

Popular Astronomy

Vol. LIX, No. 2

FEBRUARY, 1951

Whole No. 582

The Eighty-Fourth Meeting of the American Astronomical Society

By CURVIN H. GINGRICH

At the invitation of Dr. Louis C. Green, director of the Strawbridge Observatory of Haverford College, approximately one-hundred fifty members and friends of the American Astronomical Society convened at Haverford College for the eighty-fourth meeting of the Society on Wednesday, December 27, 1950. A demonstration of the Spitz Planetarium was held in the afternoon for those who arrived early. The Council held its first session at seven P.M., and the registration and assignment of living quarters for guests continued until quite late into the night. This first night proved to be the coldest of the season. Although the thermometer registered no lower than zero, even those, who had come from sections of the country in which much lower temperatures are the rule rather than the exception, felt the penetrating chill. The wintry night and morning became the general topic of conversation at the breakfast table.

After the visitors had partaken of a hearty and satisfying breakfast in the College Commons, the group assembled in the large lecture room in the Haverford Union building for the opening session at nine o'clock. Promptly at the appointed hour, the session was called to order by the President of the Society, Dr. Alfred H. Joy of the Mount Wilson Observatory. Dr. Joy had come directly from Cleveland where he had delivered an address as retiring vice-president of Section D of the A.A.A.S. Dr. Joy introduced the host, Dr. Green, who welcomed the group personally and in the name of the College. Without further ceremony, the presentation of scheduled papers was begun, Dr. Dirk Brouwer presiding during the morning session.

The session was adjourned at twelve in order to provide time for taking the group photograph. The sun was shining brightly and, with Founders Hall, usually referred to simply as Founders, as a background, the result shown in the accompanying photograph was obtained. Luncheon followed, and then, promptly at two P.M., the presentation of papers was continued with Dr. A. E. Whitford presiding.

Between the sessions, the visitors had the use of the facilities afforded by the Haverford Union and by the Common Room, a spacious, well-furnished lounge in Founders Hall, across the quadrangle from the Union. At five P.M., on Thursday, tea was served in the Common Room.

The next event was the climax of the meeting. At eight P.M., the

Maria Mitchell Library

POPULAR ASTRONOMY

CONTENTS

FEBRUARY, 1951

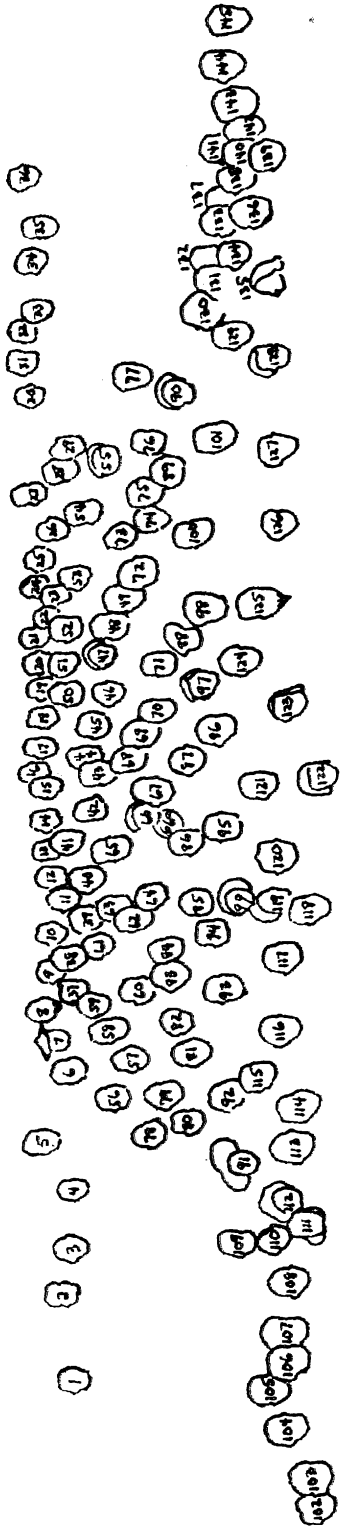
THE EIGHTY-FOURTH MEETING OF THE AMERICAN ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY, CURVIN H. GINGRICH.....	57
LONG-FOCUS PHOTOGRAPHIC ASTRONOMY, PETER VAN DE KAMP..	65
THE FIRST OPTICAL TUBE, O. S. MARSHALL.....	79
CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE METEORITICAL SOCIETY, EDITED BY FREDERICK C. LEONARD.....	88
The La Lande, New Mexico, Chondrite, CARL W. BECK, RALPH G. STEVENSON, JR., and LINCOLN LA PAZ.....	88
The Real and Apparent Stellar Magnitudes of Telescopic Meteors, C. C. WYLIE . . .	96
A Method for Permanently Marking the Exact Locations of Meteorite Discoveries, RUSSELL A. MORLEY . . .	98
A Note on the Lost Port Orford, Oregon, Meteorite, LINCOLN LA PAZ..	101
The Planets in March, 1951.....	103
Asteroid Notes	104
Occultation Predictions for March, 1951.....	105
Variable Stars	106
Variable Star Notes from the American Association of Variable Star Observers.	
Comet Notes	109
Comet 1950 <i>a</i> (Minkowski),—Periodic comet Encke,—Comet Oterma,—Comet Schwassmann-Wachmann Nr. 1.	
General Notes	110
Personal notices,—The Rittenhouse Astronomical Society,—Provisional sunspot numbers for December, 1950,— Summary of sunspot observations at Mt. Holyoke College, 1950.	
Book Reviews	112
Der Sternenhimmel (1951),—The Conquest of Space,— Sterne und Sternsysteme.	

