



RIDICULOUS

January-February 1992

NEWSLETTER OF THE KINGSTONE CENTRE
THE ROYAL ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY OF CANADA

OFFICERS

HONORARY PREZIDENT.....	Levi Strauss
PREZIDENT.....	Saddam Levstein
VICE PREZIDENT.....	Leo
SECRETARY.....	Kim Hey!
TREASURER.....	James T. Kirk
LIBRARIAN.....	Dave Stokeline
NEWSLETTER.....	Bill Fodder Truck
NATIONAL COUNCIL REP.....	Old MacDonald
ALTERNATE.....	Saddam Levstein
ASTRONOMY DAY COORDINATORS.....	Stanna Bananna

UPCOMING MEETINGS AND EVENTS

Regular meetings of the **Kingstone Centre, RASC** are held on the Second Fryday of each month at **8 p.m.**, in **Room D-999, MacIntosh Computer Hall, Queen's Universal**. **Irregular meetings** are held elsewhere. Non-members are welcome to join. Executive meetings are at the decree of the Prezident for Life.

Fri., March 13	Regular Meeting	BS Tauri: A New Class of Variable Star?
Fri., April 8	Regular Meeting	TBA
Fri., May 10	Cancelled	GST
Fri., June 12	Regular Meeting	TBA

IN THIS ISSUE

	<u>Page</u>
Prezident's Rapport.....	2
Communicating With the Newsletter.....	2
A New Technique for Observing Mars.....	3
Messier Certificate Awarded.....	4
Greetings From the West.....	4
New Members Welcome.....	4
Peanutz.....	4
Canadian Astronomer in Disgrace.....	5
The Celestial Observer.....	5
New Products in Astronomy.....	6
Mother Goose and Grimm.....	6

Prezident's Report

As my year as prezident of the Kingstone Centre draws to a close, I would like to ~~brainwash~~ share a few thoughts with the members.

The year began with a bit of a step backwards as Brian Mulroneu decided to unleash the worst tax in memory, causing a cancellation of the January meeting in order to balance the Centre budget. By February, heads were rolling nicely and I began to feel quite comfortable in my new role as Prezident-For-Life.

My favourite part of our meetings is listening to the ~~ramblings~~ observing notes and finding out what wasn't going on in the lives of our members. I find that the most difficult part of the job is putting together a schedule of programs for each month. To this end, I must thank Dry Martini, who right after my ascension force-fed me suggestions for pogroms. I thought this was most appropriate since we were holding our monthly post-meeting meetings at Harvey's.

For those of you who are interested in music or who went to Baja for the eclipse: Did you know that "Montezuma's Overture" by Mustav BeenTheWater, that everyone raves so much about, and tries to avoid on solar eclipse expeditions, had nothing whatsoever to do with Astronomy, other than the names of the seventeen movements?

Finally, I would like to think that my efforts in getting students interested in Star Trek have not been in vain and that in future even more young people will join our Centre, or at least a Star Trek fan club at their local school. I cannot stress more strongly the need to get youngsters interested in Star Trek. Our future as a viable, vital, and growing organization, as it has been so often pointed out, lies with The Next Generation.

I look forward to a continued dictatorship with the RASC Kingston Centre.

Gloriously submitted,

Saddam Levstein.

Communicating With the Newsletter

This is rather difficult as the newsletter is not a living entity (though it is made from once-living material). As always, we invite your comments and observations, just as our Prezident-For-Life invites your submission. Please send any communication intended for the newsletter to the editor. Letter-bombs should be sent to the Prezident-For-Life.

