

the WASP

THE MONTHLY JOURNAL OF THE WARREN ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY

FEBRUARY 1974



Kohoutek a Dud

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING: 1913f

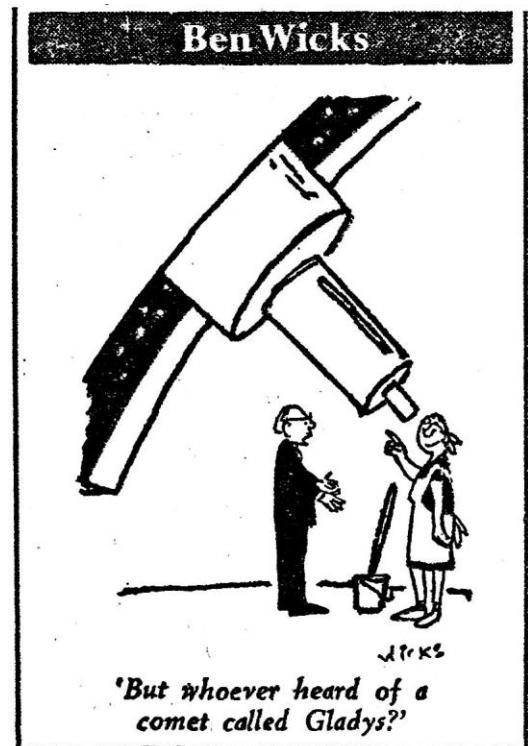
by
Kenneth Wilson
(F.W.A.S.)

You've read about it in "Saga" and "Reader's Digest". You've heard Johnny Carson talk about it. Possibly, you've heard Burl Ives sing about it. There is even an "eyewitness" medal in gold or silver available for those obsessed with it. A "citizens' action group" was formed in Duluth, Minnesota that demanded that the President shoot it down with a Saturn V rocket before it came "too close to the earth. If you're rich enough maybe you shipped out on the Queen Elizabeth II on a disappointing cruise to look for it. And, if you were very lucky, maybe you even saw it.

What is "it"? Why, Comet Kohoutek 1913f of course. The comet whose tail was going to stretch "halfway across the sky". The comet that was going to be "as bright as a full moon". Well, if you've been following the amazing publicity (the most important thing to happen in the sky since Armstrong set foot on the moon) of Comet Kohoutek then you know by now that it turned out to be much, fainter and less spectacular than predicted. "Kohoutek", in Czechoslovakian means "little rooster", but in this case a more appropriate definition would be "big turkey".

Several W.A.S. members followed Comet Kohoutek on the few cloudless mornings of the pre-dawn visibility period. They were not very impressed. The Comet did not get brighter than about 2nd magnitude, with a dim tail less than 3° long. But hopes still ran high for the evening visibility period in January. Those hopes were somewhat reinforced by reports from the Skylab astronauts, of a very bright comet with a wide stubby tail.

The first luck any W.A.S. members had was not until Friday, Jan. 4th when the long clouded skies finally cleared before sunset. A motley crew of feet stamping, hand rubbing W.A.S. members gathered in the cold at Stoney Creek Metro Park to find the elusive object. Present were myself, Dave Harrington, Bev and Doug Bock, Frank



McCullough, veteran comet watcher (he saw and photographed Comet Bennett) Larry Kalinowski, Don Mission, Pete Kwentus and about 30 curious onlookers.

I set up my six inch on top of the hill where everyone was gathering. I then hauled out my tripod and camera, and my oscillator for a much wanted guided shot of the comet. All the while, the sun was setting on a hazy horizon and, for the first time, I could see Venus while the sun was still up.

Finally the sun was gone and I began to sweep the sky below Venus with my three-inch finder. It was hopeless. Nothing but bright sky. I stamped my feet and thought about the warm car. I looked some more. Only a few of the brighter field stars were visible. Then, like the voice of Zeus from Mt. Olympus, the P.A. from the ranger-station behind us barked, "You'll have to move your car. It's blocking the driveway." The white Corvair was quickly moved and all was quiet again. I went- back to searching. Nothing. Larry Kalinowski was standing nearby with his binoculars on a tripod. He was getting more disappointed by the second. I kept mumbling, "But, we should see it by now." Larry began to pack up when Pete Kwentus came over to me and said, "Ken, I think I've found it." Before he could finish his directions I had it in the three inch and then the six. I yelled, "That's it". The trip wasn't a waste after all. There was a trample of feet, as I was shoved away from the eyepiece. Larry stopped packing.

It was not a very impressive comet. The coma resembled a forth magnitude globular cluster. The tail was quite wide and vague. I estimated its length as approx. $2\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$.

Oh well. It just goes to show that you can't always believe what you read in the newspapers or "Readers Digest". (Where were they when Comet Bennett or Comet Ikeya-Seki were here?) I guess I should have been suspicious of a comet discovered by a Czechoslovakian professional astronomer instead of a Japanese amateur!

