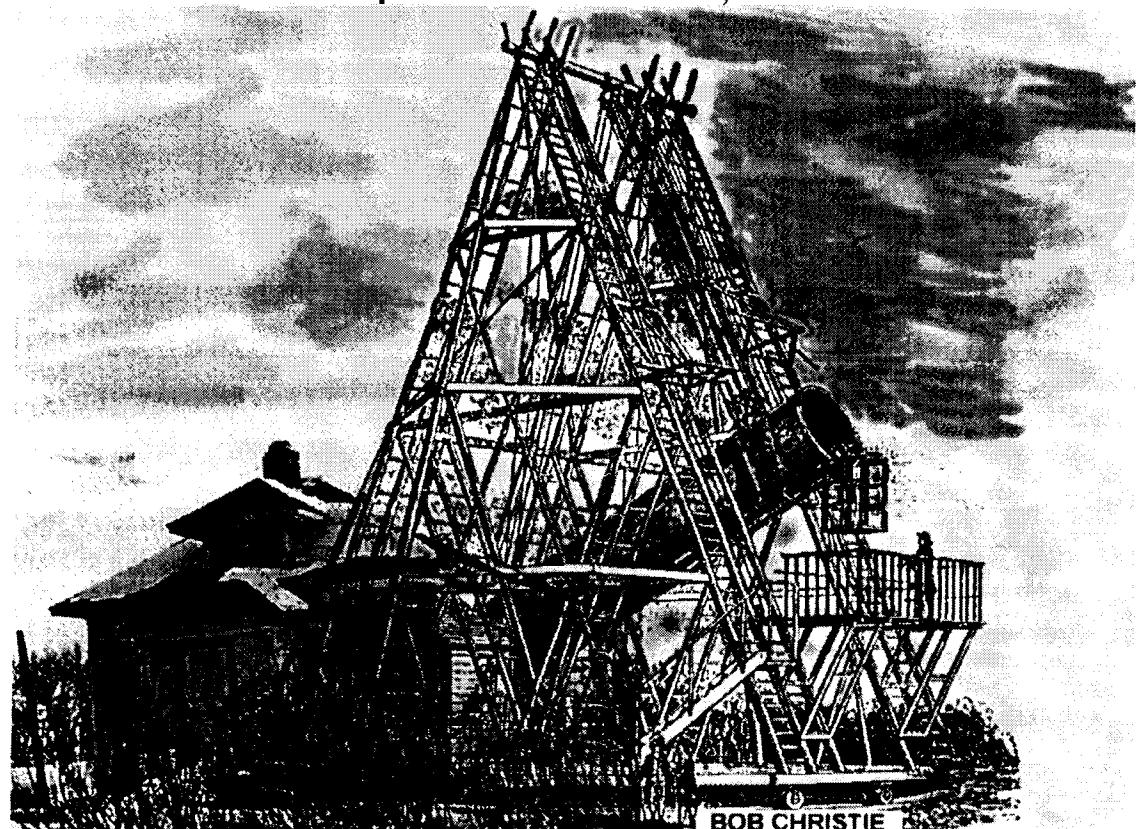


Saskatoon skiis

Periodical of the Upper Flatland Outpost of the
Royal Gastronomical Society of Canada
April 1997 • Vol. 28, No. 4



BOB CHRISTIE

The Sleaford Observatory - a synergy of
big budgets, bigger plans, sweated labour,
and University building codes.

ΛΟΣ ΑΝΝΟΥΧΙΟΣ δελ Πρεσιδεντε

It's spring...almost! It won't be too long before we can turn our first sod at the new observatory site! Plans to acquire the land are moving along, with the Physics department going to the U. of S. Board of Governors by the end of this month for approval to purchase the 3 acres of the old Sleaford Schoolhouse. We also have a plan in place to do a back-up purchase or shared purchase if need be.

As well, the partnership agreement between the University and the RASC for use of the observing site has been drafted, and will be available to all members for review and comment at the next general meeting (or will be mailed out to you if you can't attend). The agreement will be thrashed around many times before it's all done, so everyone will have ample time to provide comments and input. By mid-May, we should be in a position to actually begin construction at the site, so it's time to volunteer! There will be many jobs to organize and do, from painting the old schoolhouse to trenching, wiring and hammering! I'm getting pretty excited about it all!

If you don't want to work on the observatory, we need a load of volunteers to organize and run the Cypress Hills Star Party. At the general meeting, a duties list will be presented. We need enough volunteers to get these jobs done as well - registrars, cooks, security, advertising, organizing, and so forth! By the time you get this newsletter Erich and I will have given presentations at the Edmonton and Calgary Centre meetings promoting the SSSP97! We've even received our first registration, so I guess we're committed!

This is going to be Saskatoon's biggest year ever for activities and volunteerism. We will have begun a new observatory and a new major star party, and as always, run our normal year's activities. Please lend a hand and help out your Centre in the year to come.

