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# Stardust

A Monthly Newsletter of the  
Royal Astronomical Society of Canada  
Edmonton, Centre

STARDUST

APRIL 1966 \*\*\*\*\*

SEE THE GREAT  
GREAT NEBULA IN ORION.....  
A BREEDING PLACE OF STARS \*\*\*\*\*

APRIL MEETING NOTICE  
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THE MONTHLY meeting of the Edmonton Centre, Royal Astronomical Society of Canada will be held at the QUEEN ELIZABETH PLANETARIUM on Thursday, April 14th, beginning at 08:15 p.m. sharp. President W. J. CABLE will preside.

THE FEATURE SPEAKER for this meeting will be Mr. John HOWELL, Calgary Centre member, and the annual exchange speaker for this year. His presentation is titled: "The Search for Planet X." Dr. L. A. Bayrock is the Edmonton Centre member who will present a talk to the Calgary Centre at their meeting on April 13th.

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Sir Bernard LOVELL, renowned astronomer, author, of the Jodrell Bank Radio Observatory, will be in Calgary April 15th to open a new science tower on the University of Alberta, Calgary Campus. He will address invited guests afterward. This will not be open to the general public.

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Condolences are extended to the Centre's President, W. J. CABLE, and family, on their recent bereavement. Mr. Cable's father passed away on March 12th.

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Mr. J. D. HERBERT, Director of the Manitoba Museum of Man and Nature, paid a visit to the planetarium recently. He will head the above complex which will feature a major planetarium. The DOW Planetarium is now officially open; Canada's first MAJOR planetarium, under Mr. Donald D. DAVIS. See latest issue SKY and TELESCOPE magazine.

On May 2nd, a new show, "MANSIONS OF THE SUN" will commence at the Queen Elizabeth Planetarium. The planetarium staff is currently engaged in the preparation of aforementioned production. As usual, all members welcome.

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It is hoped the Queen Elizabeth Planetarium will have purchased a 10" reflecting telescope for use by the public, by the month of June. Efforts in this direction are being vigorously pursued by the Director.  
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PART TWO of John P. DAY'S winning essay "Little-known Phenomena in Astronomy and Meteorology". See March issue, STARDUST, for part one.

.....Another question: "Why are earthquakes usually followed by meteors?"  
This is not exactly that. But enough earthquakes are accompanied by, or followed by, an unusual amount of meteors to dismiss chance. Could it be that earthquakes send large amounts of meteoric material high into the atmosphere? A likely story!

While we are having fun with meteors, we notice two things: First, meteorites seem to avoid populated centres. Second, a lot of them land in certain areas and only a few elsewhere. The first problem may be put down to chance, but surely some populated areas would have been hit. Something's funny here. This could be used as a base for a discussion on metaphysics and physics, but that's not what I'm concerned with, not, at least, in this presentation.

Nor are we going to fool around with meteorology for a while. And what better way can one begin than with rain?

Red rains, green rains, purple rains, pink rains, any colour rain you wish have fallen. It is generally believed that sediment, etc., is carried up by winds and stays up until surrounding water vapour condenses. Down comes the rain and with a colour at that! Yet in 1846 two chemists noted that corpuscles (not necessarily blood corpuscles) and organic matter comprised 35% of the rainfall sample. Another sample revealed bilge, that is, dirty water. Other samples in 1846 showed incense,

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lumps of paste; hair like and edible substance, feathers, cereal and slag. Someone reduced a sample to .0002% of the original volume and found no precipitation. Dead and living animals have come down; and mostly of one, and only one, species. Sometimes even luminous rains have come down. We have a lot to learn and to explain about rain.

Another phenomenon, fairly well-known but yet very puzzling, is ball lightning. Its existence cannot be denied, and neither can its peculiar behaviour. (THIS IS THE END OF PART TWO. PART THREE WILL APPEAR IN A FUTURE ISSUE OF STARDUST).

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PLEASE NOTE -- AS PRODUCTION EDITOR WALTER FRANIEL WILL SOON BE LEAVING ON AN EXTENDED HOLIDAY IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO SUSPEND THE NEXT TWO ISSUES OF STARDUST PENDING HIS RETURN -- POSTCARDS WITH MEETING NOTIFICATION WILL HAVE TO SUFFICE IN LIEU OF THE ABOVE -- Members will be informed re the above.



