

Mar 79

The San Jose Astronomical Association

Predictions

- Apr. 27-28 AANC-sponsored star party at Fremont Peak.
- May 5 General Meeting, Rosicrucian Planetarium, 7:30 pm. San Jose, Park & Naglee. Tom Fisher from Lockheed will talk about the Space Shuttle.
- May 11 Board of Directors meeting at Jim Van Nuland's. 3509 Calico Ave. San Jose, 8:00 pm.
- May 26 Club star party at Sanborn Canyon.
- May 26-28 Riverside Telescope Makers Conference. Camp Oakes, Big Bear City, California.
- Jun. 2 General Meeting, Rosicrucian Planetarium, 7:30 pm. Park and Naglee, San Jose. The meeting will be a general slide night with a possible movie. Elections will also be held. Those whose terms are expiring are: Cathy Pinheiro, Douglas H. Buettnner, Jim Van Nuland, Wolfgang Hanisch, Bob Fingerhut.
- Jun. 8 Board of Directors meeting at 8:00. Douglas H. Buettnner's, 6659 Mt. Pakron Dr., San Jose.
- Jun. 14 Bob Schalck's birthday.
- Jun. 15-16 AANC-sponsored star party at Fremont Peak.
- Jun. 23 Club star party at Henry Coe State Park.

Gerry Rattley, President 732-0202
Penny Pinschmidt, Editor 356-4330

Editorial

This is my 20th Bulletin. It is also my last. As of this date, April 20, 1979, I resign my editorship of the San Jose Astronomical Association's club bulletin. This decision was made entirely by me and with full knowledge of its consequences - maybe more than most will ever know or think.

I seriously doubt there has been or will be any editor of SJAA who enjoyed doing the Bulletin as much as I have. It was truly a labor of love. Knowing what I know now about the events of the last two weeks, I wouldn't change a minute of my editorship if I had the opportunity to do it all over again.

Obviously, something very serious has happened between the publication of the April issue and now. This last bulletin will be devoted to telling the facts as I know them, and some personal feelings about how and why my resignation came about. As editor, I have always upheld the vitally important responsibility of making sure the membership is up-to-date and aware of club activities and conflicts. They are paying, voting, concerned people, and it's the least I could do to keep them informed. I have always played fair and square with every one of you. This bulletin will not be an exception. I'm sure the membership will receive other versions of the story, maybe even in the next edition of the Bulletin.

The facts and personal opinions are as follows. Please keep in mind, because of the complexity and length of this issue, I will not be able to give all the events, viewpoints, and emotional responses.

On Friday, April 6, Gerry Rattley called Ed Schell. Gerry was very upset about the new bulletin format. He didn't like it and complained, among other things, that there haven't been enough technical articles. Other subjects were also discussed in the over-two-hour conversation. Gerry also contacted Cathy Pinheiro and Bob Fingerhut and had a long talk with each.

April 7 at the Rosicrucian for Astronomy Day, Gerry and I had no contact other than a few brief words as we were leaving. He said he wanted to talk to me about the bulletin and expressed the wish to have a long discussion with me soon. I said O.K., but not the next day, Sunday, because my see-once-every-three-years brother and his family had come for a one-day visit.

Tuesday, April 10, about 4 p.m., Martha, Wolfgang Hanisch's wife, called. She informed me that Wolf would "pick me up" at 6:30.

As my father's grandfather clock struck 6:30, Wolf arrived. His last words to my mother were, "I'll bring her back in about two hours." As he drove, he began

explaining the reason for this "meeting". I was told he can talk better while driving which, I assumed, was why he picked me up. He said something had happened that was very serious, and I was not to take anything in the wrong way. I was loved very dearly by the club and considered a wonderful person and editor, BUT....

According to Wolf, on Sunday night, the 8th, Gerry wanted to talk to him. He was invited to Wolf's house. Eventually, Jack Zeiders also came to Wolf's. Gerry was very irate about the bulletin and the three of them talked into the wee small hours of the morning. A few people were contacted, and, at Wolf's suggestion, a meeting was scheduled for Monday night, the 9th, at Wolf's.

