

CAPE FEAR



Skies

A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER
OF THE
CAPE FEAR ASTRONOMY CLUB

VOLUME 2, No.3

MARCH 1987

MEMBERS:

WELCOME TO SPRING!!, AND WITH WARMER WEATHER, WE WILL BE ABLE TO GO OUTSIDE AT NIGHT WITHOUT 3 OR 4 LAYERS OF CLOTHES ON.

WE DO HAVE ONE MAJOR ACTIVITY PLANNED THIS MONTH FOR CLUB MEMBERS. WE WILL BE TAKING A TRIP TO CHAPEL HILL FOR A VISIT TO THE OBSERVATORY THERE. THE DATE IS MARCH 27th, A FRIDAY NIGHT, THIS DATE IS RESERVED FOR US AND WE WILL BE ABLE TO LOOK THROUGH THE 24" TELESCOPE THERE. THIS PROMISES TO BE A GREAT EXPERIENCE FOR ALL THOSE WHO GO. (PROVIDED OF COURSE THAT MOTHER NATURE IS KIND ENOUGH TO PROVIDE CLEAR SKIES THAT NIGHT). IF I'M CORRECT, WE NEED TO BE THERE BY 7:30 PM. ALL THOSE WHO WOULD LIKE TO GO, PLEASE CONTACT ALAN, PAUL, OR RONNIE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. PAUL WILL BE SENDING A LETTER OUT LATER ABOUT THIS TRIP, SO READ IT CAREFULLY FOR ALL THE DETAILS.

OUR NEXT MEETING WILL BE ON MARCH 1st. 7:30 PM AT MORTON HALL, UNC-W. WE WILL PROBABLY MOVE THE TIME OF THE MEETING TO A LATER HOUR AS THE DAYS GET LONGER AND WARMER WEATHER APPROACHES, SO WE CAN DO SOME OBSERVING AFTER THE MEETINGS, BUT EVERYONE WILL BE NOTIFIED BEFORE THE MEETINGS AS TO THE TIME THAT WILL BE SET UP.

BETTY McMILLAN WILL BE GIVING A TALK ON HER RESEARCH INTO VARIABLE STARS AT A MEETING OF THE CUMBERLAND COUNTY ASTRONOMY CLUB SOMETIME IN THE NEXT COUPLE OF MONTHS. WE HAVE BEEN INVITED TO JOIN HER AS A VISITING CLUB TO THIS MEETING. THIS WILL GIVE US AN EXCELLENT OPPORTUNITY TO GET TO KNOW SOME OTHER ASTRONOMERS IN OUR AREA AND ENJOY A SHORT TRIP TO JOHNNY HORNE'S OBSERVATORY IF POSSIBLE. EVERYONE WILL BE NOTIFIED AS TO WHEN BETTY WILL BE MAKING HER TRIP, SO LET'S PLAN ON GOING!!

MARCH SKY CALENDAR

- 1st MOON 0.005 DEGREES NORTH OF JUPITER
OCCULTATION. VISIBLE IN OUR AREA.
- 2nd MOON AT ASCENDING NODE.
- 4th MOON PASSES 1.9 DEGREES NORTH OF MARS
- 6th SUN'S NORTH POLE MOST INCLINED AWAY FROM EARTH.
- 7th FIRST QUARTER MOON 6:58 AM
- 9th MOON AT APOGEE
- 11th SUN ENTERS PISCES
- 12th MERCURY STATIONARY
- 14th ALBERT EINSTEIN BORN 1879
- 15th FULL MOON 8:13 AM
THE IDES OF MARCH
- 20th SPRING BEGINS 10:52 PM. VERNAL EQUINOX
- 21st MOON 0.1 DEGREES NORTH OF ANTARES
OCCULTATION
- 22nd CAMELOPARDALID AND MARCH GEMINID METEORS
MOON 5 DEGREES SOUTH OF URANUS
LAST QUARTER MOON 11:22 AM
- 23rd MOON 6 DEGREES SOUTH OF NEPTUNE
- 24th MOON AT PERIGEE
- 26th MOON 3 DEGREES SOUTH OF VENUS
MERCURY AT GREATEST ELONGATION WEST
- 27th JUPITER IN CONJUNCTION WITH SUN; MOVES TO MORNING SKY
MOON 1.6 DEGREES SOUTH OF MERCURY
- 29th MERCURY AT APHELION
NEW MOON 7:46 AM
ANNULAR TOTAL ECLIPSE OF THE SUN. VISIBLE IN THE SOUTH ATLANTIC
OFF THE WEST COAST OF AFRICA
- 31st SATURN STATIONARY IN RIGHT ASCENSION. BEGINS RETROGRADE MOTION.

