

The Atlanta Astronomy Club, Inc  
December 1980

This Atlanta Astronomy Club meeting date will be an exception to the exception which will equal a normal. So the meeting will be on the usual 3rd Friday, Dec. 19, at 8:00 PM in old BC, as Bill Calder sometimes refers to Eradley. An exciting space adventure awaits you from ~~from~~ your grandstand position in one of old BC's slat bottomed seats provided you get there early. Harper High School's planetarium director Bob Tate will present us with a Euck Rogers style look at beautiful Saturn by way of Voyager 1 and video tapes from NASA. Bob will make it a 'Talkie' with some lively comentary about space lore.

Observing chairman Jay Rhoads has a work schedule change that leaves him free to look at the sky on Friday nights, so he invites everyone to join him on Jan. 9, a Friday, at the Barber Observatory for the next observing alert. It so happens that Jim Brown and I like X Saturday night so you have two chances at the stars. When you are interested in observing get on the phone and call someone. Find out who else is interested, find someone to go with you, make something happen.

The stars smiled on us again Saturday Dec. 8. Eighteen to twenty people were present to enjoy a very pleasant late fall evening of star gazing. The Crab Nebula had a transatory companion messier object, Stephan-Cterma. People with eyes a little better than mine claimed to be able to see a tail on the comet. Orion was very high in the sky, in good position for some photography.

Al Beals is leading a small group to the Barber Observatory on the night of 13-14 to look for the Geminid meteor shower. Eugene Fowell is planning a similar expedition to look for the elusive Quadrantids in the early morning hours of Jan. 4.

ARCA Observatories' great Campbellton Telescope, the 14 inch Newtonian, has been installed in a new domed observatory in Jerry Armstrong's back yard. We are all expecting some high quality amateur astronomy to start emerging from ~~un~~ that silo dome.

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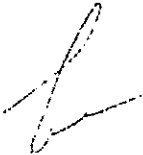
Your new membership list will accompany this letter, be sure and let someone know about any changes or omissions to your name and address.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to everyone

-Notice!!!-

Meeting of Erd of Directors and club Officers following December regular meeting, be there

-a.b.c.

 lee wilson

## Le BANQUET de LIFE est CONTRIBUTION PROPORTIONAL

There must be some kind of special magic, a metamorphosis of the psyche, that takes place when a fellow grinds and polishes his own telescope mirror. Bill Close seems to have been touched by this phenomenon when he became a member of the "Monday night telescope making class" as begun by Dr. Calder in the basement of the old science hall at Agnes Scott College soon after Christmas of 1947.

In much the way a nova develops in the sky, the early development of the Atlanta Astronomy Club occurred. An article about 15 new faculty members being added at Agnes Scott appeared in the Atlanta Journal in September 1947, and featured among these was a professor of Physics and Astronomy, Dr. William A. Calder. Agnes Scott had hired an experienced astronomer to head their Astronomy Department and to assist with the construction of the observatory and installation of the 30-inch Beck telescope. However, they had also hired an amateur astronomer who had been an avid star-gazer since he was a young boy. Two Atlanta star-gazers who saw the news article went calling with ideas about setting up an amateur group and found a willing listener. On Sunday, October 19, the Atlanta Constitution published an article about their plans and they held their first meeting the following Friday in the old science hall. This was followed by meetings in November and December, with plans for a telescope making class which became a Monday night ritual. Bill Close quickly progressed from student, to Dr. Calder's assistant, to instructor in his own right at other locations around Atlanta.

When you talk about the Closes' and amateur astronomy, you have to say Bill and Anna Belle Close because that was the way it was then as it is now. They came to meetings together and shared in the activities as well as the organizational aspects of the club. Each has held at least six officer positions (never together in the same year) spread over a span of more than 20 years. The year 1948 saw the formal election of club officers and the start of a club publication, "The Atlanta Astronomer's Report." Bill and Anna Belle, along with other active members, were deeply involved with the "Report." Anna Belle worked with the nuts and bolts of publishing as well as contributing articles; Bill was the illustrator and publicity chairman. The Report became very popular and was mailed to people around the nation and the world. After about 10 years, it died from exhaustion.

Bill Calder is the original closet mirror grinder, having set up operations around a barrel in a walk-in closet, this being the only area his wife would allow him to use. The first edition of a small publication called "Amateur Telescope Making," got him into a bit of mischief. After many miles of walking around the barrel and getting rouge in his nose, eyes, ears and hair, he got the itch to go back to school and take up astronomy so he wrote an earnest letter to Dr. Harlow Shapley at Harvard and as a result went off to become a professional astronomer.

On behalf of the members of the Atlanta Astronomy Club, this article is offered as thanks and appreciation to these ardent star-gazers for their contribution to our club and to amateur astronomy.