

PLANETARIUM FOR UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA is here!

The long awaited planetarium has arrived from Europe at last. Construction of the building in which it is to be housed is far ahead of schedule and it is expected that the planetarium will be open before the end of 1948. This planetarium, to be called "The Morehead," will be the first in the South, the sixth in the nation, and the only one owned by a college or university anywhere in the world.

NEW MEMBERS

- *Brunot, Felix R., 4621 Norwood Drive, Chevy Chase 15, Md. Wisconsin 1783
- Evans, William H., No. 14, Tea St., N. E. Dupont 8474
- *King, Christopher Zag, 3926 McKinley St., N. W. Emerson 0952

"POPULAR ASTRONOMY" lecture, given by Carl H. Gamble in December, was attended by nearly 200 people. Mr. Gamble's talk on descriptive astronomy was illustrated with beautiful slides. He explained the role of the amateur astronomer as an "interpreter" of the work of "investigators," bridging the gap between the technicians and the lay public, thus performing a valuable function in the general dissemination of astronomical information and creation of popular support for the science.

REMODELING OF ROTBART OBSERVATORY is about completed.

The heavy asbestos shingles which covered the dome have been ripped off and replaced by a canvas covering which has been coated with Army paint such as is used on awnings and similar outdoor shelters. This has lightened the dome by about 300 pounds and greatly increases the ease of its manipulation. Persons contemplating the building of an observatory will be interested in Mr. Rotbart's experiment.

STAR PARTY AT COLESVILLE SCHOOL on December 2 was a

distinct success. Mr. Slemaker and several other NCA members made the trip and took along telescopes and star maps. Many had never had an opportunity to look through a telescope until that evening and the experience was greeted with expressions of surprise and delight.

Jewell Boling, assistant editor, 1717 P St., N. W. DU-2969

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Date JANUARY CALENDAR

- 3 "The World Calendar and Astronomy," Westy Egmont, Director, The World Calendar Association. 8 p. m. Room 43, National Museum.
- 10 Juniors' night at the 5-inch, Naval Observatory. "Observing Nebulae," with Carl W. Wertz.
- 17 Discussion group, 8 p. m., foyer of Commerce Auditorium. Mr. Leroy Benfer talks on "The Coating of Lenses." Mr. Samuel R. Young reports on his recent visits to various observatories and planetariums.
- 20 Tuesday, 6:30 p. m. NCA dinner at Mrs. K's, 8123 Georgia Avenue, Silver Spring, Maryland.
- 21 Night at the NCA 5-inch, Naval Observatory. "Study of Lunar Surface Features," with Carroll Slemaker.
- Mondays) Telescope making with Mr. McLellan. 6:30 to
- Wednesdays) 9:51 p. m., room 235, McKinley High School.
- Thursdays) First class following the holidays January 5.

"THE WORLD CALENDAR AND ASTRONOMY" will be the subject of Westy Egmont's lecture on January 3. Mr. Egmont is Director of the World Calendar Association and Editor of the Journal of Calendar Reform. He has had a distinguished career as public relations counsel and has served as editor of leading magazines. International Who's Who lists a number of public service activities with which he has been associated. He has traveled extensively and has spent considerable time in Europe, the Far and the Near East. He has been a radio commentator on international affairs and has lectured at the leading universities of many nations. In his lecture to NCA he will explain the present program for calendar reform and will bring out the astronomical implications.

REFLECTORS OF 4-INCH TO 24-INCH APERTURE are being ground by the 23 members of Mr. McLellan's telescope making class. Three of the larger glasses will serve in Schmidt cameras - an outstanding development of the past twenty years. One will be a visual Schmidt, as invented by Anderson of Palomar and not yet made, as far as is known by NCA. Edward Aker is planning construction of an observatory in Lynchburg, Virginia, for his 8-inch reflector. The optical glass blanks donated by the Naval Ordnance Laboratory are being used for finders, photo objectives, and eyepieces. These high quality blanks are free to class members. Now is a good time to join the telescope making class. A shipment of 6-inch and 8-inch blanks arrived December 18.

NCA DINNER January 20, 6:30 p. m. at Mrs. K's, 8123 Georgia Avenue, Silver Spring, Maryland. (Don't confuse with Mrs. K's Toll House Tavern.) Regular dinners 85¢ to \$2.25. Pay your own check. Room available after dinner. Talent needed for entertainment program. Will you volunteer? Reservations not necessary, but Mr. Delaney would like a general idea of the number going. He is moving. To get in touch with him for further information or to offer assistance, call Mr. Franklin May, SLigo 1837. More details later.

COMMITTEE TO CONSIDER PURCHASE OF ANOTHER TELESCOPE has been appointed: George Skirm, Chairman; Bob Wright; and R. M. McLellan. The telescope under consideration is the 4-inch refractor now owned by Mr. Armstrong Thomas of Naval Observatory. The instrument is mounted on a tripod and is equipped with five eyepieces from 1½" to ¼", a star diagonal, a solar diagonal, slow motion adjustment in right ascension, and a 1" finder with reticle. It will be advertised in January Sky and Telescope for \$435 but it is understood that Mr. Thomas will sell in the Washington area for \$400. The committee will consider the advisability of purchasing another telescope, the suitability of this particular telescope, and means of raising funds if the decision to buy is made. Possession of a portable telescope would permit NCA members to make observations on many occasions where it is not possible to make use of the stationary 5-inch.

5-INCH NIGHT was clear for the fourth consecutive time. Optimists not discouraged by the overcast sky at 7:30 on December 18 went to the observatory and were rewarded by seeing the Orion nebula, some star clusters, and Uranus. Mr. Slemaker also instructed new members in the use of the 5-inch.

REVIEWS

"Sunspots in Action," Harlan True Stetson. Ronald Press, New York. 1947. 252 pp. \$3.50.

The author is Research Associate at M. I. T. and Director of the Cosmic Terrestrial Research Laboratory at Needham, Massachusetts. He is an authority on the relationship of solar and terrestrial phenomena, and has written several previous works on the subject. This volume is designed to provide an up-to-the-minute summary of the body of sunspot knowledge. One of the "Humanizing Science Series," the book is written for the intelligent layman, keeping technical language to a minimum.

The first portion of the book gives essential background information on the sun's properties and atomic processes and the effect of sunspots and solar radiation on the electrical state of the earth's atmosphere. Considerable attention is given to the subjects of sunspots and radio communication and radio prediction; the earth's magnetism and northern lights; radio and the moon; radio, solar eclipses, and cosmic effects. The author points out the importance of sun and sunspot cycle study to the future of long distance communication, including the new frequency allocations to F. M. and television. The latter half of the book describes the nature and origin of sunspots themselves, problems of prediction, and relationships to weather. Interesting chapters are also included on the substantial body of speculation dealing with possible effects of sunspots on the economic cycle, on weather, and on living things. An appendix table supplies relative sunspot numbers (monthly and mean for the year) for the years 1749 to 1947. ---R. J. Hinckley

ARTICLES OF INTEREST

- "Man's Most Powerful Eye," Life, December 8;
- "Dr. Hubble--Sky Spy," "History by Starlight,"
- "Close-Up of Mars," Science Illustrated for November;
- "Fels Planetarium," Science Illustrated for December.

"TEN YEARS WITH THE NATIONAL CAPITAL ASTRONOMERS," compiled by Grace Scholz, proved to be a "best-seller" the minute it was put on sale. Thirty-eight copies went at once. Miss Scholz has a few copies left. Price 15 cents.