Men of Action in the W.A.S.

Some of the latest accomplishments for the members of the W.A.S. whom some of us might and might not know.

Angie Bommarito has been working on a sheet, which she has titled, "The Who, What, Where of the Warren Astronomical Society". This will point out to new and old members and guests what the society has to offer.

Tony Bommarito has been working on publicity for the W.A.S. and also is the one who hauls out Angie's telescope outside so she can observe. (I wonder if Diane will haul my scope out for me?)

Lou Faix has done a service which we should be very grateful of. He wrote the Romeo Tractor Plant asking for the reduction of light pollution given off from the plant, they complied with his request and the reason the skies are still fairly dark at Stargate could be the result of this man. Lou also along with Pete Kwentus have just about finished a slow motion for the declination on the observatory scope.

Pete Kwentus, I mentioned above his work on the slow motion, but he now heads up the famed Observatory Crew, which he has worked very hard on forming it into a very functional operation.

Kim Dyer, the Lone Ranger of Camp Rotary, has spent many thankless nights (Friday) lecturing to scouts.

Roger Civic, the man who nearly singlehandedly made the W.A.S. convention display what it was in 1973, continues to put forth club pennants, T-shirts, and now is finalizing bumper stickers, decals, and patches for W.A.S. members.

Have you noticed how many good movies we have had lately! This has all been a part of Janice Cottrell and Chris Edsall looking and sending for these movies.

A little interest and dedication is why articles appear in the W.A.S.P. from people like Bev Bock, Mark Taylor, Ken Wilson, Dave Harrington, Diane McCullough, and Lou Faix.

Submitted by:

Frank McCullough

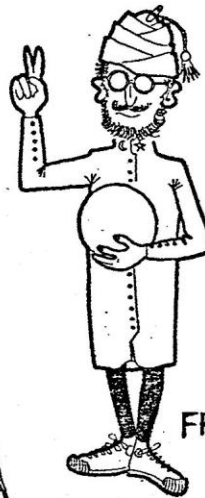
W.A.S.P. FEATURE AS A SERVICE TO MEMBERS :

(FOR THE RECESSION OF 1974) PLACEMENT SERVICE
DIAL TYLER 87100

Job Opportunities for Out-of-Work Amateur Astronomers:

Astrology

MAMARISHI
★
ABU BEN GEGENSCHEIN
Ph.D.
→ CUT-RATE ←
GRADUATE SWAMY
★ ★ ★
★ **HOROSCOPES** ★ ★ ★
★ ★ **CAST** ★ ★ ★
★ **WHILE U WAIT!** ★
(CELESTIAL MECHANIC ON DUTY)
Fee Schedule
★ Regulation Horoscope 250
★ Bode's Law Special 150
★ Rigorous, Non-LTE Horoscope 350
(our specialty)
with Relativistic Correction 250
★ SPECIAL TODAY
★ Wish Upon a Star 5¢ FIRST STAR
5¢ EA. ADDL.
CLOSE
OUT
PHRENOLOGICAL
READINGS
(Plane Parallel Approx) 1.00
★ **STAR CHARTS** 1.25
CHRISTMAS SLIDE SHOW...! FREE



FRANK

Merchandising

NO "FAIX" HERE
SIDEREAL TIME PAYMENTS

'CWAZY' QUASAR'S
USED CAR LOT

BURST OUT IN A NOVA!
(RECURRENT PAYMENTS)

THIS Mercury IS HOT!
→ RED SHIFT
→ BLACK BODY
→ Perfect Radiator

BURP APO? SUSPENSION SHOT?
Ask to see the
Russ L. Hirt's
Spring Diagram

No Nebulous Claims
OBSERVE COMET!
NO DUST!
→ and →
IT'S FULL OF GAS!

LOOK AT THE BRIGHT LINES OF THIS CORONA!
PLUS! TYPE IV RADIO

Got a Paschen for a New Car, but short of Pfunds?
Lume & Balmer, Inc.
will finance any income Brackett.

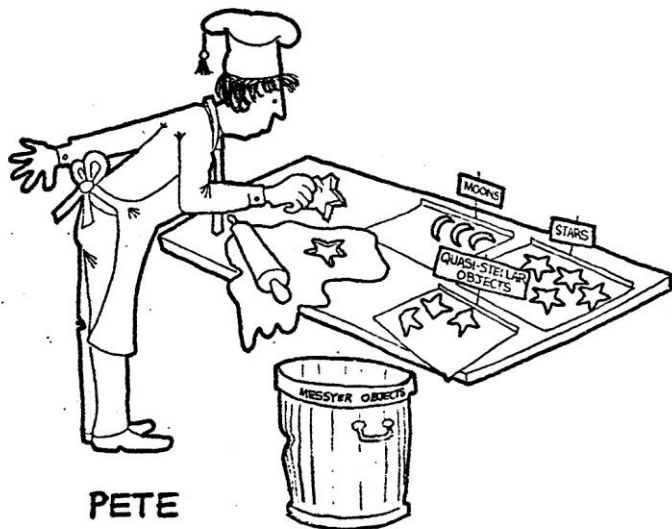
TRADE IN YOUR OLD BIHERTZ OR TRIHERTZ ON A NEW NOVA MOTORHERTZ!

