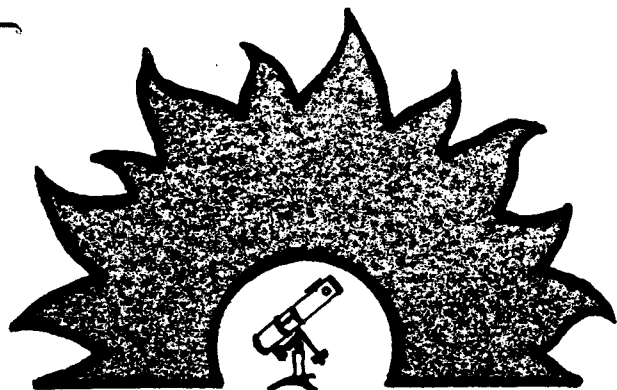




F E B R U A R Y

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PASTIMES

PHOENIX ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY -- FOUNDED 1948

FEBRUARY MEETING FEBRUARY MEETING FEBRUARY MEETING FEBRUARY MEETING

Our guest speaker for February is Dr. Ann Cowley who recently returned from an extended trip to China. She'll be sharing slides of her fascinating investigation of "Astronomy in China."

Our meeting will be held, as usual, at Phoenix College, Room C-102 (see map on back of newsletter) on Friday, February 27, 1987 at 8:00 p.m.

NOTES FROM OUR PRESIDENT

About 35 members attended our January meeting and enjoyed a "Hawaiian Travelog" with guide Dan Heim. We were treated to breathtaking views from atop Mauna Kea, but as astronomer's luck would have it, wicked weather washed out any good seeing of Halley from the mountain. Dan did have some good shots of Halley. One in particular was taken from Hilo Bend -- oops, Gila Bend, AZ. Anyway, Dan's presentation was both informative and entertaining. Thanks, Dan!

Belated thanks to Hermann Andresen for bringing in his past issues of *Sky & Telescope* and *Astronomy* magazines to the December meeting for free distribution to those members interested. Very generous.

At our meeting Friday I will have brochures and registration forms for the upcoming Riverside Telescope Makers' Conference to be held on Memorial Day, May 22nd thru the 25th. I will also have final word on the club's star party planned for February 28th.

Our current treasury stats show a money market of \$1300, our CD valued at about \$1500 and a checking account balance of \$179.

-- Bill Krist



STAR PARTY!!

At press time we were still waiting for confirmation on the use of McDowell Mountain Park

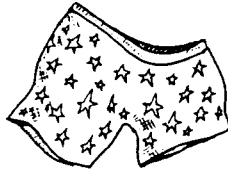
for our club star party scheduled for Saturday, February 28th. Final details will be announced at Friday's meeting (the 27th), so if you can't make the meeting give Bill Krist a call at 254-4057 for details. Channel 8 TV is threatening to attend so we'd like a good showing of scopes and folks out there to prove that amateur astronomy is alive and well in Arizona.

It is advised that you show up about an hour before sunset to set up your equipment. Bring warm clothing and your own refreshments.

A final note on star party etiquette, which can be summed up in one word -- courtesy. This is mainly in reference to light pollution, which should be kept to a bare minimum. Once eyes become dark adapted even a simple flash from a cigarette lighter can set someone's viewing time back by 10 minutes. Please be cautious with headlights, flashlights, back-up lights, etc. (See map on page 3)



ASTROBRIEFS



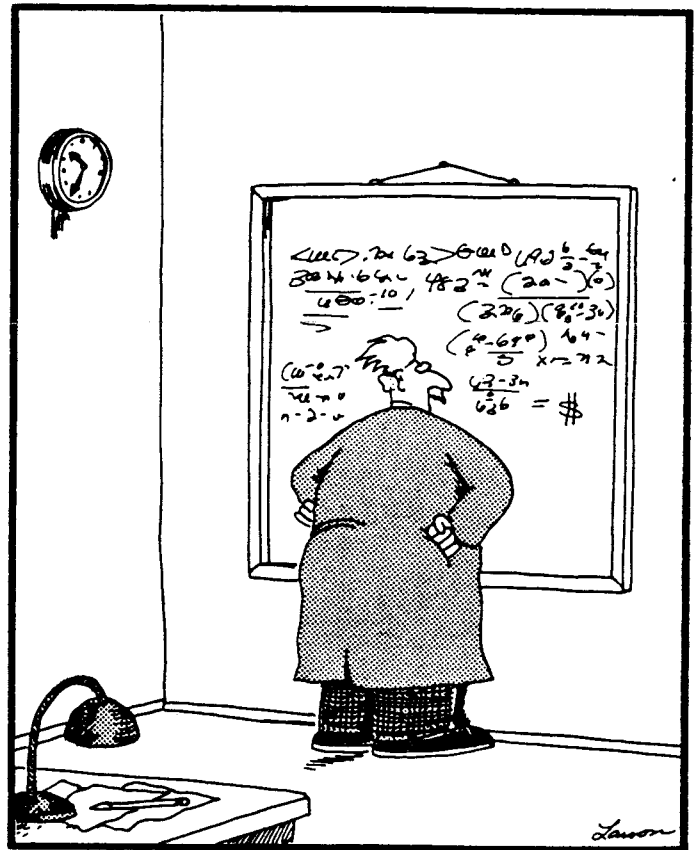
Heavenly Arches. Two starry arcs, filaments in the sky, one resembling part of a broken circle, the other having a beaded appearance have been discovered around a galaxy 19 billion trillion miles from earth. How these curving lines of stars are formed is a mystery. Although the arcs were detected 10 years ago, they were too faint to be studied until recently when an electronic light-sensor called a charged-coupled device was developed

