



Los Angeles Astronomical Society, Inc.

NEWS BULLETIN FOR MAY 1972

Volume 2 No. 5

A Letter from the President

Dear fellow member,

Summer is rapidly approaching, and with it a number of very special events in the life of our Society. The star party season opens this month, with our first star party scheduled for May 13th at our property in the Lockwood Valley. For directions, see any Board member at the general meeting or feel free to call me at 746-6897.

Our June star party will be on the 10th of that month, and will be held at Table Mountain. This is intended to be our one big membership-drive star party, and is being heavily publicized. We are, of course, hoping for a maximum turnout on the part of our own members. I urge each of you to take it upon yourself not only to come, but to bring with you any friends or acquaintances you may have who are interested in our group.

In addition to these and several other star parties, dates of which were announced in a previous bulletin, we are looking forward, of course, to the W.A.A. convention, to be held in August in Riverside. This is certainly a very convenient location for us, and it is my hope that we will be very well represented indeed. Elsewhere in this issue of our bulletin you will find detailed information on the convention.

Along the lines of conventions, the recent Riverside Telescope Makers' Conference was, according to all reports, a success. In particular we have ample reason to be proud of our own Norman James, whose 12½-inch sphere-mounted Cassegrain telescope took all four of the awards given by the judges, in the categories of mechanical ingenuity of design, optical excellence, mechanical excellence, and the overall category of best telescope. Certainly this recognition and honor could be no more richly deserved.

Finally, with the summer season ahead, it is a real pleasure to be able to announce that our optical shops are now operating on a regular basis under the leadership of Shop Director Jim Scarborough. Shops are open every Friday night from 7 until 9:30 on the fourth floor of the administration building at Belmont High School in Los Angeles. You will find more detailed information on the location elsewhere.

As you will note on our calendar, the general meeting is on Monday, May 8, and we will be having a delightful speaker with an intriguing-sounding subject. I am hoping to see all of you there and at the many other exciting functions of your Society in the months to come.

—Art Johnson
President

What is a Star Member?

When our Society had a chance to purchase land in Lockwood Valley for star parties and an observatory early in 1970, the idea seemed impossible. The Society's income from membership dues was not enough to pay for the land. After Mr. Millard Williams donated the down payment, President Ron McKnight and the Board of Directors established a new group within the Society whose members would make the land payments in return for certain special privileges on that land. This was the Star Member group.

Star Members may use the observatory site anytime, while regular members use only on designated star party nights, which are generally once a month during the spring, summer, and early fall. Star Members may purchase a concrete pad on the site for observing. These pads are circles eight feet in diameter with a hole in the middle to accommodate a permanent pier for a telescope. More than twenty pads have been purchased so far, and one pier has already been installed. When the observatory is completed, Star Members will have exclusive use of it on non-star party nights. At this time the observatory is about half completed.

Charter Star Members (those who joined when the group was established in 1970) pay \$30 per year in dues. Other Star Members pay an annual fee of \$50. Concrete pads cost \$20 one time only and remain the property of the Star Member purchaser until such time as he leaves the group.

Star Membership gives an amateur astronomer an opportunity to observe from a good location with a minimum of trouble, and to participate in the building of the observatory he or she will soon use. If you are interested in joining our group, you may do so at any general meeting of the Society, or by contacting Mr. Walter Deutsch or me.

—Mike Simmons

Dates on the L.A.A.S. Calendar

May 8, Monday, 7:45 p.m. General meeting at Griffith Observatory. Speaker: Dr. John A. Russell of the Astronomy Department at the University of Southern California. Professor Russell's topic: "The Ecology of the Perseids."

May 13, Saturday - May 14, Sunday. Star party at L.A.A.S. observatory site in Lockwood Valley.

May 30, Tuesday, 7:30 p.m. Board of Directors meeting, location to be announced by cards to members.

June 12, Monday, 7:45 p.m. General meeting at Griffith Observatory.

June 10, Saturday - June 11, Sunday. Public Star Party at Table Mountain. Details to be announced.

