



Los Angeles Astronomical Society



CALENDAR

- May 12 General meeting - Kinsey Auditorium, California Museum of Science & Industry, Exposition Park, 7:45 p.m. (Same location as March and April.)
- May 17 Star party/work party - Lockwood Valley
- May 19 Star member meeting - Palms Recreational Center, Overland Avenue near the Santa Monica Freeway, 7:45 p.m.
- JUNE 2 ~~May 26~~ Executive Board of Directors meeting - Palms Recreational Center, location and time as above.

GENERAL MEETINGS

Highlighting the May meeting will be Dr. Edwin C. Krupp, acting director of Griffith Observatory. His topic, "Twilight of the Gods: Ancient Astronauts," will put in scientific perspective a subject which has recently enjoyed widespread appeal via the popular writings of Erich Von Däniken. Don't miss this one!

The June 9 meeting will be a joint venture with the Polaris Astronomical Society and the Polaris Observatory Association at Griffith Observatory's planetarium theater. Mount Wilson astronomer and LAAS'er Thomas Cragg will use the Zeiss planetarium projector to guide us on "A Tour of the Summer Skies."

GRIFFITH OBSERVER

As reported last month, treasurer Alfred Bond, in a letter to the Los Angeles City Park Commission, appealed the recent decision to hike the Griffith Observer subscription rate by a whopping 68 percent. After reading the letter and accepting sympathetic testimony from Griffith Observatory's Dr. E.C. Krupp, the Commission agreed to make an exception by accepting our offer to suffer a twenty percent rather than a 68 percent increase. In return for this consideration, we have been asked to continue serving the public as we have in past years by providing public star parties and telescope clinics. What better opportunity to renew our ties with Griffith? We are indeed grateful to Al Bond for his efforts and Dr. Krupp for his support. The twenty percent rate hike will in no way affect dues.

LUNAR ECLIPSE

The LAAS has been invited to host a public 'eclipse party' on the front lawn of Griffith Observatory, Saturday evening, May 24.

	h	m		h	m
Moon enters penumbra	7	59	p.m. PDT	Leaves	1 38 a.m. PDT
Moon enters umbra	9	00	" "	Leaves	12 36 " "
Totality begins	10	03	" "	Ends	11 33 p.m. "
Mid-eclipse	10	48	" "		

Bring your telescope; the greater the participation, the more enjoyable will be the event. See you there!

STAR PARTIES

All star parties in 1975 will be held at the LAAS Lockwood Valley site. Directions will be provided upon request at general meetings. Plan to arrive at the site

before dark. Remember, facilities are minimal; no water, no electricity, one outhouse. Anticipate subfreezing temperatures--bring warm clothing and hot coffee (tennis shoes and windbreakers just won't do). Courtesy and safety must be observed by all and don't forget to haul out ALL your trash (including aluminum can pop-tops and cigarette butts). Star parties are planned for the following Saturday evenings: May 17, June 7, July 12, August 9, September 6, and October 4. Members attending the May star party will have an opportunity to use the new 16-inch reflector, described in last month's Bulletin.

LOCKWOOD REPORT

Reminder to star members: Dues are due and payable by May 1st. Construction activities cannot be budgeted until dues are collected. Please make checks payable to the Los Angeles Astronomical Society, and mail them directly to treasurer Alfred Bond, 6204 Condon Ave., Los Angeles, Calif. 90056. Please indicate "star membership renewal" somewhere on check.

Star members met April 21 to discuss installation of observatory floor and telescope pier. A work party to grade and form floor and pier was set for May 17, same day as the star party. General members will have a firsthand opportunity to watch star members in action. Again, members storing equipment in the observatory are reminded to remove it by no later than May 17. Everything remaining will be placed outdoors. Star party-goers should be happy to learn that the next project to be undertaken by the star member committee will be restroom facilities. This decision was made shortly after strong gusts toppled the outhouse last winter. If sufficient funds are available this summer, the entire observing area will be graveled, thus alleviating the dust problem.

This past winter the LAAS land management committee (oh yes, we have lots of committees) met for the first time since shortly after acquisition of the site in 1970. The most suitable location for a clubhouse, well, power poles and future observatory structures was discussed. Recommendations will be made to the star member committee in a forthcoming report.

