

OCTOBER, 1975
Number 4

SKY-LINES

phoenix astronomical society, inc.

LOWELL OBSERVATORY TOUR AND OBSERVING - SATURDAY, OCTOBER 25

On Saturday, October 25th, P.A.S. members will meet in Flagstaff for an afternoon tour of Lowell Observatory telescopes near Lake Mary. At 7:30 P.M. the group will meet at the Lowell Observatory Library on Mars Hill overlooking Flagstaff for a short talk by Charles Capen, Jr, noted planetary observer, and observing with the 20" Refractor for the remainder of the evening, weather permitting.

Members wishing to take the afternoon tour will meet in the parking lot of DENNY'S RESTAURANT in south Flagstaff on U.S. 89A, about $\frac{1}{2}$ mile north of the I-17 and I-40 interchange. Mr. Capen or a Lowell staff member will lead the caravan south on Lake Mary Road to the Andrews Mesa site, leaving Denny's Restaurant PROMPTLY at 3:30 P.M.

Nighttime temperatures in Flagstaff will be near freezing so PLEASE BRING WARM WINTER CLOTHING! Under normal conditions the drive to Flagstaff takes $2\frac{1}{2}$ to 3 hours, so plan to leave Phoenix early.

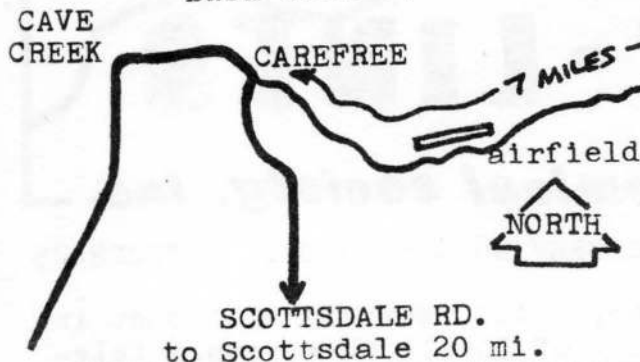


★ ★ **STAR PARTY** ★ ★

★ SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 1

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Dusk till ??



Drive 7 miles NE of Carefree on Seven Springs Rd. - Take turnoff to Bartlett Lake and park next to Microwave Sta. just past turnoff. (all rds. are paved.)

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Monthly Newsletter of the PHOENIX ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY, INC, Phoenix, Arizona. A non-profit, educational, scientific corporation. Mailing Address: 2736 West Rose Lane, Phoenix Arizona 85017.

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1975 - 76 Officers
President: Cliff Vaughan
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Opinions and views expressed in SKY-LINES are strictly those of the writers and not necessarily that of the PHOENIX ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY, INC. or its officers.

***** MEETING NOTES *****

Sixty new and old members attended the first fall meeting Sept 26. President Cliff Vaughan welcomed everyone and introduced the officers to the audience. Reports on the club finances, progress on the 24" mirror, and plans for the fall schedule were given.

Bill Anderson announced the formation of special-interest groups within the club, and invited members to sign up for activities. Bill is organizing an Astrophotography Group - call him at 943-2697 for more information.

S.I. Gale showed a fine series of slides of the Cygnus Nova - particularly noted was its vivid red color as it faded.

A REMINDER - To all new or old members who have not yet sent their Membership Dues to the Treasurer, Chuck Nash - please do so as soon as possible.

OBSERVING THE MESSIER OBJECTS --- John Holmquist

Many an amateur astronomer, despite possessing an excellent telescope, soon finds that his observing enthusiasm has dwindled to the point where he does little or no observing. To begin with he enjoyed looking at the moon, the planets, sun spots, and the more spectacular stellar objects in more or less casual fashion, but in time these became 'old hat' and his telescope became a dust collector in his garage or utility room.

What is needed to retain one's interest in using the telescope is some systematic, long range program of meaningful visual observations or astrophotography. A program which has given me considerable satisfaction is observing the catalog of Messier Objects.

The Messier Objects are named after Charles Messier (1730-1817), a French astronomer who discovered 20 comets during his lifetime. In searching for comets he found certain star clusters and nebulae which appeared like comets in his small refractor. To avoid confusing these with new comets in future observations, he recorded their positions and features. His lists were added to by other observers, and a total of 107 are now generally known as Messier Objects.

Observing the Messier Objects, rather than regarding them as nuisances in searching for comets as Charles Messier did, has become a pleasant hobby for many amateur astronomers. Under favorable conditions all the objects can be seen with a 4 inch refractor or 6 inch reflector, but except for a dozen or so they are not "easy" objects.

To observe many of them requires careful study of the constellations, precise aiming of the telescope, and above all, patience. Some of the "deep sky" objects require the ability to discern faint objects at the threshold of vision. Only a certain number of the objects can be seen during any one season, so this is a year-round hobby.

The Astronomical League, the national association of astronomy clubs, awards a Messier Club Certificate to League Members who have observed 70 or more of the Messier Objects and kept a log of their observations. Recently I received the Certificate which I framed and proudly display. An Honorary Certificate is awarded to those observing all of the objects and that is my next goal.

The Astronomical League publishes a booklet, "Observe - The Messier Objects," containing a description of each Messier object, helpful directions for finding it, and a convenient

(continued on page four.)

More about...OBSERVING THE MESSIER OBJECTS

log for recording observations. While the Phoenix Astronomical Society is not a member of the League, I am a Member-at-Large and can order "Observe" booklets at \$2.00 each for those interested.



SKY-ADS

P.A.S. members may list telescopes, optical equipment, books, charts, & other astronomical material FREE up to three lines per issue. Sorry, NO commercial listings accepted.

UNGROUND glass blanks for 5.75" refractor with computer design specs. 8" Classical Cassegrain and 4" Schmidt Camera, optics and tubes only. Call FRANK MERCALDO, 992-8583.

ALUMINIZED 8" f:8 mirror for sale; excellent figure - \$50. Call JOHN HOLMQUIST, 985-7343.

NEVER used 20mm Erfle eyepiece by Cave, 80° field - \$27. or trade. Call FRED TRETТА, 979-8478.

3" REFRACTOR, f:15, with equatorial mounting with clock drive and circles, wooden case and many extra accessories, \$200. Call STEVE CHLEBO, 272-8417 (home) or 262-6235 (work)

PHOENIX ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY, INC.

Chuck Nash, Secretary

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