

# DETROIT ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY



---

---

## NEWSLETTER

---

---

DECEMBER 1980  
JANUARY 1981

### — ACTIVITIES —

- DEC. 5 • BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING AT 700 PM  
• RICHARD LLOYD WILL PRESENT ANOTHER INSTALLMENT IN THE BASIC ASTRONOMY SERIES AT 8:30 PM
- DEC. 12 • MONTHLY GENERAL MEETING WITH ELECTION OF OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS FOR 1981 AT 8:30 PM  
• A ROUND UP OF ACTIVITIES OF 8 TO 10 ASTRONOMY GROUPS IN THE NIAGRA FALLS, ONTARIO AREA AND A REVIEW OF THE PORTABLE INFLATABLE PLANETARIUM WILL BE PRESENTED IN TALK AND SLIDE FORMAT BY JACK BRISBIN.
- DEC. 19 • ANNUAL CHRISTMAS PARTY ——— 8.30-10.30 PM  
PLAN TO SPEND AN EVENING WITH MEMBERS AND THEIR FAMILIES SHARING SOCIAL EXCHANGE AND HOLIDAY FOODS. THIS IS TRADITIONALLY THE TIME OF THE YEAR WHEN INACTIVE MEMBERS GET TOGETHER TO CATCH UP ON CURRENT HAPPENINGS AND WE USUALLY HAVE A LARGE TURN OUT. ANY APPROPRIATE FOOD CONTRIBUTION WOULD BE GREATLY APPRECIATED. THERE WILL NOT BE ANY TELESCOPE OR MIRROR MAKING THIS EVENING.
- DEC. 26 • THE DAS WILL NOT MEET THIS DAY AFTER CHRISTMAS
- JAN. 2 • BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING AT 7.00 PM  
• RICHARD LLOYD WILL PRESENT AN ASTRONOMY TALK (NOT PART OF THE ASTRONOMY SERIES) AT 8:30 PM  
• NORMAL TELESCOPE AND MIRROR MAKING ACTIVITIES RESUME
- JAN. 9 • MONTHLY GENERAL MEETING AT 8:30 PM
- JAN. 16 • BASIC ASTRONOMY CLASS IN THE CONTINUING SERIES PRESENTED BY RICHARD LLOYD AT 8.30 PM
- JAN. 23 & 30 THESE DATES ARE OPEN HOWEVER WE ARE ATTEMPTING TO SECURE FILMS FOR THESE DATES, OR A SHOW AT THE GRUNOW PLANETARIUM.

THE COLLEGE ASTRONOMY CLASS BEING TAUGHT BY DR. BLASS AT THE U OF D BEGAN DEC. 2 (7:00-8:30 PM TUESDAYS) IN ROOM 114 OF THE ENGINEERING BUILDING. OUR NEXT MEETING IS DEC. 9, NO CLASS DEC. 16, 23, AND 30.

### -ANNOUNCEMENTS -

WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS --  
ALBERT SANT, JOHN KRANIG, MICHAEL AND BRENDA McNEIL WERE ATTRACTED BY THE NEWLY FORMED COLLEGE ASTRONOMY CLASS. JEFFREY FRESKO WILL TAKE ADVANTAGE OF OUR FRIDAY TELESCOPE WORKSHOP TO MAKE 12 1/2 INCH F5.5 MIRROR.

-ANNOUNCEMENTS CONTINUED-

- THE THREE BOOK SET OF "AMATEUR TELESCOPE MAKING" HAS BEEN PURCHASED FOR OUR LIBRARY AND IS AVAILABLE FOR REFERENCE.
- THE DAS HAS PURCHASED A FEW OF THE COULTER TELESCOPE KITS FOR THE CONVENIENCE OF OUR MEMBERS WHO DON'T WANT TO LOOSE TIME WAITING FOR THE LONG DELIVERY PERIOD.
- WE ARE PLANNING A PLANETARIUM SHOW AT MRS. GRUNOW'S HOME IN JANUARY. A SIGN-UP SHEET WILL BE AVAILABLE AT THE FRIDAY NIGHT MEETINGS OR CALL THE DAS PHONE 837-0130 TO MAKE YOUR RESERVATION. SPACE IS LIMITED TO TWENTY PERSONS. TENTATIVE DATES ARE JAN. 23 OR 30.
- GENERAL INFORMATION SHEET HAS BEEN OMITTED FROM THIS DITTO BUT TIMES AND PLACES ARE UNCHANGED.
- A SPECIAL THANKS TO ED INDYK FOR ACCEPTING THE TASK OF PROCURING ASTRONOMICAL FILMS FOR OUR MEETINGS.