The principal articles of this magazine, beginning with Volume 15 (1907), are listed in the INTERNATIONAL INDEX TO PERIODICALS.



THE EIGHTY-FOURTH MEETING OF THE AMERICAN ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY,
HAVERFORD, PENNSYLVANIA, DECEMBER 27-30, 1950.

(KEY AND NAMES BELOW)



1. Dimitroff	73. Miss Williams	49. Streeter	25. Merrill	102. 109
2. Cameron	74. Mrs. Mayall	50. Caffey	26. Henry Smith	104
3. Adams	75. Hall	51. Mrs. Sitterly	27. Bestul	106
4. Layzer	76. Miss Jones	52. Naqvi	28. Scott	107
5. Irwin	77. Owren	53. Gossner	29. Savedoff	108
6. Binnendijk	78. Wolf	54. Mrs. Savedoff	30. Yeagley	109
7. Rieber	79. Rabinowitz	55. Mrs. Lewis	31. R. H. Wilson	110
8. Smiley	80. Hynek	56. Leavitt	32. Ashbrook	111
9. Dyer	81. Eckert	57. Brouwer	33. Sutton	112
10. Keller	82. Mrs. Eckert	58. Federer	34. Alden	113
11. Vysotsky	83. Omer	59. Miss Morrow	35. Schopp	114
12. Mitchell	84. Yoss	60. Miss Hutzler	36. Heines	115
13. Protheroe	85. Miss Weber	61. Hunter	37. Weston	116
14. Deutsch	86. Miss Underhill	62. Malitosky	38. Harlan Smith	117
15. Matthews	87. Allan Cook	63. Wood	39. Mrs. Harlan Smith	118
16. T. G. Cowling	88. Mrs. Whipple	64. Seyfert	40. Keenan	119
17. Wildt	89. Ice	65. Bittstein	41. Stearns	120
18. Sitterly	90. Mrs. Menzel	66. Miss Reilly	42. Sarah Lee Lippincott	121
19. Orral	91. Mrs. van de Kamp	67. Haddock	43. Munch	122
20. Hoag	92. Mrs. Baker	68. Hagen	44. Mrs. Stearns	123
21. Wyller	93. Aller	69. Thomas	45. King	124
22. Mrs. Merrill	94. Mrs. Federer	70. Whipple	46. Mrs. Gossner	125
23. Mrs. Henry Smith	95. Schilt	71. Harris	47. Davis	126
24. McKrosky	96. Miller	72. Egen		127
	97. McLaughlin			128
				129
				130
				131
				132
				133
				134
				135
				136
				137
				138
				139
				140
				141
				142
				143
				144
				145