Mount Kobau Star Party 1997

The 1997 Mount Kobau Star Party will be held Wednesday, July 30th through Sunday, August 3rd. (In practice, there are always observers on the mountain from the weekend before the official start of the star party.) There is a good write-up in the January, 1997 Sky & Telescope, page 111 and there will be one in an upcoming issue of SkyNews. *Bring Your Own Water--This Is A Dry, Sagebrush-Covered Summit. Bring a Winter Jacket and Toque.* (Osoyoos down below in the Okanagan Valley boasts the hottest recorded temperature in Canada more summer days than anywhere else in the country BUT the mountaintop is COLD most clear nights.)

Fees: Single: \$15 for one night, \$30 for the whole star party
2 or family: \$25 for one night, \$50 for the whole star party

Camping: FREE!

Mail: MKSP Registrar, PO Box 20119, TCM, Kelowna, BC V1Y 9H2

Chair: Jim Failes e-mail:jfailes@wic.ca

Notice of the General Meeting

Everyone is welcome to attend the next general meeting of the Saskatoon Centre of the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada. The meeting is open to members and non-members alike. Admission is free.

When: Monday, February 17, 1997, 8:00 p.m. in the boardroom

Where: The National Hydrology Research Institute Building, Innovation Place

Please remember to park **only** in the NHRI parking lot as all other locations in Innovation Place require 24-hour parking permits, and you will be ticketed. On entry and exit of building, please register with the commissioner. He will have a membership list to quicken this process. Non-members will just sign the guest book. There is ground-level access, and coffee will be served! Bus service is close by, but anyone who needs a ride, call me at 665-3392 well before and to arrange pickup. Remember to bring your Handbooks!

Executive members will meet at 7 p.m. in the NHRI boardroom.

Richard Huziak, President

Saskatoon Centre

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Honorary President: Prof. J. E. Kennedy

President: Richard Huziak
Vice-President: Erich Keser
Treasurer: M. Williams

National Rep. Dr. Gord Sarty
Secretary: Dr. A. Hartridge
Editors: S. Ferguson & E. Keser

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*Large Cylindrical Objects

Cover: Processing: R. Christie, Photo E. Keser. Image of Herschel 40 foot telescope from Knollwood Books.

Saskatoon Skies is produced by volunteer labour on a monthly basis with summer double-issues. We welcome letters and other submissions (articles, images, cartoons, drawings and diagrams). Contact Sandy Ferguson (931-3184) or Erich Keser (372-4262) for details. E-mail text as unformatted **ASCII** text with line returns at paragraph breaks *only*, images in UUEncoded form to keser@duke.usask.ca. Signed articles do not necessarily reflect the opinion of the Saskatoon Centre.

Politically Corrected Astronomy

It has been brought to our attention by NICE PERSONS on COMMITTEES ABOUT BEING NICE TO ALL THINGS that some of the names for astronomical objects are really NOT VERY NICE, and that, as the people whose eyes most often impinge on said objects (without permission!), amateur astronomers should set an example of how to be NICER by using NICER TERMS and thus not only be NICER to the objects they view, but set a NICER tone for their hobby as a NICE step toward a NICER universe! Please follow the following directives scrupulously or your observing privileges shall be suspended forthwith!

E.K.COMMISSAR FOR POLITICALLY CORRECT ASTRONOMY

HURTFUL TERM	NICER TERM:	NICER TO:
Dwarf star	Radially-challenged star	little persons, children
Minor Planet	Mass-challenged solar system object	persons with complexes
White dwarf	Pigmentally-deprived radially-challenged star	Melanin challenged ("white") persons
Black Hole	A hole of color	Melanin abundant persons
Dark Matter	Light Deprived Matter	dim people, vampires
Infrared	Frequency-challenged invisible-light Radio emissions	writers paid by the word
Big Bang	Large Explosion	prudes, steady staters
Variable Periods	Variable Magnitude Time frame.	prudes, silly people
Scutum	I don't know. (i.e. "I'm sorry Mrs. Jones, you have an inflamed Scutum.")	prudes: sounds like body part! writers paid by the word
Eskimo Nebula	High Northern Latitude Indigenous Peoples Nebula	ditto
Orion the Hunter	Orion the White Male Chauvinist Meat-Eating Pillager of the Environment	ditto
Andromeda	Woman oppressed by a white male oligarchy. tritto	
Ursa Major&Minor	Endangered long tailed bears. Long-Tailed bears	
Crab Nebula	The Endangered Body Louse Nebula	Body lice (crabs)
Wormhole	segmented vertebrate-challenged absence	(worms)
Northern Cross	Northern Sectarian Symbol	Constellation persons trying to fill a page

Based on list posted by Dr. Karl Matz, Mankato State U. Mankato, MN
[on tp://www.lme.mankato.msus.edu/ci/Matz.html](http://www.lme.mankato.msus.edu/ci/Matz.html)

Announcements:

THE JUNIOR ASTRONOMERS Will meet for what will probably be the final evening this season on Friday, April 18th at 7:30 PM at Alvin Buckwold School. Please call Sandy 931-3184 for more details. Thanks to Kim Mysyk for presenting running the March session.

