



MINUTES

Minutes of the regular meeting of Feb. 7, 1978:

The Twin City Astronomy Club met in the auditorium of the Science Museum of Minnesota Tuesday, Feb. 7, 1978.

Hub Brueckner announced he is interested in forming a chapter of the American Optical Society. Those interested can contact Hub; he has some literature on the society.

Hub also announced that Courage Center is seeking someone to teach an elementary class in astronomy. The class would be for a small group of handicapped individuals ages 18-70. Class-time will be Tuesday or Thursday from 10 a.m. to noon or from 1 to 3 p.m. The class will be either one or two hours long at the teacher's discretion. Classes start April 11 and run for nine weeks. Anyone interested should contact Ms. Ellen Mae Foslien at 588-0811.

Anyone interested in membership in the Webb Society should contact William Larson.

Bill also announced he is heading the Nominations Committee and anyone interested in seeking office should contact him.

Bill showed several publications, as usual, including Visual Observing of Double Stars by Charles E. Worley and Some Bright Visual Binary Stars by Jean Meeus of Belgium. Also shown were "What Star Is That?" and "The Webb Society's Observer's Handbook."

Kay Sproll requested that the cards in last month's Gemini for the observer's network be turned in to her or sent at once.

The April meeting of the Twin City Astronomy Club will be April 4 rather than April 11.

The program for the evening was a slide presentation of an eclipse expedition taken by Bruce Lundegard and Herbert Kuehl. Both went on the Fairview/Fairsea expedition of last October, which stalked the total eclipse

of the sun off Peru in the Pacific. The two returned with slides of adventures both on and off the boat.

Their ship, the Fairview, left Port Everglades, Florida, and sailed to Cartagena, Columbia. From there it sailed to the Panama Canal; transiting the isthmus was one of the highlights of the trip. (Was the eclipse one of the low lights?) From there they rendezvoused with the Fairsea for a short view of the eclipse. After a lot of shuttering, the Fairview set course for Puerto Vallarta, Mexico, where our two adventurers tried kiting behind a speedboat. Then it was back to the U.S. of A. via Los Angeles.

Event of the Month

Mercury Is At Greatest Eastern

Elongation on March 24

by Bill Larson

If you have never seen Mercury-and many astronomers (including Tycho Brahe) have not, you should try to find it during this month's elongation. Greatest eastern elongations occur when Mercury is as far east of the sun (as viewed from earth) as its orbit will carry it. It is then visible in the western sky after sunset. With a synodic period of 116 days, Mercury usually has three eastern and three western elongations per year.

Due to the orientation of the ecliptic, the eastern elongation nearest the first day of spring and the western elongation nearest the first day of autumn are the easiest ones to observe. If you are not totally given over to astronomy and other nocturnal activities (that is, if you are not Lauren Nelson), you will find observing just before sunset more convenient than observing just before sunrise. Thus this month's apparition of Mercury is your best opportunity to view it in 1978.

Mercury will be visible approximately from March 12 to April 1. During this period its magnitude drops from -1.1 to +1.4, its apparent diameter increases from 5.6" to 9.5" and its phase changes from 86 to 14 percent illuminated.

Try looking for it about half an hour to an hour after sunset. Throughout this elongation

Mercury will be within ten degrees of Venus. Thus Venus (at about minus third magnitude) will serve as a guide post. On March 24 Mercury will be about four degrees above and to the right of Venus. Those who have never seen Mercury should not pass up this chance to surpass (at least in one small way) the accomplishments of Tycho Brahe, the greatest pre-telescopic observer of all time!

The following members still have no affidavit on file to comply with postal regulations. By not doing so these individuals jeopardize the mailing privileges of the entire club. Please mail your affidavit to the club office or contact Andy Fraser (690-5902).

Paul D. Lane	Raymond Wilbur
P.D. Lincoln	James Robertson
Howard J. McKenzie	Raymond Gustafson
Maria Mortensen	Tom Schwab
Hayden Matthews	Alan Kraines
Mark Petersen	
Edward Peiffer	Gerald Condon
	Pat Clements
Stacia Danielson	Frank C. Gray
Larry Grotz	Marilyn Joy Hellman
James Hildreth	Richard Ray
Allen Vehrs	Paul Walker
William Lee	

The March meeting will be held March 7 at the Science Museum. The program for this joint meeting with the 3MCAS will be Dr. Donald E. Osterbrock, Director of Lick Observatory, who will lecture on "Research Activities at Lick Observatory, Past Present, and Future."

GEMINI

Editor----John Mlinar

Gemini is issued monthly by the Twin City Astronomy Club (TCAC), an affiliate of the Science Museum of Minnesota, St. Paul, Minn.

The TCAC strives to promote amateur astronomy through its publications, meetings, and public programs. Membership is open to anyone. Annual regular member dues are \$16 and student member dues are \$5, of which \$1.50 is allocated for a subscription to Gemini. Subscription to Gemini is available to non-members at \$2.50 per year. Inquiries may be directed to: TCAC, Science Museum of Minnesota, 30 E. 10th St., St. Paul, MN 55101.

Advertisements for publication in Gemini are welcome and inquiries may be directed to Lauren Nelson c/o TCAC.

Second class postage paid at St. Paul, MN 55101.


Letters


Dear Editor,


I have written to "deliver unto the gods" my answer to your "What-is-it?" in the last GEMINI. It's a little bizarre I know- but so are most of the people in this club of ours.

My thought processes went as follows-

The symbol for the moon is: 

The symbol for the sun is: 

The symbol for opposition is: 

so- if you place the moon and sun symbols inside the opposition sign you end up thus; 

The moon being at opposition to the sun or in otherwords a full moon.

Sounds screwy you say huh? Well don't laugh you may be senlle some day too.

Un-sincerely,
Dennis Garvey

P.S. Perhaps it would be wise to lower the cash prize a bit- the treat of such a large sum puts you under such a strain that it makes it hard to think clearly.

TCAC
Science Museum of Minnesota
30 E. 10th St.
St. Paul, MN 55105

Second Class Postage
Paid at St. Paul, MN
55101