

The Wrap

March, 1969

The Warren Astronomical Society Paper

CLUB NEWS

Meetings:

March 11th-- NOTE, the meeting of March 12th has been rescheduled to Tuesday, the 11th. This meeting will feature Mr. Barkley, a guest speaker from Bell Telephone. The program discusses the most ambitious, complex, and potentially rewarding peacetime project ever undertaken by man-- sending astronauts to the moon and returning them safely. Please be ready to start at 7:30. All guests are welcome.

March 26th:--The central attraction of this meeting will be Mr. Edward Draving, head of the science department at Cousino High School. Mr. Draving's topic will be the Biological effects of Supernovae. This is a new line of thought tracing evolutionary changes to events far out in space.

Field Trips: For those interested in solar astronomy the W.A.S. is planning an excursion to the McMath-Hulbert Observatory on March 8, 1969. Only 15 interested adults and high school students are permitted to attend. For further information contact Martin Butley at 758-6755.

Projects:

Spectroheliograph-- The people involved met Feb. 19th to determine their course of action. Diane Bargal

CONSTELLATION OF THE MONTH

CANCER

Location This zodiacal constellation lies between Gemini and Leo in the spring sky. The notable star cluster, the Praesepe, can be located by drawing an imaginary line from β Tauri to Pollux in Gemini and prolonging it approximately 17 times the distance from Capella in Auriga through α Cancer, which bears the Arabian name "Acubens".

Description Cancer is the most inconspicuous of the zodiacal constellations yet makes up for its obscurity by containing the Messier objects, $M67$ and $M44$, and a large number of double stars. By far the most outstanding object of the above mentioned Praesepe, or Beehive cluster, it lies within an irregular square of stars formed by γ Cancri and δ Cancri.

March

1975

The Warren Astronomical Society Paper (W.A.S.P.) is published monthly by and for the members of the Warren Astronomical Society. Subscriptions and advertisements are free to all Warren Astronomical Society Members. Non-member subscriptions and advertisements are available upon arrangement with the editors. Contributions, literary or otherwise, are always welcome.

The Warren Astronomical Society is a local, nonprofit organization of amateur astronomers. Membership is open to all interested persons. Annual dues are: \$2 for Student (K through college) Membership, \$4 for General Membership, and \$5 for a Family Membership. Add \$5 for a one year subscription to Sky and Telescope magazine. Monthly general meetings are held at Macomb County Community College at 8:00 p.m. on the third Thursday of the month, in room 311 of "B" building.

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THIS MONTH'S COVER BY; Frank McCullough

The Warren Astronomical Society maintains correspondence, Sometimes intermittently, with the following organizations:

THE ASTRO-GATOR ASTRONOMY CLUB

THE ASTRONOMICAL LEAGUE

THE FORT WAYNE ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY

THE GRAND RAPIDS AMATEUR ASTRONOMICAL ASSOCIATION

THE KALAMAZOO ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY

THE MIAMI VALLEY ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY

THE OLGELTHORPE ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY

THE OLYMPIC ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY

THE ORANGE COUNTY ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY

Other organizations are invited to join this list. The editors of the W.A.S.P. will exchange copies of this publication with other club publications on an even exchange basis.

MAR

- 4 Last Quarter Moon.
- 6 Messier Club Meeting, contact Frank McCullough (791-8752) for details.
Joseph von Fraunhofer born 1787
- 12 New Moon.
Gustav R. Kirchhoff born 1824
- 13 Astrophotography Club Meeting, contact Larry Kalinowski (776-9720) for details.
Uranus discovered by Sir William Herschel in 1781.
- 14 Albert Einstein born in 1879
- 16 Robert Goddard launches first liquid-fuel rocket in 1926.
- 18 Lt. Col. Aleksei A. Leonov becomes the first man to walk in space in 1965 from Voskbad II
- 20 First Quarter Moon.
Warren Astronomical Society general meeting at 8 p.m.
- 21 Vernal Equinox (Spring Begins) at 12:57 am EST.
- 27 Full Moon
- 28 Free Astronomy Class meeting 8 pm at St. Paul's United Church of Christ, 31654 Mound Rd. in Warren. This month's topics: Telescope Accessories (D. Misson) and Nebulas (D. Harrington). Contact Louis Faix (781-3338) for further information.