INTERNATIONAL ASTRONOMY DAY: is Saturday, April 12. Please help. Anyone who can drop by our display area at Circle and 8th Mall during the day and mind our table, talk to the public or help demonstrate telescopes for an hour or so will be most welcome. We are setting up our things between Wall-Mart and the Cinemas starting at 9:30 AM

ASTRONOMY DAY PUBLIC STARNIGHT: Just another reminder, that the Astronomy Day Public Starnight will be at Beaver Creek on May 10th beginning at dusk. Telescopes will be welcome, as are people to pass out brochures and tell people what they're looking at.

These are important recruiting opportunities for our Centre. Volunteers and telescopes are needed to make both events successful. Please call Sandy Ferguson at 931-3184 if you can help.

GASTRONOMY EVENING: Following our Astronomy Day activities we will again be gathering for a gastronomy bash to make up any lost weight! Everyone is sure to be in a good mood and will be glad to hear your yarns about observing 20th magnitude objects with your 6" scope. We will meet at 6:30 PM at the reasonably priced German Club Concordia, located at the corner of Lorne Avenue South and Cartright Road. If you can attend--families are especially welcome, please let Al Hartridge know at 373-0034 as soon as possible.

OBSERVING SESSION: Friday May 2, 9 PM, Rystrom Observatory: Take a last good look at our winter constellations from the comfort of our observatory & warm-up shelter. Cloud/ date is Sat. May 3rd. (Call Darrell at 374-9278 for further information).

Binocular Group: May be meeting at the same time & place. This is a great way to learn the sky. Call Kirt Headley at 683-0251 or Brian Friesen at 384-2963 for details.

UNIVERSITY OBSERVATORY will be open to the public on Saturday evenings in April from 9:00 to 10:30 PM. Call the Astronomy Information Line at 966-6429 for further details.

Buy and Sell:

Telescope Wanted: New member, Normand Poirier would like to purchase a decent telescope. He is suggesting a 6" f/8 or similar scope in used and good condition. If anyone has such a scope available please Call Norm at 445-0458 in N. Battleford.

For Sale: Kodak Carousel Projector Bulb: Sylvania ELH 300W 120V Brand New in box. Am stuck with this after bulk-ordering for our Centre \$25. (Lowest in-town-price \$30+ taxes)
Call Erich at 374-4262

Opinion

We are entering a new stage in the life of the Saskatoon Centre. At the Edmonton General Assembly last July, one of the most interesting talks was Roland Deschene's **So you Want Your Centre to Grow? Analysis of Population Dynamics - Lessons Learned in Calgary.** An important part of it was an analysis of the somewhat different dynamics that affect Centres of different sizes. Small ones, with a 10 to 30 members tend to need most of their energy to maintain basic organizational routines and a few outside activities. A Centre of 50 to 100 tends to develop a certain momentum, which make it less of a battle to get people out to meetings, produce a newsletter and hold regular public events. There's even energy left for maintaining an observatory or running occasional bigger events. Once Centres get to one or two hundred members, a regular newsletter, major public programs, an active observatory and hosting periodic major events becomes much easier.

We are in the middle-sized Centre, and theoretical model, confirms actual experience to indicate that we have to be careful. Like most organizations, our active core of people able and willing to and able to actively participate in projects is always a fraction of the total membership. The number willing to *lead* --to initiate them and be responsible for getting them done--is still smaller. This is understandable. After all, most of us take up stargazing as a hobby, a leisure-time pursuit, and an escape from the pressures of work and everyday life, not as a second, unpaid job.

Yet, there are always so many good things to do, and more which could be done. And the temptation is to do them all. And since most active members are already "too busy" to recruit and train help, this usually means that they take on ever more tasks onto themselves and/or load more onto each other. And sooner or later, some burn out, and such exhaustion becomes a major deterrent to the further growth of our Centre. After all, this is supposed to be a hobby and relaxation for us too. As 2:30 AM, 3:00, then 4:00 passes with me at the keyboard, I think of the clear night outside and how Hale Bopp must look from our new site. And of Sandy, who was doing a presentation every night for weeks on end. And of Rick who is usually busier still.

There are several possible solutions. Perhaps we've taken on far too much: a major Star Party this Summer, a new observatory to build, Public Star Nights, school and other presentations... and this newsletter. But it seems too late to cancel the Star Party, with registrations starting to come in, and Rick poised to leave for Edmonton and I to Calgary. Besides, Cypress Hills is such a beautiful Park, and the skies were SO GOOD there last year. The new observatory, too is something we want to get on with. As they watched Hale Bopp with us, Nelson and Gloria Rystrom talked of building grain bins where our present buildings stand, not this year, but next. Besides the skies are SO GOOD out there, at the Sleaford School site. Cutting down on our public Star Nights would be short-sighted, after all, we get many new members there. And the presentations also attract new people...and even make money for our Centre.

