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Astrofest '82

The Chicago Astronomical Society is happy to announce "Astrofest '82" which will be held September 24-26 at Shaw-Waw-Naw-See 4H camp near Manteo, Illinois.

New this year will be a series of special interest workshops on astrophotography, mounting design, optics design and other topics of interest to the amateur astronomer. Like previous Astrofests, this year will also include a paper session, a display of amateur telescopes and telescope judging in mechanical and optical excellence.

Astrofest will start at 6 pm on Friday, September 24th, and end at noon on Sunday, the 26th. Camp Shaw-Waw-Naw-See provides indoor facilities for all Astrofest events, as well as hiking trails through the beautiful 130 acre camp. Attendees have the option of sleeping in the bunk houses, camping or bringing a RV - but RV facilities are limited! No meals are provided on Friday or Sunday, but all three Saturday meals are included in the registration.

Registrations must be postmarked by September 15th in order to include food service. Registration fees are $30.00 per person for adults, $20.00 for children 6 - 12 years old and free for children 5 years or younger. Registration includes full use of all facilities including bunk house and camping areas plus the three Saturday meals.

For further information and registration forms, write to: Astrofest '82, PO Box 596, Tinley Park, IL 60477.

NCRAL Convention 1982

by Robert Schmidt

The 1982 convention of the North Central Region of the Astronomical League was sponsored by the Milwaukee Astronomical Society on the occasion of that society's 50th anniversary. The sessions were held on May 22nd at Carroll College in Waukesha, Wisconsin.

Paper sessions produced a varied and interesting series of reports that were of a very high quality. Topics ranged from a A for astronomy to V for variable. Included were history, travelog, telescope making, photoelectric photometry, mythology, orbital computations and space astronomy.

A high point of the business session was the presentation of the Regional Award. Ed Halbach presented the award to Walter Scott Houston in recognition of his years as a member of the Milwaukee AS and as author of "Deep Sky Wonders" and "Observer's Page" in Sky and Telescope magazine.

Officers for the coming year, elected at the convention, are: Chairman - Barry Beaman, Rockford, IL; Vice Chairman - Larry Jahn, Naperville, IL; Secretary/Treasurer - Richard Wend, Chicago, IL; Regional Representative - Robert Schmidt, Richfield, MN. The new address for the League Executive Secretary, Don Archer, is PO Box 12821, Tucson AZ 85732.

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Astronomy Day

Racine Astronomical Society

by Cyril Havel

In observance of Astronomy Day, May 1st, the Racine AS set up a display booth in the new Regency Mall in Racine.

The display included a video tape with information about their observatory plus video tapes from NASA; a computer programmed by a society member with 28 multiple choice questions about astronomy; a computer programmed with data about constellations, planets and other phenomena which might interest the public; three telescopes: an 8" member-built Newtonian, a 3" refractor and a Celestron 8. Brochures on the society and its Modine-Benstead Observatory and information on astronomical magazines, books and star charts were also available for distribution.

Society members took turns in teams of four or five to man the booth from 10 am until 9 pm. Beginning at dusk, several members held an open house at the observatory west of Racine.

Dubuque Astronomical Society

(reprinted from the Dubuque Astronomer)

Nationwide observance of Astronomy Day was May 1st, but the Dubuque AS broke away early with a diverse and popular display at Kennedy Mall on April 24th. The Mall was helpful in providing electrical outlets and display boards.

A zoom projector showed slides of moon landings, the Sun, planetary exploration, Halley's comet and deep sky objects. The splendid selection of photographs was narrated by society members. A 6" homemade

telescope, an Astroscan and a Celestron 8 were set up for display. Other displays included books, magazines, posters and charts.

People of all ages stopped by to talk astronomy with members who manned the booth from 10 am to 4 pm. A large number of back issues of Dubuque Astronomer were passed out. The goal was to inform possible new members of society activities and to stimulate interest in astronomy and space science among the general public.

Minnesota Astronomical Society

The Minnesota AS observance of Astronomy Day began in mid-April when Minnesota Governor Al Quie issued a proclamation declaring May 1st to be Minnesota's official Astronomy Day, also. The society proceded to set up a two day exhibit at the new state zoo, just south of the Twin Cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul.

Thirteen large, free-standing screens defined the primary exhibit. A variety of amateur and NASA photographs covered part of the screen area while other sections enclosed a projection booth in which a variety of astronomical slides were projected continuously.

Other exhibits included a 13" Dobsonian telescope, a Celestron 8 and, courtesy of NASA and the University of Minnesota, an exhibit of moon rocks. To the exasperation of members stationed at the display, the public kept ignoring the direction signs and insisted on looking for the moon rocks in the Dobsonian!