About this point in our conversation, Wolf ended the "drive" at his house. John Rhodes appeared out of the dark, and we walked into the house. Wolf mentioned that he wanted John to be there when the problem was discussed.

To continue with Wolf's and now John's story, I was told who attended the Monday night meeting. John, Wolf and Martha, of course, Gerry, Jack, Kevin and Denni Medlock, Douglas Buettner, Jim Van Nuland, and Debbie Moore. In a faltering and uneasy manner, John and Wolf told me what was wrong with the Bulletin.

Too many quotes and with often "blue" connotations. Too many personal jabs at certain people and at the Board itself. Not enough technical material. Too many personal viewpoints. Should work more with the Board about the Bulletin and its content. In short, the Bulletin "must change". It no longer reflected the image the Board wanted to have. What would Norm Sperling, Morrison Planetarium, or the people who read the Bulletin at Peninsula Scientific think?.... And, of course, my editorial policy must change. For instance, John Rhodes said, "No one need know about all this. It does not concern the membership." They said if I was a "real adult", I would consider their comments and comply with them. It was "for my own good."

I was asked a few times to reply to what was being said to me. Each time I tried, I was interrupted, and the subject was changed. Eventually, I gave up trying to defend myself and simply sat there. At 11:30 P.M., five hours after Wolf picked me up, I arrived home.

Ed Schell is the president of a philosophical society called the Wakanta Longhorn Breeders Association (WLBA). This group has been very supportive of the SJAA. They organized and sponsored the indoor star parties, with Ed as representative, supplied any needed extra money for the bulletin and for special publications (for instance, the news flash telling of Don's discovery of Comet Machholz).

When I explained to Ed about the exclusive Monday meet-

ing and my "talk" with John and Wolf, he decided he would not host the upcoming indoor star party. No one else from the WLBA would host the meeting. After a long discussion, the WLBA decided continuing support of SJAA was inappropriate. They immediately mailed a letter to the club informing them of their action.

Emotions, by then, were running high and wild from all sides. My response, or lack of response, was to mail a letter to the Board stating I would not be attending the April 13 board meeting, the first I have missed since my editorship 19 months ago. My other response, in order to give me time to think and sort things out, was to disassociate myself temporarily from the club. I hoped things would cool down.

On April 14, Saturday, my mother received a morning phone call from Martha. The phone was quickly turned over to Wolf, and he began to talk about the Friday night board meeting. He told my mother it was "unanimously decided" that Ed Schell was not liked by the club and that I was loved dearly. Their only concern was for the Bulletin and the good of the club.

A notice of the cancellation of the indoor star party with a letter of explanation was posted on the door of the Red Cross.

On Tuesday, the 17th, Ed and I met with Don Machholz at Sambo's in Los Gatos. Don had agreed to serve as a neutral person and go-between for the Board and me along with Ed. His job was to accurately relay our side of the story to the board and, in turn, allow them to express their views to us. The idea was to have someone who was not intimately involved to serve as a means of communication and help solve problems. Friendships and personalities were battling each other. It had gone beyond the issue of simply the bulletin content.

For instance, on Wednesday, the 18th, Wolf visited the staff manager at the Red Cross. He expressed many of his personal views and feelings to her about the last few weeks. He complained that Ed had "locked them out" on Saturday. It was improper and against the principles of Red Cross to try to involve the Red Cross in private disputes.

This, for the most part, ends the factual portion of the account. Again, please realize I was not able to mention everything that happened. From now on, I, as Penny, will be writing this, not the editor.

The only thing which the individual can do is to give a fine example and to have the courage seriously to stand up for ethical convictions in the company of critics.

Albert Einstein

I believe that if Gerry had contacted me the day he received the bulletin, none of this would have happened. It could easily have been solved between Gerry and me.

Wolf was wrong to organize the Monday night meeting. It was not a board meeting, as I was told (special board meetings have to be called three days in advance). To me, it was an improper and exclusive meeting of a small group to discuss official board, editor, and general membership-related subjects. Those whom they discussed were not informed of the meeting and, therefore, could not reply or offer rebuttal themselves. Complaints were raised that could easily have been explained away in a few sentences. In essence, I feel deeply hurt because I was tried, convicted, and sentenced without any defense.

