



MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

HALIFAX CENTRE

ROYAL ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY OF CANADA

September 1960

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

On the evening of August 1, 1960, The Royal Astronomical Society of Canada, Halifax Centre, held a very successful public viewing night at the "Horse Field". The weather was perfect and a large enthusiastic crowd turned out.

The most distinguished visitors that evening were Mr. and Mrs. Bridgen of the Montreal Centre. The Bridgens who were holidaying in the Atlantic Provinces took time out to attend the public viewing night and were most helpful in many ways. It is a pleasure to make such personnel contacts with amateurs from other Centres and we here on the coast would certainly enjoy meeting anyone who travels this far east.

I would like to take this opportunity, on behalf of the Halifax Centre, to personally thank both Mr. & Mrs. Bridgen for all the encouragement and valuable information which they so willingly passed on to us.

B. W. Allen.

EDITORIAL

The report of THE COMMITTEE INVESTIGATING THE COOPERATION BETWEEN OBSERVING CENTRES which was read at the National Council Meeting in Toronto on June 3, 1960, should be of special interest to all amateur astronomers. Paragraphs 3 and 6 of this report are quoted here:

"3. Lack of Information on Observing Programmes. Groups with well established observing programmes have found that printed instructions and report forms that specify what information is important are essential in carrying out a good observing programme. As a step towards establishing some of these programmes in other Centres not currently working in the field in question, the National Council should help the individual Centres duplicate sample sets of these instructions, report forms, and training programmes; and should facilitate the distribution of these samples through the information service of the National Office. This would help to achieve the goal of achieving a "National" feeling among members of the Society as it would establish the National Office as a place where observing information originates. At present, most members of the Society rely on such organizations as the AAVSO, ALPO, etc. for such services; and although such sources are excellent, the time is ripe for a reorientation.

6. Trouble Getting Large Numbers of Observers to Participate in Observing Programmes. Centres with organized programmes know that generally one, or two, enthusiastic observers are sufficient to carry out a programme of observations. Of course, greater numbers are desirable, but it is not the number participating that counts; rather their interest in observing. Also it is a general fact that personnel changes occur in the observing ranks as the interests of the observer reorientate. This tends to introduce new programmes and also creates gaps in the rank of the observers. Such gaps can be filled by other observers, and allow new blood to bring in new ideas and new methods of observation, hence they prevent "stagnation" in the ranks of the observing group.

Since the need of a National Observing Programme is obvious, and with these problems in mind, the Committee suggests:

that Council should consider the origination of a second publication similar to the JOURNAL Supplement but not quite as formal as the JOURNAL. The purpose of such a publication would be to act as an intermediary between local newsletters and the JOURNAL. Members could submit articles of good amateur quality to this subsidiary publication where they could not achieve the professional quality required for the JOURNAL. Articles on the construction of observatories, telescopes, or other observing equipment, and their usage, could be submitted where the standard is not suitable for professional publication but is of general interest for the average amateur observer. The publication could be issued either quarterly or semiannually and could serve as a means of introducing and training new observers. It could also handle observing data not yet refined enough for the JOURNAL, but of interest to members. As proposed in our previous report, more formal reports of observations would be issued to the JOURNAL from time to time as articles of quality are prepared."

The need for a national effort within The Royal Astronomical of Canada where all Centres are encouraged to work for a common purpose has long been needed. The suggestion that the JOURNAL is not at an amateur level need not be commented upon. It is sufficient to say that it is an excellent publication and should not be discontinued. The Committee should be congratulated on its report and it is hoped that the National Office will not tarry in putting the above two suggestions into effect immediately.

B.W.A.

HALIFAX CENTRE NEWS

PUBLIC VIEWING NIGHT: The Royal Astronomical Society of Canada, Halifax Centre, will hold a public viewing night on the evening of September 24, 1960, at 8:00 pm. in the "Horse Field" at the westerly end of Jubilee Road. All members are asked to attend and those who have telescopes please bring them along. Also please bring along your friends.

Providing weather conditions are such that viewing is impossible on the evening of September 24, 1960, we will meet on the evening of September 26, 1960.

SEPTEMBER MEETING NOTICE: The next scheduled business meeting of The Royal Astronomical Society of Canada, Halifax Centre, will be held on the evening of September 28, 1960, at 8:00pm. in the Planetarium Room of the Nova Scotia Museum of Science, Spring Garden Road, Halifax, N.S.

This meeting will mark the beginning of another fall and winter season and it is hoped that all members will attend. We will be voting in a new slate of officers at the meeting in October and trust that you will endeavor to take an interest in the clubs affairs and if asked to fill a post, that you will accept the appointment and do your best to fulfill the obligation and not leave it to the others to do all the work. A club is only as strong as its weakest link so let us try to have a organization in which there are no weak links this year.

REPORT ON AUGUST PUBLIC VIEWING NIGHT: More than two hundred and fifty people attended the public viewing night held in the "Horse Field" on the evening of August 1, 1960. The weather was perfect, a large number of club members were present and the evening was a real success as well as a milestone for the Centre.

A special thanks to all those members who brought along their telescopes and who in anyway whatsoever helped to make the evening the success that it was is passed on at this time.

Even though the evening was a success it must be realized that only through experience does one learn and the Centre did learn

that such an evening must be organized, a matter which was almost forgotten on August 1, 1960. It is hoped that we will be able to profit by our mistakes at future public viewing nights.

REPORT FROM METEOR GROUP: The Meteor Group of the Halifax Centre, of The Royal Astronomical Society of Canada was formed in February 1960, with an initial membership of five.

The first night of scheduled observing for the Group found the skies overcast thus blotting out the Lyrid meteor shower of April 21, 1960. On the evening of May 6, 1960, the Group met to observe the Aquarids meteor shower but was hampered by fog. The proposed observation of the Delta Aquarids shower was rained out on July 29, 1960. The first big break came on the day after the maximum of the Persids shower when under partly cloudy skies seven meteors were definitely seen and four more spotted by individual members. The most brilliant being a large -6 magnitude fireball at 12:20 am. on the evening of August 12/13. Other meteors from +3 magnitude to -2 were also seen in a one hour observation period. The following night was not clear enough to carry out observations.

Members of the Meteor Group are listed below:

- Mr. Jim McGuigan (Group Leader)
- Mr. John Manolopoulos
- Miss Margo Dunsworth
- Mr. Bill Take
- Mr. David Akins
- Mr. Bert Allen

The Group will meet in October to view the Orionids meteor shower. All members of the Halifax Centre are welcome. The time and place will be announced in the October issue of "Galaxy".

REPORT FROM AURORA GROUP: The aurora during August and September has been fairly active in this area with five sightings having been made by members of the Group. Most of the credit for these sightings must go to Mr. Harold Curran who has taken a keen interest in the Group's activities during the past summer.

AUGUST		SEPTEMBER		
<u>NIGHTS ON WHICH AURORA HAS BEEN REPORTED IN THE HALIFAX AREA.</u>				
16/17	27/28	2/3	3/4	17/18