



EDITORIAL

Immanuel Velikovsky and Bob Baglow

In the latest issue of the St. George Dragon, published by the U. of T. Graduate Students, there appears an article entitled "Vested Interest and Immanuel Velikovsky" by one Joseph Knecht. (It would appear from the article that Joseph Knecht is a graduate student in English, but his name does not appear in the Students' Directory and he is not known at the School of Graduate Studies - which makes one wonder!)

In his elegantly written piece Mr. Knecht defends the thesis put forward by Velikovsky in his 1950 book "Worlds in Collision" that the various catastrophes, like the Flood, which are recorded in myth, legend and folklore around the world are evidence of the collision of a comet with the earth which resulted in the formation of the planet Venus. The poor reception given to Velikovsky's views by astronomers is, according to Mr. Knecht, attributable to the Vested Interest Reaction (VIR) and Linear Single Vision and Worship of the Pattern of Truth which infect the Elect and cause us to reject not only Velikovsky but things like parapsychology and macrobiotics and astrology and Marshall McLuhan.

Now it must be that Mr. Knecht is just putting us astronomers on. If so, then it is all clean fun. But I do object a little to his treatment of Robert L. Baglow and his excellent J.R.A.S.C. review, which Mr. Knecht quotes with a few sentences lifted out of context.

If any one of us lacked VIR and LSV it was Bob Baglow, who was on our teaching staff in the late 40's and early 50's. Bob was intelligent, literate, articulate, thoroughly likeable and sometimes infuriating. He held, as he stated in the last sentence of his Worlds in Collision review, that "it is permissible to ride at windmills", (Time Magazine, which he read from cover to cover, was one of his favourite targets.) "but not in all directions at once".

Bob rode the bus to the city for his lectures and, whether from reading Ap.J. or Time or from mental riding at windmills, he was forever leaving his briefcase behind. It finally got that the T.T.C.

would call the Observatory and say, "he left his briefcase again". On one of these occasions I decided that it was my duty to give him a little fatherly advice. I said, "Bob, this is just symptomatic of the disorder of your mind. Why don't you do as I've had to do -- buy a little black book and record things that you have to do?" He said, "Jack, I have a little black book, but," with a twinkle in his eye, "it's in my briefcase".

Bob got caught in a financial morass during the time that university salaries were lagging badly behind the increasing cost of living, and he had to leave astronomy for a better paying job. He was a good astronomer, a fine teacher, and it was a loss to the University. I see him occasionally, but not as often as I would like.

Joseph Knecht, whoever you are, you should have known BOB BAGLOW.

J.F.H.

OBSERVING

Observing conditions during February have been unusually good, 15 of the first 23 nights being workable. One of these was lost because of the breaking of a gear bracket for the dome opening mechanism. A new bracket was welded up in Richmond Hill and machined in our shops and replaced within 36 hours.

The scheme of having Jim Thomson on duty as an all-night observing assistant for 20 consecutive nights out of 30 is working out well, and there is no longer a problem of shortage of observing assistants. Jim points out that his degree from Waterloo is a B.Sc. in general physics, not the B.A. mentioned last month.

***** Gerry Longworth has realuminized the mirrors of the
24-inch reflector very expeditiously and successfully
** with the new 30-inch chamber. This chamber has been
installed in the corner of the "carpenter shop" where
***** the mirror grinding machine used to be. *****

The three G12 plate-holders have been re-tested and adjusted so that they are all now in essentially perfect focus together.

Papers Submitted during February

D.P. Hube: "The Radial Velocities of 335 Late B-type Stars".
"HD 176318: A Second Epoch Spectrographic Orbit".
"The Spectrographic Orbit of HD 161701".
J.D. Fernie: "UBV Observations of Nova Vul 1968".

COMINGS AND GOINGS

Dr. MacRae was in Ottawa on the 14th attending a meeting of the Council of Section III of the Royal Society of Canada, and in Washington on the 19th attending a meeting in connection with the organization of the consortium of universities involved in the Universities Space Research Association.

Dave Goodenough is in Kitt Peak for an observing session.

Dr. and Mrs. Fernie have been in Jamaica for a two-week deferred summer vacation.

SEMINARS

February

Seminars were held as scheduled in last month's Doings.