members and their guests, and a number of local persons, among them members of the Rittenhouse Astronomical Society of Philadelphia, filled the lecture room to overflowing to hear the annual Henry Norris Russell Lecture. Dr. Joy, in introducing the speaker used to good effect a description of the interweaving of his astronomical career and that of the Russell lecturer for the occasion, Dr. Harlow Shapley. He related how they had filled positions in succession at Princeton and again at Mount Wilson. Now (although the president did not make this comment) they were here together as the outstanding personalities at the Haverford Meeting. With a large collection of excellent slides and with his characteristically vivid description and commentaries, Dr. Shapley made this a memorable occasion for every one present. His topic was "The Inner Metagalaxy."

Friday morning dawned bright and sunny overhead but with a treacherous coating of ice underfoot. Fortunately distances between the focal points were short and no casualties resulted. The session for papers, with a brief recess, continued from nine until twelve with Dr. Leo Goldberg presiding.

At two in the afternoon, Dr. Joy called the session to order for the business session of the meeting. He called attention to the importance of keeping the welfare and standing of the Society in mind when recommending applicants for membership. The Secretary, Dr. C. M. Huffer, reviewed the proposed changes in the Constitution which were outlined when the notice of the meeting was sent. By almost unanimous vote of the Society, Sections 2 and 5 of Article III of the Constitution were changed to read as follows:

SECTION 2. The Council shall consist of the officers, the two available ex-presidents whose presidential terms have most recently expired, provided they have served their full terms, and of nine councilors elected from the membership of the Society. The management of all affairs of the Society not otherwise provided for shall be entrusted to the Council. Each officer of the Society shall be responsible to the Council and shall administer his office in accordance with its instructions.

SECTION 5. The term of office shall be two years for the president, two years for the vice-presidents, three years for the secretary, three years for the treasurer, and three years for each of the nine councilors. The president shall be nominated only from those members of the Society who have served at least one year on the Council. The president, vice-president and the nine councilors shall not be eligible for immediate re-election.

After some discussion concerning the question of life memberships, it became clear that it is very difficult, in view of the lessening value of the dollar, to fix an amount for life memberships that would be reasonable and stable. Consequently, when the question came to a vote it was

decided, again almost unanimously, that no future life memberships be accepted for the present. The president made a brief statement concerning the publication problems now confronting the Society and its members. No definite recommendation was forthcoming and no action was taken at this time. The Secretary then read the list of names of those persons elected to membership in the Society, as follows:

Mr. Edwin A. Beito, 1201 Dreams Landing, Annapolis, Maryland
 Mr. Don M. Bubeck, Goethe Link Observatory, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana
 Mr. Felix Y. K. Chiang, Goethe Link Observatory, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana
 Miss Mary Lois Connelley, Goethe Link Observatory, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana
 Mr. J. A. Duerksen, U. S. Coast and Geodetic Survey, Washington, D. C.
 Mr. Irving Greenbaum, U. S. Naval Observatory, Washington 25, D. C.
 Mr. Fred T. Haddock, Jr., Radio Astronomy Section, Naval Research Laboratory, Washington, D. C.
 Mr. Kenneth L. Hallam, Goethe Link Observatory, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana
 Mr. John Henry Hett, 3140 Netherland Ave., New York 63, N. Y.
 Mr. Jack Kent, Box 4355, College Station, Texas
 Dr. Karl G. Kessler, 212 South Building, National Bureau of Standards, Washington 25, D. C.
 Mr. Paul Kopp, 1305 N. Adams St., Arlington 1, Va.
 Rev. Martin F. McCarthy, S. J., Georgetown University, Washington 7, D. C.
 Mr. George S. Mumford III, Goethe Link Observatory, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana
 Mr. Richard C. Nicholas, Goethe Link Observatory, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana
 Miss Mary W. Peters, Dept. of Physics, University of Tennessee, Knoxville, Tenn.
 Professor Leonida Rosino, Astronomical Observatory, Via Zamboni 33, Bologna, Italy
 Mrs. Elske P. Smith, Harvard College Observatory, Cambridge 38, Mass.
 Mr. Henry J. Smith, Harvard College Observatory, Cambridge 38, Mass.
 Dr. A. Victor Stern, 2523 Ridge Rd., Berkeley 9, Calif.
 Mr. Thomas L. Swihart, Goethe Link Observatory, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana
 Sister Mary Therese, B.V.M., Mundelein College, 6363 Sheridan Rd., Chicago 40, Illinois
 Mr. Kenneth G. Widing, Goethe Link Observatory, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana
 Dr. A. J. J. van Woerkom, Yale University Observatory, Prospect & Canner St., New Haven 11, Conn.
 Prof. H. L. Yeagley, Penn State College, State College, Pa.
 Mr. Harold Zirin, Harvard College Observatory, Cambridge 38, Mass.