There is also a much more difficult answer. That is to finally begin to create a Centre infrastructure: to get teams of people working on such projects as the SSSP, the new Observatory, presentations, Observing Sessions, even this newsletter. At first it will be slow and inefficient and frustrating. New people have to learn how to do things; they'll even make mistakes. But in the long run, this is the only way the Saskatoon will ever finally break into the big time, and move toward that magic hundred members. NOW is the time to start this process. e.k.

Spring Observing at our new Site

Sandy Ferguson

Sometimes all it takes is that little whiff of spring air to get one out of the winter blahs and into an outdoorsy frame of mind. After a winter committed to really serious couch reclining, the night of Saturday, April 29/30, gave me that much-needed shove to get out there and photograph Comet Hale-Bopp and generally muck about under the stars.

Erich Keser was kind enough to offer a lift to the Colonsay site, where he was planning to do some observing and photo-taking as well. Although I had been to Colonsay once before on a site searching-expedition, this was the first opportunity to do some 'real' astronomy. The night was mild and windless, with a moon that wasn't due to rise until the very late hours.

So, off we hurtled into the night in Erich's car, loaded down with a C11, photographic equipment, binoculars, star charts, several layers of winter clothing, a box of donuts, cookies, juice boxes and tea. (Clever astronomers know the importance of having the right junk food available when observing!). We left the city around 9:30 PM, with the sky hazy in parts and an auroral arc evident in the north. The comet was high and bright, located above the aurora in the northwest, and offered decent pictures if the aurora remained quiet.

On arrival at the site we noticed that the sky was patchy in places, but the east and south were good, and the bit of sky glow from Saskatoon was in the west behind the only

building on the site, the Sleaford schoolhouse. This was a plus for photos of the comet, as it would keep city light from washing out any pictures of the comet.

While Erich took the usual hour set up and polar-align his C11 and prepare to "shoot", I went ahead and took a number of tripod photos with the remaining frames on the roll of Fujicolor 400 ASA that had been in the camera since new year. Unfortunately this was print film (I prefer slides), as the trip to Colonsay was spur-of-the-moment and I was out of slide film! All exposures were between 15 and 30 seconds with a standard 50 mm f/1.7 lens. Erich, on the other hand, was totally prepared...with a roll Ektachrome 1600 Pro film he'd started at last year's Cypress Hills Star Party.

Hale Bopp's tail was a surprise. All the previous observations of the comet I had made were from the city, where the tail looked to be about 3-4 degrees long. Here, under dark skies (but near an aurora), the tail extended into Cassiopeia, around 10 degrees, maybe more. It was relatively short, wide and arched.

About an hour into the observing session, the aurora became active and "curtains" started to develop. In addition, a second, lower arc appeared. The was comet framed by these two arcs, so that its tail almost disappeared as it extended into the upper aurora. Sailor's curses hung in the air, until we noticed the beauty of the this spectacle.

After midnight the sky really cleared. This made for a big change in Saskatoon's glow from behind the schoolhouse; it diminished to the point of being barely discernible.

(Continued next page)

continued from P. 7

The southern sky was really spectacular, Mars being the brightest object near the hindquarters of the Lion. (Actually, it's in Virgo, I think.) Erich turned his 'scope on the planet and we were delighted to see surface features as pale greenish/brown areas and there also appeared to be a northern polar cap (it might have been wishful thinking). Mars is into its early summer season--perhaps we will see the polar cap shrinking in size over its summer.

I managed to take a few photos of that part of the sky, as well, mainly to record the position of Mars. I will then take future shots of the same area for a few months to record its motion over time. I find pictures like these useful for talks in the schools and at astronomy classes for children.

It was a warmer night than many of those that have followed, but still brisk. Be warned that our picturesque new site can be chilly. There

is a lovely windbreak of trees around the site, but it is still the highest point around. Thus we had a tea break, after which we spent a few minutes observing M13, which was really beautiful in the C11 at high power.

About 2:00 am the moon finally rose and could be seen through the trees bordering the site. They were silhouetted against its light, in one of those haunting, Halloween scenes (with a last quarter rather than full moon!). Surely the bane of every astronomer is to be appreciated sometime!

After packing up all the gear, we took a minute to appreciate the whole view and the night. We had heard great horned owls and coyotes and observed one skunk on the drive out and experienced another's distinctive fragrance on leaving. Perhaps we left at the right time!