On Saturday, an additional exhibit was set up just outside the zoo entrance where two members set up their telescopes. One was a 14" Cassegrain mounted on a trailer and the other was a 6" Newtonian equiped with an H-alpha filter for solar viewing. The clear weather permitted many zoo goers to see solar prominences for the first time.

Intense Lyrids

(from IAU Circular #3691)

Visual observers in both Florida and Colorado reported a brief, unusually intense, return of the April Lyrid meteor stream. At the peak of the display, approximately April 22d 06h 50m UT (corresponding to solar longitude 31.38 degrees, compared to 31.17 degrees, epoch 1950.0, for the associated

comet 1861 I), the observers recorded 3 - 5 Lyrids per minute. For the hour centered on the peak, the hourly rate was about 75 corresponding to a ZHR of 90 - 100. The observed hourly rates were less than 20 during the preceding and following hours. The brightest meteors were of magnitude -2.0 to -3.0. Any other observers who witnessed the event are encouraged to send their observations to M. Adams, PO Box 863, Palm Bay FL 32905.

Epsilon Aurigae

(reprinted from the Chicago AS Observer)

The enigmatic variable star, Epsilon Aurigae, famed for its lengthy period and unusual parameters, is due to commence its seventh recorded eclipse on July 22nd this year. The late Otto Struve, formerly of the Chicago AS, is said to have declared that the study of this extraordinary eclipsing binary is, "in many respects the history of astrophysics since the beginning of the 20th century."

The star is normally visual magnitude 3.0 but fades to almost exactly half that brightness, magnitude 3.8, over a six month duration. It stays at the fainter magnitude for just over a year before brightening over another six months. The cycle repeats once every 27 years.

Epsilon is one of "the Kids" in Auriga, the one nearest to Capella. It can be seen at sometime during every night of the year from our mid-northern latitude. It ought to be worth watching.

Cosmology Group

(reprinted from the Fox Valley Observer)

The only regular, monthly interest group within the FVAS is the Cosmology Group. Its members meet for breakfast and study on the Saturday following the society's monthly meeting. The group has met for six months. After studying several short articles on cosmology, the group has agreed to long term

study of The Big Bang , a paperback by Joseph Silk.

The Big Bang reviews the history of cosmology and deals with current problems in 16 chapters. It is popular enough for amateurs, with just enough math to be challenging.

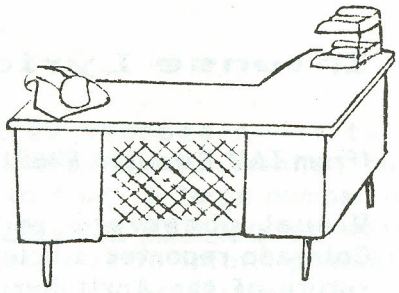
Attendance of the Group has ranged from three to eight with over a dozen expressing interest. The Group plans to do a future program for the FVAS to share some of the knowledge they are gaining.

NCRAL (cont.)

Noon lunch and the convention banquet were served in the student union of Carroll College and were enjoyed by all who talked with this reporter. The banquet speaker was Dr. Michael Turner, Professor of astronomy at the University of Chicago. His banquet address, "Big Bang Cosmology: from Primordial Soup to Expanding Universe," explained theories of the first moments of time following the Big Bang.

The final event, for a few hardy ones, was a visit to the Milwaukee AS observatory. Pouring rain kept many away who might have attended otherwise. They missed a chance to see a very fine, multipurpose installation, the result of many years' work. The climaxing piece will be a 26" instrument now under construction. The building for this instrument is almost complete and the telescope is, perhaps, less than a year away from completion. Two other instruments, a 12" and a 13" are permanently mounted and in regular use. The clubhouse, a combination photolab, data reduction center, library and dormatory, plus associated equipment make this a very complete installation for serious amateur astronomy.

EDITOR'S CORNER



Sample copies of this issue of Northern Lights are being sent to all League member societies in the North Central Region. The purpose is several-fold.

This issue contains a report on the Regional convention. Since not all the clubs were represented at the meeting, the report will let them know what they missed and, perhaps, spur an effort to attend next year's event.

Articles describe a cross section of activities by other societies in the Region. Maybe one will spawn an idea for another group to expand upon.

I need information on activities from all societies in thte Region. Some have been quite diligent in sending newsletters or other comments while most clubs remain in "the silent majority." Perhaps after seeing the exposure and usage of such information, more clubs will respond.

Finally, I encourage the ALCor, to whom this copy is being sent, to circulate the newsletter among officers and members of the organization. New subscriptions are always welcome. If there is sufficient interest, any member society is encouraged tot inquire about the substantial discount available to any club willing to purchase enough subscriptions for all its members.

August 30 is Deadline for September Issue