MORE CLUB NEWS.....

AT OUR FEB. MEETING, WE VOTED TO AMEND OUR CONSTITUTION TO INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING ITEMS.

- 1) TO ADD TWO MORE CATAGORIES OF MEMBERSHIP, JUNIOR MEMBER AND FAMILY MEMBERSHIPS TO THE GROUP MEMBERSHIP POLICY.
- 2) THERE MUST BE A VOTE WITH MORE THAN TWO-THIRDS MEMBERSHIP AGREEING WHEN CLUB MATERIALS, GENERATOR, BOOKS ECT. WANT TO BE BORROWED BY PEOPLE OUTSIDE THE MEMBERSHIP.

THERE WAS ALSO A VOTE OF "YES" TO THE PROPOSED CHANGES IN THE CONSTITUTION OF THE ASTRONOMICAL LEAGUE, OF WHICH WE ARE A MEMBER. THOSE OF YOU WHO WOULD LIKE THE DETAILS OF THIS CHANGE CAN CALL DEBBIE, AS SHE IS OUR ALCOR REPRESENTATIVE.

JOHN MARSHALL, OUR ASSOCIATE VICE-PRES, HAS VOLUNTEERED TO CHAIR A COMMITTEE FOR CLUB ACTIVITIES DURING THE AZALEA FESTIVAL. WE WOULD LIKE TO SET UP A DISPLAY OF OUR TELESCOPES FOR THE PUBLIC DURING THAT TIME AND POSSIBLY HOLD A PUBLIC OBSERVING SESSION ALSO. ANYONE WHO HAS ANY IDEAS ON WHAT WE COULD DO PLEASE CONTACT JOHN @ 763-3818. THE MEMBERS PRESENT WHEN THIS WAS DISCUSSED FELT THAT AN ACTIVITY DURING THAT TIME WOULD MAKE FOR GREAT PUBLIC AWARENESS OF THE CLUB'S ACTIVITIES.

AT THE FEB. MEETING, THE SUBJECT OF HAVING A STAR PARTY FOR CLUBS IN THE STATE OF NC WAS PRESENTED. THE TIME WOULD BE SOMETIME IN THE FALL POSSIBLY SEPTEMBER OR OCTOBER. THIS WOULD INVOLVE A LOT OF TIME AND EFFORT ON OUR PART BUT IT WOULD GIVE US A CHANCE TO MEET PEOPLE LIKE OURSELVES FROM ALL OVER THE STATE. WE WILL BE DISCUSSING THIS ITEM MORE AT THE MARCH MEETING. PLEASE COME AND GIVE YOUR OPINION. IF WE DECIDE TO DO THIS, WE'LL NEED HELP FROM ALL THE MEMBERS.

