

predictions

may '79

- May 5 General Meeting, Rosicrucian Planetarium, Park & Naglee, San Jose'. 7:30 pm. Our speaker will be Tom Fisher of Lockheed, who will talk on the Space Shuttle, reviewing its history and plans for its future use.
- May 11 Board of Directors' meeting at Bobby Fingerhut's. 340 Rio Verde Place, #4, Milpitas. 8:00 pm.
- May 12 Indoor Star Party, Los Gatos Red Cross. 7:30 pm.
- May 19 Indoor Star Party, Los Gatos Red Cross. 7:30 pm.
- May 26 SJAA Star Party at Sanborn Canyon County Park, for anyone left in town. (See next item.)
- May 26-28 Riverside Telescope Makers' Conference, Big Bear, Ca. See Rattley Rattles, April bulletin, page 9.
- May 28 Memorial Day. Drive carefully!
- June 2 General Meeting, Rosicrucian Planetarium, Park & Naglee, San Jose'. 7:30 pm. The meeting includes the annual election of five members to the Board of Directors. Details on this next month. Second feature will be a Riverside Rehash with slides and reports from the conference.
- June 8 Board of Directors' meeting at Doug Buettner's, 6659 Mt. Pakron Drive, San Jose'. 8:00 pm. Phone 997-1783. Election of officers. All newly-elected board members should attend.
- June 9 Indoor Star Party, Los Gatos Red Cross. 7:30 pm.
- June 15-16 AANC Star Party at Fremont Peak.
- June 23 SJAA Star Party at Henry Coe State Park.
- June 26-30 ASP Summer Meeting, Sonoma State University. See Rattley Rattles for April, page 9.
- June 30 Indoor Star Party, Los Gatos Red Cross. 7:30 pm.

This month's bulletin reflects many changes. There was a difference in opinion between the editor and the board over what was appropriate content for the bulletin. The board decided to relieve Penny Pinschmidt of the editorship of the bulletin and appointed Denni Medlock as our new bulletin editor. We know you all thank Penny for her past efforts and join us in supporting Denni as our new editor. We regret that the general membership was subjected to an unauthorized bulletin.

The Board

zeniths

While staring at my typewriter wondering what to title this section a whole parade of names came to mind, things like Nebulous News (I have to give the Hanischs credit for that one), Novas, FFNs (for Faint Fuzzy Nothings, of course), or just plain Aren't-Laps-Wonderful-So-Much-Gets-Dumped-Into-Them News, finally settling on, temporarily perhaps, Zeniths. I know with all that talent we have sitting out there that one of you should be able to come up with something better.

For those of you who unfortunately showed up at the Indoor Star Party a few weeks back only to find the door locked it will be good news to note that the Red Cross building is now acquired directly by the SJAA and Gerry Rattley has control of the key. What this means is that, barring bulletin error, there shouldn't be any more eclipsed Indoor Star Parties.

Speaking of Indoor Star Parties this would be a good time to explain them to any new member or bulletin subscriber that hasn't the faintest idea what 'Red Cross meetings' have to do with astronomy. On Saturday nights, whenever there isn't a star party or general meeting or any other astronomical event scheduled the Red Cross building in Los Gatos is made available to the SJAA for what could be termed an informal rap session, a very informal rap session. Everyone is invited, munchies are usually produced from the attendees, and the subjects of discussion have been known to range the spectrum of mankind's accumulated knowledge. Telescope mirror making is encouraged as is bringing slides and/or movies, so if you haven't been to a 'Red Cross meeting' yet try one. I think you'll like it and it's a good way to spend a Saturday evening. Almost better than watching Creature Features.

Gerry wanted me to remind those who haven't registered for the Riverside Telescope Makers' Conference to hurry up and get it mailed, so there, I've reminded them.

Bob Fingerhut says that starting in May members will be receiving that colored renewal card from good 'ole Sky & Tel and that everyone should know what to do with them. That's good, because I have never figured out what to do with them. In reality I believe they are to go back to Bob.

10²⁷ thanks to Norm Neinchel for his donation of a projection screen to the club! Many possibilities of uses—meetings, star parties, Astronomy Day lectures....

