

Sidereal Times



10/75

Next A A A P Meeting

October 14 at 8 P.M.

Place

PRINCETON UNIVERSITY

Jadwin Hall

Rm. A 07

Topic

Viking Probes the Martian Soil

Speaker

ROBERT HARGRAVES

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Mars, the planet most like Earth, has intrigued astronomers for centuries. Through technology we have solved many of the mysteries cloaking the red planet. For almost a decade space probes have been collecting bits and pieces of information about the red planet. Mariners 4, 6, 7, and 9 intensely photographed the surface features and revealed many surprises: volcanos, craters, dust storms, and a great rift valley. The most impressive mission has a target date of July 4, 1976 when a craft will land on the very surface of Mars. Surely the most exciting aspect of the mission - at least to the public at large - concerns the question as to the existence of life. But more fundamental questions should be considered as equally important - How did the solar system evolve? How does the Martian environment differ from that of Earth? Project Viking may very well supply some of the clues to these and other questions that will ultimately expand as cosmic consciousness.

On October 14, Robert Hargraves of Princeton University and Chief Scientist involved with the soil experimentation of the Viking mission will speak to the Amateur Astronomers Association of Princeton on the topic, "The Martian Soil". Prior to the lecture, members are cordially invited to meet for dinner at 5:45 p.m. at the Prime Rib situated on U.S. 1 between Princeton and Lawrenceville.

THE AMATEUR ASTRONOMERS ASSOCIATION OF PRINCETON

P.O. BOX 2017
PRINCETON, N.J. 08540

TRAVELLING OBSERVATORY

At the September 9 AAAP meeting a proposal for a "Travelling Observatory" was mentioned. The Travelling Observatory would consist of a small trailer specially equipped to promote steady observing. The AAAP 10" f-5 reflector - generously donated by Karl Koehler will be attached to a mount bolted to the floor of the trailer. When not in use the telescope will be safely secured in a foam-lined cabinet that would be bolted to the sides and floor of the trailer. The advantages and disadvantages of the concept were discussed.

Advantages: Travelling observatory would provide a transportable telescope to be used by AAAP observers.

Travelling Observatory would serve as a public relations tool by making public aware of AAAP Activities and thereby increase membership.

Travelling observatory is an affordable item of great use until more funds become available for a permanent observatory.

Travelling Observatory provides a practical project that will bring member's interests and skills together.

Disadvantage: Travelling Observatory will detract from AAAP's prime focus of a permanent observatory.

The AAAP Board of Director would appreciate feedback on this matter. Should we bring this concept to a vote?

TELESCOPES ANYONE?

Due to a most generous donation by Former Assistant Director Karl Koehler, the following telescopes are available for use by AAAP members.

1. 5" f11 Solar Scope with Herschel wedge.
2. 6" f9 Newtonian reflector
3. 4" f4 Astro-camera

The following stipulation are advised by Director Dick Peery:

1. User must supply mount and saddle.
2. User is urged to maintain observing log.
3. User is requested to make short report on the telescopes use at the end of observing period.

NEW MEMBER ROSTER

Hal Collins
180 Franklin Corner Rd.
G-6
Lawrenceville, New Jersey 08648

Serita B. Scott
30 S. Westfield Avenue
Trenton, New Jersey 08618

CREATURES OF DARKNESS

OR

INTO THE LAND OF THE TUBE PEERERS

by

I. C. Nightly

Once upon a time and long, long ago (c. 1956), a strange strain of homo sapiens sharing a mutual but unusual interest of directing long tubes toward the nighttime sky banded together. They called themselves the LEHIGH VALLEY AMATEUR ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY (LVAAS). So great was their obsession of searching for vague phenomena that cluttered the expanse of the heavens that they decided to bring their tubes out of the cold, harsh mountain environment and cloister a commonly shared tube within protecting walls; hence the Knecht observatory was dedicated in 1963. Although the observatory allowed LVAAS to observe unhampered by the severity of the cold, rain and clouds obscured their view of stars and planets. Disgruntled but not defeated they brought the stars and planets indoors; hence the construction of their own planetarium.

For seven years these creatures of darkness peered through their long tubes in relative bliss. But this fairy tale is not without its episodic tragedy—a feared enemy called Light was growing larger and larger, and finally surrounded the Lehigh Valley. The favorite pasttime of light was to sneak up on LVAAS observers and glare into their eyes. "I can't see," exclaimed an unsuspecting member. Attempts of the knights of darkness to do battle with this ubiquitous foe proved futile. "Let's move!," urged another member as he furiously rubbed his eyes. "Gotcha!" glared light.

Thus began a six year exodus of epic proportions. The LVAAS members firmly resolved to practice their habit where light was unlikely to follow. The LVAAS finally decided to relocate their tube-peering activities to the 1500 foot-high summit of Pulpit Rock Mountain.* The struggle to pulpit rock was a rough one with many rocks in the path, to sort of speak. But finally in August of 1969 The Arthur Fox Memorial Observatory was dedicated; A Meteor research observatory was completed in 1972; The Schlegal-McHugh Observatory would follow.

And so what began as a flight from light became a paradise of darkness

AAAP to visit LVAAS October 12

Since October 13 is Columbus Day, some members may be able to afford the time Sunday evening, October 12 to visit the Lehigh Valley Amateur Astronomers Society of Allentown, Pennsylvania, certainly one of the most active astronomy groups.

***Business meeting begins at 7:00 p.m.

***Regular meeting begins at 8:00 p.m.
Scheduled speaker will be George McCook. Head of the Villanova Astronomy Dept. on the topic of "Photometry of Eclipsing Binary Systems."

***Inspection of the facilities as described in I. C. Nightly's article is also under consideration depending on time and weather.

***Interested individuals should leave for Allentown around 5:30 p.m.

Those desiring to make the trip should call Dick Peery at 397-3676 for directions and car pool information.

Dear AAAP Member:

This issue of Sidereal Times contains a ballot with which to vote for a proposed change in Article VI of the new constitution. The second sentence of Article VI, the Dissolution Clause, now reads:

In case of dissolution the assets of the Association shall be divided equally among the members.

In place of that sentence the Board of Trustees has proposed the following wording:

Upon dissolution of this Association the Board of Trustees shall, after paying all debts outstanding, dispose of all assets of the Association to a non-profit organization qualifying as exempt under Section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954 (or the corresponding provision of any future United States Revenue Law).

At the Club meeting of September 9 the club membership voted in favor of the proposed change. The next step is the current mailing of a ballot to all Club members so that they may vote on the proposed change. A simple majority vote of the membership is necessary to pass the revision.

The purpose of this change is to bring the Club constitution in line with Internal Revenue Service regulations for non-profit tax-exempt organizations. Gaining tax-exempt status will mean contributions toward the building of an observatory will be tax deductible, thus encouraging such contributions. Making this change in our constitution is the first of several steps necessary to acquire tax exempt status:

Please record your vote on the ballot below and mail as soon as possible or phone in your vote to:

Richard D. Peery
16A Coryell Street
Lambertville, N.J. 08530
(609) 397-3676

I hereby approve the proposed change in Article VI of the AAAP constitution.

I disapprove the proposed change.

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

TOWN _____ ZIP CODE _____