See Our NEW General Catalog of GALAXIES

FUN!
GET OFF THE MAIN SEQUENCE
MATTER (GALAXY) VMI

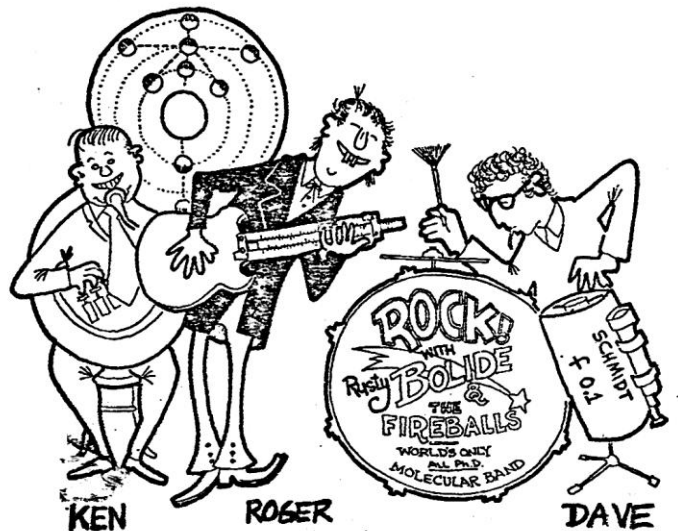
LOU

Commercial Baking



PETE

The Arts



KEN

ROGER

DAVE

Private Enterprise



LARRY

Professional Sports



TIM

Poetry by Bev

As the heavens vault over us
In literal leaps of splendor
As the heavens exalt over us
Divinely reigning—
So we are stars amidst the maze
Of glittering space
Not seeking divine knowledge
But just our rightful place.

No day is so discouraging that it cannot
Be made more beautiful by love.

Submitted by:

Bev Bock

* * * * *

A SAD "TAIL" ON THE COMET By Our Diane McCullough, the Astrologer



The much talked-about, highly speculated Comet Kohoutek has somewhat fizzled in appearance. It has never reached naked eye vision and never will. .

Astronauts in Skylab reveal that the comet has diminished in brilliance and is fading, due to some coated, sticky substance surrounding the object and possibly the fact that its orbit was too close to the sun.

Comet Kohoutek has been much more publicized than the spectacular Comet Bennett of Spring, 1970, which appeared brilliantly outstretched to the naked eye in the morning sky.

Comet Kohoutek can now still be viewed in the evening sky near the planets Venus and Jupiter shortly after 7:00 p.m. It can vaguely be seen with binoculars. Upon more observation the tail has become somewhat elongated and slightly arched.

Well, if you really want to see Kohoutek, wait for another 70,000 years and maybe the viewing will be better! In the meantime, Haley's comet will be appearing in 1986 and, who knows - maybe another unidentified comet, even sooner.

(This article was taken from the National Casualty Company NEWSLETTER)

FEBRUARY 21

WARREN-MILITARY

FEBRUARY

1974

1974	M	T	W	T	F	S
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

SATURDAY

FRIDAY

THURSDAY

WEDNESDAY

TUESDAY

MONDAY

SUNDAY

1974	M	T	W	T	F	S
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

2
1 Kalamazoo
Astro. Soc.
meeting
8:00 p.m.
H.A.S.
MEETING

9
8 H.A.S.
MEETING
776-9720
INFO.

16
15 H.A.S.
MEETING

23
22 DETROIT
ASTRO. Soc.
MEETING
GRAND RAPIDS
Astro. Soc.
MEETING
NEW MOON

FRIDAY IS OBSERVANCE
NIGHT!!
AT STARGATE

W.A.S.
V.A.S.
H.A.S.

7 Messier
Club
8:00 p.m.
791-8752
INFO.

14 Astro
photo
Meeting
8:00 p.m.
776-9720
LAST QUARTER

21 P.S.
W.A.S.
V.A.S.
H.A.S.
8:00

28

Home group
it's
Stargate

6
FULL MOON

13
LINCOLN'S BIRTHDAY

20

27
ASH WEDNESDAY

Stargate
it's
Astro

5

12

19
WASHINGTON'S
BIRTHDAY

26

Stargate
it's
Astro

4

11

18

25

Stargate
it's
Astro

3

10

17

24