Thinking of possibilities of uses: Pete Manly, be forewarned. I'm going to want an article from you soon about the CCD camera and its progress. I got a chance to look at its interpretation of the lunar surface during Astronomy Day and it was very impressive. The public loved it. (More about Astronomy Day later)

Starting at the May general meeting there will be a new object up front joining the usual piles of brochures, magazines, old bulletins, etc., and that will be box with the word 'SUGGESTIONS' printed on the side. The board felt it would be advantageous for those members who don't attend board meetings to be able to make suggestions concerning any subject concerning the club they wish. So please FEED THE BOX! If you don't like something let it be known. The box won't distinguish anonymous suggestions from any others.

At the last board meeting (at the last two, actually) the presenting of an award was discussed, an award that would be given to a club member that had done something extraordinary, styled somewhat after Don Machholz's comet award. Nothing definite was decided on but if anyone has any ideas either put them down on paper in the suggestion box or come to the next board meeting with it. There's been some feeling that it should be named after Dr. A.B. Gregory in memorial to all he had done for the SJAA.

Wolfgang Hanisch has been clicking away, getting pictures for the upcoming club brochure. We sure have a lot of hams in this club! (More about Wolf and pictures later).

Many thanks to Fred Braniff for his past crossword (skyword) puzzles. Please keep it up! It's the only entertainment around work during lunch. Bob Schalick, Rob Vorderbreuggen, and myself all sit around trying to solve it and are often seen storming into the room next to mine where Sky & Tel's monthly sky chart is hanging. Luckily, about 10% of the people working there are amateur astronomers. The rest have learned to tolerate the occasional insanity without too much grumbling. Little do they know that the company is going to have to shut down Memorial Day weekend simply for lack of manpower (womarpower?). Riverside Telescope Makers' Conference strikes again.

There's actually been a rumor going around the club that the long lost club 12" is actually being reincarnated by a few of the members. Will miracles never cease?

A few of you may be wondering what I plan as regular features in the bulletin. Well, they may not be regular but I would like to keep such things as question of the month going just as soon as I get a surplus of questions. Also book reviews would be welcomed. Anybody read a good astronomy-type book lately? Let me know about so it can be passed on here.

"Take Problem A, call it Problem B, and Problem A will disappear." Denni

"Just ignore me." Wolf Hanisch

COMET COMMENTS

There have been no new comets observed in the past seven weeks. So far this year we have one comet discovered by a professional astronomer (Charles Kowal) and one returning comet (Daniel) recovered. This is an unusually low number of comets for the first four months of the year.

COMET TAILS: Several months ago I tabulated the number of comets discovered per month, and in different categories. Prior to 1968 there were 21 comets discovered in the month of May, (excluding photographic discoveries) which is the lowest of any month of the year. This could be due to the tilt, in the morning sky, of the ecliptic, making the area south of the ecliptic rather unaccessible to the more numerous Northern Hemisphere comet hunters. The problem with this solution, however, is that this is only an average "discovery-rate" time for the Southern observers. Their weather may affect the Southern observers in May, lowering their chances.

Don Machholz 356-7727

Don has reached the pinnacle of publicity and will be in People Magazine this month! It will be the May 21st. issue, available on the newsstands May 14th. Watch for him in the magazine's Lookout section.

By the way, Don will be giving the San Francisco Amateur Astronomers a talk on comet hunting, Wednesday, May 16, at 8:00 pm. The meeting will be held at the J. Randall Jr. Museum, 99 Museum Way in S.F. Everyone is welcome!

Great Red Spot

Calico Observatory
3509 Calico Ave., San Jose, Ca. 95124

| on Meridian PDT | da | mo | d | h | m |
|-----------------|----|----|----|----|----|
| M | 4 | 30 | 11 | 35 | PM |
| Th | 5 | 3 | 9 | 5 | PM |
| Sa | 5 | 5 | 10 | 44 | PM |
| Th | 5 | 10 | 9 | 53 | PM |
| Sa | 5 | 12 | 11 | 33 | PM |
| Tu | 5 | 15 | 9 | 5 | PM |
| Th | 5 | 17 | 10 | 46 | PM |
| Tu | 5 | 22 | 9 | 53 | PM |
| Su | 6 | 3 | 9 | 53 | PM |

Recent attempts to observe the Red Spot have failed due to weather or seeing. Still, it has been a fine sight during moments of good seeing, so do go give it a last try.

