

Sidereal Times



MARCH 1977

EDITOR: Jack Power

MARCH AAAP MEETING

The March meeting of the Amateur Astronomers Association of Princeton will be held on Tuesday, March 8, at 8:00 p.m. in Jadwin Hall, Room A-07. John Church, our Program Chairman, has secured as our speaker Dr. Walter Jaffe of the Institute for Advanced Study. Dr. Jaffe's topic will be Radio Galaxies. Dr. Jaffe is a member of the astronomy faculty of the Institute for Advanced Study.

The Meet-the-Speaker dinner will be held at the Prime Rib on Route 1, south of Princeton, at 5:45 p.m.

OBSERVATORY

Questionnaires were sent to all members the latter part of January. In order to permit Bill Phillips, our Observatory Chairman, to organize his planning, these questionnaires should be filled out and returned to him. Please do this by the March meeting.

→ DAVE BROWN'S AMBITIOUS PROJECT

Dave Brown has undertaken an ambitious project of producing for himself a Newtonian telescope and mount. Some particulars of his project are as follows. "I decided to build a fork-mounted 8-inch, f/5 Newtonian telescope when confronted with the requirements of a portable fast telescope for astrophotography and wide-field observation. Since I can buy fine optical parts, I am concentrating on the design and construction of the fork mount (which is difficult to purchase at a reasonable cost). Some particulars: (1) The mount has a 2-inch stainless RA shaft and a 1.6-inch declination shaft. All ball bearing housings have been custom made. (2) The RA axis is driven by an 8-inch worm gear with a stainless worm. The dec. axis is driven by a motorized tangent arm. (3) Provision has been made for quick set-up on the North Pole by coarse and fine adjustments in azimuth and elevation and a bore sight with appropriate reticle. (4) The fork is easily removed from a large bearing surface at the end of the pole axis for transport purposes. (5) The legs are adjustable in length. They are rigidly held by a combination of close tolerances, large cross sections and a steel wire spider holding them in tension.

→ I expect this mount to be completed by late autumn."

(Thank you Dave. I, for one, am most interested in inspecting your handywork. Editor)

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

Four members spent a most interesting Wednesday, February 16, evening at the home of Karl Kochler. We had a delightful viewing session through Karl's 16-inch reflector in his observatory. The skies cooperated and seeing was very steady, but, boy, it was cold! A visit to his workshop and a showing of his deep sky slides topped the evening. Thank you Karl for a wonderful evening. (Karl, how about a short write-up about your photography project? Editor)

LAST MEETING

John Church gave a very interesting discussion on Ray Tracing of Telescope Objectives. In particular, he used his work on the Association's 6-inch refractor to illustrate how it is accomplished. This work has developed some interesting dimensions for the 6-inch objective lens.

EARTH NARROWLY MISSED

It has been reported that the earth narrowly missed being struck by a flying mountain of rocks, the asteroid Hermes, during the last two weeks of October 1976. This object, about a quarter-mile wide, passed within 750,000 miles of Earth on October 20th. It is stated that one asteroid of this mass strikes the earth every million years on the average. (Astronomy News, Vol. 5, No. 2, Edmund Scientific Co.)