

"Eye on
the
Sky"

JANUARY 1982
Editor:
Scott Ramsay



The Durham Region Astronomical Society

The DRAS is an organization designed to bring together people 13 & up who are interested in astronomy whether they be serious amateurs or novices to this exciting hobby.

We hold regular meetings (see below) which consist of talks and slides given by our members. We also review upcoming astronomical events.

Our objectives include the construction of an observatory and a large telescope, public displays and public star nights on Astronomy Day, a cable TV show, and a regular newspaper column.

If you have any questions or suggestions, contact:
Walter MacDonald 579-6615 (9:30-11 p.m. Mon-Thurs)
Scott Ramsay 728-6461 (9:30-11 p.m. Mon-Thurs)
Better yet, come out to one of our meetings!

CURRENT EVENTS IN ASTRONOMY

Some excellent reading can be found at Oshawa Public Library in SKY & TELESCOPE (in the periodical section).

An excellent sky guide for the year can also be found: The 1982 OBSERVER'S HANDBOOK (in the reference section) gives monthly summaries of the planets, moon, sun, and stars, and much, much more. Widely used throughout North America, the Observer's Handbook is excellent for both naked eye observers and telescopists alike.

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN 1982

Meteor Showers:

Lyrids....April 22	Orionids..October 21
Aquarids..May 4, July 28	Geminids..December 14
Perseids..August 12	Ursids....December 22

The Perseids and Geminids produce the most meteors: up to 50 per person per hour! The Perseids are much better observed because of warm August nights.

In 1982 we will enjoy two total eclipses of the moon! The first, on July 6, will start shortly before midnight but the last part will be missed when the moon sets. The second, on December 30, will start shortly after 3am. Don't forget to dress warmly!
On November 19 at 4pm the moon will pass in front of Mars. This is known as an occultation and should be exciting.

Newsletter of: THE DURHAM REGION ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY

UPCOMING MEETINGS

Saturday, January 30. All meetings
Saturday, February 13. Begin at 8:15
Saturday, February 28.

Meetings are held at 759 Glencairn St,
Oshawa (near the airport).

For more information contact Walter
MacDonald at 579-6615.

HOW WIDESPREAD IS ASTRONOMY?

From the December 1981 issue of Astronomy here are some highlights of the Astronomical League Light Pollution Committee's report on amateur astronomy in North America:

"American and Canadian amateur astronomers today own \$56 million worth of 'scopes that pack a total light-gathering power equal to 68 Mt. Palomars. Last year they added more equipment to this arsenal than could be bought by

triple the budget of Kitt Peak Observatory..." "Interest in astronomy as a hobby is widespread. An estimated 185 000 active non-professionals are among at least 400 000 who, the survey estimated have "some interest" in the hobby. A recent university estimate, for example, put the number who have taken elective courses at about 200 000 people."

"In the 2 countries there are 20 000 active amateurs organized in more than 400 local astronomy societies and clubs. About 60% of these are affiliated with national or regional groups such as societies and clubs. About 60% of these are affiliated with national or regional groups such as the [American Astronomical] League or the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada."

"The total US annual market for imported and domestic instruments may be more than 40 000 units, including at least 15 000 produced [in the US]..." "Amateur astronomers make significant contributions to the science. Probably 500 observers provide data to 6 specialized societies which, in turn, make it available to professional astronomers and researchers." "The study also mentioned the **cult** cultural benefits of this popular science and the costs of continued degrading of the quality of the dark sky. The report cited a US Environmental Protection Agency study of the daytime sky which stated:"Decreasing visibility of the sky creates aesthetic and psychological costs, loss of property values, loss of tourist revenues in scenic areas and general citizen dissatisfaction."

For a copy of the summary report send a stamped self-addressed envelope to:
Astronomical League Survey, 329 South Front St., Harrisburg, PA 17104

COUNCIL OF THE DURHAM REGION ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY

President: *Walter MacDonald*
Vice-President: *Steve Chomniak*

Secretary: *Scott Ramsay*
Treasurer: *Mirko Moenic*