These Spot ephemeris are the last for the current apparition of Jupiter; the only one in June is included here. Jupiter reaches conjunction with the Sun on August 13. Recovery of the Spot will be attempted in October Jim Van Nuland 371-1307

New Addresses:

Ron Cunha
15995 Wards Ferry Road
Sonora, Ca. 95370

Trudy E. Bell
Suite 14M West
11 Riverside Drive
New York, New York 10023

"If I am right, and traveling back through time is genuine impossible, can we ever hope to obtain firsthand information from the past? Oddly enough, we can, simply by looking up at the stars."

Patrick Moore

"I must be the only person in the world who has a telescope mounting on my bedroom dresser and a polar shaft in the refrigerator."

Denni

AVAILABLE PUBLICATIONS

A continuation of the list of publications available through the club at substantial discounts (10%-45%) from Sky Publishing follows. They can be ordered from the club treasurer, Bob Fingerhut at 263-4455.

LUNAR QUADRANT MAPS 60¢ each, all for \$4.90

NORTON'S STAR ATLAS & REFERENCE HANDBOOK \$10.00
by Satterthwaite, Moore, Inglis

POPULAR STAR ATLAS \$2.27
by Inglis

ATLAS CATALOGUE \$8.40
by Becvar

SKALNATE PLESO ATLAS OF THE HEAVENS
by Antonon Becvar

Deluxe Edition \$11.20
Field Edition 3.50
Desk Edition 3.50

ATLASES: BOREALIS, ECLIPTICALUS, & AUSTRALIS

by Antonin Becvar

| | |
|--------------------|---------|
| Atlas Borealis | \$18.00 |
| Atlas Eclipticalis | 22.00 |
| Atlas Australis | 18.00 |

or \$56.00 for all three

To be continued in the next bulletin.

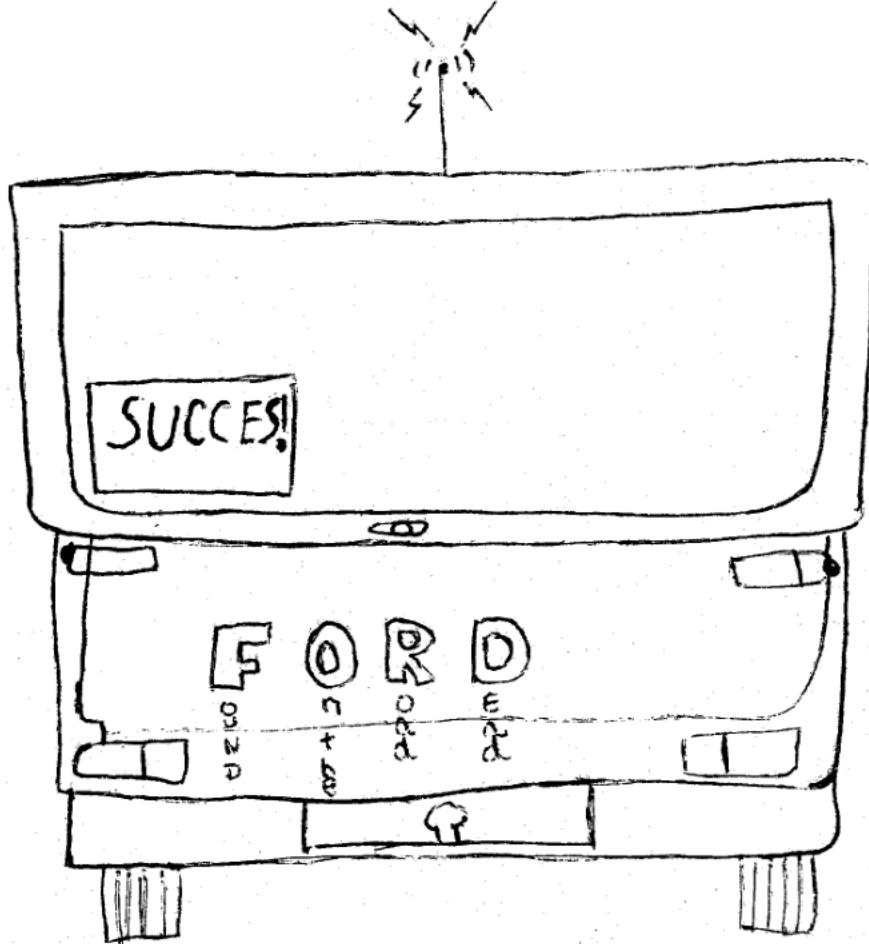
"When you are in it up to your ears, keep your mouth shut." OMNI magazine
"I was known for years to only open my mouth to change feet." Jay Freeman

ASTRONOMY DAY—SJAA STYLE

April 7th's Astronomy Day at the Rosicrucian Planetarium drew about a hundred interested public and about half that amount in telescopes and telescope keepers. It's the first time I've been at a telescope station and had too many telescopes there. Sixteen in all, to be exact. But most everyone seemed to enjoy the chance to look through so many instruments even though Jupiter, Saturn, the Moon, and M 42 were repeated throughout the gathering. I even heard people comparing views of the same object and telling their friends "you should go look at it in THAT telescope!"

