

## SIDEREAL TIMES

Scope  
History

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Member of the Astronomical League

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## AAAP Tenth Anniversary Dinner

The Amateur Astronomer's Association of Princeton celebrated its 10 th anniversary on November 13, 1972 at a banquet held at Emerson's Steakhouse. It proved to be a success as more than 35 people showed up to fill themselves with steak, salad, and bread as well as other good foods. After a very filling and delicious meal a brief business meeting was held. It began about 9 p.m. when director, Norm Sperling announced that "the way to an astronomer's heart is through his stomach". First discussed was the progress on the identity search of the club's 6" telescope. Several historians have been contacted and the club is eagerly awaiting their replies.

The club observatory also recieved publicity at the dinner and a good portion of the meeting was spent discussing this. Since the club seems generally in favor of an observatory, a committee of 10 AAAP members were selected to choose the location, design, and other important factors involved in the building of an observatory. Members of the committee are as follows: John Church, Chairman, Dave Apgar, Co-Chairman, Harry Bernhagen, Mike Clark, Barry Hancock, Joe Lopez, Dick Peery, William Phillips, Steve Shutt, and Roxanne Tobin.

A feature of the observatory discussion was a brief talk on observatories by Ray Stein of the State Museum. Mr. Stein also showed several slides of types of observatories. The meeting adjourned around 10 p.m.

## List of Guests and Members

Dave Apgar	William Phillips
Harry Bernhagen	Frank Shallcross
Mr. and Mrs. John Church	Steve Shutt
Mike Clark	Norm Sperling
Mrs. Susan Elliott	Jeff Streed
Mr. and Mrs. Bruno Goszka	Ray Stein
Barry Hancock	Mr. and Mrs. Gilmore Stitely
Mr. and Mrs. Gifford Havens	Roxanne Tobin
Leith Holloway	and several other students.
Henry Kalman	
Mr. and Mrs. Karl Koehler	
Will Krasnansky	
Derek Lillie	
Joe Lopez	
Robert Packer	
Richard Peery	

## FLASH!

The assistant director is proud to announce the birth of his daughter, Carol Elaine Church, on 15 November 1972. At 8lbs 1 oz she was in the Supernova class. Mother & daughter are doing fine; the father, however, is barely holding his own.



## NEWS OF THE REFRACTOR AND OBSERVATORY

Considerable information has been received about the early history of our scope, but no definite maker has yet been identified. The instrument was made in the 1850-90 era, as indicated by its brasswork, optical pattern and mount, and confirmed by Dr. Henry C. King. Unfortunately, it bears no legend. There were several active refractor builders in this country at the time (though it could be foreign). Proximity would suggest it may be a Mogeys from Plainfield or New York City, but the patterns and styles of their mounts, in illustrations in an old Review of Popular Astronomy, are very different. Hearsay heard by Rutgers Archivist Harmony Cappola suggested it may be by Henry Fitz of New York, but there is nothing yet to confirm this. In 1967 Deborah Warner of the Smithsonian Institution's Museum of History and Technology, compiling data on Alvan Clark refractors, inquired at Rutgers, but nothing could be found to identify the one or two scopes they once had at Schenck Observatory, or to trace their current whereabouts, or makers, or anything at all. King suggests the mount might perhaps be by John Brashear of Pittsburgh, and the tube by Thomas Cooke of England, based NOT on written evidence or personal examination but on general similarities seen in the photos we sent. Saul Moskowitz, an expert in antique scientific instruments, also says it's apparently a mixture of several makers.

We do know it was in a cellar at Rutgers University in 1937. At that time it was bought by or given to the Galileo Club of Trenton, a college-age group of amateurs active not only in astronomy but also with cameras and other fields. The Galileo Club was founded about 1930, and possibly was able to get the scope because Rutgers may have gotten a better replacement. They tried to trace its earlier history then, but were unsuccessful. To avoid city lights in Trenton they mounted it out in the country. They built a small observatory in the back yard of their member Frank Faltum, at 411 White Horse Avenue. Faltum says the club broke up about 1940 because of jobs, marriage and other distractions. He kept the scope up for their occasional use for a number of years. Eventually he used the observatory as a toolshed, storing the instrument in his house. The structure has been removed in the last few years, according to AAAP member Barry Hancock.

