



Los Angeles Astronomical Society, Inc.

MONTHLY BULLETIN FOR MARCH 1973

Volume 3, No. 3

A Letter From the President

Dear fellow member,

I was gratified at the large number of you who were able to make your way down to the U.S.C. campus for our February meeting. This month we return to our more usual home, Griffith Observatory, for our general meeting, which is next Monday evening the 12th. An excellent program is in store, featuring as speaker one of our own members, Mr. Howard Parsons. Our vice-president, Tom Cragg, will preside over the meeting, as I will be kept from attending by a musical production I am involved in at school. You know how it is!

I am pleased to announce that Mike Simmons has agreed to undertake the job of News Bulletin Editor for the Society. It's a big job, as the past two years or so have taught me, and I am glad to be able to pass the editorial flame, if that is the right phrase, to such an able and conscientious recipient.

Special thanks are due to Jerry Bilodeau, who has arranged for our new membership cards. I just got mine (after receiving a "Second Notice" from Wanda Giblin, I blush to confess!) and think the new cards are mighty pretty. Real gold ink on blue card stock. It was enough to make me kinda glad I paid up...

Also I want to express my thanks, and yours also, I'm sure, to Wanda for typing up a new membership roster. This roster is now being printed in quantity, and copies will be available free of charge at the March and April general meetings.

Art Johnson
President

GENERAL MEETING

Our next general meeting will be March 12 at 7:45 pm at the Griffith Observatory. Mr. Howard Parsons will be our featured speaker. He will talk to us about a new optical testing method he has developed using lasers to examine interference patterns. Mr. Parsons, an LAAS member, was recently honored for this development at our Awards Banquet where he received the Optics Award.

NEW MEMBERS

We are always happy to welcome new members into our Society. The following applicants were accepted for membership at the Board of Directors January and February meetings:

Michael King, Josh Levin, Todd Lyons, Sam Walters, Jayne Gladney, Robert Barton, William Buffinger, Arnold Grossman, Dana Patchick, Kevin Priscilla, David Silvers, Steve Trever, James Walker, and Dr. Ned Walker.

Welcome to the LAAS!

STAR MEMBER REPORT

The February 3 and March 3 star parties were rained out. The next attempt at a star party will be March 31. As usual, any general member wishing to attend may contact me at 345-1243 for permission to come as a guest. Any other star member may also give permission.

It was reported at the February 19 meeting that the 14-1/2" telescope has been disassembled for cleaning and repairs. It should be back in operation for our March 31 star party. Dave Sovereign is designing the electronics for the observatory. Howard Parsons is designing the telescope base. Steve Kufeld has offered to re-aluminize the mirrors. Dave Gilmore has supplied high and low temperature silicone grease, and Norm Muir has already made use of it, repacking the declination bearings. Let's hope we get as much work done with the telescope when it's mounted in the observatory as we have done on it in the past few weeks.

The roof is scheduled to be built during the Memorial Day weekend. We will have two work parties to prepare for it - April 21 (last-quarter moon that evening) and May 12. We will need all the help we can get.

Speaking of help, the Star Members have struggled along the last few years with funds for construction coming almost entirely from their dues. While we have received some donations, we can't help being envious of a neighboring society that was recently given \$10,000, or the Stanford students who are completing a \$45,000 observatory with donations. If there are any philanthropists in the crowd, let them speak now.

The next Star Member meeting will be March 19 at 7:30 at the Palms Recreation Center, National and Overland in West Los Angeles. We would like to see as many Star Members there as possible.

- Mike Simmons

ESSAY: Why I Enjoy Astronomy by Ephraim Merritt

The very thought of a December or January star party, with the temperature dropping well below the magic number of 32 degrees F. can simultaneously send shivers down my spine and send a thrill of hope and expectation through my whole being.

The temperature is something tangible with which I can contend through preparation, but the thrill of seeing the little pockets of beauty and mystery in the heavens makes it all worth while. This is true even though only one trip out of three or four delivers the hoped-for views.

If it were possible to see the winter sky during the summer months, it would probably be different, but then the summer sky holds thrills of its own. Who would want to compare the Pleiades with Saturn, or the cluster in Hercules, or the Lagoon Nebula, or any one of dozens of beautiful galaxies, or the glorious sights in Sagittarius, or the Ring Nebula, or the colors of the Orion Nebula, or, or, or. The list is endless, and each one is incomparable.

As I look at these awesome sights, and contemplate their pasts, presents, distances, sizes, and the things I don't know about them, my ego declines, my problems and incapacibilities diminish, and I find

myself contemplating the creator of these exalting sights. Whether by a big bang, or by simply establishing the laws of nature by which these things are is not of consequence to me. I find suddenly that The God of Nature, which include me, has grown in stature in a way that I would never have realized had it not been for some of those uncomfortable nights at the eyepiece of my little telescope, and I am thankful. I find also that I have a new appreciation for Job 38, Psalm 146, Isaiah 40, and from them, a greater appreciation for all of the Scriptures.

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STAR PARTY DATES ANNOUNCED

Here are the dates established by the Board of Directors at its last meeting for Society star parties during the coming season. All are Saturday evenings.

June 2, June 30, July 28, August 25, September 22.

These star parties will be held at the Society's site in the Lockwood Valley unless otherwise announced in future bulletins.

DATES ON THE L.A.A.S. CALENDAR

- March 12, Monday, 7:45 pm, Griffith Observatory - GEN. MEETING
- March 19, Monday, 7:30 pm, Palms Rec. Ctr. - STAR MEMBER MTG.
- March 26, Monday, 7:30 pm, Griffith Obs'y. - BOARD OF DIRECTORS
- April 9, Monday, 7:45 pm, Griffith Obs'y. - GENERAL MEETING

CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS

Seeking Jaegers 5" f/5 achromat for eclipse photography this summer. New or used. Phone Art Johnson at 747-3670.

FOR SALE - 1 - 2" aluminum coated flat & 8-1/2" mirror, 63" F.L., + 1" prism.

- 1 - Springfield mount
- 1 - metal tube for mirror & mount
- 1 - Kellner 1" coated eyepiece
- 2 - Scientific American books on telescope making.

Price: make offer. Stanley E. Doran, 3115 Glenridge Ave., Alhambra, California. (213) 284-8844.

F I R S T C L A S S M A I L



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