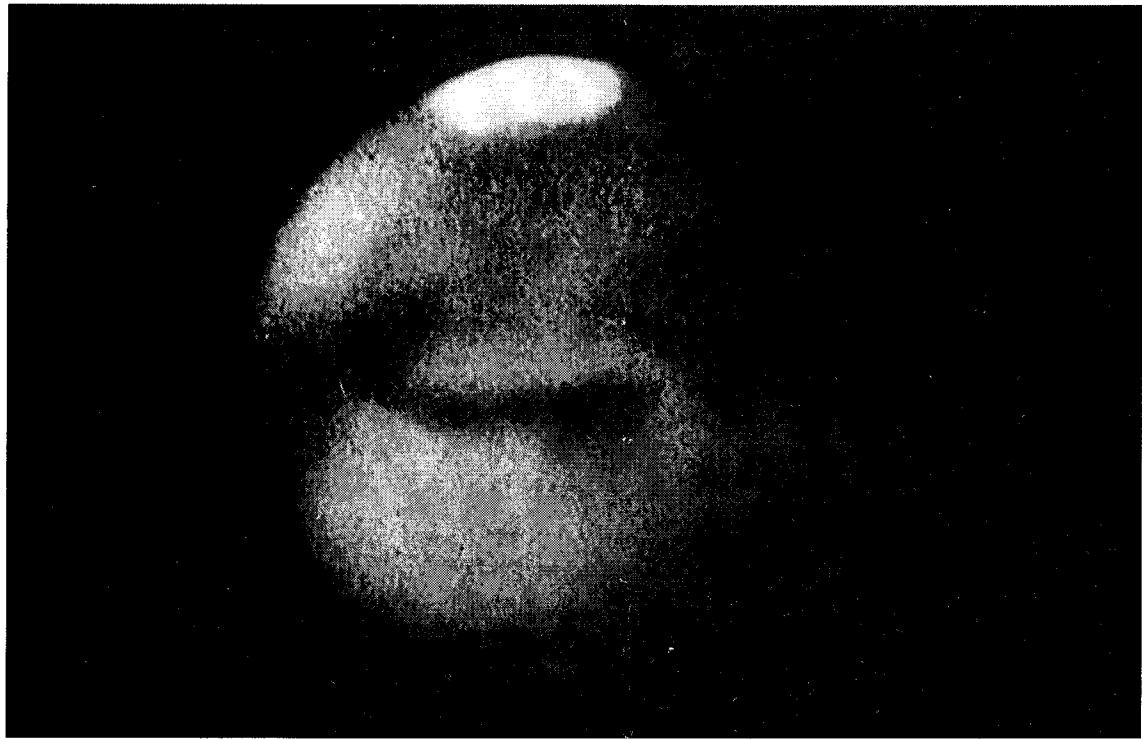
I give the night a score of 8 on a scale of 1-10!

Sandy Ferguson



Comet HALE-BOPP, Bill Hydomako, 100mm, 60 sec, ASA 400

April 1997



Test our new

If you've had the impression that our new site isn't really as dark "as advertised", then be sure to try going out there on a really clear, moonless night. Sky conditions, especially cloud, make for a tremendous difference in the "seeing" at this site -- or any other within 50 kilometers of Saskatoon! It is a difference we've become inured to, through our years of steadily increasing sky glow at our Rystrom.

Be sure to do yourself the favour of learning the several different access routes. It is a long way, but the distance and/or driving time can be reduced by choosing your route carefully:

In difficult driving conditions: (using highways and only the widest grid roads):

Highway 5 to the Colonsay Road, then right for four miles (6.4 km) and right for another 1.5 miles (2.4 km)

site for yourself!

Highway 16 to Colonsay-Prudhomme Road, then left for about eight miles (~11 km) to jog in road at, then left for about 3.5 miles (~.5 km) to schoolhouse.

In better driving conditions:

(shortening distance by using slightly smaller, but well-maintained grid roads)

Highway 16 to Lawrence Road, then left for about six miles (~10 km) to road's end at T-intersection, then right for about .5 miles (.8 km) to schoolhouse.

Highway 5 to Meridian Road, then right for four miles (6.4 km) and left for about four miles (6.4 km).

Shortest route: Veer left from Hwy 16 and Straight out along the Potash Mine Road. This is makes for 53.5 kilometers from my front door to the schoolhouse! ek

How Is Variable Star Observing Different From Deep Sky Observing

The following article was first published in the Tri-Valley Stargazers newsletter, *Prime Focus*. Their web site is <http://www.hooked.net/~tvs/>. It was written by Dave Sworin who posted it to the AAVSO e-mail list and who gave the permission to republish the article here.

1. Variable stars are usually much more difficult to find than deep sky objects because most stars look alike. You must know the exact location of the variable with respect to the stars around it. This requires charts which show more stars on them and a very careful and exacting star hop.

It is not uncommon for beginning variable star observers not find a single variable on their first night. For example, some Mira variable stars vary between magnitude 9 and 14 over a period of a year. If the star is at magnitude 12 when you try to make your observations, *Uranometria* is not nearly detailed enough to find the variable.

2. The first time you see a deep sky object is frequently the greatest thrill. Deep sky observers are always seeking out new objects and new thrills. Of course deep sky observers have their favorites, but you can only look at M82 so long for so many times before you want to see something else.

In contrast, the first time you see a variable star, it is the least impressive and interesting observation you will ever make of that star. It looks just like a star, like most any

other star. Now when you go back a week later and find it has changed in brightness, now it starts to get more interesting.

