

THE P.A.A. NEWSLETTER

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JUNE, 1976

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By now every member of the P.A.A. should have received a copy of the Optica b/c Company's "Astronomical Events Calendar" for 1976. It should prove to be a handy reference item and will be provided to members each year from now on.

Our club welcomes two new members, Vince Castellano and Professor John Earnshaw, who I know will contribute a great deal to our organization. Professor Earnshaw teaches the astronomy course at Trent University and is also the head of the Physics Department.

Most members should know by now that the P.A.A. now has its own stationery. With two sizes of envelopes and plenty of writing paper it should give our amateur organization a more "professional" look. Anyone who would like to use some of this stationery should get in contact with the secretary.

By the middle of this month the planets we've been used to observing during winter and early spring will have disappeared from the sky. One planet which is just barely visible to the naked eye and is in a good position to observe is the planet Uranus. This dark green planet can be found this month in the constellation Virgo in a triangular formation with Kappa and Lambda Virginis. See "The Sky in June" for more details.

There is a phone number in Toronto members can use to obtain taped astronomical information. The tape isn't changed very regularly so its advisable to phone it only occasionally. The number to call is 1-416-978-5399.

Meetings:

The P.A.A. meets Friday evenings at 8:00 p.m. in Wallis Hall Seminar Room T3, Catherine Parr Traill College near the corner of Reid and Dublin streets. Members will be phoned if a meeting is to be held as scheduled.

The meeting of May 7 featured a lecture by Vince Castellano on the life cycle of stars. This lecture also included a brief summary of the processes by which stars convert various elements into fuel.

During the May 14 meeting Harry announced that a major meteor shower watch would be scheduled for July 28. Our club will observe the Delta Aquarid shower, hopefully making some good photographs in the process, and try to keep accurate records of the whole event. Harry's lecture on lenses, during this meeting, included a practical demonstration on how to determine focal lengths. In June meetings are scheduled for the 11th and the 25th.

Association Activities:

For the June 11 meeting two things are planned. First, Doug Kirk has promised to give us a lecture on the fundamentals of navigation. Second, Harry wants each member to bring the materials necessary in order that we can each build ourselves a Cross Staff. The purpose of this device is the measuring of angles of separation between sky objects and, in order to build them, members are requested to bring the following materials:

- (1) a piece of wood measuring 3/4" X 3/4" X 39"
- (2) a piece of cardboard measuring approximately 9" square and of about the thickness of a file folder
- (3) 2 elastic bands each of about 1" in length or longer

The Cross Staffs will be assembled during the meeting so if you want one don't forget to bring the materials.

Astronomy News:

Three of the four gas giants, Jupiter, Saturn, and Neptune, radiate more heat than they receive from the sun. It has been speculated that the reason for this may lie in the fact they still retain some residual heat from their formation 4.5 billion years ago and also, perhaps, because they have a very slow gravitational contraction rate. The exception to this theory, Uranus, has had its temperature analyzed recently by a group of five scientists. A low measurement of -360 degrees Fahrenheit has been tentatively explained as the result of a slower contraction rate.

The McLaughlin Planetarium has a new show entitled "Space: The Final Frontier". The show times are; Tuesday through Friday: 3:00 and 7:30 p.m.; Saturday and Sunday: 1:30, 3:00 and 7:30 p.m.

Look in this column next month for details on the Viking missions to Mars.

The Sky in June:

Mercury - has a very unfavourable western elongation on the morning of June 15, mag. 0.8

Venus - in Taurus, mag. -3.5; too close to the sun for easy observation

Mars - in Cancer, mag. 1.8; low in the west, getting fainter

Jupiter - in Aries, mag. -1.6; rising in the morning, on June 23 will be only 0.1 degree south of the Moon

