Committee on Membership and Fellowship: Robert W. Webb, Los Angeles, California (Chairman); Robert G. Brown, Fort Worth, Texas; J. D. Buddhue, Pasadena, California; Clyde Fisher, New York, New York; Miss Leota J. La Paz, Columbus, Ohio; H. H. Nininger, Denver, Colorado; J. Hugh Pruett, Eugene, Oregon; and Lincoln La Paz, Columbus, Ohio, and C. H. Cleminshaw, Los Angeles, California, *ex officiis.*

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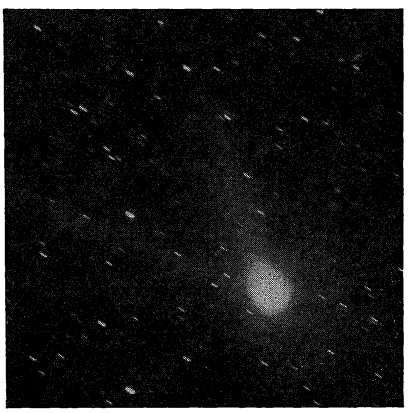
Committee on Terminology (additional members): C. O. Lampland, Flagstaff, Arizona, and Edward S. C. Smith, Schenectady, New York.

C. H. CLEMINSHAW, *Secretary*

Comet Notes

By G. VAN BIESBROECK

COMET 1942 *a* (WHIPPLE). As was foreseen, this comet has brightened up considerably since its discovery on January 25. The increase in brightness has been even greater than was expected from the first computation. Cloudy weather here has made the record very incomplete but on February 23 with the help of a binocular I estimated the total brightness as equivalent to a star of magnitude $6^{M}.4$. Last night, March 10, the figure came out $5^{M}.8$ while the corresponding ephemeris magnitudes were 7.8 and 7.3. Naked-eye visibility has therefore been reached and will almost certainly continue for the balance of this month. Even in a small telescope the comet can be seen as a fairly large coma, with a bright stellar nucleus, and an extension to the north making a coarse tail some half a degree in length. Photographic images have further revealed the presence of a rapidly changing slender and twice longer tail pointing southwestward during



COMET 1942 *a* (WHIPPLE)
March 10, 1942.

February. The plate obtained on March 10 from which the figure is reproduced here shows the broad tail pointing somewhat east of north and the slender tail some 45° farther to the east giving the comet the appearance of a V of 45° aperture. The most curious phenomenon in this case is the fact that the tenuous, fine tail is oriented in the direction opposite to the sun and is therefore the normal tail while the much brighter tail that is seen at first sight is really an abnormal one making a big angle with the direction away from the sun.

It will be of interest for observers to keep a record of these varying appearances while the comet is moving southward and receding. The preliminary orbit by R. N. Thomas still represents the motion of the comet sufficiently well so that it can be extended from p. 167:

EPHEMERIS OF COMET 1942 *a* (WHIPPLE)

0h U.T.	α h m	δ ° ′	Distance from Sun	Distance from Earth	Mag.
1942 Apr. 7	7 31.6	—18 45	1.49	0.95	6.3
11	21.7	20 11	.47	1.01	.4
15	13.6	21 27	.46	1.07	.5
19	7.0	22 36	.46	.13	.6
23	7 1.6	23 39	.45	.20	.7
Apr. 27	6 57.3	24 37	.45	.26	.8
May 1	53.8	25 33	.45	.31	6.9
5	51.4	26 27	.45	.37	7.0
9	49.0	27 20	.45	.42	7.1
13	47.5	28 13	.46	.47	7.2
May 17	6 46.4	—29 6	1.46	1.52	7.3

The magnitude was adjusted so as to represent the estimate given above for March 10. After April 30, when point nearest the sun is reached, the comet will fade more rapidly and besides the increasing southern declination will reduce the visibility for northern observers. After the middle of May the comet is best situated for southern observers who will have the opportunity to follow this comet probably for several months.

PERIODIC COMET SCHWASSMANN-WACHMANN 2 is gradually fading and moving into the evening sky. On March 10 I estimated the magnitude as 13. The diffuse coma spreads out into a short broad tail in the second quadrant.

The expected PERIODIC COMET GRIGG-SKJELLERUP will probably be picked up before long. Cloudy skies have interfered with the search here.

The search ephemeris given by the English computer Cripps is continued here from p. 168.

EPHEMERIS OF PERIODIC COMET GRIGG-SKJELLERUP

1942	α h m	δ ° ′
Apr. 7	5 48.8	+ 2 54
15	6 4.6	4 39
Apr. 23	23.1	6 36
May 1	6 44.5	8 51
May 9	7 9.0	+11 36

During April the comet moves across Orion and is therefore well placed for evening observations.

Williams Bay, Wisconsin, March 10, 1942.