The more you observe it, the more changes you see. The more familiar you are with the variable, the more differences from other variables you notice and the more irregularities you discover. A variable star is more interesting the more you observe it.

3. Deep sky observing is an experience in space. The vast reaches of our universe unfold before your eye and stretch your imagination to comprehend the size and relationship of where we are in the universe. The time element is hidden in the eons of time it takes for changes in deep sky objects to unfold.

With variable stars, time not space is the dimension of interest. This is difficult to feel until you are into variable star observing for more than a year, for like the seasons of the constellations, variable stars have their own rhythm.

Vision is the key discriminator of space, but time is in your breathing and the beating of your heart. Variable star observers use their eyes to find the stars and make the magnitude estimates surely, but the joy is in the experience of changes with time, in the dynamics of our universe.

4. Aperture fever is common among all amateurs, but it is particularly strong in deep sky observers because what you can see increases dramatically with aperture. In variable star observing however, you do not need a big scope to see time, it is right there on your wrist watch, in plain sight.

continued opposite P.

continued:

There are many naked eye variables and many more binocular variables. A small telescope puts thousands of variables within your reach. Telescope aperture is not as important.

5. Light pollution is very detrimental to deep sky observing. The difference is so amazing that many amateurs only observe at dark sky sites, away from their home. In contrast, variable stars are not bothered as much by light pollution. For amateur telescopes, a variable star is just a point of light, high magnification darkens the sky background allowing you to see the variable. Many if not most variable star observers, observe from their back yards.

6. You can not do variable star observing very well by yourself. You need an organization. You need people around the globe. Deep sky observatories can congregate in one location, like Chile or Hawaii, where the best observing conditions are located.

Not so with variable star observing. Time waits for no man [or woman], you've heard it said, and neither do the clouds nor the Sun. You will miss many observations important to following the behavior of your variable stars, but luckily variable star organizations exist around the world and cooperate internationally in a wonderful way. When you are sleeping, someone in Hungary is making an observation of SS Cygni as it starts to go into outburst jumping from magnitude 12 to magnitude 8 is one day.

by Dave Sworin

To Dave's article I would like to add that I personally disagree with his point 4; there's always an excuse for aperture fever! In my case, I observe (when I can) with an 8 inch telescope from a very heavily light polluted back yard. So seeing down to 12th magnitude can be a challenge. A larger aperture would make up for the light pollution and allow me to get to the 13's where all the AAVSO alert notice activity happens.

By the way, my very first observation of SS Cygni caught it in outburst. Now that was cool! I used a chart published in a book by David Levy and joined the AAVSO shortly afterward.

Gord Sarty

Still Missing Your 1997 Observer's Handbook?

Some members who renewed in before Christmas have yet to receive their new Handbooks. University of Toronto Press assures us that this will be rectified shortly. If you do not have your copy by the April 21 meeting, be sure to inform Mike Williams.

Loaner Telescope Program:
As of March 3, the Centre's telescopes are in the hands of these people:

- 3.1 inch Tasco Refractor: available
- 4 inch Astroscan Reflector: Sandy Ferguson, 931-3184, since Jan.20/97
- 6 inch Rich Field Telescope: Ron Schnor, 343-1256, since Sept. 22/96.

If you wish to rent a telescope, please phone Gord Sarty at 665-6448 or 655-2332.

Beyond Coldspell: The McCurdy Catalog

In recent years a number of new observing catalogs have sprung into existence. Notable among these are the famous lists introduced by Phatlip Herringbone and Sir Packrat Coldspell-Moorbeere. Not that they have introduced anything in the way of new objects to observe, mind you; they have, however, managed to recycle a great many existing attractions with their own names prominently affixed. Supposedly there is now a great deal of prestige for an observer to track down objects in the H (for Hubris) or C (for Conceit) catalogs.

I considered this sorry state and decided to draw up my own catalog, avoiding all the Messiest, Coldspell and Herringbone objects. When it came to numbering them I was temporarily nonplussed because McCurdy, like Messiest and Moorbeere, begins with an "M". Fortunately, my surname actually has two capital letters, an "M" and a "C", both of which I *always* use. So let us use "McC" for my catalog.

The McCurdy Catalog

New Designation	Previous Name	Comments
McC 1	"The Big Bang"	OK, so you're a few billion years late; still, all you need is an orbiting observatory and some damn good software to detect the three degree background radiation. A logical starting point.
McC 2	"The Milky Way"	A superb example of an edge-on galaxy which not only was left off the M, H, and C catalogs, but the NGC, IC, and UGC as well. The McCurdy Catalog is designed to rectify such oversights.
McC 3	"Large Magellanic Cloud"	A southern vacation is all you need to bag this one. Hey, Coldspell-Moorbeere forgot it, so I might as well claim it.
McC 4	"The Sun"	Like McC 2, this spectacularly bright star is notable by its absence from most star catalogs. On the darkest nights, this enigmatic star becomes a challenge object.
McC 5	"The Moon"	The best example of a bright variable I have yet observed, and a worthy object for my list.
McC 6	"Venus"	The reason 99% of the population can't identify this brilliant object is its dull, unattractive name. A sexy new moniker like McC 6 should solve this problem.

