

STAR DUST

Vol. 7, No. 7

April, 1961

THIS MONTH'S MEETING

The Date: April 13, at 8:15 pm.
The Speaker: Mr. Peter G Lockner, of Calgary
The Subject: Recent Hypotheses in Astronomy and Cosmology
The Place: The Queen Elizabeth Planetarium
Refreshments will be served at close of meeting

THE ANNUAL NATIONAL MEETING by Ian McLennan

Three members of the Edmonton Centre of the R.A.S.C. ventured down to Toronto recently for the Annual National Meeting of the Society. Our President, Franklin Loehde, Vice-President Ian McLennan, and former president Earl Milton arrived in Toronto in time for an informal meeting with two former Edmonton Centre members, Arthur Dalton and Dick Henry, before taking in the various sessions held in conjunction with the annual meeting. Following the Andrew McKellar Memorial Lecture, delegates to the National Meeting browsed through displays set up by the various centres represented. The Edmonton Centre display was well received by all those attending. Special thanks are due to George Williams, whose artistic talents added much to our Toronto display. In addition to the impressive display depicting the many activities of the Edmonton Centre, all three Edmonton Delegates delivered talks during the meeting's paper session. Franklin Loehde spoke on the Role of Our Astronomical Society in Today's Neighborhood, a talk in which he attempted to illustrate the many ways the RASC could help foster wider interest in astronomy especially among younger people. Ian McLennan spoke on the Role of a Planetarium in the Astronomical Society, and gave a brief report on the method by which the City of Edmonton produced the Queen Elizabeth Planetarium. Earl's (Milton) impressive lecture dealt with findings of a scientific committee which studied the Bruderheim Meteorite fall in Northern Alberta a year ago. Earl's description of the way in which many of the meteorite fragments found their way into the local beer parlor provided a refreshing lift to the otherwise scientific presentation.

The highlight of the Edmonton visit to Toronto was, of course, our invitation to the National Council to hold next year's meeting in Edmonton. A letter from Mayor Elmer Roper urging the Council to choose Edmonton for the 1962 Annual Meeting was read to the Council, in which use of the Planetarium was offered as a meeting place for business and social activities during the meeting. No decision has yet been reached regarding the Edmonton Centre hosting the 1962 meeting. It is hoped however, that centres across Canada will voice support for our proposal. We feel it would add great stimulus to Western Canadian RASC centres, as they would participate in preparations for the meeting. In this way, the RASC can fulfil its scope as a NATIONAL organization for the betterment of astronomy everywhere in Canada.

Star Night

The first STAR NITE ever to be staged in Edmonton is proposed for the third week in May. This could be a truly big production, and help put some badly needed funds into our (gulp) treasury. So far, plans for the STAR NITE are quite tentative because we feel it will take many people to organize the event. If you're interested, please come to our April meeting and participate in the workshop we have planned following the meeting. We hope to get all the ideas we can in order to make this project the success it should have with the present interest in Space Research. Plan now to work on STAR NITE.

ASTROPHOTOGRAPHY --Bill Cable

Photographing the heavens can be a very rewarding phase of Astronomy. There are three methods of making photographs through a telescope:

1. Placing film at focal point of your objective;
2. Placing film above exit point of your eyepiece;
3. Placing your camera set at infinity above exit point of your eyepiece.

Each of the above methods has certain advantages:

1. Gives the sharpest image;
2. Yields a large image;
3. Enables the highest power to be used.

On the other hand, there are also certain disadvantages with each method:

- Method 1 gives a small image;
- Method 2 causes difficulty in finding the focal point;
- Method 3 results in loss of light by way of eyepiece and camera lens.

Other photographs can be made by attaching your camera to the side of your telescope and tracking whole star groups.

Outside of short moon shots, a time exposure is needed, and this makes an equatorial mount a must. However, one made from pipe fitting can be made to work very nicely, and is well worth the time and effort both in viewing and photographing.

DECLINING ATTENDANCE AT MEETINGS

At the March meeting of the Centre, the President commented on the fact that the attendance at the monthly meetings had dropped somewhat, and that some members who found it hard to get to the Planetarium as a result of having no car, would prefer to have the meetings held at the University as before. There is, of course, nothing in either constitution or by-laws to tie us down to either one place or another. It is entirely a matter for consideration by the members as to which would be most desirable. After some discussion, it was decided to place the matter before the members in a questionnaire (to be drawn up by the executive) to be circulated with the present issue of STARDUST. So far, the Editor (who is also a member of the Executive) has had no word on the subject. However, we feel the matter is of such importance that some mention of it should be made at this time.

So far as the Planetarium is concerned, there are, of course, a number of arguments in its favor. It is an attractive building in itself, can seat from 60 to 70 persons comfortably, and has convenient kitchen facilities. In addition, it gets the benefit of all the publicity which the City of Edmonton gives to the Planetarium. In the University, at least in the Arts Building, we were often pressed for time, and such kitchen facilities as we possessed were often remote from the lecture room. As Professor Keeping informed us, however, the situation is considerably changed as a result of the opening of the new Science-Math Building. A number of lecture rooms or small auditoriums are available, with very adequate seating capacity, and good kitchens nearby. A further important advantage, of course, is the availability of science equipment for demonstrating various technical aspects of optics and astro-physics.

The University connection is something which the Society cannot afford to shake off lightly. Our centre was founded by a University professor: the cream of our lecturers in the past, with the exception of a few able laymen, have been University men; and any hope we have of an Observatory in the near future is probably in the University's hands (unless anyone has an alternative suggestion to offer). Personally, we feel that even more important than the place of meeting is the calibre of the material we present.

It would be better to have less publicity unless we have something of real value to give to those who are persuaded to attend our meetings. Hence, whether our meetings are held in the University or at the Planetarium, we do feel we should avail ourselves to the utmost of the services of the trained science and mathematics teachers we are fortunate enough to have associated with us.

There may be other things that tend to deter people from attending our meetings. Ragged business sessions, non-adherence to the ordinary rules for running meetings, lack of punctuality in both opening and closing--all these might well have a detrimental effect on attendance. Apart from matters of routine, decisions on policy should be made only by the duly constituted authorities, the executive, the council, or the general meeting. Decisions made out of order are not legally binding on the society. Perhaps a copy of "Rules of Procedure" in our library would be helpful.

Personal

Stuff We expect that the next issue of STARDUST will be the last one in which we shall have a hand as Editor. We expect, indeed, to be on the high seas before the May issue is off the press; and we have a heavy program for next year. These three years as Editor of STARDUST have been pleasant ones, although we confess we do hope our successor will have more luck in extracting reports from reluctant contributors than we have had during the present year. Whoever he may be, may we bespeak for him the loyal support of all members. Goodbye and good luck!

Satellite Shower,
February, 1913

On the grounds that "negative evidence" is sometimes useful, our good friend Alex Stockwell forwards us a letter from the Vermilion Standard to the effect that no reports of any such shower were made in the pages of the Standard, nor do any of the older staff members recall any such spectacular shower being observed at that time.

From O.W. Colley,

From Calgary, Mr. Colley writes us a very kind note in appreciation of STARDUST, and goes on to say: "Truly, I think you are doing a wonderful job, and I am proud of that wonderful aggregation of young men at Edmonton who are taking a grand interest in Astronomical work." This, young men, for your edification.

"Old Timer"

STARDUST, published monthly from October to May inclusive.
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