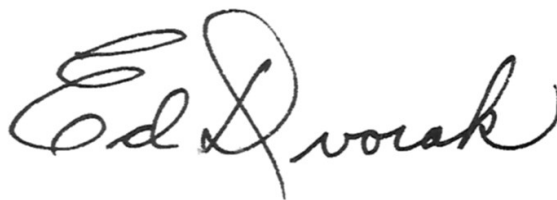
- SLATE FOR 1981 ELECTION

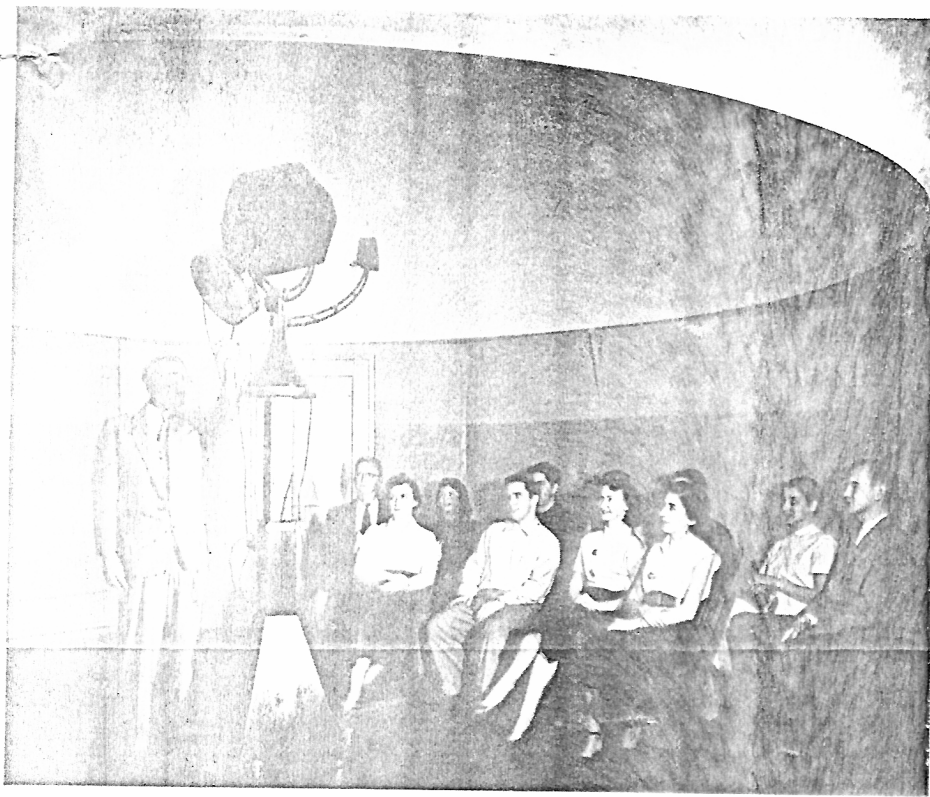
GARY FREY	PRESIDENT
ED DVORAK	VICE PRESIDENT
MARTY KUNZ	SECRETARY
GORGE EYSTER	TREASURER
RICHARD LLOYD	DIRECTOR 3 YRS
NANCY WAGGONER	DIRECTOR 3 YEARS
FRANK LIPKE	DIRECTOR 2 YEARS

THE OTHER DIRECTORS SERVING US ARE MIKE MANYAK, LARRY APPLBAUM AND CLAUDE M<sup>C</sup>ELDRY

- AS OUT GOING PRESIDENT OF THE SOCIETY I LOOK BACK WITH JOY AT MY EXPERIENCE DURING THE PAST YEAR AND A HALF AND GIVE THANKS TO ALL OF THOSE WHO SUPPORTED ME. EVEN THOSE WHO DID NOT CONTRIBUTE DIRECTLY SHOULD BE MADE AWARE THAT YOUR VERY EXISTENCE AS A MEMBER IS IMPORTANT TO ME AND THE RESPONSIBILITY I TOOK ON BEHALF OF THIS SOCIETY ACTUALLY TURNED OUT TO BE AN OPPORTUNITY FOR ME TO EXPERIENCE GROWTH THAT I CAN USE IN MY LIFE. I LEARNED A LOT AND HAD MANY ENJOYABLE HOURS - IT WAS GREAT TO SERVE AS YOUR PRESIDENT.