TELESCOPE CONFERENCE

This year's Riverside Telescope Makers conference on May 10-11 has been moved to Camp Oaks, located east of Big Bear City on Highway 38, at Lake Williams Estate Road. Weekend lodging in heated dormitories is \$13 and includes four meals, but amateurs must bring their own bedding. Motel accommodations and campgrounds are available nearby. Reservations and a \$1 registration fee are being handled by Philip Wolfe, 8952 San Vicente Ave., Riverside, Calif. 92503.

SUMMER TRAVELERS

If you are traveling through western Texas on your vacation this summer, you may wish to visit McDonald Observatory. Visitors' night is on the last Wednesday of each month when the 82-inch Struve reflector is available for public viewing. Daily tours of the 107-inch telescope are also given. For reservations send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to Marcia Newberry, McDonald Observatory, Box 1337, Fort Davis, Texas 79734.

AN EVENING OBJECT

As the month of May begins, with it comes warmer nights and hints of the magic of summer. It all adds up to a lazy kind of feeling which keeps one from being motivated enough to grab the ol' telescope setting in the corner and running out to do some star-gazing, especially since the friendly winter sky has just gone over the hill and into the sunset. After losing what we've all become accustomed to calling our best friend we certainly don't feel like going out to look at the dull spring sky. However, the sky above always holds some hidden gem just waiting to be seen for

the first time by someone, whether it be in the winter or in spring. Such an object is NGC 4038/9 in the constellation Corvus, which is just past the meridian in early May as twilight begins.

This galaxy seems to collect little attention from amateurs and it is probably due to the fact that it is lost to the vast expanses of the Virgo cluster just north of Corvus. The best way to describe NGC 4038/9 is probably by the name that it goes by which is the "ringtailed galaxy." It is so named because it is a double galaxy that, seemingly, is splitting apart. The best part is that through the telescope one can actually see the two stuck together in a manner that is very similar to the way a clam looks when it is halfway opened. Another downfall to the popularity of this galaxy is its poor magnitude listing. The Atlas Coeli catalogue gives NGC 4038 the following specifications: Photographic magnitude 11.0, apparent diameter 2.5 x 2.5 minutes of arc, and its type Sc. And of course the coordinates for your setting circles, friends, are R.A. 11h59m, Dec -18°35m. The catalogue doesn't even list the companion galaxy which is right next to it! In this case, the visual magnitude has been omitted, probably because of insufficient data. This observer finds that in spite of the fact that the galaxy is a small, open spiral, it appears to be slightly brighter visually than the facts would indicate. The spring sky is full of objects listed as faint, but, surprisingly, they turn up bright. In the immediate vicinity of NGC 4038/9 there are about half a dozen galaxies, all within reach of a good six inch glass combined with an equally keen eye.

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ASTRO CALENDAR

- May 5 Meteor shower - Eta Aquarids. Maximum of twenty-one per hour (BAA Handbook). This shower is usually good from about the first of the month to the 8th of May. With the moon near new, the chances for a favorable view are very good.
- May 24 Total lunar eclipse - Information provided elsewhere in Bulletin.
- May 24 Venus and Saturn will form a neat pair this evening, Venus being approximately three degrees north of Saturn.

Dana Patchick

CLASSIFIED

For sale: 36 exposure rolls of Kodak 103-af astrophotographic film. \$2.50 per roll. See Sam Sjogren at the general meetings or call at (213) 628-1433.

For sale: 8-inch Celestron Pacific in excellent condition. Complete with visual and photographic accessories. Exceeds Celestron's April-May offer! Asking \$1200. John T. Allton, (213) 798-0389.

EDITOR'S NOTE

Submission of Bulletin materials, including articles, information, and ads, should be forwarded to Lewis Chilton, Bulletin editor, 1951 So. Shenandoah St., Apt. #10, Los Angeles, Calif. 90034.

All other inquiries and correspondence should be directed to the Los Angeles Astronomical Society, Box 27787, Los Feliz Station, Los Angeles, Calif. 90027. Please indicate on envelope the general nature of your correspondence or to whom it is being directed.

-Lewis Chilton

