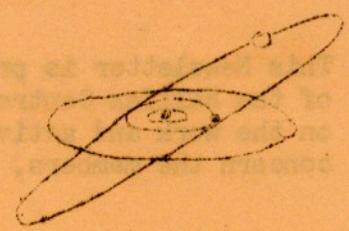


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GALAXY

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

HALIFAX CENTRE

ROYAL ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY OF CANADA

February 1960

MESSAGE FROM THE HONORARY PRESIDENT

It was with great pleasure that I saw our Newsletter come to life again last January with the sparkling and promising title of GALAXY. As I have now been asked, only a few weeks later, for a message for the next number, it raises hopes that we are now entering on a new era and that the members of the Halifax Centre may look forward to monthly news. It is by the self-sacrifice of a few that this will be attained. I wish to congratulate those who are showing so much activity and promise.

- M. W. Burke-Gaffney, S.J.

EDITORIAL

Our President is deeply interested in a practical way in the well-being and advancement of our Centre. Obvious evidence of this practical interest is seen in his role in the rebirth of our Newsletter. Bert was solely responsible for the idea and initiative and also for the writing and production of the entire January issue. It is an example to us all and our President deserves our appreciation. Perhaps the finest way we may do this is in our helpful, reliable and loyal assistance. With such help we have just reason to hope for the finest year ever.

The responsibilities of a President, plus those of a monthly Newsletter are large. With this in mind, Mr. Bert Allen appointed your Editor as Chairman of the Newsletter Committee and gave this committee responsibility for the Newsletter and enough authority to carry out it's duties.

Bert is naturally very interested in the Newsletter and is a member of the committee. It is good to be able to report that he will continue to be active in GALAXY'S affairs, as Associate Editor, as well as an advisor.

EDITORIAL

This Newsletter is primarily for the information and enjoyment of the members of the Halifax Centre. As a Newsletter it will confine itself to reporting on the work and activities of the Centre's members, or on matters which closely concern the members.

With this second issue of GALAXY, it becomes readily apparent that it is rapidly evolving and developing. It will probably evolve and develop further as we acquire new staff and receive help and advice from our members. It is hoped that a favorable percentage of all modifications will be of the nature of improvements. Meanwhile, we trust to your patience as we learn our job.

In planning the present and future issues of GALAXY we found a wealth of ideas in the monthly Newsletters of other Centres of the R.A.S.C. The June 1959 issue of Montreal's SKYWARD contained an editorial paragraph which is so apt as to be quoted verbatim; "We hope to issue the Newsletter with a fair degree of regularity but make no rash promises. We came across a little magazine once that was 'published now and then and sometimes oftener'. That would suit us perfectly. However, we shall continue to aim at once a month".

Faithfully yours,

Wm F. Taler

Editor.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS - Our next newsletter will be produced by a staff which is in process of being recruited. Meanwhile, it is a pleasant duty to acknowledge the help and assistance of those persons who helped to produce the present issue on short notice. Thanks are due B.W.Allen and H.F.Roberts for helpful contributions; Carolyn Barrett and Inez Roberts for typing; and Jane McNeill for the front cover design. -Ed.

ADDRESS - Please direct any correspondence concerning the newsletter to the following address: -
The Editor,
Halifax Center, R.A.S.C.,
N.S.Museum of Science,
Halifax, Nova Scotia.

WANTED - The work of writing and producing the newsletter has been subdivided into several jobs, each of which is important enough to be a real contribution without being too large to be a burden. Most of these are unfilled to date. We would like to hear from anyone who has some time and would like to give it a whirl. Writers are especially needed. -Ed.

SOCIETY NEWS - HALIFAX CENTRE

ANNOUNCEMENTS

FEBRUARY MEETING NOTICE - The February meeting of the Royal Astronomical Society, Halifax Centre will be held on the evening of Wednesday, February 24th at 8 p.m. in the Planetarium Room at the N. S. Museum of Science. The programme planned, is a talk by Father Burke Gaffney on "Lunar Eclipses" (with special emphasis on the coming eclipse, March 12th - 13th).

Hoping to see you at the coming meeting--- H. F. Roberts, Secretary.

METEOR & AURORA OBSERVING GROUP - The Club President, Mr. B. Allen, passed along the news that one of our most active observers is interested in having an observing group formed to specialize in aurora and meteor observing. Any kindred spirits really interested in contributing and participating in such a group, please get in touch with Jim McGuigan, at the February meeting,

ECLIPSE OBSERVING GROUP - "Calling all Night Owls" - It is hoped that a group can be organized for the March 12th - 13th lunar eclipse. Although the event takes place during the early hours of Sunday morning if any members are interested to get together, please submit your name to the secretary at this meeting. Possible viewing site will be on the roof of the N. S. Technical College. HFR.

MIRROR GRINDING AND TELESCOPE MAKING GROUP - Mirror grinding and telescope making activities are scheduled to be resumed on Thursday night, February 25th, at the N. S. Museum of Science. Those already started and those interested please contact the president, Mr. Allen at the February meeting.