Faltum's friend, then-AAAP-member Lars Peterson, told our club about the scope in the Fall of 1968. The November 1968 meeting voted to buy it. Henry Kalman paid the \$200 and was reimbursed through donations from members about December 1968-January 1969. Around that time the scope was moved to George Parker's farm in Plainsboro, where it was stored outside under a tarpaulin until September 1972. At that time John Church started reconditioning it at his home in Princeton Junction.

Inquiries have been made to a number of expert sources. If anything further is learned it will be reported immediately in Sidereal Times.

--Norm Sperling.

The newly-constituted Observatory Committee met at John Church's home on 29 November to initiate discussions about an observatory building to house the reconditioned 6" refractor. Present were Dave Apgar, Harry Bernhagen, John Church (chairman), Mike Clark, Barry Hancock, Dick Peery, Steve Shutt, and Roxanne Tobin.

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The first order of business was to begin discussions about a suitable permanent site for the instrument. 8 suggestions, some more specific than others, were made. These were--1: an old silo on the ridge north of Pennington Mountain, of which there are photos; 2: Princeton Day School grounds; 3: state-owned land near the Mercer County Work House; 4: George Parker's property; 5: Western Electric's property near Hopewell; 6: Educational Testing Service; 7: various other parcels of state property; 8: John Church's garage. Responsibility for checking some of the most important factors about each location was assigned to: Apgar: 1, 2, 5, 6; Clark, 3; Church, 4, 8; Shutt and Brewer, 7. Sites eliminated from consideration were Mercer County Community College, Washington Crossing State Park, and Trenton's State Fair Grounds.

Some of the most important factors that will go into the decisions about a permanent site are: Will the club have title to the land on which the building rests? If not, will we have a long-term lease, easement or other document guaranteeing our control of and access to the land under any conceivable circumstances? If we don't control the land, we don't control the building. Will the site be very secure against vandalism? We have a several-thousand-dollar instrument. Will visibility be good? it was noted that telescopes are of little use until objects attain at least 10° altitude; therefore, a perfect horizon is not a prerequisite. Good altitude is of course desirable to get above mist, fog and ground seeing effects. Will neighboring lights be objectionable? What about future lights? Will the location be reasonably accessible to a majority of the club membership? That means different things to different members, some feeling that 20 miles is not an unreasonable distance to drive. Most, however, feel this is too far to go to use a 6" (but not a 20"). Will persons or organizations donating land or otherwise making it available attach certain provisions that could be a nuisance to the club?

There was considerable sentiment voiced that the club should build a large reflector of 12" or more aperture, as the 6" is not well suited for good observing of deep-sky objects. This would of course be an important consideration in our final plans. It was agreed that we would talk more about this at the next meeting.

Recently-obtained photos of Saturn with the 6" show that the mount and drive are performing excellently. Even on caster wheels, the instrument as presently mounted has very good stability, due to its great mass.

The next meeting of the committee will be held at Dave Apgar's house in mid-December. Meetings will be held at least monthly, and the meeting places will be rotated. At the coming meeting, those assigned responsibility above will be prepared to discuss the various locations in some detail, hopefully touching on all the points mentioned, as well as any others that may come to mind. Interested members are encouraged to contact committee members to discuss this topic.

--J.A.Church.

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Cdr. Richey and George Parker presented the club with two recorded planetarium programs in November. Cdr. Richey also donated to the club a 10" long-focus mirror; a bubble sextant; an astro-compass; and a pelorus. Each instrument is currently being evaluated by other club members. Anyone with suggested uses for the equipment should contact an officer. Also being assembled for possible use by club members (as well as himself) is a fine large diffraction grating; Will Krasnansky is constructing a spectroscope with it. Contact him for details.