



## GUEST EDITORIAL

## THE McLAUGHLIN PLANETARIUM - THE FIRST SIX MONTHS

Since the Planetarium first opened its doors to the general public early in November last, nearly 200,000 visitors have passed through its display areas and/or seen a show in the Star Theatre. The total attendance in the Star Theatre during the eight-week period January 27 through March 23 was 69,441, an average of 8,680 a week. (Of the 28 shows a week, 11 were for schools and accounted for roughly 28 per cent of the attendance). The attendance for the building over the same eight-week period averaged about 10,000 a week, and during February accounted for 42 per cent of the total number of visitors to the R.O.M.

Although these figures are most encouraging, it has to be remembered that the Planetarium is presently still enjoying a honeymoon. Ahead lie the difficult years of early marriage.

The problems of coping with so many people in a comparatively small building have been great and varied. At times the dome, instead of covering a haven of rest and contemplation, has been analogous to a beehive, although with a minimum of workers. There have certainly been many cells of the mind to fill, for the great majority of people, insofar as their knowledge of cosmology is concerned, are pre-Copernicans. Which fact, perhaps, goes far to account for the continued public interest in astrology.

The current public show, BETWEEN THE STARS, is being well received. Most of the work of planning its various stages and selecting the visual material used was done by Tom Clarke. It will be replaced on May 6 by MARS, PLANET OF MYSTERY. This show, the brain-child of Terry Dickinson, will run through to July 13.

Henry C. King

## TOWN MEETING

"Countdown" on April 16 took the form of a Town Meeting - a session in which a variety of topics having to do with the Observatory and the Department were thrown open for expression of opinion by members of the teaching staff and graduate student body. Dr. Hogg served as Chairman and explained the rules: no votes were to be taken, no decisions reached and personal references were to be avoided. A time schedule was set out for the topics on the agenda; Dr. Garrison was timekeeper.

Admission policy: There was general agreement that job opportunities for Ph.D.'s in Astronomy (and Physics too) are scarcer now than a few years ago. Should this affect our policy of admission to graduate training? Most of the speakers were of the opinion that we should not refuse any well-qualified applicant, though some thought that we should be frank to the applicants concerning the shortage of jobs. Several believed that present-day Ph.D.'s should be content with jobs at smaller institutions and should try to compensate for the disadvantages by energetically seeking observing time on any available telescopes. In the main the realization of the present situation was tempered by a cautious optimism.

### General Examinations and Academic Standards:

Students asked the question, "What is the real purpose of the general oral examination". Staff opinions were that it is twofold: to provide the candidate with a reason for making a systematic review of his knowledge of basic astronomy and to ensure to the staff that the Ph.D. candidate really has the general overall knowledge of the subject which he should have. Two students in particular expressed the opinion that there are other ways of achieving these ends, and that each student should be permitted to work out with his supervisor the way that best suits him. Another student opinion was that a combination of oral and written examinations was best, another that an ad hoc committee chosen for each student should continuously test the student over a period of two years. A staff suggestion was that the present oral examination format might be replaced by a series of visits made by the candidate to a number of different staff members over a period of a week.

Graduate Student Equipment: Dr. MacRae explained the nature and the size of the various Observatory and Department accounts and how the budget estimates were arrived at, also the role played by N.R.C. grants to staff and the sizes and purposes of the three endowment funds - Chant, Helm and Reinhardt.

Availability of Demonstratorships: Will there be fewer next session? Not substantially, because though there will be fewer lab exercises, there will be more work for teaching assistants in seminar sessions. Students appeared to be anxious to play a greater role in devising exercises and quite willing to put the needed planning and effort into seminar sessions with undergraduates.

Computing: Computing time assignment is admittedly chaotic at the moment. Can purchase of a small computer for the department be justified? Such a proposal would have to be passed by a central authority in Computer Science. The chances seem small.

Justification of the University: The challenge to the universities by the Department of Education should be met. Best medium is probably TV. Support of the R.A.S.C. was urged as a means of justification and fostering of good will among the public.

Should the DDO Library be Moved Downtown?

Only a few students supported this suggestion without qualification, a suggested location being the 15th floor. Other students and staff, while emphasizing the need for better reference facilities on campus suggested compromises such as merging our duplicates and main library astronomy books with the Physics Library. One opinion was that centralization in the main library was preferable to decentralization in many branch libraries as now, but a rebuttal of this opinion brought spontaneous applause.

Chairman Hogg and Timekeeper Garrison kept the session under excellent control and the consensus was that the experiment had been eminently successful.