Gerry Rattley did a fantastic job with his outdoor slide show while in the planetarium the Warrens put on quite a good sky show. With that many telescopes being dusted off for the begining of star party season I won't mention all the names but I would like to mention and thank Bob Badstuber and Don Larsen, two non-members who braved the crowd and showed up with scopes. Hope we can see you at the coming star parties.

"That is not a hot tub!" Penny, defending her telescope tube to Jay F.



SUCCES!

February 26th started very early. At 4:15 the alarm clock began ringing and we sleepily crawled out of the truck. We packed up the truck and were off in record time. When we arrived at the motel, we found Penny and Ed giving everyone a ring of the cowbell. Ed gave us a tinkle too and the truck promptly responded by backfiring.

By this time several people were wandering around mumbleing things about cloud filters and low batteries. Then came the weather report with news of clearing to the west. There ensued a mad scramble for cars reminiscent of a Le Mans start. Mary and I drove on wondering whether we would actually get to see the eclipse. When we stopped for gas, the station attendant told us of an alternate route. We decided to try it.

We crossed the Columbia river and headed west attaining illegal if not imprudent speeds. Finally, we saw clear skies ahead, our first sign of encouragement. Perhaps Murphy wouldn't see us. We raced on, time was getting short. Finally, we came to a bend in the river. The hills ahead of us were mottled with light and dark patches. The cloud cover had broken!

We found a good spot off the road and started setting up. We only had twenty minutes until totality. With fifteen minutes to go, a cloud obscured the sun. Next to us a factory sounded its siren to stop work. They too were getting ready. We continued to set up, hoping the cloud would move on. With 6 minutes to totality, the cloud moved on revealing a thin crescent sun.

The landscape reminded me of Mars or Jupiter. Shadows were still sharp, but the light was dim and fading quickly. Suddenly, the sun disappeared leaving a diamond ring. Then it too went out. The view finder of my camera filled with the splendor of totality. Electric pink prominences stood in sharp contrast to the blue-white corona and the infinite blackness of the moon. Behind us, people on the hill began whooping and cheering.

I started taking pictures as fast as I possibly could. Mary then took the camera while we made some long exposures. As I counted off the seconds, I looked up and saw the velvet blue sky, Venus and several stars. As I shifted back to the camera, totality came to an end. I took a couple of pictures and sat back. The eclipse was over. The people on the hill resumed their cheering. This time we joined in, making noises usually reserved for the G&L big game. The factory blew its whistle, calling everyone to work again. Improvising with newspaper and rapidograph ink we struck a commemorative. Mary and I started out. Our truck now sporting that read 'SUCCES!'. There was only enough room for one 'S'.

Dave Ambrose

A bit of news: Supernova discovered!

M100—11th mag., 2½ min SE of nucleus, confirmed
M101—12th mag., 1degree from nucleus, unconfirmed
as of 1979, April 21.