It Came Upon A Midnight Clear. They call NGC 1667 "Christmas Supernova". The new found exploding star is located in the center of the constellation Eridanus, just south of Taurus. An undergraduate operating the computer-aided equipment at Leuschner Observatory during Christmas week spotted the supernova. In the past 6 years since the computer observations started, only 4 supernovas have been discovered

And Another Star Is Born! Conceived at perihelion and delivered on Halley's birthday, November 8, 1986 was Kelsey Nicole Whallon -- a new granddaughter for member Jerry Maurer. Congrats, Gramps!

Strings In Space. Galaxies may be aligned in broad sheets stretching across the universe. Edward Witten, a Princeton astrophysicist, believes these sheets intersect, leaving huge voids, creating a universe that appears sponge-like. These strings would be incredibly massive, generating extremely powerful electric current and would be responsible for the force that creates galaxies. This theory suggests the strings are the remnants of the "Big Bang"

Halley's Darker Side. Halley, the brightest dependable comet, could last 76,000 years or it might just stop being a comet. ASU astronomer, Susan Wyckoff described this possibility to a Chicago meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science. It's more likely Halley's will build up a rubble obscuring the icy core, preventing evaporation and thereby becoming observable only through large ground based telescopes. Some surprises: gases spew from only 7 spots on the nucleus; erosion occurs on only 3% of the surface; the nucleus is 9 miles long; and the color



Einstein discovers that time is actually money.

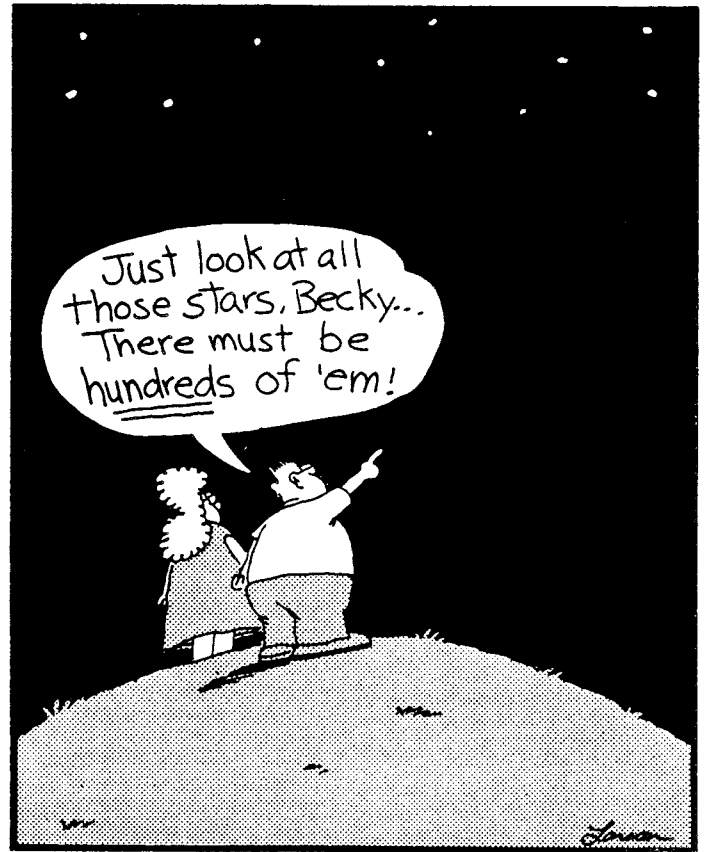
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is asphalt black. Halley's is one of the darkest objects in the solar system . . .

Christopher Columbus! The Mount Graham "Columbus Project" has already begun its Italian phase -- designing a mirror-support structure and drive system for a twin-mirror telescope, each mirror to be 315" on the single mount. It should collect 5 times more starlight than any existing astronomical tool. A U.S. Forest Service environmental draft has suggested that this telescope be permitted on Mt. Graham. The completion date is set at 1992, the 500th anniversary of Columbus' voyage to the New World. The Columbus Project also involves the U of A which is contributing the mirrors using the unique spun-cast honeycomb structure developed by U of A astronomer J. Roger Angel. The U of Chicago and Ohio State U will be contributing as well as Italy's Ministry of Education

(ASTROBRIEFS is edited by Helen Lewis)



Carl Sagan as a kid

★ STAR PARTY MAP ★

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MAP FOR McDOWELL MOUNTAIN PARK

(From Shea turnoffs to viewing area is approximately 6 miles)