WE ARE ALSO CONSIDERING THE POSSIBILITY OF HAVING A "MESSIER MARATHON" WITHIN THE CLUB. MOST OF YOU ARE FAMILIAR WITH THE MESSIER OBJECTS, THERE ARE 110 OF THEM, AND ALL ARE VISIBLE FROM OUR LATITUDE!! SEVERAL MEMBERS HAVE EXPRESSED AN INTEREST TO OBSERVE ALL OF THEM. WE WOULD HOLD A SESSION AT WHICH WE WOULD SIGHT AS MANY AS POSSIBLE AND HAVE THE SIGHTING OFFICIALLY RECORDED BY AN OFFICER OF THE CLUB. THESE SESSIONS WILL HAVE TO BE "ALL-NIGHTERS" IN ORDER TO SEE AS MANY OBJECTS AS POSSIBLE AT ONE SITTING. THEY WOULD BE HELD AT DIFFERENT TIMES OF THE YEAR SO THAT ALL THE OBJECTS CAN BE OBSERVED AT THEIR BEST. ONCE A MEMBER HAS OFFICIALLY "SEEN" THE 110 OBJECTS, THEY WILL BE GIVEN A CERTIFICATE STATING THAT FACT. NOT MANY PEOPLE HAVE SEEN THEM ALL, SO GETTING THAT CERTIFICATE WOULD CERTAINLY BE AN ACHIEVMENT. WE WILL BE DISCUSSING THIS ALSO AT THE MARCH MEETING.

THESE ARE THE PEOPLE WHO RECEIVED AWARDS AT OUR JANUARY
ELECTION AND AWARD CEREMONIES. CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL OF THEM!!

JOHNNY HORNE - HONORARY MEMBERSHIP IN APPRECIATION FOR HIS TIME
GIVEN TO OUR CLUB MEMBERS AND HIS GREAT PRESENTATION ON HALLEY'S
COMET.

PAUL PETTY - CLUB ACTIVITIES AWARD. FOR ALL THE HOURS OF WORK
HE DOES FOR THE CLUB

BETTY McMILLAN - THE BOB COOK AWARD FOR OUTSTANDING ACHIEVMENT.
THIS IS FOR BETTY'S HOURS & HOURS OF ASTRONOMICAL RESEARCH AND TO
SHOW HOW PROUD WE ARE TO HAVE A MEMBER IN A NATIONAL MAGAZINE.

RONNIE HAWES - OUTSTANDING ACHIEVMENT AWARD FOR ALL THE TIME HE
SPENDS DOING LOGOS FOR THE CLUB AND THE HOURS HE PUTS IN FOR
CLUB BENEFIT.

KEN SWAIN - SPECIAL ACHIEVMENT AWARD FOR ALL THOSE CONSTITUTIONS
HE MADE UP AND COPIED.

JANE FOUNTAIN - SPECIAL ACHIEVMENT FOR WRITING THE NEWSLETTER
EVERY MONTH.

KIM WHITFIELD - CERTIFICATE OF APPRECIATION FOR KEEPING US IN
CONTACT WITH OTHER CLUBS AND KEEPING ALL THOSE MINUTES AT EACH
MEETING.

THE FOLLOWING GROUPS OR PERSONS WERE AWARDED CERTIFICATES OF
APPRECIATION FOR THEIR CONTRIBUTING PART IN OUR CLUB

WECT-TV CHANNEL 6	WJKA-TV CHANNEL 26
WMFD RADIO & RANDY HARRINGTON	WHQR PUBLIC RADIO
STAR NEWS NEWSPAPER LIFE-STLYE DEPT.	JOHN NEWTON ATTY.
UNC-W SPECIAL PROGRAMS	
& GARY SPENCER, FT.FISHER HISTORIC SITE.	

THANK YOU TO ALL THESE PEOPLE WHO DEVOTED THEIR TIME TO OUR CLUB.