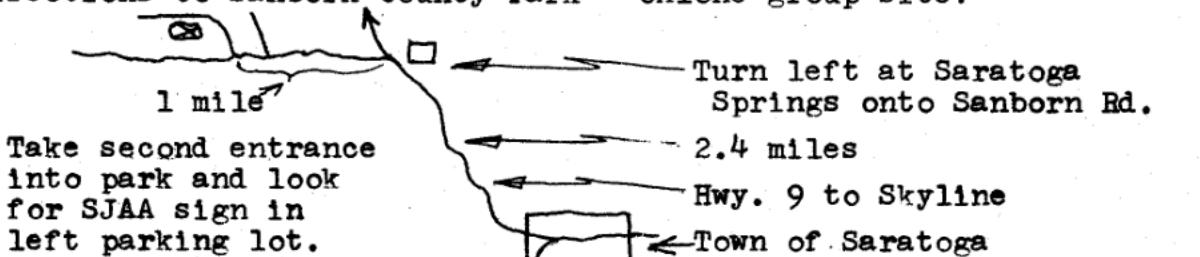
Jim Van Nuland via Ken Wilson

SJAA Banquet
by Wolf Hanisch

This year the SJAA Banquet and official installation of officers will be a picnic at Sanborn County Park. It will be held on Sunday, July 15, and will officially start at 3:00 PM, with dinner at about 4:30-5:00. Our menu will be steak and "Bender" beans. The steak is a 10-12 oz. Market steak and should be quite good. For those of us who have many children to feed, we have hot dogs and beans. The "Bender" beans are absolutely delicious, and people have been known to trade their steaks for an extra huge helping of beans. The rest of the menu is pot luck - you bring the chips, salad, and dessert. Also bring your own drinks and utensils (knife, fork, plate, and table cloth is you desire). For those who are athletically inclined, we have horseshoe pits available. At dusk we will move to our usual location in the unlocked parking lot for an informal star party - so bring your telescopes.

Please make your reservation by the June general meeting, or at the latest by June 22. I need 3 weeks to order the steaks.

Directions to Sanborn County Park - Ohlone group site:



Take second entrance
into park and look
for SJAA sign in
left parking lot.

Send money and reservations to:

Bob Fingerhut
340 Rio Verde Pl. #4
Milpitas, Ca. 95035

For other picnic questions,
contact: Wolf Hanisch 998-0861

Name: _____

of steak dinners @ \$4.00 ea. _____ # hot dog dinners @ \$1.50 _____

extra steaks @ \$3.00 ea. _____ # extra hot dogs @ \$.75 _____

Total amount enclosed: _____

How to Make Money and Become Famous at the Same Time
by Wolfgang Hanisch

A bunch of us Astronomers were sitting around wondering why our treasurer's kitty should always be depleted. So we came up with the brilliant idea of selling our astrophotos at events such as Astronomy day, public star parties, or to each other, etc.. The idea was cleared with the board, and Jim Van Nuland informed us that it was legal for us to do so.

I already have gotten enthusiastic response from astro-photographers Gerry Rattley, John Gleason, Kevin Medlock, Norm Neinchel, Bob Fingerhut and Jack Zyders. I am asking presently only for black and white negatives which are to be enlarged in quantity, dry mounted on matte board and sold. Each picture will bear the photographers autograph and technical information of the back of the print. When you give me a negative please include a description of the subject and information on how it was taken. After having conferred with several board members, we are looking presently at a price of about \$4.00 per print and each picture will bear a small SJAA in the bottom right hand corner. I am specifically looking for black and white negatives of the Pleiades, M-42, the North American Nebula and other good stuff. All profits will go into the club kitty and should make Bob Fingerhut ecstatically happy. Please hand me or send to me your precious negatives, and I'll handle them like gold. I will contact you to sign your pictures. Keep those pictures coming to: Wolfgang Hanisch
1815 Cleveland Ave.
San Jose, Ca. 95126

The Messier Marathon - a First Report

On the night of March 23 about 15 persons attended the first day of the marathon. It was a little windy and there were a few high clouds (but they didn't get in the way). Several observers got close to 100 objects that night and two persons that I know of got over a hundred. Don Machholz got the most with 107. He missed M.74, M.110 and M.30. It was determined that at a future marathon around the middle of the month it might be possible to get a total of 109 while only missing M.30. That same night we saw M. Barium (a Vandenberg Rocket Launch Barium Dump). It was a rocket that blew up in plain sight for us and the green cloud expanded and expanded until it disappeared. Later that same evening we were treated to a view of M. Bolide (a large fireball meteor that fell and blew up over Monterey Bay). It was spectacular!

The next night we had over twice as many people with clear skies and just a little wind. Herman Fast completed his list of the Messier Objects (he is probably the first one to qualify for the AANC Messier Club Plaque). Good work and congratulations! Again many persons got close to 100 objects but I do not know whether any one went over 100. This night we were treated to M. Sputnik (a Russian Satellite which skipped in about 10 degree bounces through the atmosphere). I was looking right at it when it first entered the atmosphere and immediately pointed it out. We all watched it bounce and burn until it disappeared over the Northern horizon. It was later found out that it was a Russian satellite that fell finally in Canada. Also viewed that night was M. Pluto. Using a finder chart that Herman Fast brought M. Pluto was not too difficult to locate in Doug Berger's 16-inch telescope. Pluto is now, and is for a few years to come, lucky enough not to be last. It has moved inside of Neptune's orbit and is now the 8th planet, Neptune will have to be last for a while!