Following the business session, the presentation of papers was resumed, Dr. G. M. Clemence presiding.

The time intervening between the close of the afternoon session and the Society dinner was used by many for the purpose of visiting the Strawbridge Observatory and the Haverford College Library. The former, at the edge of the campus, was found to be very attractive in its arrangement, library, and astronomical equipment. In the Treasure Room in the College Library was found the second largest collection of Quakeriana in the world. Of special interest to astronomers were letters by Halley, Rittenhouse, and others. There were also on ex-

hibition such non-Quaker items as a set of the first folio edition of Shakespeare and a page from the Gutenberg Bible. The visitors lingered over these rare exhibits.

Promptly at six-thirty the group assembled in the usual dining room for the Society dinner. The customary sumptuous menu was served. The president, Dr. Joy, presided at the program after the dinner. He announced that Dr. C. E. K. Mees of the Eastman Kodak Company had been elected a patron of the Society. He then introduced Dr. T. G. Cowling of the University of Leeds, England, who was present as a guest of the Society. Dr. Cowling spoke briefly of his impressions of this country and of his plans while here. Following him, Dr. John P. Hagen of the Naval Research Laboratory showed and described a film depicting the circumstances of the Naval Research Laboratory eclipse expedition to Attu, Alaska, for observing the eclipse of September 12, 1950. This proved to be extremely interesting. This was followed by the showing by Dr. John B. Irwin of a number of colored slides made by him in an extensive astronomical pilgrimage through South Africa last summer. The slides and the speaker in his explanations emphasized the work and the setting of the several observatories located there. They also disclosed other incidental experiences of such a journey. Dr. Irwin's success in making the situation realistic is attested by the remark of one who had been there to the effect that he thought he actually was there again.

The after-dinner program was fittingly brought to a close by the reading of a manuscript by Dr. Fred L. Whipple of Harvard College Observatory. In order that nothing of its import and purpose may be lost, the manuscript is given here in full.

THE MARTIAN MANUSCRIPT

As I was returning from the Friday afternoon session of the American Astronomical Society 1950 Christmas meeting at Haverford, a bundle dropped mysteriously at my feet. I was alone, about to enter the dormitory Building L; apparently the bundle must have fallen from a great height. In my room I lost no time in opening the bundle, to discover that the contents were many sheets of extremely thin and tough transparent plastic, covered with strange characters. With the aid of my pocket microscope I could identify a few of the rectangular characters as minute photographs of our meetings, apparently taken from above with light in the far ultra-violet. A few others showed shadowy figures of our Society members with bright high-lights centered on their foreheads. Probably some unknown mental radiation was exploited in these latter "photographs."

I would have been at a loss for an interpretation except for the fortunate circumstance that the last page contained a glossary of terms in the strange text with some photographs and English words printed alongside. A quick study showed that here was a fragmentary but usable basic dictionary. With great excitement then I hurriedly de-

ciphered as much text as I could in the short interval before the Society Banquet. My free and uninhibited translation follows:

NOTES ADDRESSED TO: COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF OF THE FLAGSHIP
"SOARING PLATTER."