At the Tuesday meeting with Wolf and John, I felt I had no opportunity to reply to their comments and just told what to do. Because Wolf picked me up, I had no way of leaving.

My most serious complaint is not what they said but how they said it. Apparently they felt that these problems had been building up for some time. If that is so, why was approval the only feedback I ever received? If things had been done more out in the open, the results would not have been so hurtful and final.

Don Machholz has been doing an absolutely fantastic job as the non-emotional mediator. Without his help, the situation would have been more difficult. The most recent update is that the Board has given me an ultimatum and I was told that if I didn't acquiesce "the Board might take further action as to the replacement of the editor."

The Bulletin has, up to now, been entirely independent. It is obvious the Board no longer wants it to be. I feel I cannot work under those conditions. I feel as though I have been slapped in the face and told to go to my room until I am ready to straighten up and fly right.

After this bulletin is put to rest and mailed, I will no longer be as actively involved. I do not wish to associate with the board as a whole. As far as individual friendships are concerned, Gerry and I had a long phone conversation today, April 20th. He believes if he had gone to me with his complaints at the beginning, none of this would have happened. He is also very sorry. For this I am grateful.

In talking to a few people who were not involved but are aware of the situation, the consensus is "What a waste!" Nearly all of the members of this club have two things in common: a hobby called amateur astronomy and friendship. The past two weeks have been vicious, vindictive, egotistical, childish and bordering

on violence. Many people have been deeply hurt and will wear the scars for many years to come. This should not be the conduct of an amateur astronomy club.

I have lost my joy, enthusiasm, and pride in this club. I will continue my interest in astronomy. You may see me at Fremont Peak and at general meetings a few times. I don't want to give the impression I'm discouraging any friendly contact. Quite the contrary, I need reassurance from sincere friends.

As far as the Bulletin itself is concerned, my advice to the Board is to produce it themselves. An extra meeting a month will suffice for getting the bulletin together. Things will be less difficult and demanding with more people working on it. If the bulletin is produced this way, never again will a problem like this come about. The Board will be running the show wholly and completely as they see fit.

I would like to thank once again all of those who have helped me with the Bulletin. People such as Suzanne Lowd, Cathy Pinheiro, Don Machholz, Bob Schalck and Jay Freeman. All contributed in making the Bulletin as successful as I know it was.

In last month's Bulletin, I had written on the front page, "I only hope this club will live on continuing Dr. Gregory's enthusiasm for what was right." I didn't realize that statement would come to a test so soon.

Penny E. Pinheiro

I think the above is fairly accurate as to the basic facts. To me, morality is honesty, integrity, doing the right thing. I feel some of the leaders of this club have not played straight with Penny, and, to a lesser extent, with me and the rest of the club.

It hurts to be disappointed by my friends that I held in so much respect. In the three years of my involvement with the club, I have seen so much improvement in the attitudes, opportunities and activities of and for the members. I had begun to hope everyone recognized that the good of the club, as a whole, must outweigh petty personal problems. My dreams and everything I have worked for has been shot out from under me. If the Board will do this to Penny, what would they do to the rest of us? I can only say I am glad this happened after Dr. Gregory died. I'm sure it would break his heart to see all this.

Ed Schell

Short Little Things

Due to the loss of funding, the eclipse publication will be suspended.

An explanation is needed about the new format. The advantages are many. With all the pages reduced, more material can be condensed into a smaller space. That means less pages, less money, less trouble, as well as giving space for more material. The only disadvantage I can see is the awkwardness in a 3-ring binder.

FOR SALE: Edmond 8-inch reflector with star drive; spectroscope, eyepieces and barlow. Asking \$750.

Gary Goodrich
1137 Reed Ave., Unit C,
Sunnyvale, Ca. 94086
Call 244-5987 7-8 A.M.
5:30-7:30 P.M.

FOR SALE: 1964 Mercury Montclair, 8 cyl., automatic, power steering, power brakes, power windows (for the ones that work), air conditioner, heater, radio, one new muffler, two new retreads, good spare, horn works intermittently. \$200 firm.

Pinschmidt Used Car Lot
356-4330

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