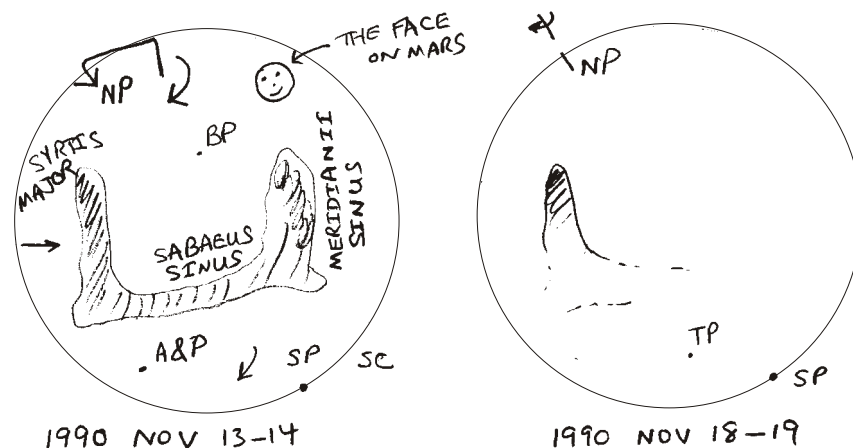
A New Technique for Observing Mars

by Leo

Being an avid observer of all of Mars' oppositions over the last 10 years, I was often frustrated by the tendency for desert storms to obscure surface details on Mars. A friend of mine in Kuwait has told me of one desert storm in 1990 and 1991 that totally ruined his observing for many months. Only now with Mars out of opposition are things slowly beginning to clear. All in all it was the most spectacular desert storm since Mariner 9 arrived at Mars in 1971 only to find the entire planet enshrouded and quite featureless.

It was during a desert storm during November of 1990 that I stumbled on a revolutionary new technique for observing Mars. Shown below is a drawing on 1990 Nov 13-14 00:30 UT.

Everything is clear and fine. By Nov 18-19 at 06:40 UT things had changed however: a desert storm was obscuring most of Mars (see sketches below).



Just as I was completing the Nov 18-19 drawing, I accidentally sprayed some Dristan mist all over my eyepiece as I was preparing to relieve myself of my cold symptoms. Since I had no tissues with me, I left the eyepiece as it was, injected myself olfactorially, and continued observing. What I saw left me speechless [!! -Ed]: Mars was extensively and crisply detailed, just as it appeared in the first sketch. In particular, all of its Sinus passages (like my own) had been miraculously cleared up! Only Syrtis Major remained obscured. As I watched over the next several minutes, Mars gradually resumed its featureless appearance. Incredible! Dristan Mist can be used to enhance planetary observing!

Eager to test my discovery, I leaned closer to the eyepiece, closer even than the eye relief of the ocular required. I held up the bottle of Dristan mist and squeezed. The sinuses on Mars instantly cleared up. All trace of the clearing effect disappeared within 5 minutes 28 seconds. I have since determined that Dristan 12 Hour mist increases

the duration of clearing by a factor of 2.239384672 and that the quantity of Dristan required is directly proportional to the aperture of the instrument in use. I am now re-working my previous paper on solar k-value theory to include this Dristan Effect.

In conclusion, I have discovered that Dristan Mist can be successfully used to enhance detail in planetary observation, particularly with regard to the Martian sinus areas.

Messier Certificate Awarded

Stanna Banana was awarded a Messier Certificate after spilling coffee and donuts all over the Kingstone Centre Executive. Way to go Stan!!!

Greetings from the West

Greetings to all of you.

Here's my fee for 1992. Many thanks for Ridiculous. I like the format and the articles, especially all the editor's writings. Astro Fumbles are also a great idea. Compliments to Bill Fodder Truck for a very fine publication.

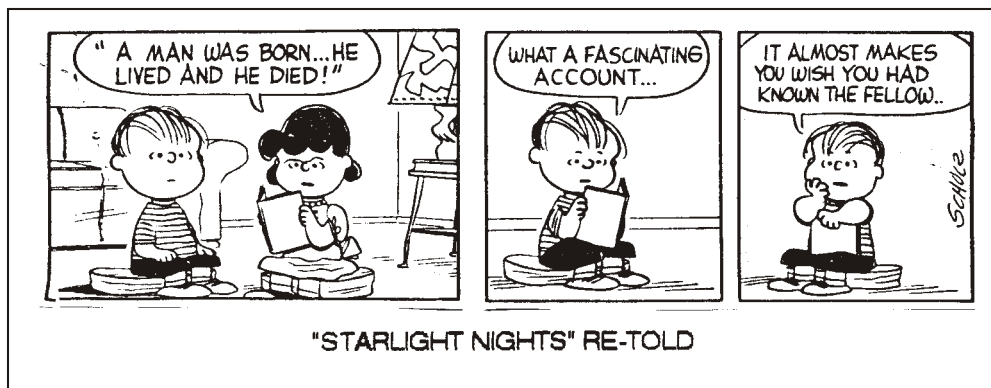
- Olga Fodder Truck

Good to hear from you again Mom. Many thanks for the kind comments regarding Ridiculous. Your cheque is in the mail.

