

# STARDUST

FEBRUARY 1967

## THE END OF AN ERA

The Edmonton Centre will no longer meet at the Queen Elizabeth Planetarium. A vote taken at the January meeting approved a council recommendation that for the coming months, meetings will be held on the second Monday of each month in Room 262 Campus Tower. A description of how to find the new meeting room is included with this issue of STARDUST.

The decision to move, which brings to an end six years of meeting in the Queen Elizabeth Planetarium, resulted from two factors which have become evident in the last year or so. Most important was the serious lack of space that the Planetarium lecture room provided for the increasing numbers of people attending the regular meetings. And secondly, the Planetarium required the lecture room for work and storage area. All R.A.S.C. members will be watching progress on plans for Planetarium expansion with great interest, for when they are finally realized, the Centre will undoubtedly return its base of operations to it.

### THE JANUARY MEETING

Another tradition was broken when the regular January meeting was switched to the third Monday in the month...the 16th. This resulted from a complete change of schedule for the Planetarium's public shows which caused Monday to be the night free instead of Thursday. The change apparently caught some of our executive members napping, so Honorary President E.S. Keeping chaired the meeting until President George Cumming and Vice-president Robert Allin could be located and brought to the meeting.

The featured speaker was Dave A. Rodger, who presented the "WORLDS OF GALILEO" Planetarium show in the theatre.



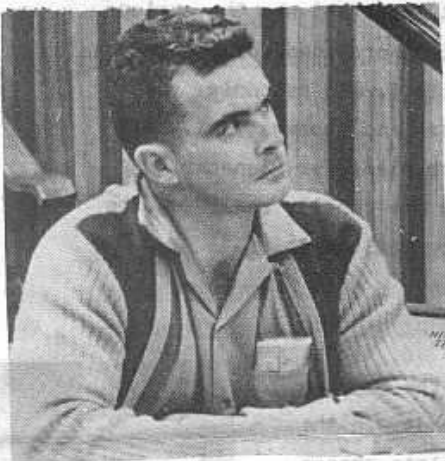
E. S. KEEPING

A VISIT TO THE SMITH OBSERVATORY IN EDMONTON ( First of a Series )

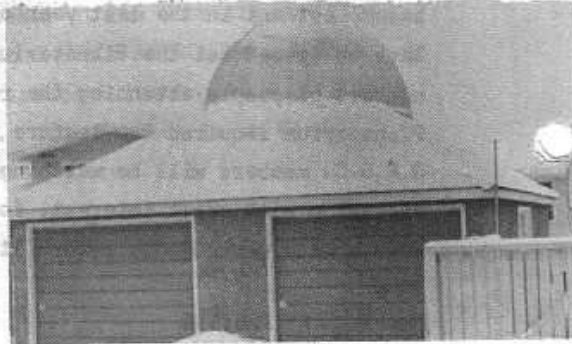
It was in November, 1965 that Angus Smith of 4908 116th Street began work on what is now the largest observatory in the Edmonton area. As the pictures show his observatory is built on top of his two-car garage and is entered by means of a flight of stairs from within.

The telescope is a 12 and one-half inch F/ 7.4 reflector. Angus bought the mirror from the Cave Company, but the rest of the instrument, including tube, mount, and motor, was wither built by himself or under his supervision. Your editor was present the night the telescope first went into use in March of 1966. He remembers distinctly the fine view of Jupiter we had that night and how we found several faint galaxies and star-clusters. In the months since then, Angus has completed a motor and setting circles. Since he is an accomplished amateur photographer, we will be waiting anxiously for the first products of his camera.

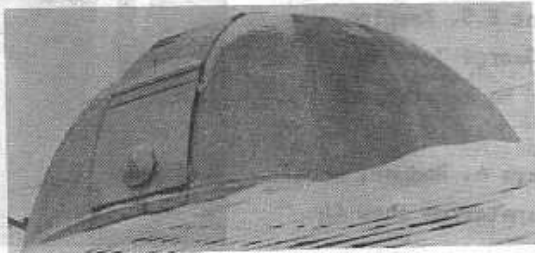
Angus is a most genial host, and is especially happy when he can encourage the younger members of the community in their astronomical interests.



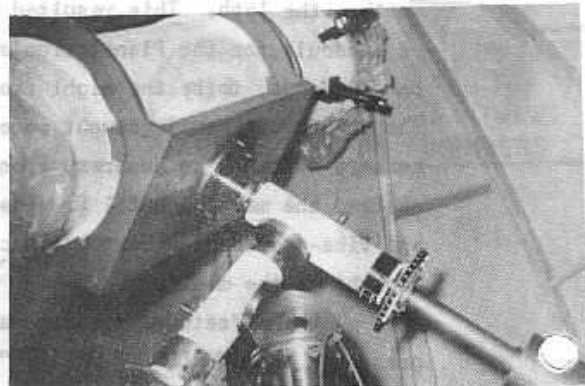
Angus Smith, Edmonton's most enterprizing amateur astronomer.



The Smith Observatory in south-west Edmonton.



The dome, which is fully motorized has recently been fitted with air-vents.



The telescope as seen from the stairs leading into the observatory.

**THE EDMONTON CENTRE'S NEW MONTHLY TREASURE HUNT**

**First Clue :** On the night of the monthly meeting, drive, walk, or take a bus to the University of Alberta campus. Look for this building.....



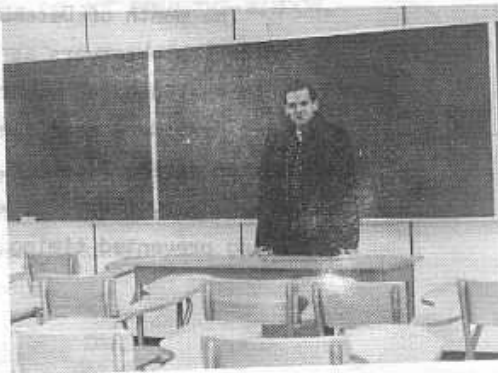
**Second Clue :** Proceed directly to the corner of 87th Avenue and 112th Street.....