The following weekend brought only about 10 people on Friday and around 25 on Saturday. It was windy and cold with a bit more cloudiness than the previous weekend but still a lot got done. On Friday night both myself and Don Machholz got 108 objects each, only missing M.74 and M.33. M.33 would have been visible, we only missed it because of a tree and a hill! It would be possible at an end of the month marathon to get 109 objects, all but M.74! I have now completed the Messier Catalogue for the Messier Award also. I think Don has completed it too, but has said nothing to me about it? This weekend we were only treated to M.3C 273 (the brightest of the Quasars, 12th magnitude, located in Virgo not too far from M.61).

The marathon was, in my opinion, successful. I haven't enjoyed a star party so much in a long time. Thank you all for coming and I hope I get reports from all those that were there.

There were no problems with the Loma Prieta Site, it was big enough, we could stay there during the day, the Police co-operated and the land owners said they liked us there. We will most probably use it again next year.

Dark Skies and Good Seeing:

Sealld C. Ramey

Rattley Rattles, continued . . . see Nov. 78 Bulletin

Finest Skalnate Pleso Objects - Chart II, conclusion

NGC RA (1950) dec Con SP:mag,size,type,dist

1514 04 06.1 +30 38 Tau pn:11?(*9½):2!0x1!5:V:1320pc

H.IV 69: 9th mag star in nebulosity 3' in diameter: use moderate power to locate and moderate to high power to observe; this is a good object to train yourself on for averted vision! It is difficult to see when it is looked at directly, but is found relatively easy if you train your eye on some location $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ of an eyepiece field away; though it seems fainter than 11th mag, this object is a very rewarding sight when located!

1528 04 11.4 +51 07 Per oc:6½:25'-80*:e:870pc

H.VII 61: Cluster,Bright,very Rich,considerably Compressed: best viewed with low power; this is a fine object for binoculars or a small telescope!

1545 04 17.1 +50 08 Per oc:8:18'-25*:(d):1320pc

H.VIII 85: Cluster,pretty Rich,a little Compressed,stars Large: use low power; easy object but not to impressive.

1579 04 26.9 +35 10 Per gn:-(*12):12'x8':2000pc

H.I 217: pretty Bright,very Large,irregularly Round,much brighter in the Middle,star 8th mag 2' from the center in P.A. 350°: use low and moderate powers; fairly easy for a gaseous nebula.

1893 05 22.4 +33 21 Aur oc:8:12'-20*:d:790pc

Cluster,Large,Rich,a little Compressed: use low power; photos show a faint nebulosity, I.C. 410, involved.

1907 05 24.7 +35 17 Aur oc:10:5'-40*:f:2090pc

H.VII 39: Cluster,pretty Rich,pretty Compressed,Round,stars from mags 9 to 12: use low power to view in same field as M.38, north following, and moderate power to well resolve; very fine small cluster!

1912 05 25.3 +35 48 Aur oc:7½:20'-100*:e:1100pc

M.38: Cluster,Bright,very Large,very Rich,irregular Figure,stars Large and Small: use low power; viewable with binoculars; look for the crusiform structure and take time to look at NGC 1907; very rewarding!!!

1931 05 28.1 +34 13 Aur gn:11½(C1:13):3'x3':2500pc

H.I 261: very Bright,Large,Round,Bright triple star in the Middle: use moderate power and if seeing and transparency are good switch to higher power for finer detail; this is an extraordinary little object!

1952 05 31.5 +21 59 Tau pn:8½?(*16):6!0x4!0:VI:280pc

M.1: very Bright,very Large,Elongated in P.A. 135°,very gradually a little brighter in the Middle,mottled: this is the famous Crab Nebula! view with low, medium and high power; with any scope look for the elongated shape but with larger apertures, 12-inch and up, and good seeing try to detect the serrated, irregular edges that gave it its name!

1960 05 32.0 +34 07 Aur oc:6½:12'-60*:f:1160pc

M.36: Cluster,Bright,very Large,very Rich,a little Compressed,stars from mag 9 to 11,stars scattered: very fine cluster at low power; visable in binoculars.