109 objects would have exceeded most people's attention span, and let's face it, there is only a handful of objects up there that truly warrant having my name associated with them. So a list of 13 seemed about right.

Just imagine a romantic evening with a loved one, a glass of wine maybe, and a dark sky.

Lover # 1: "Oh look dear, there's McC 5!"

Lover # 2: "Let's wait until it sets and McC 2 comes out!"

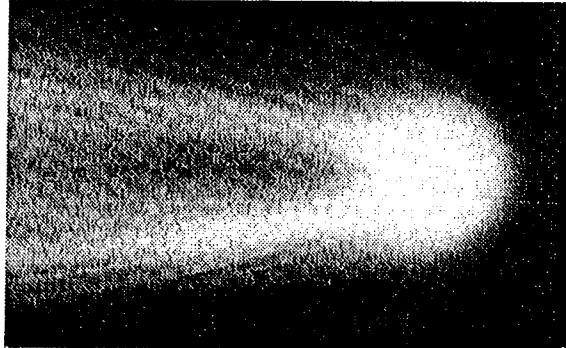
Lover # 1 (or # 3): "Oh, darling!"

The list follows. Who will be the first to photograph, sketch, observe or imagine all the McC objects, with or without a CAT? Who cares??

- McC 7 "Jupiter" Any planet that considers itself King is worthy of a McCurdy designation.
- McC 8 "Saturn" Not too conspicuous visually, but a friend of mine who actually owns a telescope says it looks real neat.
- McC 9 "Nemesis" Might as well try for a piece of the pseudo-scientific market while I'm at it. There's more money to be made there anyway. Besides, it's at least as visible as C9, the Cave Nebula.
- McC 10 "Comet Hyakutake" Who does this guy think he is, getting his name in all the papers? I would have discovered the thing myself if he would have only waited a few weeks.
- McC 11 "Comet Hale-Bopp" Might as well plan ahead to next year while I'm at it.
- McC 12 "Comet Halley" Oh, what the hell... why not just make a grab for lasting fame?
- McC 13 "Aurora Borealis" If anybody's name is going to be taken in vain, it might as well be mine.

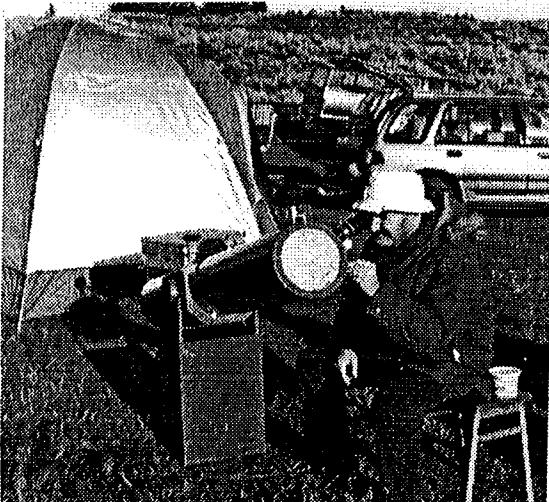
Autographed McCurdy Certificates, suitable for framing or wrapping fish, are available for only \$1 (plus \$99 shipping and handling) to anybody who says they have seen all 13 objects and pays cash. Bumper stickers, beer steins, boxer shorts and assorted other b.s. can be manufactured for a price to be negotiated and paid in advance. Delivery optional.

-Bruce McCurdy



The above photo is of McC 12 (formerly comet Halley). This was not a difficult object to observe during its pass in 1986, but if you missed it, then yer either going to have to wait until 2062 or get yourself one hell of a scope.

The photo to the right shows the author Bruce McCurdy observing the bright star McC 4 (previously the Sun). When asked about the difficulty of observing it he replied "If you use protection for safe observing it's not too bad -- but it's a real bugger to star hop to.



Stolen with no permission whatsoever from Edmonton's April 1996 STARBUST!