THE MARCH SKY CONSTELLATIONS

CANIS MAJOR	CANIS MINOR	GEMINI
AURIGA	CANCER	MONOCEROS
LEO MAJOR	LEO MINOR	COMA BERNICES
URSA MAJOR	HYDRA	CANES VENATICI

ALTHOUGH THE MILKY WAY WILL NOT BE IN OUR VIEW FOR A COUPLE MONTHS
MORE, THERE ARE SOME EXCELLENT OBJECTS TO OBSERVE IN THIS AREA OF
THE SKY. PRAESEPE, THE BEEHIVE CLUSTER, IS ON SHOW THIS MONTH LOCATED
IN THE MIDDLE OF CANCER AND VISIBLE IN BINOCULARS. ALSO COMA BERNICES
IS AN EXCELLENT TARGET FOR BINOCULARS AND SCOPES. THOSE OF YOU WITH
LARGER SCOPES, TRY FOR THE "CLUSTER OF GALAXIES" AROUND COMA BERNICES.
AND OF COURSE M51, OUR CLUB MOTTO, THE WHIRLPOOL GALAXY IN CANES
VENATICI. IT IS ONE OF THE BRIGHTEST GALAXIES IN THE AREA. IT'S
FACE-ON SPIRAL IS 15 MILLION LIGHT-YEARS AWAY. IT ALSO CARRIES A
SMALL COMPANION GALAXY WITH IT. CHECK IT OUT.

SPECIAL REPORT

HALLEY'S COMET FROM AYERS ROCK, AUSTRALIA

THOSE OF YOU WHO COULD NOT ATTEND OUR JANUARY MEETING, MISSED THE SHOW OF A LIFE TIME. JOHNNY HORNE FROM STEDMAN, NC PRESENTED US WITH A SLIDE SHOW OF HALLEY'S COMET YOU WOULD NOT BELIEVE. HIS TRIP TO AYERS ROCK IN THE MIDDLE OF AUSTRALIA PROVED TO BE AN EXPERIENCE IN ITSELF, BUT ONCE THE JET LAG PASSED AND THE PHOTOGRAPHS WERE DEVELOPED, THE TRIP WAS WORTH IT. JOHNNY MANAGED TO TAKE US WITH HIM ON THAT TRIP VIA HIS SLIDE SHOW. WE SAW THE COMET AND THE SOUTHERN SKY AS NEVER SEEN BEFORE. THE SLIDES AND DISPLAY PHOTOS HE PROVIDED WERE UNBELIEVABLE. THE KNOWLEDGE HE POSSESSES ABOUT THE FIELD OF AMATEUR ASTRONOMY WOULD FILL BOOKS. JOHNNY HAS HIS OWN OBSERVATORY IN HIS BACK YARD, SEVERAL MEMBERS HAVE VISITED IT, AND ALSO TOOK SOME FANTASTIC PHOTOS OF HALLEY FROM THERE. THEY ALL HAVE TO BE SEEN TO BE BELIEVED.

WE WOULD LIKE TO THANK JOHNNY FOR TAKING THE TIME TO COME HERE AND PRESENT US WITH SUCH A WONDERFUL SHOW AND ANSWERS TO OUR QUESTIONS ABOUT HIS TRIP. WE HOPE THAT WE CAN RECIPROCATE SOMETIME IN THE FUTURE.

ORIGINS OF THE COSTELLATIONS

CORVUS THE RAVEN - ACCORDING TO SOME LEGENDS, THIS IS THE RAVEN SENT BY APOLLO TO GUARD HIS BELOVED CORONIS DURING HIS ABSENCES. DURING ONE OF THOSE ABSENCES, CORONIS FELL IN LOVE WITH ANOTHER AND WAS UNFAITHFUL TO APOLLO. WHEN THE RAVEN TOLD APOLLO OF THIS, HE PLACED THE BIRD IN THE SKY AS A REWARD FOR HIS FAITHFUL SERVICE.

CRATER THE CUP - THIS CONSTELLATION IS SUPPOSED TO RESEMBLE A GOBLET FROM WHICH THE GODS DRANK. IT HAS BEEN ASSOCIATED WITH APOLLO, BACCHUS, HERCULES, AND ACHILLES.

