



GALAXY

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

HALIFAX CENTRE

ROYAL ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY OF CANADA

MAY 1961

THE PLANET JUPITER

The planet Jupiter now in Capricornus rises about 11:00 p.m. and appears as a bright yellow object of magnitude -2.0. It is the largest planet in the solar system having a diameter of 87,000 miles or about eleven times that of the Earth. It is the fifth planet having an orbit that averages about 483,000,000 miles from the sun. Despite its titanic size Jupiter spins very rapidly on its axis revolving once every nine hours and fifty-five minutes. The planet is appreciably flattened at its poles - so much so that the diameter at its equator is approximately 6000 miles greater than at its poles. Although the surface of Jupiter is obscured by whirling clouds of methane and ammonia, astronomers believe that its surface is probably rocky, covered by a shell of ice and solid or liquid hydrogen. Jupiter has twelve moons, three of which are larger than our own moon, ranging down in size to a small moon only fourteen miles in diameter.

The following four satellites of Jupiter can be seen, under good viewing conditions, with a four inch reflector:

NAME	STELLAR MAGNITUDE	MEAN DISTANCE FROM PLANET IN MILES	DIAMETER IN MILES
Io	5	261,000	2300
Europa	6	416,600	2000
Ganymede	5	664,200	3200
Callisto	6	1,169,000	3200

* * *

The four satellites Io, Europa, Ganymede, and Callisto are usually denoted I, II, III, and IV respectively, in order of distance from the planet. SKY AND TELESCOPE publish a monthly chart showing the Configurations of Satellites I - IV which will assist the observer in viewing.

AURORA GROUP: Aurora has been sighted twice, in the Halifax area, during the month of May. Mr. Harold Curren made both reports, one at 23:30 p.m. on May 1/2 and the other at 02:45 a.m. on May 5/6. The aurora sighted on the night of May 5/6 was also viewed by the Meteor Group who were out observing the Eta Aquarids meteor shower. This aurora apparently covered a considerable area of eastern Canada as I have a report from Clinton, Ontario, that it was visible in that area.

B.W.A.

SIX INCH REFLECTOR FOR SALE: Complete parts for a 6 inch diameter, Newtonian type, reflecting telescope as follows:- 6 inch diameter coated mirror with mount, bakelite tube with all holes drilled, eyepiece with aluminum coated secondary mirror, 3 achromatic coated eyepieces (Erifle, Orthoscopic and Barlow), 6 power achromatic coated finder scope with mount, telescope mount with tripod.

Also mount for 4 inch diameter reflector with tripod (Slightly Used).

For information please contact Mr. Jim McGuigan, 39 Bellevue Avenue, Halifax, Nova Scotia. Telephone 422-2359.

METEOR GROUP: Members of this Group have met twice since the last publication of GALAXY. The first meeting was on the night of April 21/22 to view the Lyrids meteor shower. A watch was kept from 02:55 a.m. to 03:27 a.m. when nine meteors were sighted. Their magnitudes varied from 5 to 0 with one first magnitude meteor having a fairly long tail. From 03:30 a.m. to 04:06 a.m. only one meteor of -2 magnitude was seen. However this "fireball" proved quite spectacular having an extremely long and brilliant tail.

The second meeting was held on the night of May 5/6 to view the Eta Aquarids meteor shower. The maximum of this shower occurred on May 4th but a single observed hourly rate had been estimated at 20 with normal duration to $\frac{1}{4}$ strength of maximum as 18 days. Thus one would have expected good viewing, but this was not the case on the night of May 5/6 as from 02:05 a.m. to 02:30 a.m. no meteors were seen and from 02:50 a.m. to 03:05 a.m. no meteors were seen. The Group await with interest the publication of reports from other sources.

MAY MEETING NOTICE: There will be no regular meeting of The Royal Astronomical Society of Canada, Halifax Centre, for the month of May.

NAKED-EYE SUN-SPOT GROUP: The last naked-eye sun-spot observed by members of the Group was on May 1, 1961. None were seen in April and this makes one for the month of May.

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