Minutes of the General Meeting - March 1996

1. Meeting called to order at 8:00 PM
2. 1997 Calendars - a few left at fire sale price of \$10.00
3. Coffee - Every one agreed that coffee at the meetings is a good idea.
4. Tuktoyaktuk T-Shirts - The logo with the rude graphic is far more popular with the members and will probably be available in the future.
5. National Council Meeting - Gord Sarty attended the London National Council and brought us up to date with the latest happenings including the membership program with University Toronto Press.
6. Astronomy Day and Gastronomy - Astronomy Day display will be held at Circle Park Mall on April 12th. Come out with your Scope and Photos and show them to the public. Then after an arduous day at the Mall come out to the German Club and suck up some schnapps and enjoy some good food and spin those yarns about all those 20th mag. galaxies you saw in your 6" scope. Some one is sure to believe you! Call me before April 11th at 373-0034 to let me know if your are coming.
7. Hale-Bopp Starnight April 10th and other plans - Rick Huziak will organize for somewhere in the city.
8. The Sask. Cypress Hills Star Party - Erich brought the club up to date on the Star Party in July in Cypress Hills Park. Lots of volunteers are needed for this event. Please advise Erich of any help you can give.
9. Junior Astronomy - Kim Mysyk gave the last lecture to the young astronomers.
10. Observing report - Darrell brought the club up to date on what's been happening with the observers group.
11. New Observatory - Colonsay will sell the land for \$1.00. Conditions are that the title transfer costs be paid by the buyer, that a commemorative plaque be erected, an annual star party be held for the town, that the Colonsay Wildlife Federation continue to have access, and that the sale be completed by the end of April.

Motion: by Gord Sarty, seconded by Rick Huziak

That we move to acquire the Sleaford Schoolsite on these terms with intent to make it our new Observatory site. 20 for 2 oppose 3 abstentions*

Motion: by Gord Sarty, seconded by Rick Huziak

That we agree in principle that we go into partnership with the Physics Department at the University of Saskatchewan, with the university owning the land and the Centre being an equal partner in the development and use of the site. 19 for 4 against 1 abstention*

12. Meeting Adjourned at 11:00 PM.

* NOTE: Exact wording of motions and figures are based on the memory of R. Huziak and E. Keser as Secretary provided no detailed record. They should reflect proportions, if not precise numbers; correction would be appreciated.

LOANER TELESCOPE PROGRAM:

As of April 7th, the Centre's telescopes are in the hands of these people:

- 3.1 inch Tasco Refractor: Larry Grenkow, 955-0810, since Feb. 22/97.
- 4 inch Astroscan Reflector: Sandy Ferguson, 931-3184, since Jan. 20/97 (Sandy will have this for March).
- 6 inch Rich Field Telescope: Ron Schnor, 343-1256, since Sept. 22/96.

If you wish to rent a telescope, please call Gord Sarty at 665-6448 or 655-2332.

MINUTES OF March 17th, 1997 EXECUTIVE MEETING

1. Meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM.
2. **Annual Report** is overdue to National. Al Hartridge will make sure it is completed ASAP.
3. **Centre Sky& Telescope sub:** Motion to renew: Darrell Chatfield, seconded: Sandy Ferguson, **Carried**.
4. **RASC 2000 Committee** - Ed Kennedy recommended that we ask Jim Young to act as our contact person to help keep us up to date on the goings-on of this committee and to suggest alternate ideas if necessary.
5. **National Council Meeting, London, ON** - Report by Gord Sarty our National Rep., mainly on the pros and cons Of joining the nationally centralized membership list maintained by U. of T. Press: Should we finally opt in or stay out? Also, the membership year is to change and become based on date of individual joining.
6. **Sask. Summer Star Party** at Cypress Hills. Erich Keser brought us up to date on the latest developments 12 of our pool of Rental Units for non-campers have already been taken. There appears to be a lot of interest: inquiries have come from as far away as Vermont! Time to start dividing up responsibilities to make it a success.
7. **April 12th: Astronomy Day and Gastronomy Night**
Astronomy Day- Sandy Ferguson has booked the Mall at Circle Park for the Centre. Please come out to help, and bring your scopes and photos for display. The connected public Star Night will be held on May 10th.
Gastronomy Night will be held following the astronomy day display. Come out and enjoy the good food and companionship. We will try to book the German Club on Lorne Avenue south for the meal. Call to let me know how many will attend: **Al Hartridge 373-0034**.
8. **Hale-Bopp Public Starnight** - We will try for the evening of April 10th. Rick suggests this be in the city. We may try also to have a starnight at Beaver Creek and Waneskewin.
9. **New Observatory Site:** The Sleaford School Site has been made available to us to out Centre or the University for \$1.00 plus cost of transfer of title, with condition that:
 - a plaque be erected to explain the history of the Sleaford School and the site
 - that starnights be held for the Colonsay community and school every years
 - that the transfer take place before the end of April so that it not to interfere with seeding.Both the University's and our legal counsel recommend against joint ownership . There appear to be more advantages in the University owning the land and us forming a partnership with them. With the help of Don MacKinnon, we will draw up a partnership agreement which is fair to both parties.
Executive Meeting adjourned at 8:00 PM.

**Executive and General Meeting Minutes
were submitted by Dr. Alan Hartridge.**

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**Enjoy some payback for our winters
a unique privilege of our Northerly latitude:
the chance to follow Hale-Bopp through the night!**



**Photo of by Centre member Bill Hydakko
using Rystrom Observatory dome telescope**
"Hale Bopp, 120 seconds, ASA 100 film, prime focus, C8 (2000mm)"

**DON'T MISS YOUR LAST CHANCE -
GO OUT AND SEE HALE BOPP TONIGHT!**