New Members Welcome

A word of welcome to the new members who have joined the Kingstone Centre in the last little while: Col. Scwartzkoff, S. Hussein, M. Gorbechev, Sal Amanders.

PEANUTZ



Canadian Astronomer in Disgrace

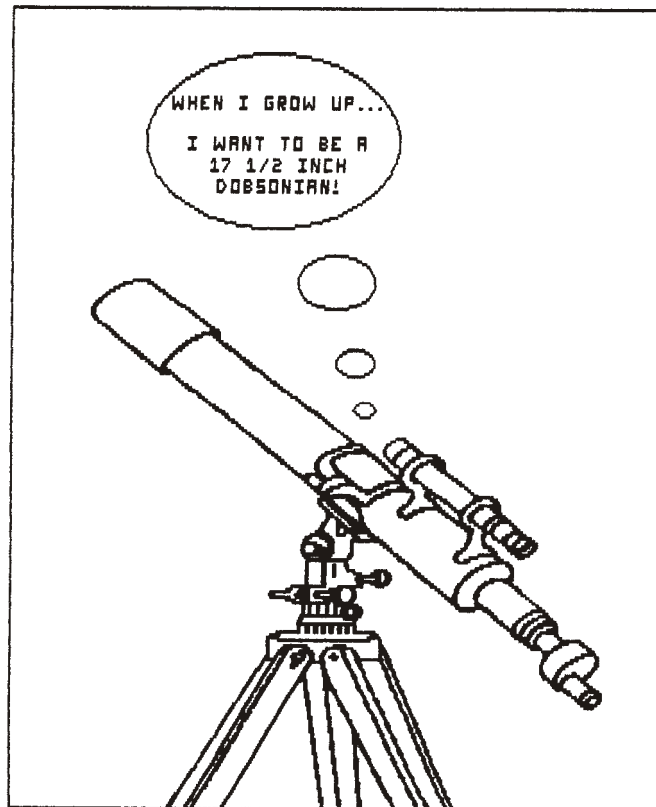
A severe blow was dealt to the Canadian Astronomical community in January when Kingstone Centre Honourary Prezident Levi Strauss tested positive for parabolic steroids. Levi, who has discovered 12 comets, has been banned from comet hunting for two years and will be stripped of his discoveries. Parabolic steroids artificially enhance the ability of the user to find solar system objects, especially those in parabolic orbits.

Levi's comet hunting career began in the late 1960s but he didn't meet with success until 1984. Since then he has discovered comets at an astonishing rate. Over the last few years Levi has been the target of allegations of steroid use by other comet hunters. Says William Liller, "Here's a guy who can't find a comet for 20 years and then finds 12 in 7 years. That should have been a dead giveaway."

Steroid use is believed to be rampant at many Astronomical institutions. An IAU commission into steroid use in Astronomy has been set up. It will conduct hearings around the world and report back to the IAU in September.

In his own defence, Levi says "I'm not the only one! Look at [Robert] Evans -- he lives on steroids!"

THE CELESTIAL OBSERVER



WHEN TELESCOPES DREAM...

NEW PRODUCTS IN ASTRONOMY

New Filters From Lunicom

Filter technology continues to advance as evidenced by the recent release of two new filters from Lunicom that promise to revolutionize Astronomy...

Cloud Rejection Filter: Available in 6", 8", 11", 14", and 17E" sizes, the CRF simply fits over the front end of the telescope. With the CRF in place you will not see any clouds. Unfortunately this filter reduces the intensity of radiation entering the telescope by 100%, so it is not suitable for photography.

Horizon Rejection Filter: Can't afford that trip to the Southern Hemisphere? Try the HRF. This electronic filter module fits to any telescope that accepts a standard T-adaptor. Simply attach and point your telescope below horizon level. Also sees through clouds! Unfortunately the HRF is only sensitive to neutrinos, so it is not suitable for visual or solar observation. For best results, locate your telescope a kilometer or two below ground level.

Astronomy Day Photo Kit for Telescopes

Ever been clouded out on Astronomy Day -- and with hundreds of people lined up at your telescope expecting to see something anyway? This problem has been solved forever with the new OmniVision Photo Kit from Preceptor (Scumberg, Ont). Each kit contains 10 photos of various astronomical objects specially shaped to fit over the corrector plate of your telescope. Each photo is printed on extra-thin paper to allow illumination from the typical ambient light levels found in most shopping malls. This even works at night! Order today, as these are bound to go fast!

Mother Goose and Grimm

