

# Stardust

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

## MAY MEETING

### NOTICE



Mr. John HOWELL, main speaker of April Meeting.



Mr. HOWELL and Mr. SIEWERT discussing possibilities of constructing and operating a radio telescope. (Mr. WEISS is an electronics specialist)

THE MONTHLY meeting of the Edmonton Centre, Royal Astronomical Society of Canada will be held at the QUEEN ELIZABETH PLANETARIUM on Thursday, May 12th, starting promptly at 08:15 p.m. President W. J. CABLE will preside.

There is a possibility that we will have a meteorological film titled: "Above the Horizon." This is a new National Film Board release, and should be quite interesting, and informative. In addition, Mr. Gary Shearman will lead a brief discussion on, (you guessed it!), U.F.O's!! However the main interest in this meeting will be, weather permitting, observing.

Members are urged to bring their telescopes, binoculars, etc., and we will be setting up in front of the planetarium. For further details, phone W. J. CABLE at the planetarium.

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As many of you may know by now, Walter FRANIEL, along with thousands of other Polish patriots, will NOT be going to Poland to participate in their millenium celebrations of Christianity in Poland. The present government in Poland apparently frowns upon freedom of religion, among other things.

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Mr. John HOWELL, Calgary Centre member, and annual exchange speaker for this year, gave a most enjoyable talk at the April Meeting. "The Search for Planet X" was the title of his talk. A lively discussion period followed.

THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE: During the past month, observing has been from good to fair to poor and now back to good with the moon in the sky. I spent a very pleasant evening with Angus Smith and his telescope. Angus has turned a dream for many into a reality for himself. The work and care with which he has used in building his observatory is an outstanding credit to him. If you have not seen the instrument as yet, do so, but give Angus a call first.

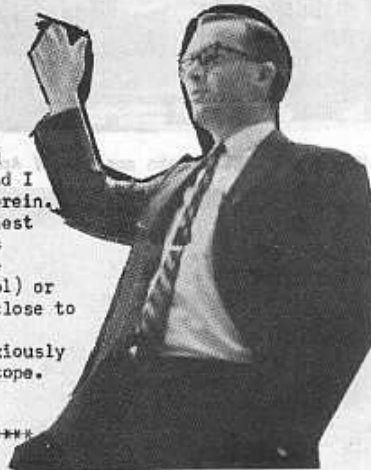
W. J. CABLE

We note in the April, 1966, Sky and Telescope issue, page 196 an article "New Skies for a New City" by Donald D. Davis, Dow Planetarium, City of Montreal the following, quote: "With this title for its initial lectures, Canada's first major planetarium begins operation on April 4th in....." end of quote. (Underlining is mine. ed.) For the correct information of all interested parties, the Dow Planetarium is not the first planetarium in Canada, nor is it the first major planetarium in Canada, neither is it a major planetarium in Canada. First of all, the Queen Elizabeth Planetarium is the first planetarium (public) in Canada, officially opened in September, 1960. Secondly, according to Webster's Seventh New Collegiate Dictionary, Copyright 1965 by G & C Merriam Co., based on Webster's Third New International Dictionary, Copyright 1961 by G & C Merriam Co., the word major is defined as follows: 1. greater in dignity rank, importance, or interest. In view of the fact that the Dow Planetarium has just opened, in all fairness we could hardly apply this definition as implied by D.D.Davis in the above quoted article. No, I say, let us call the Dow Planetarium what it is, namely, the biggest planetarium in Canada at the present time. Nothing more, (yet) nothing less, (yet) size of a planetarium is one thing; quality is quite a different matter!

EDITOR

OBSERVING NOTES by Mr. D. RODGER

I've always enjoyed the springtime sky for observing. And one of my favorite areas for study has been the cluster of galaxies in Coma Berenices and Virgo. In the February issue of Stardust, Robert Allin published a chart of this area. Armed with this and the recently completed 12½" reflector at the Smith Observatory, Angus and I have seen many of the Messier and NGC objects therein. The Smith telescope is undoubtedly one of the finest instruments of its type in western Canada. It is still in its proving months but one need only see the Ring nebula in Lyra, the Whirlpool Galaxy (M51) or the Hercules Cluster (M13) with it to feel very close to the depths of the Universe. We at the Queen Elizabeth Planetarium are now anxiously awaiting the arrival of our 10 inch Nelson Telescope. We will advise you when it does arrive!



Mr. Dave RODGER, Director,  
QUEEN ELIZABETH PLANETARIUM

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Members of the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada and astronomers everywhere were saddened by the loss of a great Canadian astronomer, Dr. Robert M. PETRIE. His recent death leaves a great abyss in the ranks of Canadian astronomers, a gap that will indeed be hard to fill in this high bidding society. "And starry Gemini hang like growing crowns, Over Orion's grave low down in the west."

Tennyson's Maud.

Many Edmonton Centre members will recall that Dr. Petrie addressed the Edmonton Centre several years ago.

