meeting was a sort of follow-up on the preceding one. Darwin Christy and his son, Orrin, were scheduled to tell about their six-year adventure in building a home observatory. According to an Instrument Section report fifteen members showed up at their January meeting despite a snowstorm. No articles - the preceding month's plea was in vain!

SPY and TELL

by Edith Geiger

Jack, son of Jack and Jayne Mack, is a very active student at Williamsville South High School, and is president of the student government. He has attended two high school conferences, one in Albany and another in southern California. In the school play, "Last Night of Ballyhoo," Jack played the part of the father. Daughter, Alice, is in her second year of grad school at N.Y.U., majoring in English. Jayne has a job as a warden! (chief layman) at All Saints Episcopal Church in Williamsville. Jack Sr. as usual, is an indefatigable gentleman.

Bob Hughes is a member of Sky Warn Weather Watch. During serious weather, Sky Warn is activated, which means that the weather service contacts the ham radio operators, who are called to the station to warn various regions of the approach of dangerous weather such as tornadoes, destructive hail, and severe winds. Bob has been serving this

area for 10 years. The area covered is from Watertown, through Rochester to Jamestown.

Dr. Joseph Wechter is now retired. His field was internal medicine, and he was connected to St. Joseph's Hospital in Cheektowaga. He is enjoying his well earned retirement.

Judy Heubel is a casual clerk at the Main Post Office where she works during the Christmas season and on 6 month tours. She has been on this schedule for 4 or 5 years. She likes walking, going to baseball and football games with her two grandsons, plus reading many books, especially history.

Frank and Tricia Fendt have a very unusual occupation. They have mystified audiences all around the country with their Magic Shows, which started back in 1960. They played to enthusiastic spectators in a

Continued next page

Spy and Tell Cont.

regular circuit through Chicago, Milwaukee, and California, as well as the Midwest. Frank was the only sword swallower in the eastern part of the country. They have many stories to tell about their travels, including a wax museum, a Keystone cop, Gloria Swanson and a rose. Seek them out and talk to these interesting people. There is a parlor in their home where they have a fountain and plants, and a bird cage 8 ft. high, 4 ft. wide and 2 ft. deep in which 4 cockatiels reside. The ceiling is painted blue with white clouds.

Jerry Silverschatz received his degree in computer science from Buff State in the early 80's, after which he went to Syracuse and worked with computers at the Carrier Corporation. Later he returned to Buff State to be in charge of their computers. Since '96, he has been self-employed, doing work with computers for small businesses. When he goes out to Beaver Meadow Observatory, he usually takes two people along to enjoy all the beauty he finds there.

From September 23-28, **Darwin Christy and Ann Macgill** were in Oklahoma City at the 70th Fighter Squadron Reunion, which was associated with the 13th Air Force. Still around are 105 members, but only 19 came to the reunion, as so many are in nursing homes, are ill, or involved in other activities and can't make it, and some find it difficult to attend because of the distance and cost. The reunions are held in various places throughout the country. During free time, Darwin and Ann visited

the memorial site at the bombed out building (McVeigh) and the part still standing. They also went on a canal tour among other things. Darwin is the official photographer for the group, and has many wonderful pictures of the reunions which he sends to those who attend. A great time was had by all as they looked at photos from many years ago and talked about years gone by.

On the cover of the November issue of the Astronomical League Reflector is a colored photo of the aurora taken by **John Dean** at 3 A.M. on August 12, '00.

Bill Townsend finds joy in many things. Besides astronomy, he does a great deal with photography. He is also a railroad buff (not model) known as a "rail fanning". He rides trains and is interested in the historical aspects. Every year they go to Toronto, and on December 2, '00, they were there to ride the streetcars and see the Christmas doings.

Bill has a deep appreciation of the wonders of Nature, and spends many hours at Beaver Meadow. He graduated from U.B. in chemistry, and became personnel manager for Allied Chemical. The plant shut down, so he became a Security, Safety, and House Inspector for restaurants, ski lifts, and window washers.

Two photos of **Bill Aquino** appear in the January 2001 issue of *Sky & Telescope* in the article "Gamma-Ray Bursts and Amateur Astronomers." pp. 95-98.