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ADS

- FOR SALE: One 6x30mm Criterion finder with adjustable mounting rings. \$15. 268-9337, ask for Ken.
- FOR SALE: One 15-60 X 60mm zoom spotting telescope with alt-azimuth mount and slow motions. \$20. 268-9337, ask for Ken.
- WANTED: One telescope tube for a 6-inch. 7¼" O.D. and at least 28 inches long. 268-9337, ask for Ken.
- WANTED: Articles for the W.A.S.P., contact one of the editors.

WHAT IS ASTRONOMY?

by: Diane McCullough

I have been approached by the editors of the W.A.S.P. to submit an article to the February publication. Since I haven't been busy discovering any new comets lately, or running across any super novae, I decided to somehow convey to you "what astronomy means to me."

I should begin by giving a little background history of my first acquaintance with astronomy in general. Back in 1967, I happened to be interested in a particular individual, who happened to be interested in heavenly bodies. (I tried to convince him that I would bring the stars to him if he would consider concentrating on my earthly body!) It was Christmas time, and Frank (the "astronomy nut" involved), received a 4½" Tasco reflector telescope from Santa. This was my first real encounter with observing the heavens - the moon, Jupiter, and the most beautiful of all - Saturn.

Our interests in astronomy soon took direction with our introduction to a group of amateur astronomers who called themselves - the Warren Astronomical Society. In 1968 we became members of the group, which then met at Warren Lincoln High School. In the meantime, I had purchased a 2" Tasco refractor with some of my graduation money in August, 1969. The members had built a 12½" Cassegrain telescope some years back, which was being housed in the school observatory. (If anyone is familiar with the area - 9 Mile Road and Van Dyke is not the greatest observing site). In the Spring of 1971, the telescope was moved to a new home - Stargate Observatory located at Camp Rotary, 29 Mile, in New Haven. The Rotarian Society was gracious enough to provide the sight and building of the observatory; we added the dome and, of course, the scope. As a service to the Rotary people, we opened our doors to campers, mostly Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts, with informative "star parties" (Pete - I need an "observatory committee report")!

In the meantime, Frank became President of the W.A.S. and husband of Diane Bargiel. I might add that not every couple plans their wedding date around the occurrence of a total solar eclipse - July 10, 1972! And what a beautiful honeymoon it did make - Frank romanticized me with the "diamond ring" effect of the eclipse. A year later, we spent our first wedding anniversary celebrating with the majestic total solar eclipse in the Atlantic Ocean off the west coast of Africa~

The location of the club meetings demanded greater capacities and expansionary efforts, and they changed to Macomb County Community College with added assistance to Frank from Mr. Paul Strong. The past two years at Macomb I have resided as recording Secretary and have been most appreciative for the experience. I have attended several astronomical conventions in Ohio and Michigan, as well as astronomical society meetings in Grand Rapids, Detroit, Kalamazoo, Toledo, Ohio, and Jacksonville, Florida.

This past summer I was able to meet Mr. Bob Fried, current President of the Astronomical League, and take a tour of his Braeside Observatory in Atlanta, Georgia. Frank and I were graciously welcomed into the home of Mr. Charles Gale, current editor of the Astronomical League Reflector in Atlanta. I must comment that I have found amateur astronomers to be some of the warmest and helpful of friends from all locations.

In August, 1974, the W.A.S. hosted a national convention at Michigan State University. I have to admit that this is the very hardest I have ever worked for a five-day stretch in my life! But I am so thankful that I had the opportunity to be a part of its success and to meet close to 200 amateur astronomers from all walks of life and from all parts of the country.

In thinking back I have established a great sense of pride for this society to which I belong. I have found sincere and lasting friends, who have helped and continue to help me learn and enjoy all the beauty that astronomy has to offer. When times are discouraging in the world situation and things are looking down, I find contentment and tranquility in looking up and beholding God's masterpieces of the heavens, with which I have been so richly blest.

Constellation of the Month

Constructed by
Frank McCullough

Cancer: The Crab

I'm sure we are all thinking about spring about now. And yet we must face it, we have another couple of cold months. There is a constellation that appears when the weather can be colder than icicles on Frosty the Snowman's brain, but also is high in the sky in early evening as Mother Nature tries to warm up this old earth of ours.