2099 05 49.0 +32 33 Aur oc:6½:20'-150*:f:1450pc

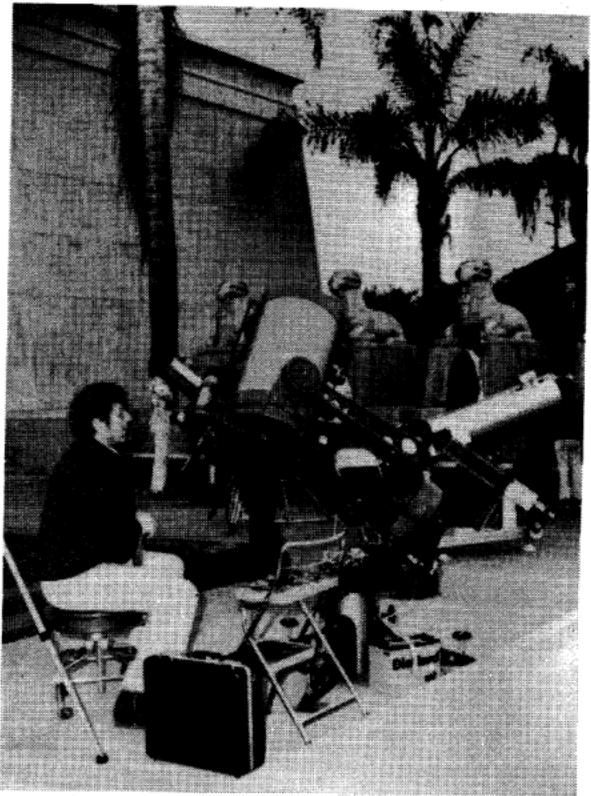
M.37: Cluster,Rich,pretty Compressed in the Middle,stars Large and Small: use low and moderate power; visable in binoculars; some consider this the finest cluster in the winter skies!!! look for large red star in center.

II.2149 05 52.6 +46 07 Aur pn:10(*14):0!3x0!2:IIIB+II:870pc

Planetary,Stellar: use high power and good seeing to look for this little gem; it is very difficult even though it is quite bright; the difficulty lies in its size! it really is tiny!

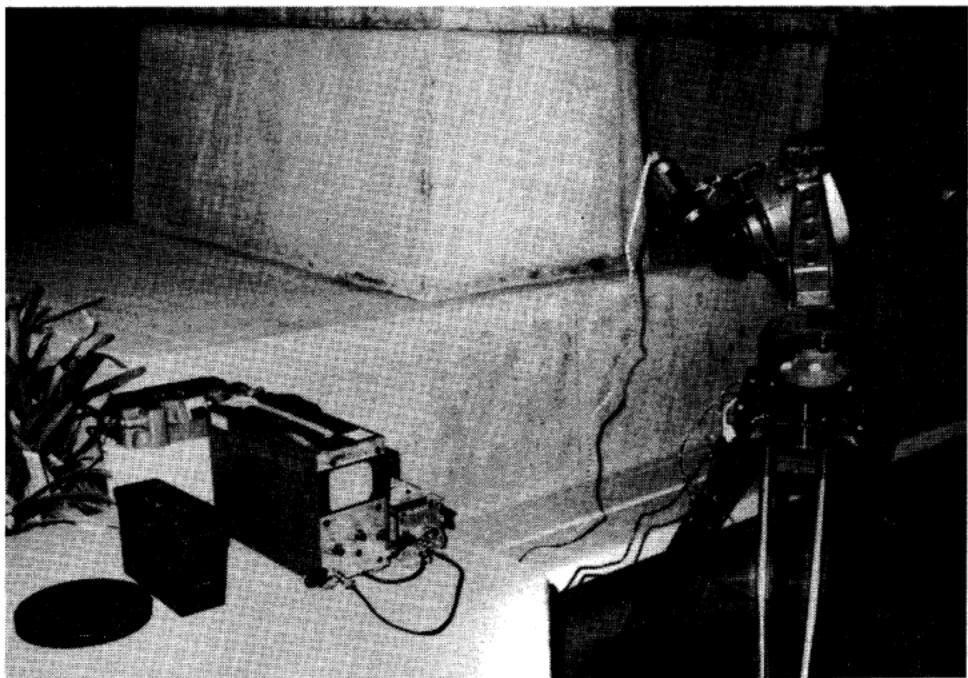
Dark Skies and Good Seeing;

Audrey W. Rattley



Norm Neinchel setting up
at Astronomy day.

At Messier Marathon, Don to Gerry
(or was it Gerry to Don?)
"To see M 33 we have to cut that
tree down."



Pete Manly's TV camera