

STAR DUST

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Monthly Newsletter
EDMONTON CENTRE, RASC

May, 1955

AURORA BOREALIS: April, 1955 followed the trend that has been in evidence since last December. Our Auroral Group only were able to manage to see 7 displays during the month. 10 reports were received covering the 7 displays of aurora. These were seen on the nights of April 5-6; 7-8; 10-11; 16-17; 25-26; 29-30; and 30-1. The observers contributing were: Karl Milton (2), Franklin Loehde (4) Ian McLennan (2), Johnny Mandrusiak, and Richard Loehde. No reports were received from Noel Boisvert as of the present, but we sincerely hope to hear from him in the near future.

We hope that in a month or two, we will be able to commence auroral observations using the new punch-card system as instigated by Drs. Gartlein and Kishall of Cornell. This new system should appeal to those observers that like a more technical type of observation.

SOLAR DIVISION: Last April, our Solar Group recorded a total of 136 spots and 23 groups. As it has been for the last 5 months, the northern hemisphere was more active. Only 15 spots were seen in the southern hemisphere compared to 121 in the north. A total of 55 observations of the sun were made during the month. There was an average of 5.91 spots for each day of the month. The number of spots seen by each observer is as follows: Don Morrison (61 spots, 11 groups); Johnny Mandrusiak (94 spots, 23 groups); Franklin Loehde (91 spots, 17 groups).

In the naked-eye department of sunspots, only one spot was recorded and this on April 6th. IN THIS field Don Morrison made 18 observations.

Johnny Mandrusiak on the 9th of the month saw his 500th spot. He expects to get his thousandth one sometime during the summer. Franklin Loehde, our Solar Division chairman, also thought April was a special month as he saw his 1000th spot on April 29th.

In the faculae branch the number seen was down just as the number of aurorae. Only 9 groups were seen during the whole month.

CLOUDS: Clouds played an important part in curbing April's special observations. First the Lyrid Meteor shower. We had planned to observe on the evenings of April 20-21, and 22-23 but the elements did not feel the same way about it. Both nights were enhanced by the presence of liquid moonlight. Then came the Sunday of April 24th when the major event of the year was to materialize, the occultation of Mars. As usual the local weather office did not feel like giving us a good forecast. This time they tempted us as the sky cleared only five minutes after the event.

PLANETARY DEPARTMENT: Our Planetary Department chairman, Arthur Dalton, is now in the wilds of North-eastern Alberta. Although he is without a large telescope he plans to make a number of observations with his 4 inch reflector which he took with him up to Waterways, Alberta. Before he left he made a number of variable star observations which were submitted to the American Association of Variable Star Observers. He hopes to continue this work up north during the five months he is staying there. He will keep in constant contact with us by mail and if anything comes up in the way of assistance he is sure to help us. We can expect quite a number of aurorae from him in August and September.

Most of the members of the Centre are aware that we have an observatory and also that the planet Saturn is in a good position. There are quite a few members who have never set foot in the observatory and this summer we not only want them to go to the observatory but also to make a few observations of the planet Saturn. There is no trouble what-so-ever in making planetary drawing and while you are making the drawing you can get an excellent birdseye view of the ringed planet.

Around May 20 Mercury is in an excellent position for observation. It is hoped that at this time our observers will be fortunate enough both atmospherically and other-wise to be able to see surface features on Mercury's sunlit portion..

OBSERVATION COMMITTEE: For the convenience of those who wish to participate in one or more of the diversified observational activities which our Centre offers to its members and friends, we have prepared the following list of committee chairmen and sub-chairmen. If you require forms, information, or data concerning results in these fields the various chairmen will be pleased to comply.

ATMOSPHERIC PHENOMENAE: Aurora Borealis, Meteors, and Halos.
Chairman- Earl Milton, 9634-85 Street, Ph. 65397
Sub-chairman of Halos- Richard Henry, 13322-102 Avenue, Ph. 83259

SOLAR and LUNAR DIVISION: Sunspots, Faculae, Lunar Features, Eclipses, Occultations.
Chairman- Franklin Loehde, 11542-65 Street, Ph. 75652
Sub-chairman of Faculae- Johnny Mandrusiak, 11642-71 St., Ph. 781623

PHOTOGRAPHIC DEPARTMENT:
Chairman- Ian McLennan, 11852-65 Street, Ph. 782387

PLANETARY DIVISION: Conjunctions, Variable Stars, Novae, Planets
Chairman- Arthur Dalton, Beverly, Ph. 783959
*During the period of Arthur Dalton's absence Ian McLennan will take charge of the Planetary Division.

OBSERVATORY: The Observatory will continue to function regularly for the purpose of carrying on public observations and we would appreciate the members turning out to help man the various instruments and answer questions by the public. Observations will begin as soon as sky conditions permit.