BEST WISHES FOR THE HOLIDAY AND I AM LOOKING FORWARD TO AN EVEN BETTER YEAR FOR OUR DAS IN 1981.





Dr. Everett Phelps, chairman of Wayne University's physics department, here is lecturing to a class in the planetarium chamber. Note the adjustable mounting of the Spitz projector. The normal seating is for 35 persons.

## A Small Planetarium in Detroit

BY CHARLES A. LEWIS, *Wayne University*

SCRATCH the surface of any typical American community, and you'll find a latent interest in astronomy. And if equipment is lacking, community effort can often provide it. This has been illustrated in Detroit, which now has an active planetarium center utilized by many community organizations, and plans for larger facilities of the same type. Many groups have contributed to the past and present efforts, with Wayne University serving as a physical center and providing some of the advisory and working personnel.

As early as the 1890's, Detroit's interest in astronomy brought forth a number of public meetings on the subject. These continued for a long time, but no organized group was set up until 1931, when six interested persons met at the College of the City of Detroit and organized the Detroit Astronomical Society. One of the six, Dr. Everett Phelps, of the college staff, arranged for an on-campus meeting room. Headquarters of the society have remained there since; and the college was renamed Wayne's College of Liberal Arts.

About 15 years later, the society decided to give the university a Spitz planetarium projector. This was partly to show thanks for the housing facilities so long provided, and partly to stimulate community interest. Though much

appreciated, however, the instrument could not be used extensively because no dome was available for projection.

At this point, the Detroit Navigators Club became interested in the project. Membership in this club is conditional upon the passing of a special course in celestial navigation offered by the Detroit Power Squadron, an organization of small-boat owners in the city. A Wayne staff member, the late Wendell Vreeland, enjoyed close contact with the Navigators Club members because of his volunteer work in this teaching program. At his suggestion, the club do-

nated \$700 to build a dome, which is located in the corner of a high-ceilinged room in Wayne's ROTC armory.

The hemispherical dome, 20 feet in diameter, was designed by a member of the Detroit Power Squadron in consultation with Wayne University. Curved girders forming the framework are covered with wire mesh, which was plastered and painted white. A plasterer's darby, curved to perfect roundness and revolved over the wet plaster from a supporting pole in the dome's center, produced a distortionless inner surface. On two sides the dome is supported by the walls of the room; on the other two it is suspended from the ceiling by rods.

The projector mounting, constructed by a member of the Navigators Club, permits lowering the projector so that it may be wheeled out of the room into an adjacent storage cabinet, as the room is used also as a regular ROTC classroom. Space is at a premium in the building.

Since its installation, the planetarium has been in frequent use by boy scout and cub scout troops, high school science classes and clubs, Wayne astronomy classes, and 400 to 500 students at the university who each semester elect a survey course in the physical sciences. Navigators Club candidates assemble periodically for lectures on navigational stars, and the Detroit Astronomical Society occasionally meets in the planetarium instead of in its usual quarters in the lecture room of a nearby campus building.

There is, as yet, no regular lecture schedule for the public. Rather, an effort is being made to accommodate groups on request. No admission is charged.

As for future plans, a committee of the Detroit Astronomical Society has a goal of 1½ million dollars for a large planetarium installation. The city plan commission has already earmarked a site in Detroit's Cultural Center, of which Wayne University itself is a part. Such a planetarium would doubtless draw upon the personnel resources of the university for astronomy lectures.

**THIS REPRINT FROM SET, AUGUST 1953 MAY ENLIGHTEN SOME MEMBERS AND BRING BACK MEMORIES TO SOME OF OUR SENIOR MEMBERS.**

**OUR PURPOSE TO ENCOURAGE AND PROMOTE THE STUDY OF ASTRONOMY AND RELATED SCIENCES, AND SERVE THE COMMUNITY WAS CLEARLY ESTABLISHED IN 1931.**

**DAS DEC. '80 ED DVORAK, PRESIDENT**