

THE P.A.A. NEWSLETTER



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The P.A.A. has decided that after a six month trial the newsletter will continue to be published in its present format for the time being. In making this decision it was noted that our membership was large enough to support a two page newsletter and that any expansion in the future will have to be based on an increase in club revenues.

This month I am happy to report that the P.A.A. has acquired two new members. We welcome Jarvis Lake and Ferne Cristall to our organization and announce that our membership, which stands at 16, is the highest point we have reached in four years.

Summer is now upon us and members should now be observing the "Summer Triangle" as it rises in the east each night. The triangle is made up of three prominent stars of the first magnitude or brighter. They are Vega, from the constellation Lyra; Deneb, from the constellation Cygnus; and Altair; from the constellation Aquila.

Everyone have a good summer.

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.

There were only two meetings in June. The June 11 meeting was high-lighted by a talk from Doug Kirk on the principles of navigation. The meeting of June 25 was informal and the time was used mainly to assemble the Cross Staffs described in last month's newsletter.

In July meetings are scheduled for the 2nd, the 9th, and the 30th.

Association Activities:

As mentioned in last month's newsletter we will be holding a major meteor shower watch during the last week in July to observe the Delta Aquarid meteors. Details will be made available during meetings this month of what activities are planned for the watch. We will, however, be holding it at

Frank Hancock's property on the centre line of Smith Township and much of the procedure used will resemble that at the Perseid Meteor shower watch we hold last year.

Astronomy News;

The biggest news this month is undoubtedly the Viking missions to Mars. Viking 1 was due to land on the red planet on July 4, but because of the rough terrain of the prime-landing site this has been postponed. According to the latest reports Viking 1 could try to make a landing near the prime site as early as July 9. If, however, the area around the prime site (an area known as the Chryse region) is found to be totally unacceptable, then Viking 1 will land on an alternate site on July 22 or 23.

The purpose of Viking is to examine the surface of Mars for signs of life. To achieve this various biological experiments will be carried out by the equipment aboard the two craft. There are also experiments to look at Seismology. Meteorology, to examine the magnetic properties of the planet, and, using a ten-foot claw to gather materials, molecular analysis to search for organic compounds.

According to information just received as this newsletter was being prepared Viking 1 is scheduled to land on July 17 in a low plain just 150 miles from the prime-landing site.

Viking 2, due to reach Mars in September, is now about 4,980,000 miles from the planet's surface.

The number to call for up to the minute reports on the progress of the Viking missions is 1-213-354-4213. Information is coming in at such a rapid pace now that the tape is changed about every six hours.

The Sky in July

Mercury - not visible this month

Venus - in Gemini, mag. -3.4; visible very low in the west at sunset

Mars - in Leo, mag. 1.9; sets in the west two hours after sunset

Jupiter - in Taurus, mag. -1.8; a morning object

Saturn - not visible this month

Meteors - Delta Aquarids: July 28; about 20, per hour, variable in strength

Moon - first quarter, July 4; full moon, July 11; last quarter, July 19; new moon, July 27.

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