**Third Clue :** Go directly to the West entrance of the building. DO NOT STOP AT ZORBA'S. Take the elevator to the 2nd floor.....



**Final Clue :** Leave the elevator, move straight ahead smartly to ROOM 262. At 8:15 the meeting will begin. If you were in time, go to the head of the class !



A P O L L O

An article on the first manned Apollo mission was to have been written for this issue of STARDUST. The tragic fire in Cape Kennedy occurred just as we were going to press. We have many lasting memories of the achievements of Gus Grissom and Ed White. Roger Chaffee would undoubtedly have left us with more. We mourn the loss of these fine men.

S I D E R I U S      N U N C I U S

The title "Siderius Nuncius" is taken from Galileo's publication of 1610. It means "messenger from the stars". We thought it would be an appropriate title for the monthly observing report !

METEORS

Since the last issue of STARDUST was printed there have been several meteor showers. On December 12th, four hardy souls ventured out to the Devon observatory to observe the Geminids. The temperature was around 15 above. Despite an overall haze which accentuated the eastern sky glow from the city, they were able to count 31 meteors in the shower between 9:45pm and 10:50. The number is far short than the predicted hourly rate for one observer, let alone four.

Fred Tauber

OCCULTATIONS

The month of December proved both eventful and successful for our occultation observers as nine separate timings were made. Mild, clear evenings allowed observers Angus Smith, Dave Rodger, and myself to team up and provide a near clean sweep of the occultations predicted for Edmonton during December.

January, however, was a different story as cold temperatures and ice fog prevented timing of some seven predicted occultations.

continued.....



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Not undaunted, the trio, aided by Ralph Haeikel will open February with an attempt to observe a comparatively rare event: a grazing occultation on the 2nd, visible just north of the city. Armed with computer predictions supplied by the Jet Propulsion Laboratory, the group hopes to be able to view a star passing behind a number of lunar peaks.

Franklin Loehde

#### WINTER OBSERVING

This is a time of year when many of us look longingly at the outstanding celestial sights, regretting that they can't be seen under more pleasant circumstances. Of course, 13,000 years from now, the same stars and constellations will be visible from Edmonton during the summer, but that isn't much consolation. The next best idea is to travel southwards until you reach warmer climes. Unfortunately, that is also out of the question for most of us.

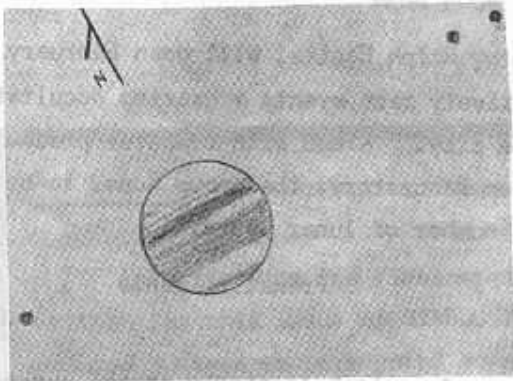
Facing up to the fact of a sub-zero Alberta winter, we still have two possibilities: build an observatory or observing shelter or mount our telescopes indoors. The former suggestion is the best one for those of us who have the time...yes, and MONEY, to do so. The latter suggestion may sound like sacrilege, but before you report me to Patrick Moore, read on!

Almost any astronomical book will tell you NEVER to observe from indoors, and certainly this is a good point in so far as open windows or dirty windows are concerned. But consider a typical Edmonton winter night. The temperature is five to ten below zero and you wish to look at Jupiter or the Moon. If you have a reflector and take it outside, you must wait three or four hours for it to cool down to be sufficiently useful. And that's usually about the time the clouds roll in, isn't it! But why pass up the sights of a February evening just because it's cold?

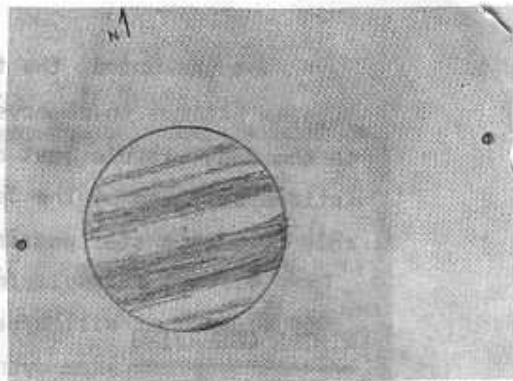
If your telescope has been kept at room temperature, it will perform well within that range. Therefore take it to a nearby window and point it at the objects you wish to observe. Be sure to clean the window first and turn off all the lights. One word of caution: DO NOT OPEN THE WINDOW. Now you know you're going to have to put up with some distortion and a small amount of light loss. But which is better: wishful thinking or comfortable observing?

On the following page are two drawings of Jupiter made by George Williams. He used the Planetarium's ten inch F/6 reflector, and he was seated, quite comfortably in his shirt sleeves looking across the frigid parking lot from within the little lecture room!

DAR



6:40 pm, MST  
January 24, 1967  
6.6 mm lens



6:05 pm, MST  
January 24, 1967  
10 mm lens

#### FEBRUARY MEETING

FRED TAUBER will be the guest speaker at the February monthly meeting of the Centre. He will talk about SPACE ASTRONOMY and what the United States and the Soviet Union are contributing to our knowledge through their space programs. The meeting is on Monday, February 13th at 8:15 in Room 262, Campus Towers.

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EDITOR : DAVE A. RODGER  
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