NEW PLANETARIUM SHOW --- "MANSIONS OF THE SUN" --- THROUGHOUT MAY AND JUNE 1966  
In Mansions of the Sun, the Zodiac is explained in both ancient and modern terms. This leads into a close-up look at the Sun and the awesome spectacle of a total solar eclipse. Finally, the sun is compared to some of the stars in the Zodiac in light of modern discoveries about the Universe. (Page 2) S T A R D U S T M A Y 1966

PART THREE of John P. DAY'S winning essay "Little-known Phenomena in Astronomy and Meteorology." See March and April issue's of STARDUST for parts one and two.

.....Ball lightning acts as if it is controlled by intelligence. It is lethal to horses, cows, pigs, dogs, cats, birds, rhinoceroes, hippopotamuses, elephants, monkeys, snakes, and almost every other animal - save one. In no case has a human suffered a severe or permanent injury. It explodes when it touches a house (sometimes) and sometimes explodes without a sound. It seems to find doors and windows without missing.

I brought in ball lightning and the next two phenomena to lead up to a very well-known subject which could use some perspective.

Mirages have been badly explained say some. Between reflections, refractions, etc., we learn that practically all mirages are images of real things. Why this is so, is fairly well done in some aspects. But we have trouble with the "fata morgana", which nobody has given a satisfactory explanation about. With all due respect to scientists, I would like to suggest that we are inclined to use an explanation that we like. This is what happened with mirages, I think. Possibly this explains unsatisfactory explanations.

So much for mirages, both a well-known and little known happening. Now we shall briefly treat the aurora.

First let us examine what a skeptic's objections are:

1. One can explain that self-deception, exaggeration, hallucinations and deliberate deceit and so forth take a large part of it.

2. Earthly aircraft, meteors and other natural phenomena take a large part of it.

3. Mirages are a primary cause.

4. "The Aurora is a primary cause. But we have problems with these, and some of these claims are meaningless, for instance: 1. 63.77% of observers of flying saucers are reliable and well-trained. 2. Quite a few sightings cannot be explained by natural causes. 3. We know very little about mirages, but we do know that most are images of real objects. 4. We know even less about the aurora.

(THIS IS THE END OF PART THREE. THE FINAL PART, PART FOUR WILL APPEAR IN THE NEXT ISSUE OF STARDUST).



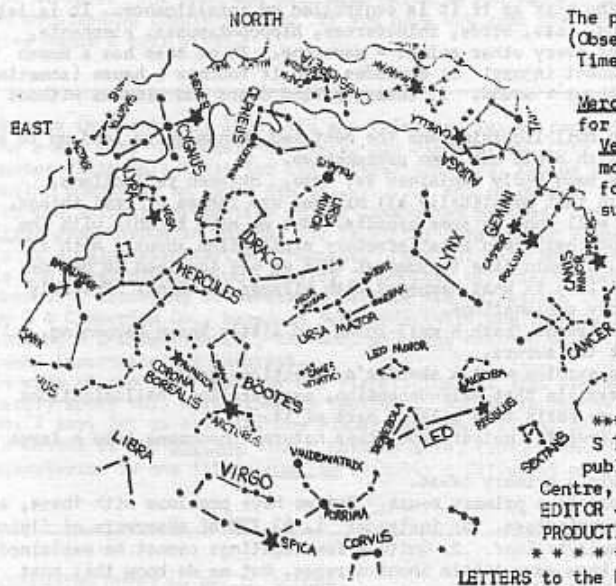
Professor E. S. KEEPING reads the Observer's Handbook points of interest.  
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Merle BLAGHUT, Observer's Representative delivers observing report.  
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**FOR SALE:** 6" f-12  
1/10 wave mirror and cell, or  
complete telescope on equatorial mounting. Robert ALLIN Phone 488\*7680

LETTER TO THE EDITOR: from Mr. C.H. SHEPHERD, Lethbridge, Alberta. He mentions he would like to be put on our mailing list, (which has been done) and also that he has recently completed an 8" reflector and is just getting started in some real astronomy. The Edmonton Centre wishes him well, and will be ready to assist him in any possible way should he encounter difficulties. Thanks for the note Mr. Shepherd and welcome to our select circle. (Editor).  
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The night sky in MAY ---  
about 40° North latitude.  
Approx. 9 p.m.

The planets for MAY, 1966.  
(Observer's Handbook, 1966,  
Times, naturally, are E.S.T.)

Mercury - Too close to the sun  
for observation.

Venus - It is visible as a  
morning star low in the east  
for about two hours before  
sunrise.

Mars - Too close to  
the sun for observing.

Jupiter - In Gemini,  
it is well down in the  
west at sunset and sets  
about three hours later.

Saturn - In Pisces, it  
rises about two hours before  
the sun.

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S T A R D U S T is a monthly  
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EDITOR - G. E. WILLIAMS  
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