REPORTS OF MEETINGS

JOINT MEETING - The Halifax Centre of the RASC and the Dawson Geology Club had a joint meeting on Monday, January 18 in the Department of Geology, Dalhousie University. Rev. M. W. Burke-Gaffney spoke about some facts and problems involved in measuring the motion and position of the moon.

Following the interesting presentation, questions naturally and gradually evolved to ones on the physical nature of the moon and its substance. It was heard, with great interest, that the relatively recent observations interpreted as proof of volcanic activity on the moon were now held in some doubt.

Seventy-five persons were at the well attended meeting. Mr. R. Allen, President of the Dawson Club and member of the Halifax Centre, welcomed the Society. Mr. B. Allen, President of the Halifax Centre expressed the societies sincere appreciation.

(REPORTS OF MEETINGS)

JANUARY MEETING - Mr. B. Allen, President of the Centre, spoke on the reflecting telescope and its design, at the January meeting in Halifax. His talk was illustrated with his own telescope, together with large charts of drawings and design formula used in making that particular telescope. As a result of the members interest in the talk, copies of it are being mimeographed for distribution. It is hoped that these will be available at the February meeting.

Attending members approved the council's plans to acquire an observing site on the Herring Cove Road. The decision followed a general discussion, during which concern had been expressed about fog conditions and residential development in the area involved. All agreed that a convenient site under such conditions was preferable at the present time to sites at a greater distance where seeing conditions were decidedly better. With this general approval, the president gratefully accepted the kind offer made by Dr. McGuigan to assist the Society to obtain the desired property.

After the meeting, the members of the Centre went up on the roof of the Museum to observe the stars. Under the leadership of the more experienced observers, everyone looked at several types of star clusters, as well as the planet Uranus. The highlight of interest was the planet, which was located for the group by Jim McGuigan.

-HFR,WFT.

CELESTIAL CALENDAR HIGHLIGHTS

FEBRUARY 23/24, MERCURY AT EASTERN ELONGATION - This is one of the four favourable times to observe the planet this year. Mercury will set about $1\frac{1}{2}$ hours after the sun and therefore will be seen in a fairly dark sky. The planet may be readily seen right after sunset during the latter half of February.

-WFT.

MARCH 4/5, LUNAR OCCULTATION OF ALDEBARAN - The Moon may easily be observed as it comes between us and the bright star Aldebaran on this date. The Moon will hide or "occult" the star in the early evening. The exact times of immersion and emersion of the star for Halifax are not available. However, we estimate from the OBSERVERS HANDBOOK that immersion should take place shortly after 7:38 p.m. A.S.T., and emersion shortly after 9:03 p.m. A.S.T.

-WFT.

MARCH 12/13, TOTAL LUNAR ECLIPSE - An excellent total lunar eclipse of longer than average duration will occur in the very early hours of March 13. Every readily observable stage of the eclipse will be visible from start to finish. In the following outline and timetable of these stages, it should be remembered that the penumbra produces no appreciable effect until just before the Moon enters the umbra itself. The total eclipse will have a duration of 95 minutes, whereas the total and partial stages will have a combined duration of 5 hours and 48 minutes.

(CELESTIAL CALENDAR HIGHLIGHTS)

(MARCH 12/13, TOTAL LUNAR ECLIPSE)

ECLIPSE TIMETABLE

Moon enters penumbra - 1:34 a.m. A.S.T.
Moon enters umbra - 2:38 a.m. A.S.T.
Total eclipse begins - 3:41 a.m. A.S.T.
Mid-point - 4:28 a.m. A.S.T.
Total eclipse ends - 5:16 a.m. A.S.T.
Moon leaves umbra - 6:18 a.m. A.S.T.
Moon leaves penumbra - 7:22 a.m. A.S.T.

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Twilight begins - 4:57 a.m. A.S.T.
Sunrise - 6:31 a.m. A.S.T.
Moonset - 6:37 a.m. A.S.T.
Breakfast - 6:38 a.m. A.S.T. -WFT.
Sack - 7:00 a.m. A.S.T.

LATE MARCH, ZODIACAL LIGHT - The faint glow of zodiacal light is best seen in northern latitudes, in the west after nightfall, in the months of March and April. Zodiacal light is no brighter than a 6th magnitude star and hence is best viewed in a clear, moonless sky. It is broadest and brightest near the horizon and tapers upwards, following the course of the ecliptic, to a distance of about 90 degrees from the sun. It reaches its greatest altitude, and is therefore easier to observe, when the ecliptic is most nearly perpendicular to the horizon. -BWA.

OBSERVING NOTES

DETAILS OF THE ECLIPSE - Amateurs with inexpensive or no equipment can make many interesting and usefull observations of the eclipse. Observing programs and details are well described in a good, readable article in the February issue of SKY AND TELESCOPE. A copy is available in the Museum library for those who wish to see it. -WFT.

MAILBAG

Brand new and empty.