Your Royal Flatness:¹

At your Royal Command I here record my observations of the assembly of heaven worshippers among the Spindle² people of Planet Solar-III. I adjusted my body frequency to a value just above their upper threshold so that I might remain unobserved—as per your Royal Order No. 4. Then I adjusted my oscillometer, air-vibration indicator, satisfaction meter, and electromagnetic radiation detector. Unfortunately, my omni-emotion indicator developed a leak so that I could not trust its results.

Incidentally, for your Royal Information, these Spindle people communicate largely by air vibration, but also by body oscillations, radiation, and even by the crude method of physical contact.

I began my observations just at the end of their hibernation period previous to the most recent one. At that time the body oscillometer registered a very high value for the individuals. I first deduced that this shaking of the Spindles indicated great anticipation for the ceremonies soon forthcoming. However, a quick glance at the satisfaction meter showed a low value. I deduce, therefore, that the spindly people were fearful of being disapproved by their companions in the ceremonies. I regret the omni-emotion meter could not have operated to clarify this question.³

Next these 6-beings⁴ gathered in a large room with many tables where they registered great satisfaction in their peculiar refueling process.

Soon they moved to the ceremonial room where they, one at a time, assumed leadership in their peculiar rites. For a long time I was confused, but it finally became clear, as your Royal Flatness so brilliantly anticipated, that they were worshipping the heavens. However, they spent most of their time making strange air vibrations and placing odd hieroglyphics on the wall. Part of the time they lowered the radiation level and projected these symbols onto the wall. Once or twice a Spindly person directed the attention of the group to the un-radiated portion of the wall as though there were some object there.⁵ It was quite confusing; a much longer study will be necessary to comprehend fully their tribal rites.

After about 0.2 of their non-hibernation period had passed, they moved from the ceremonial room to the exterior of one of their buildings where they amassed in close contact. Apparently this rite occurred for the purpose of viewing a couple of short-lived radiation flashes⁶—a procedure that illustrates the futility of their general activities.

At this point I must confess a great indiscretion on my part. In attempting to obtain a closer view I wrapped myself about one of their long immobile complex carbon compounds which was attached to the ground. In so doing I dislodged some solid compound 1₂-8 almost into the group. They nearly detected my presence but I quickly accelerated my vibration level and remained unobserved.

I will not detail their rites further as little more comprehensible activity occurred. I noted, however, that my satisfaction meter kept registering at a higher and higher level, particularly at the refueling periods and during their less formal ceremonies.

Also, I made some interesting observations of their hibernation habits during the next non-radiation period. They hibernated for a fraction of one radiation cycle equal to 0.26 ± 0.12 . It appears that their hibernation habits during the ceremonies are very different from normal, and follow the Fermi-Dirac statistics. I observed only one individual unit per level at this time with certain exceptions and variations of state.

During their hibernation period I confess to another, almost disastrous, indiscretion. Late in the period I weakened in fortitude and adsorbed a bit of delicious element 14 (Silicon). Hence, I necessarily relaxed my high frequency of vibration. As a consequence, much to my chagrin, one of these Spindly beings detected my presence and initiated activity in a large air-vibration device.⁷ This aroused a large fraction of the Spindles, but fortunately I kept my presence of mind and quickly raised my vibration level. I believe no harm was done and hope that your Beneficent Royal Flatness will overlook my stupidity.

During the second radiation period the rites and refueling continued unabated. My satisfaction meter indicated greater and greater values. Finally, and I suggest that the scientific instrument division be notified, the satisfaction meter disintegrated from overload. I was forced to return to the "Soaring Platter" with much regret, as I gather that the greatest refueling operation by the Spindle assembly is anticipated in the near future.

Your fat and humble servant,

SPY-PUSS

P.S. I may comment that the heavenly information and understanding of the Spindles appear to be at a low level. At no time in their rites could I detect any reference to our most glorious and magnificent Planet Solar-IV.

NOTES

¹ These beings apparently are shaped something like irregular pancakes. Hence, the highest esteem is accredited to the flattest. I suggest that we call the race the Flatypusses.