PRESIDENT - W. J. CABLE

THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE: "The pages of Stardust are too full of Planetarium notes.....!!!" This is a remark made by a member of the Centre. What has happened to the Observer's Group? Some of these young members have observed a worthwhile object or taken a worthwhile photograph. Let your Editor, George Williams know, for this is the only way others of the Centre are able to know what is going on. How many have viewed the sun lately? After a long absence, sunspots are once again appearing on the disc; I have recorded a couple of nice sized groups. Jupiter will be fast leaving us as the western horizon is brighter longer. Now is also a good time to start to watch for Noctilucent clouds since the western horizon is light until after 8 p.m. The weather has been ideal for observing and the best optical instrument is available to all.....the human eye.

W. J. CABLE

GALAXIES:

IN THE FEBRUARY STARDUST there is a "road map" of the Coma-Virgo cluster of galaxies. 34 galaxies are plotted on this map, all listed by their New General Catalogue number (NGC), some by a Messier number (M).

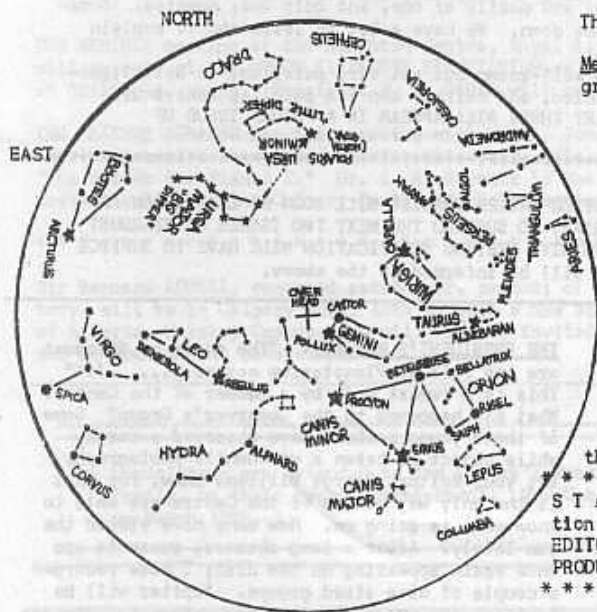
To find these galaxies one must first locate Epsilon Virgo from the finder chart. Use the lowest power eyepiece available. If you are using a reflector, invert the chart. With a refractor it is preferable NOT to use the diagonal because this results in an image that is right side up, but left for right.

From Epsilon proceed westward, identifying the associations of stars marked on the map. Where a galaxy is marked, but you can't see anything, try looking off to one side with your attention on where the galaxy should be. This is called averted vision and it takes practice to use this effect most effectively. With a 6" reflector I have seen all of these galaxies, and most of the Messier objects marked on the chart are visible with binoculars.

Robert ALLIN

OBSERVING REPORT: In the month of March, 37 variable stars were observed by Robert Allin. These ranged from 6th magnitude to nearly 13th magnitude. There are many variable stars that can be observed with small telescopes or binoculars. If anyone is interested contact Robert ALLIN, at 488 - 7680.

FOR SALE: 3" Unitron Equatorial Refractor. 6" f-8 Reflector, 1/10 wave optics, 2" finder. Robert Allin, 488 - 7680, 10038-110 Street, #7.



The night sky in April ---  
40° North latitude. Approx. 9 p.m.

The planets for April, 1966:

**Mercury** - On the 18th it is at greatest western elongation, but this is an unfavourable elongation, Mercury being only about 10° above the eastern horizon at sunrise.

**Venus** - On the 6th about 18° above the south-eastern horizon at sunrise. **Mars** - Too close to the sun for observation.

**Jupiter** - Moving from Taurus into Gemini, it is past the meridian at sunset and sets before midnight. **Saturn** - A morning star rising about an hour before the sun. The earth is in the plane of the rings on the 2nd.

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**STARDUST** is a monthly publication of the Edmonton Centre, R.A.S.C.  
 EDITOR - G. E. WILLIAMS  
 PRODUCTION - Walter FRANKEL  
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LETTERS to the Editor are welcome and should be sent to: Editor, Stardust, c/o Parks and Recreation Dept., City Hall, Edmonton, Alta.