

STAR DUST is in receipt of a very interesting News Letter from the Astronomical Society of Nevada. This society is completing the building of an observatory.

THE NAVAL OBSERVATORY now has open night only once a month - the night nearest the full moon. Passes must be requested in advance. The earliest open night for which passes are available, as STAR DUST goes to press, is January 6.

CLUB PROJECTS ACTIVITY: Those who are interested should make a particular effort to get to DISCUSSION GROUP meetings the middle Saturday of each month. Projects consist of groups that count and plot meteors and groups that count sunspots, plotting them individually on charts and then later comparing the results of their observations. Some groups make a simplified study of variable stars, either by doing it individually and comparing notes or by doing it together so that observations can be compared as they are made. The intention of these elementary types of observing is to train observers to be good observers and at the same time have a lot of fun doing it. Club Projects are carried on throughout the Astronomical League.

ASTRONOMICAL NOTES FOR DECEMBER. Venus is a morning star, unusually high in the sky and exceedingly brilliant. Mercury will be a fairly good morning star towards the end of December, to be found low in the south-eastern sky before sunrise. Jupiter has been making one of its nearest approaches to the earth and is prominently placed in the south-eastern sky at sunset. Mars rises shortly after midnight and is becoming quite bright. Mars, moving eastward, overtakes Saturn on the 19th, passing within one degree south of it.

Jewell Boling, Editor 1717 P St., N.W. NO 9621

STAR DUST
National Capital Astronomers
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DECEMBER CALENDAR

Dec. 1 Sat. "SOME OPTICAL CONSIDERATIONS IN DOUBLE STAR OBSERVING," Dr. William Markowitz, Astronomer, U. S. Naval Observatory. Commerce Auditorium, 8:15 p. m.

Dec. 10-12 GEMINIDS METEOR SHOWER

Dec. 15 Sat. DISCUSSION GROUP, Commerce Foyer, 8:00 p. m.

Tuesday and Friday, 7-10 p. m. Telescope making class, Roosevelt High School, Room 319, 13th and Upshur, N. W. Miss Irene Warthen, Instructor. Telephone LO 5-1237. Miss Warthen is present on Fridays. Note: Last session will be December 18. After this class will be in recess until January 4.

"SOME OPTICAL CONSIDERATIONS IN DOUBLE STAR OBSERVING," is a topic which should be of as much interest to the amateur as last month's subject, variable stars. In this field, too, many of the outstanding contributions have been made by amateur observers. Dr. William Markowitz, astronomer at the U. S. Naval Observatory, will give us information about double star systems and about the men who have studied them.

Some of the most famous names in double star astronomy are the Herschels, Dawes, Dembowski, and Burnham. Dr. Markowitz will discuss their contributions, and will review the opportunities in present day observing. Other topics will be the nature of double stars, methods of observing, and properties of some of the better known systems. The limiting

resolution of close doubles is determined by the optical system used, and by the visual acuity of the eye. Experiments in the use of high magnifications with the Naval Observatory 26-inch telescope will be described. Included will be a description of the Barlow lens, which is used for most of the double star observations.

Dr. Markowitz received his three degrees from the University of Chicago and Yerkes Observatory. He has been associated with the U. S. Naval Observatory for several years, and now holds the position of astronomer. His work has been mostly in the fields of mathematical astronomy, double stars, and photographic polarization.

--Mrs. H. Malitson

THE MEMBERSHIP ROSTER will be made up on December 1 and printed in January STAR DUST. There are a few members who have not yet taken care of dues. In order that the printed membership list may be complete, please make payment to the Treasurer, Mrs. Ione Alston, 20 Plattsburg Court, N. W. prior to December 1 - or see her in the lobby before the lecture at the December meeting.

THE GEMINIDS METEOR SHOWER is due December 10-12. Since full moon is the 13th, it will not be too good for seeing meteors. We have heard from the National Bureau of Standards that they will not be doing any meteor work for this shower, nor does the NCA have any plans for this occasion. Maybe we can arrange something for meteor-hunters. Anyone have any ideas?

-- Janet Perkins

YOUR VACATION FUND toward the convention in Dallas next July 4th should be well started. The Dallas convention committee have started their planning - have you?

PROFESSOR ANTONIO MARUSSI of the University of Trieste spoke on "THE MEASUREMENT OF THE SHAPE OF THE EARTH FROM ITS GRAVITATIONAL FIELD" at Georgetown Observatory's tenth Astronomical Colloquium.

TRIP TO WILLIAMS OBSERVATORY, HOOD COLLEGE, is being planned as STAR DUST goes to press. This trip was made before and those who went remember it with pleasure. Miss Allen extended the invitation at the time of her lecture here.

NEW MEMBERS

Fazekas, Miss Elizabeth M. 1005 Sligo Parkway, Takoma Park, Maryland. SH 6886
*Colborn, David, 6214 7th St., N. W., Washington 11, D. C. RA 8650

AFTER MANY REQUESTS by many persons (principally those connected with the Astronomical League) Bob Wright has secured a telephone. His new number is AShton 6748. Ask the operator for this number, as it is a 15 cent call, with the added reminder that over five minutes adds more nickels to the call.

THE PICNIC AND OBSERVATION PARTY at Miss Warthen's on November 10 was an outstanding affair. The delicious picnic supper served by Miss Warthen was enjoyed by 27 persons, who gathered around the tables set up in her home. One room seemed to be turned over to the younger element, who were deeply concerned with plans for entries in the Science Fair. Their focal point was Mr. Atkins, their science teacher. They had brought him along to show him what they are doing in astronomy.

Five telescopes were set up, and were in constant use during the evening. Warming-up periods were filled by looking at movies taken by Miss Warthen, movies in which many of those present saw themselves on convention and observatory trips. The following were present: George Borreson, Bob Wright, Janet Perkins, Irene Warthen, Mrs. Norris, Mrs. Alston, Elizabeth Goerner, Norma Leinhard, Mrs. Ambleau, Sylvia Bertolini, Lyle Johnson, Betty Fazekas, Don Hallinger, Mr. and Mrs. Morton Schiff, Margaret Glock, Thelma Cressy, David Fetter, William Doster, and Mr. and Mrs. Atkins and their children.

WELCOME, BETTY FAZEKAS, to membership in the NCA! (Many of us have known her a long time in the Norfolk group.)