As we celebrate the W.A.S.P.'s birthday, I am reminded of the first constellation that appeared in our first paper. This constellation has not appeared since and I can think of no better time than now to share with the members one of the most inconspicuous constellations in our sky, but offering some of the finest observing objects for telescope and binoculars. I present our first constellation of the month: Cancer.

Location.- The zodiacal constellation Cancer lies between the constellation Gemini and Leo. A line drawn from β Tauri to Pollux in Gemini, prolonged about 15° ends in Praesepe, the notable star cluster in Cancer. This cluster is also known as the "Bee Hive" and the "Manger".

An imaginary line drawn from Capella in Auriga through Pollux in Gemini points out α Cancri, which bears the Arab name "Acubens".

Mythology

...and there a Crab
Puts coldly out its gradual shadow claws.
-Mrs. Browning

Macrobius tells us that the name "Cancer" was selected by the Chaldeans to represent this constellation because the crab, being an animal that walks backward, or obliquely, well typifies the sun's apparent retrograde movement when it is in this part of the zodiac.

The name "Tropic of Cancer" is now applied to the circle on the earth which marks the points at which the sun at noon is overhead at the summer solstice. It thus marks the northern boundary on the earth of the points where the sun can be seen in the zenith. In this way the name "Cancer" has become familiar to all.

The Star cluster Praesepe, or the "Bee Hive" has quite an interesting history for in ancient times it was regarded as a sort of barometer or weather guide. Pliny thus refers to the cluster:

"If Praesepe is not visible in a clear sky, it foretells the coming of a violent storm."

The stars γ and δ on either side of the "Bee Hive" bear the names "Asellus Borealis" and "Asellus Australis" respectively, Greek star names that mean the Northern Ass and the Southern Ass. The Greeks and Arabs imagined that these two stars represented two asses feeding at the manger, represented by the star cluster.

The following story accounts for the presence of the two asses referred to:

Once upon a time, the god Bacchus, while on his way to the temple of Jove, came to a marsh, which barred his way. He perceived two wild asses browsing in a field nearby, and mounting one, crossed the marsh dry shod. In gratitude for this service, he transported both creatures to the heavens.

According to the Greek legend, while the valiant Hercules was engaged in his famous contest with the dreadful Lernaean monster, Juno, envious of his fame, sent a crab to attack him, but Hercules quickly dispatched it. Juno, to reward the crab for the sacrifice, persuaded Jupiter to immortalize the creature by placing it among the stars.

Acubens, the Arab name for the star Cancri, means the "Claws."

For the Unaided Eye and Field Glass

The feature of this constellation is the coarse cluster known as Praesepe, pronounced pri-sē'pē. The word means manger. It is more familiarly known as the "Bee Hive".

The Bee Hive lies within an irregular square formed by the faint stars, γ , ϵ , η , and θ . To the unaided eye, the cluster resembles a nebula, and it has been mistaken for a comet.

The first sight of these stars by Galileo filled him with delight and amusement. It was one of the first conquests of his telescope. The cluster is a fine sight in a field glass.

If your field glass is a powerful one, and you hold it steady, you may be able to separate the double star ι Cancrī.

In June, 1895, all the planets, excepting Neptune, were in this region of the heavens, and Halley's Comet appeared in this constellation in 1531.

The constellation Cancer is due south about 8:00 p.m. April 1st. In early evenings in mid spring it can be observed in the southwest, well up in the sky.

β Cancrī lies about 10° northeast of Procyon, the brilliant star in the constellation Canis Minor. α Cancrī lies on the same line, 10° above. These two stars form the tips of an inverted letter Y. The figure is directly above the stars in the head of Hydra.

Procyon is a star of the solar type. It is 10 light years distant, and has a proper motion of $1''.2$ per year.



Attention W.A.S.

next general meeting is :

Amateur Night !!!

The W.A.S. will leave the second half of the program open to amateurs who may have slides or pictures they would like to share with the club or a project or a new scope you may want to show off. It's wide open so lets see what you have to show or say.

March 20th

If interested please contact
Frank McSullough
791-8752

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W.A.S.

Astronomy
Class

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A

February 28th

8:00 p.m.
St. Pauls United Church
of
Christ

Public Invited : Bring a friend