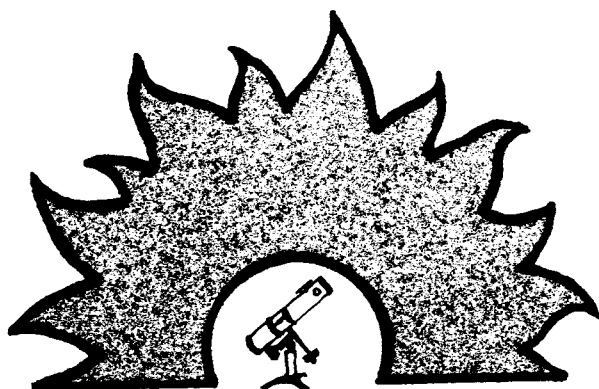




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PASTIMES

PHOENIX ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY -- FOUNDED 1948

MARCH MEETING MARCH MEETING MARCH MEETING MARCH MEETING MARCH MEETING

This month's meeting will be held on Friday, the 21st at Phoenix College, Room C-102 at 8:00 p.m. (see map on back of newsletter).

Speaking to us on the subject of occultations will be local expert Gerry Rattley, president of the Saguaro Astronomy Club and local leader of the International Occultation Timing Association(IOTA). Gerry will explain what occultations are, and how to set up for and participate in observations of astroidal and lunar grazing occultations.

NOTES FROM OUR SECRETARY

Thanks go to members Keith Parizek, Raul Espinoza, and Jerry Maurer for a fine astrophotography slide show at our February meeting. Raul and Jerry shared their views of Halley, and Keith took us on a grand tour of the galaxy from his impressive Alpine observatory. Member Richard Wasson also showed us his acrylic montage of Comet Halley, indicating that we have a budding space artist in our midst.

This year's nominating committee for new PAS officers will include Stan Gorodenski, Jerry Maurer, and Keith Parizek. President Bill Krist heads the volunteer committee and points out that while by-laws prohibit nominating committee members from nominating themselves as candidates, the general membership can nominate anyone from the floor at the April meeting.

Our editor, Steve Lewis, is requesting more membership input for PASTIMES. Send all information to him at 2806 N. 33rd Place, Phoenix, AZ 85008. Dead-

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ASTROBRIEFS

Comet Tales. At press time a multitude of information was filtering in from all the Halley probes, making almost



all news about the comet obsolete. First came the Vega I data that the surface of the "snowball" was a balmy 85°. The irregular heart shaped core of the comet was first perceived as a double core. Diameter estimates still range from two to three miles. Even though most U.S. attempts to study Halley from space were lost with the space shuttle Challenger, the Pioneer Venus Orbiter launched in 1978 (and still functioning long after it was to have expired) was the only spacecraft to observe the comet as it passed within 55 million miles of the sun on February 9th. By next month a more complete picture of Halley should be available.

Best Western InnSuites of Yuma has sent a special invitation to members of PAS to

-- Briefs p2

Notes -- continued

line for each issue is the second Friday of each month. Please be sure that all charts, tables, etc. are clean copy and complete for reproduction/distribution. Also, try to digest articles for brevity and clarity but don't worry about grammar or punctuation -- that's part of the editor's job.

Bill Krist has asked that members bring all their Halley slides to share at this month's meeting. Our April meeting will be on the 25th. Mark your calendar.

-- Harold Moorin

ATTENTION ASTRONOMY CLUBS: Due to an unprecedented demand for the January, 1986 issue of *Sky & Telescope*, it is already out of print. Any subscription orders received requesting a starting date of January, 1986 will be processed with the February, 1986 issue. Subscriptions that are being renewed with an issue prior to January, 1986 will be extended one additional month to compensate for the missing January, 1986 issue.

-- Sky Publishing Corporation

NOTICE TO MEMBERS: A fellow amateur astronomer from Denver, Neal Hanson, will be visiting here in Phoenix from 3/19 to 3/24 and would like to find a member to share a telescopic view of Halley while he's in town. Anyone interested may volunteer at this month's meeting which Neal plans to attend.

ASTRONOMICAL FIGURE: The human body consists of about 60 million cells, and each cell has about 10,000 times as many molecules as the Milky Way has stars. Each body cell contains an average of 50 trillion atoms.

Briefs -- continued

take part in their special Halley's Comet Rate for the month of April. \$44 single or \$55 double includes Queen size bed and Queen size sofa bed for up to four persons at no extra charge. Also included free are in-room refrigerator with juice, complimentary coffee/tea, continental breakfast, HBO and fitness center. Call 783-8341 for reservations. . . .

An Ocean In Space. Data sent from Voyager II seems to be supporting the theory that Uranus is covered by an ocean, the water 5,000 miles deep, thousands of degrees hot, the result of colliding comets. The water surrounds the planet's rocky core which is roughly the size of Earth. The ocean never boils due to the intense atmospheric pressure. Although it never boils, it does slowly churn which may account for the strange mysterious magnetic field which is not oriented to the planet's axis of rotation. As further support for the comet theory of its creation, Uranus has large quantities of both gases and heavier elements such as carbon, nitrogen, and oxygen which are found in comets. Speculation is that most of the millions of comets now forming the Oort Cloud once orbited the sun near Uranus and Neptune and became those planets.

Another Planet In Our Neighborhood? Oregon astronomers led by James C. Kemp, Astronomy Professor (University of Oregon), describe what could be a huge planet, at least ten times larger than Jupiter, orbiting a star 36 light years from Earth. The study, done at Pine Mt. Observatory in Bend, Oregon, used 24" and 32" telescopes to measure polarized light coming from Arcturus, our fourth brightest star. A special polarimeter detected a variation in the polarized light

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CALENDAR

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