W.A.A. Convention set for August in Riverside

The following material on this year's convention is quoted from a brochure kindly supplied by Mr. Clifford Holmes of the Riverside Astronomical Society.

"We are very pleased to announce that the joint convention of the Western Amateur Astronomers and the Association of Lunar and Planetary Observers will convene August 16/17/18/19, 1972, in Riverside, California. Registration will begin August 15th...

The location is "Bannockburn" in Riverside, a fantastic and beautiful student housing center in a European style near the campus of the University of California at Riverside. Bannockburn is new and has modern, unique, and comfortable furnishings throughout. Facilities include a swimming pool, t.v. room, volleyball courts, dry sauna, meeting halls, dining commons, and the like. Nearby are complete stores, cleaners, restaurants and all you will need. The cost for these facilities is really quite low, and you can avoid costly hotel and motel bills by staying with the rest of us. The cost is:

Double, per person, per day	\$5.25
Breakfast, lunch, dinner per person per day	\$4.00
Total	\$9.25

The Saturday evening banquet will be prorated extra on meal service. Box lunches will be provided on field trips at no extra cost. If our group total should go below 150 persons at Bannockburn, the double per day cost will be increased by \$1.00 per person. With this in mind, you can't really afford to stay anywhere else! Right? The requirement would be, of course, that you sleep and eat at Bannockburn with the rest of us. We were very fortunate to get this package arrangement, and we feel sure that when you see it you will be as excited and pleased as we are...

Two exciting field trips are planned for you!

No. 1. Goldstone Deep Space Communications Center, near Barstow, California.

No. 2. Big Bears Solar Observatory.

Transportation will be provided by chartered and air-conditioned Continental Trailways busses at a low cost to you..."

Papers are welcomed for inclusion in the proceedings. Requirements are that papers be typed single-space on plain 8½ by 11 inch paper, with a one inch border all around. If you illustrate, use black ink or a sharp pencil. Photos should be contrasty, glossy prints. Length is limited to twenty-five pages. The paper chairmen are, for W.A.A. papers, Mr. William R. Smith, 1190 Villa, Apt. B, Riverside, California 92507; and for A.L.P.O. papers, Mr. Walter Haas, P.O. Box 3AZ, Las Cruces, New Mexico 88001. Papers must reach the respective chairman by July 15 to ensure their being included in the printed proceedings.

Presentation time for papers at the convention will be limited to fifteen minutes each.

Again quoting from the brochure, "Displays by groups or individuals are encouraged. If you have special requirements for your display, please let us know soon. Display areas will be provided and will be kept secure by attendants...Please submit all questions concerning the convention to the following address: Clifford W. Holmes, 8642 Wells Avenue, Riverside, California 92503."

WIN A 6" REFLECTOR!

As a means of raising money to complete our observatory in Lockwood Valley, the Star Member group is raffling off a fine telescope. A 6" reflector of highest quality, manufactured by the Cave Optical Co., will be awarded to the person whose ticket stub is drawn from a fishbowl at the star party on June 10. Tickets are \$1 each, and you may purchase as many chances as you wish. According to Mike Simmons, if every member of the Society purchased three tickets, the observatory could be completed. You may obtain tickets from Mike or any Star Member at the May meeting and star party, or by writing to him at 7522 Jamieson Avenue, Reseda 91335.

Observing/Special Interest Groups Meeting

Most of our special interest and observing groups have already had their first meetings, and most of them have been quite successful. It's not too late to join! Group leaders are:

ASTROPHYSICS: J. Howard Parsons

ASTROPHOTOGRAPHY: Mike Simmons

PLANETARY OBSERVATION: Chris Connaly

VARIABLE STARS: Jerry Bilodeau

OCCULTATIONS: Art Johnson

FLARE STARS: Doug Duncan

ECLIPSE OBSERVATIONS: Gary Fowzer

BEGINNING PRACTICAL ASTRONOMY: Gary Fowzer

The last two groups will hold a short organizational meeting at 7:15 (before the main meeting) Monday, May 8th at Griffith Observatory. All of these groups welcome new members. Join us!

—Doug Duncan
Vice-President