

COMETS

The following reports are excerpted from the SAO Circular No. 1997 :

COMET WILD(1967c)

Dr. M. Schürer, Astronomical Institute, Bern University, cables that Mr. Paul Wild has discovered a comet as follows:

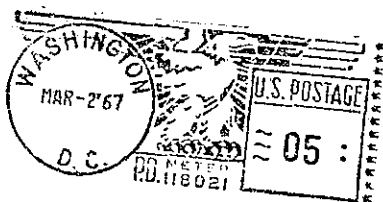
1967 UT	R.A.	Dec.	Mag.
Feb. 11.089	7h16.5m	81°45'	12

Object diffuse, with central condensation or nucleus, tail less than 1°

COMET SEKI(1967b)

1967 UT	R.A.	Dec.	Mag.
Feb. 10.553	19h10m	25°35'	10

Diffuse with nucleus.

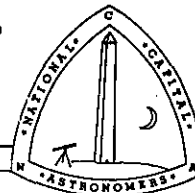


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579 ★ STAR DUST

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SOVIET ASTRONOMER TO ADDRESS NCA



Dr. D. D. Polojntsev is senior astronomer at the Pulkovo Observatory, USSR, and is head of the computing laboratory. He graduated from State University of Leningrad in 1952, and received his candidate's degree (equivalent to our Ph.D) in 1955. Dr. Polojntsev is a specialist in meridian astronomy and in using computers for the reduction of observational data. He participated in the Pulkovo Observatory expedition to South America for meridian circle observations of the Southern Reference Star Program. He is a member of the International Astronomical Union. Dr. Polojntsev is currently associated with the U.S. Naval Observatory in the Astrometry and Astrophysics Division on an exchange program.

Dr. Polojntsev will present a lecture about the history and present conditions at the Pulkovo Observatory including its scientific activity in astrometry, astrophysics, and radio astronomy. Featured will be colored slides of some of the Pulkovo Observatory instruments and buildings.

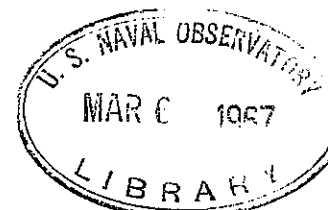
CALENDAR

MARCH 4 PULKOVO OBSERVATORY, YESTERDAY AND TODAY by Dr. D. D. Polojntsev in the Interior Department Auditorium at 8:15 P.M. The Interior Department is located on D St. between 18th and 19th Sts. Business meeting after the lecture.

Dinner with the speaker at 6:15 P.M. For further information and reservations please call: Mr. Anderson
OI-6-6324.

3,10,17,24 TELESCOPE MAKING CLASS at Chevy Chase Community Center from 7:30 to 10:00 P.M. with Hoy Walls.

3,17 TELESCOPE MAKING CLASS at McLean High School, McLean, Va. with Grady Whitney.



FEBRUARY LECTURE - TRANSIT CIRCLES

Our February speaker, Dr. B. L. Klock of the U.S. Naval Observatory, brought us up to date on recent developments in astronomy, the centuries-old branch of astronomy dealing with measurement of star positions. Astrophysics, radio astronomy have tended to overshadow this ancient but still very important scientific activity.

The principle tool of the positional astronomer is the transit circle telescope invented in 1704. It resembles a giant surveyor's transit except that it can turn only in the plane of the observer's meridian. The 6-inch transit circle at the Naval Observatory has determined star coordinates since 1895. It has been continually improved over the years for more precise measurements. An excellent description of this instrument appears in an article by a former NCA junior member, Paul Hemenway, in February, 1966 issue of *SKY AND TELESCOPE*.

Astronomers use great ingenuity in devising techniques for reducing observational errors made by transit instruments. Systematic errors are virtually eliminated by periodically reversing the instrument, rotating the circles, inverting the field of the observer optically, and so forth. Instrumental errors are minimized by the great precision in the design, construction, and mounting of transit telescopes. Observational accuracy is kept high by photographic recording of circle readings and automatic measuring of the resulting photographic record by equipment capable of punching data directly onto IBM punch cards. The Naval Observatory is constructing a 6-inch transit telescope, to be put into operation soon at Flagstaff, Arizona, which will have a 12-inch diameter, 2048 Pole Inductosyn that records precise position angles electronically.

So far all of the observing with the Naval Observatory's 6-inch transit circle has been done visually. A single observing program may require four to seven years for completion. However the Observatory is planning to build an automatic star tracker working on a photoelectric principle which will be capable of 0.05 second of arc accuracy.

Most of the star catalogues heretofore have been heavily weighted toward the northern hemisphere. However, three astrometric expeditions are headed for the southern hemisphere to remedy this shortcoming. The Naval Observatory is going to Argentina, the Germans to Australia, and Soviet astronomers to Chile.

Leith Holloway

CONVENTION REGISTRATION

We remind you again that the 1967 Astronomical League Convention will be held here in Washington. Bob Wright is still looking for at least sixty more early registrations. The fees are \$2.00 for individuals and \$3.00 for families. Let's get with it! See Bob Wright at the next meeting or put your check in the mail to him today.

CALL FOR CONVENTION WORKERS

Volunteers are needed to serve on the various convention committees: e.g. exhibits, registration, hospitality, banquet, etc. Take an active part in making this affair the success it should be. People are needed now to assist in the planning of the convention and more will be required during the convention to assist in many ways. Please call Bob Wright or any of the officers and let them know where you can help.

NEW MEMBERS

The following applied for membership at the February meeting:

Regular ... William E. Herget
1410 S. George Mason Dr.
Arlington, Va. 22204

Ernest E. Steinbrecher
3122 Friars Rd.
Bethesda, Md. 20034

Joint Jack and Deborah Warner
841 3rd. St., S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20024

ATTENTION METEOR BUFFS

We are in receipt of the following letter from the Big Sky Astronomical Society:

"We would appreciate if you would ask your members at your next meeting if they would be interested in doing some meteor observing for the Meteor Division of the Big Sky Astronomical Society.

"We would supply all forms for these members interested in doing meteor research for us."

Interested persons may contact Trudy Dellar, 931-1081, for the address.

CALENDAR (cont. from p. 1)

- 1, 8, 15, 22, TELESCOPE MAKING CLASS with Bill Isherwood at the Prince George's County Board of Education Materiel Center, Bladensburg, Md.
- 10 OBSERVING NIGHT AT THE 5-INCH on the grounds of the U.S. Naval Observatory with Larry White from 8:30 to 10:30 P.M.
- 18 DISCUSSION GROUP at 8:15 P.M., Department of Commerce, Room 2062 - - BOOK NIGHT, SHOW AND TELL