Wishing you all the best in 2001

ANCIENT CONSTELLATIONS

by Darwin Christy

CAMELOPARDALIS

Camelopardalis, or Camelopardus, the Giraffe is a long, faint and straggling constellation like its namesake. There does not seem to be a complete agreement to its exact name. It lies from the Pole star southward to Perseus, Auriga and Lynx.

This constellation was formed by Bartschuis, a Dutch astronomer of the seventeenth century, having outlined it only, in his publication of 1614. He wrote that it was represented as a Camel he thought brought Rebecca to Isaac. This was an attempt to give it a religious tone, memorializing one of the camels of biblical times. From this, Proctor attempted to change its name to Camelus--but --- this alteration, adopted by Mr. J. Ellard Gore, translated it in 1894 of Flammarion's *Astronomie Populaire*.

84 stars have been enumerated by Argelander to be naked-eye while Heis declares he can find 138 stars. It would take a good eye as most are in the order of 6th magnitude, and from our city lights--impossible!

AURIGA

Auriga, the Charioteer or Wagoner, has been described as that of a person. The records of its origin have been lost and who it is supposed to have represented is gone forever. It was figured traditionally as a constellation showing a man carrying a goat on his shoulders. He is further occupied as driving a chariot or cart to places unknown.

In Assyria, they pictured it as a chariot; the Greeks bestowed on it the personality of Hephaestion, who was a lame demigod. He rode as it was very difficult for him to walk. Hephaestion is more commonly

known as Vulcan, a god of fire as described by the Romans. Vulcan was also assumed to be a planet which orbits between the Sun and Mercury. In 1859, Lescarbault, a French physician saw what he thought was a dark body transit across the face of the sun and was confirmed by others, but it is still in reality unconfirmed.

It was recorded that the goat seems to have been added to the picture, giving it the name which so well fit it, Capella. Capella in Latin means, "The Little She-Goat." It was the goat that suckled the infant Jupiter. Three fainter stars just below Capella, are known as "The Kids" from their proximity to the "Little She-Goat."

In Lamb's Aratos:-

Capella's course admiring-landsmen trace, But
sailors hate her inauspicious face.

Thou hast loosened the necks of thine horses, and goaded their flocks with affright, To the race of a course that we know not on ways that are hid from our sight. As a wind through the darkness the wheels of their chariot are whirled, And the light of its passage is night on the face of the world. — Algernon Charles Swinburne's "Erechtheus" —

And from Manilius a story thus told:- Near the bent Bull a Seat the Driver claims, Whose skill confer'd his Honour and his Names. His Art gret Jove admir'd, when first he drove His rattling Carr, and fix'd the Youth above. A coin of consular Rome depicts a Chariot and a Goat as cast into it. The Paros minted a coin, only with the Goat which may have referred to the constellation. Auriga is bordered by the Lynx, the Giraffe, the Champion, the Bull and the Twins.

LOOKING FOR SOMETHING TO DO ON A CLOUDY NIGHT?

Looking for something to do on a cloudy night, THEN turn it into something you can do when clear? Great, here's one. Plus, you only need your eyes or perhaps a small pair of binoculars. Just the project for a winter's viewing.

Try locating some stars that are just like our Sun -- at least those they have the same color. Some planetarium programs (such as Redshift) allow you to show only stars of certain colors. I restricted the stellar spectral zone from F8 to G5 (our sun is G2) and made a map. Then I made the same map showing all stars. I kept the magnitude to mag 5.5 or brighter. From the attached sky maps you can see there are only a handful of sunlike stars. Do they look the same color in the sky? You decide! Binoculars help in showing color as they collect more light. Try defocussing a bit so stars look like small discs. I think star colors are more noticeable that way.

Got another planetarium based project? Current programs seem only limited by your imagination. Dream something up and drop it in egroups.

———— Bill Smith ————

MEETINGS

Baa Meetings are held on the 2nd Friday of the month from September to June in the New Science Building on the Buffalo State College Campus . Meetings start at 7:30 pm and all members and guests are encouraged to attend.

ARTICLES , FOR SALE ADDS, ETC. WANTED FOR PRINT IN THE SPECTRUM ! MY STOCK PILE OF ARTICLES IS NOW DOWN TO NOTHING ! IF YOU HAVE AN OBSERVATION REPORT OR ARTICLE CONTACT OR SUBMIT IT TO THE SPECTRUM PLEASE .

NEWSLETTER OF THE BUFFALO ASTRONOMICAL ASSOCIATION INC.

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