

Newsletter of the Amateur Astronomers' Association of Princeton

December, 1973

Director: J.A. Church

Editor: Roxanne Tobin

NEW AAAP TREASURER

Leith Holloway has been appointed by the AAAP Board of Directors to fill the unexpired term of Joe Lopez as Treasurer. Joe has regretfully submitted his resignation, as with the press of other evening duties he has not been able to regularly attend club meetings. The treasury is in good condition, with a recent balance of about \$430 (the highest it has been in recent times).

Leith is well known to most club members, having been Program Chairman two years ago. The Board of Directors is confident that he will do an outstanding job as Treasurer.

JANUARY SPEAKER

Our speaker for the January 8 meeting (8:00 p.m., Jadwin A-07) is Mr. David Rehberger. Dave is a professional photographer, employed by E.R. Squibb & Sons at their Worldwide Headquarters in Lawrence Township. His special interest is photographic sensitometry, which is the study of film and developer combinations and how the net result on the photographic negative is influenced by exposure level, development time, developer strength, etc. Dave was formerly with American Can Company at their Corporate R&D lab in Princeton Township, where he and John Church spent many coffee breaks discussing astrophotography, lunar and planetary photography, etc. Although not a practicing sky photographer, Dave has many helpful hints to offer on how to get the most out of a latent image of any type. A section of his talk will be on the timely subject of photographing Comet Kohoutek and what to expect in terms of film speed loss ("reciprocity law failure") at the extended exposure times required.

Mr. Rehberger will be treated to dinner at the Prime Rib (Route 1) at 6:00 p.m. on January 8. Those wishing a reservation should contact Mike Clark.

COMET KOHOUTEK

This alleged comet is now supposedly visible in the morning sky before sunrise. At the recent Board of Directors meeting, only Leith Holloway reported actually having seen it, and he wasn't absolutely sure. Hopefully, it will begin developing soon to at least a fraction of its supposed potential. If not, we soon may be seeing "Lubos Who?" or "Brian Who?" sweatshirts (Brian referring, of course, to Brian Marsden who made those predictions of -10 magnitude, etc., way back in *July*). ~~March or April~~). Comet Kohoutek is also known as Comet 1973f, where f stands for fizzle, fadeaway, foey, or any other appropriate term. At this writing, the experts still feel that in early January it will be an impressive sight in the evening sky, although no one now applies the name "Comet of the Century" to it any longer.

### THE OBSERVATORY FUND NEEDS YOUR HELP

Our Observatory Fund now stands at about \$300. The club's grateful thanks go to those who have already contributed, and our continued urgent pleas go to those who have not yet made this investment in the club's future well-being.

A separate bank account has been established for this fund, which is under the supervision of Dick Peery (Observatory Committee chairman). This money is being kept separate from the club's treasury, which continues as a working fund to meet month-to-month expenses.

Checks should be made payable to "AAAP Observatory Fund" and should be sent to Dick Peery, or given to him at a monthly meeting. We are working on getting Internal Revenue to allow these contributions to be made tax-deductible.

At the November meeting, the club approved the plan to house the two telescopes in an aluminum garage which the Institute For Advanced Study is making available to the club at no charge. There is recent good news. It now appears that the building can be made to roll off on tracks, so that it no longer will be necessary to have the telescopes on movable, roll-out mounts. This will make the mounts much sturdier and more usable. Karl Koehler has spent much time on this project, and the club is indebted to him for this and the gift of his 10-inch reflector, ultimately to be housed in the observatory with the six-inch refractor. Karl's latest estimate for the cost of the project is about \$2000, so that even with some help from the club's treasury, we still have a ways to go in financing this extremely worthwhile club effort. Let's all help out as much as we can.

### THE NOVEMBER TRANSIT OF MERCURY

Two club observing parties timed the third and fourth contacts of the November 10 transit of Mercury, and reports have been mailed to Sky and Telescope. From the discrepancy between the observed times, a quick calculation shows that Mercury is no farther from the earth than the moon is. This will no doubt lead to an extensive re-evaluation of the scale of the whole Solar System. There is the slight possibility that poor seeing conditions could have<sup>had</sup> something to do with this unexpected result. In about two months, Sky and Telescope will collect and report observations from all over the world, and we shall see if others confirm this amazing discovery.