March

- Wed. 5
Countdown Dr. Hogg "A New Survey of Variable Stars in Globular Clusters".
- Wed. 12
Countdown Dr. Owen Gingerich, Smithsonian Astrophysical Observatory. "Ultraviolet Spectra and Model Stellar Atmospheres",.
- Thurs. 13
Colloquium Dr. Gingerich: "Johannes Kepler and the New Astronomy" Room 137, McLennan.
- Wed. 19
Countdown Mark Naylor: "Preliminary Investigations of Close Binary Systems"
Dr. Heard: "An Old Chapter in the History of Tsih".
- Wed. 26
Countdown Dr. J. M. Marlborough, University of Western Ontario: "A Model for Be-Star Envelopes".

Course G2000

- Thurs. 6 Greg Fahlman: "Dynamical Properties of Cosmic Rays".
- Thurs. 20 Dave Goodenough: "On the Origin of the Solar System".
- Thurs. 27 Raymonde Verreault: "Mercury Radar Observations and General Relativity".

RASC Meeting

The next meeting of the Toronto Centre will be held on March 14th at the Planetarium. Dr. Garrison will speak on "The Spectra of Long-Period Variables".

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Sir,

For the record it should be noted that Dr. John Schmitt participated in the improvement of the G108 which in turn led to the improvement of the G40 as noted in last month's DDD.

Sincerely,

Robert F. Garrison

VALENTINE - BIRTHDAY COUNTDOWN

To mark Reading Week, Valentine Day and Dr. MacRae's birthday a Special Countdown on the pattern of the traditional Christmas Countdowns was held on Feb. 19. The staff took part, but most of the offerings were from the students.

Highlights:

Iain Baines' portrayal of Dr. van den Bergh with comments from the latter's customary seat in the front row. When he began to rock back and forth and express himself as "worried about what you have just said", it was hard to believe that SvdB wasn't there. - - - -. The younger members of the staff dressed in their painting clothes conducting a meeting of GASA as it might be a few years hence, assessing the "resource persons", particularly one who insisted on giving lectures, and finally deciding to railroad through his appointment as Director, thus rendering him completely harmless ----- A group of students similarly taking off a staff meeting; Fred Hickok as the Chairman going on at great length, with much adjustment of glasses, about policy while the others ate lunches, read Playboy, kept up a babble of trivial conversation and finally left for tea-----. Hilarious awards in the Oscar fashion by Chalmers Hardenbergh ----- and many other very good skits.

MISCELLANEOUS

Born

At Women's College Hospital on February 12 to Dr. and Mrs. Seaquist, a son, Jonathon William.

Appointments

Dr. Rene Racine has accepted the offer of an appointment as Assistant Professor in the Department and at Erindale College.

Bob Chambers who has returned for a while from U.C.L.A. has rejoined the Department as Research Assistant. He is working on a computing project under Dr. Roeder's supervision.

Departures

Peter Jackson finished his master's program and has gone to the University of Maryland to start a Doctor's program under the supervision of Dr. Gart Westerhout.

Bill Dodd has left and is teaching mathematics at West Hill Collegiate. Bob Hawkins has picked up Bill's infrared project.

Alumni

David Ellis (B.A. cal960) who has been assisting in extension teaching in astronomy has resumed his studies as a graduate student in astronomy at the University of Virginia. He writes about an interesting custom there: each graduate student is assigned a star which promises to be interesting and is asked to study it for parallax and other observables. Dave has Vys. 450, an 11th magnitude red dwarf.

Dr. D. C. (Don) Morton (B.A. cal955) of Princeton writes an interesting note from the University of Sidney where he has been invited to confer with Dr. Hanbury Brown on stellar temperatures derived from measurements of diameters with the stellar interferometer at Narabral. He climbed the highest mountain in New Zealand en route and has visited Mount Stromlo to give a colloquium.

Ph.D. Generals

Greg Fahlman passed his oral on February 14.

Housing

Dr. and Mrs. Anand have purchased a condominium in the Finch-Jane area and have already moved. Phone 633-3602.

Dr. and Mrs. Garrison have purchased a house on Glengrove Ave for June occupancy.

Award

Peter Martin has been awarded a Commonwealth Fellowship to be held at Cambridge University.

Talks

Dr. Hogg spoke on February 13 to the annual meeting of the York Central Hospital Auxiliary on "Astronomy Through a Hospital Window"; Mrs. Heard introduced her. Dr. Hogg also spoke on Feb. 21 to the Richmond Hill Naturalists on "The Fascinating Sky".

Dr. MacRae spoke on Feb. 24 to Knox College students on "The Origin of the Solar System".

Library

An interesting addition to the library received as a gift from Tashkent is Jan Hevelius' "Star Atlas", a beautiful big book with historical material and engravings on such people as Ulugh Beg, Ptolemy, Tycho and Halley and the maps of the Constellations by Hevelius. It will probably be housed among the Atlases.