CYGNUS THE SWAN - THIS CONSTELLATION IS RELATED TO THE STORY OF PHAETHON, A MORTAL WHO LEARNED THAT HIS FATHER WAS HELIUS, THE SUN GOD. HELIUS PROMISED PHAETHON THAT HE COULD DRIVE THE CHARIOT OF THE SUN ACROSS THE SKY. PHAETHON DROVE THE CHARIOT RECKLESSLY AND SOON LOST CONTROL OF IT, THREATENING TO DESTROY THE EARTH WITH THE SUN'S HEAT. ZEUS INTERVENED BY HURLING THE CHARIOT WITH PHAETHON IN IT INTO THE ERIDANUS RIVER. CYGNUS, PHAETHON'S DEVOTED FRIEND SAW WHAT HAPPENED AND DOVE INTO THE WATER TO RECOVER THE BODY. APOLLO TOOK PITY ON CYGNUS, WHO COULD NOT SWIM WELL, AND CHANGED HIM INTO A SWAN. EVEN THOUGH CYGNUS COULD NOT FIND THE BODY, HE WAS PLACED IN THE HEAVENS IN THE FORM OF THE SWAN FOR HIS BRAVERY.

DELPHINUS THE DOLPHIN - DELPHINUS THE DOLPHIN SUCCESSFULLY CONVINCED AMPHITRITE, THE SEA GODDESS, WHO WAS FLEEING FROM THE SEA GOD POSEIDON, TO STOP FLEEING AND MARRY POSEIDON. POSEIDON WAS SO GRATEFUL, HE PLACED DELPHINUS IN THE SKY AS A REWARD.

ASTRONOMICAL GLOSSARY

ASTEROID - A MINOR PLANET OF THE SOLAR SYSTEM THAT IS NOT CONSIDERED A SATELLITE OF ONE OF THE MAJOR PLANETS, SUCH AS EARTH OR JUPITER.

CIRCUMPOLAR - REFERS TO A STAR, ASTERISM, OR CONSTELLATION THAT IS CLOSE ENOUGH TO THE CELESTIAL POLE THAT, FROM THE LATITUDE AT WHICH YOU ARE OBSERVING, IT NEVER APPEARS TO SET.

EJECTA BLANKET - CHUNKS OF ROCK, USUALLY EXTENDING FROM ONE SIDE OF A CRATER, THAT WERE EJECTED DURING THE CRATER'S FORMATION

GIBBOUS - A PHASE OF THE MOON OR PLANET IN WHICH MORE THEN HALF OF THE SIDE WE SEE IS ILLUMINATED.

MAIN-SEQUENCE STAR - A STAR IN THE PRIME OF ITS LIFE, WHEN HYDROGEN INSIDE IT IS UNDERGOING NUCLEAR FUSION

MESSIER CATALOG - THE LIST OF 103 NONSTELLAR, DEEP-SKY OBJECTS COMPILED BY CHARLES MESSIER IN THE 1770'S. IT HAS BEEN EXPANDED TO 110 OBJECTS SINCE.

RADIANT - THE LOCATION ON THE CELESTIAL SPHERE FROM WHICH METEORS IN A GIVEN SHOWER APPEAR TO COME FROM.

DID YOU KNOW..... THAT THE NEXT TOTAL SOLAR ECLIPSE VISIBLE DIRECTLY OVER THE SOUTHEASTERN U.S. WILL NOT OCCUR UNTIL AUGUST 21st 2017? SOUNDS LIKE A LONG TIME DOESN'T IT. IT'S ONLY 30 YEARS AWAY.

NOTICE.....

THERE WILL BE A GENERAL OBSERVING SESSION ON SAT FEB. 21st BY CLUB MEMBERS. WE WILL BE MEETING AT PAUL'S HOUSE NO LATER THAN 6:00 PM AND THEN DRIVING UP TO BURGAW FOR THE SESSION. THOSE OF YOU WHO ARE INTERESTED IN GOING, PLEASE CONTACT PAUL FOR SOME DIRECTIONS TO HIS HOUSE.

HOPEFULLY, THIS LETTER WILL REACH ALL OF YOU BEFORE THE ABOVE DATE SO YOU CAN MAKE PLANS TO GO. PAUL'S PHONE # IS 675-2952