HOW COUNTDOWN GOT ITS NAME

Gretchen Hagen asked the question recently, and perhaps others have wondered too. Well, as one of our old graduate students, Olga Boshko, used to say, "The story is so:"

Many years ago when we first started the practice of having a mixed bag of items on our Wednesday afternoon effort (sometimes as many as ten) the Sputniks and the Vanguard's were a novelty and there were many jokes about the countdown. (e.g. the little son of a frustrated Vanguard technician who was asked if he could count to ten. "Sure! 10, 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1 - Hell! ") So, Dr. MacRae suggested that we should count down from the number of items and when we reached 1 the show was over. Hence "Countdown".

Papers Submitted in April

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| J.A. Roberts and G. Fahlman  | On the Pulsar Radiation Theory of CHIU, Canuto and Fassio-Canuto.      |
| R.C. Roeder  | On the Production of Q.S.O. Absorption Spectra in Friedmann Universes. |
| D. DuPuy, J. Schmitt, R. McClure, S. van den Bergh and Rene Racine | Optical Observations of BL LAC = WRO 42.22.01                          |

D. Hube: Places of Formation of Stars in the Galaxy.

### COMINGS AND GOINGS

Dr. MacRae made a quick trip to The Manned Spacecraft Centre, Houston, Texas on Mar. 31-Apr. 1 to attend another subcommittee meeting for the Universities' Space Research Association.

Dr. Helen Hogg went to Ottawa on April 8 to be invested in the Medal of the Order of Canada which she received from the Governor-General. On the 10th she left for a ten-day spring holiday at her Dunstable Mass. home.

Dr. and Mrs. Heard are spending ten days with their daughter, Dr. Judy Cutler, and her family in Powell River, B.C. They will also visit Victoria and return home after the UBC meeting of the National Committee for the I.A.U. on May 2-3.

Dr. Garrison is in Pasadena for an observing session with the 100-inch telescope. He will attend the National Committee meeting in Vancouver on his way home.

Dr. and Mrs. Schmitt and Catherine are spending ten days at John's parents' home in Escanaba, Mich.

### Seminars

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Seminars in April were held as scheduled. For May 14 and 15 Dr. Anand had invited Dr. Armin Deutsch, but he is recovering from a mild heart attack suffered earlier in the year and has been advised not to make the trip.

May 21 Countdown D.D.O.	}	Dr. Roeder, "Absorption Spectra of Quasi-Stellar Objects".
		Dr. Jeffers, "Trends in Astronomical Instrumentation".
May 28th U. of T. Room 137	}	D. DuPuy, "Non-thermal Optical Radiation in Galaxies"
		T. Barnes, to be announced.

### COMING EVENTS

Readers are again reminded of the following events:

The meeting of the National Committee for Canada of the I.A.U. at U.B.C. on May 2-3, Scientific sessions are open to all. They are in the Hennings (Physics) Building, Room 201:

May 2 11 a.m. Dr. Margaret Burbidge on "The Spectra of Quasars"

2 p.m. Session for papers.

May 3 9 a.m. Session for papers.

Social events include: May 2 8 p.m. Dinner, Faculty Club  
May 4 Visit to D.A.O.

The General Assembly of the R.A.S.C. will be held in Toronto May 17 - 19. Some of the events will necessarily be restricted to registered delegates, but the Department is being host to the delegates on Sunday evening in the Tower and Monday morning at the Observatory. Dr. MacRae would be pleased to have members of staff and graduate students attend these events as hosts.

The June Institute is on June 10-13. The program has been circulated. More details will be given in the May Doings.

#### MISCELLANEOUS

##### Alumni

Bob McClure (Ph.D. 1967) has been appointed Assistant Professor at Yale University. Bob is leaving Kitt Peak in June.

Judith L. Pipher, author of two papers in the February Ap.J. is the former Judy Bancroft (B.A. 1962).

##### Married

Walter Gorza was married in Toronto on April 12 to Nancy Gramarossa.

TO BE MARRIED : Raymonde Verreault is to be married on May 3rd in Quebec to Dr. Geo. Chimonas.

##### Born:

To Anson and Joyce Moorhouse at Newmarket Hospital on April 26th, 1969, a son, Douglas Mark.

##### Canadian Surveys

Dr. Roeder in his capacity of Member for Canada for I.A.U. Commission 46 is making a Canadian survey of education in astronomy at the primary, secondary and post-secondary levels.

Dr. Fernie as a member of a subcommittee of the National Committee of the I.A.U. is writing a report on the replies to a questionnaire regarding the advisability of forming a Canadian Professional Astronomical Society.