THE NEWSLETTER OF THE

ROYAL ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY OF CANADA - KINGSTON CENTRE

AND THE

QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY ASTRONOMY CLUB

SEPTEMBER 1, 1978

The Unnatural Laws Of Summertime

Observing

Most of us surely have heard of Murphy's Law, Allan's Axiom, or Etoffe's Observation, but how many of us have heard of the Unnatural Laws Of Summertime Observation. Here, with tongue in cheek, is a presentation of these laws and axioms:

LAW 1. The number of mosquitoes at the observing site varies inversely as the speed of the wind.

2. The number of carnivorous mosquitoes is greater than the number of vegetarian ones by a ratio of 10,000 to 1.

3. The noise of the mosquitoes varies directly as the cube of the number of carnivorous mosquitoes.

4. The number of mosquitoes varies directly as the number of days you have waited patiently for a clear night.

5. The number of mosquitoes varies directly as the amount of astrophotography carefully planned for that night.

6. The number of large mosquito bites varies directly as the square root of the number of mosquitoes within one kilometer of the site.

7. The number of mosquitoes varies inversely as the amount of light pollution at the site.

8. The number of mosquitoes varies directly as the seeing conditions and lack of atmospheric turbulence.

9. (a) There are fewer mosquitoes over on the next hill.
   (b) However, the next hill is a poor observing site, and inaccessible, besides.

10. (a) While you are changing an eyepiece on a Schmidt-Cassegrain telescope, three mosquitoes will try to get inside the telescope.

(b) While you are doing the same operation on a Newtonian telescope, the mosquitoes will ignore the telescope.

11. 52 1/2% of the mosquitoes at the observing site will ignore the strong smell of the insect repellent.

12. The insect repellent will be a 50% greater nuisance to the observer(s) than to the mosquitoes.

13. 14% of the carnivorous mosquitoes will place at least one large bite on each observer.

14. In the game called "Surrender Before Midnight" the mosquitoes will win 82% of the time.

15. (a) The mosquitoes will not leave until the clouds move in.
    (b) If the clouds do not move in, the mosquitoes will not leave until the observer is thoroughly frustrated and has hit at least two pieces of equipment while swinging at them.
    (c) If neither of the above has happened, the mosquitoes will not leave until one hour after sunrise.

16. 45 gallons of insect repellant will guarantee reasonably comfortable observing for 2 1/2 nights.

17. Insect repellant will neutralize a mosquito if you can drown him in it. (So will H_2O.)

If over a period of observing you have come up with some laws of observing and wish to share them for the benefit of fellow-observers, please write and tell me. State the law succinctly, precisely, and mathematically, and tell me the conditions under which you discovered it. Also please inform me if you know where insect repellant can be bought by the gallon and what would be the price per 40-gallon drum.

P.S. Just in case you haven't heard (from the first sentence) here they are:
Murphy's Law: Anything that can go wrong will.
Allan's Axiom: If all else fails, read the directions.
Etoffe's Observation: The other line moves faster.

REMINDERS

Here are a few reminders about upcoming events:

(1) Early September presents us with a chance to see the planet Mercury. Look in the east before sunrise if you have a good eastern horizon for viewing.

(2) Among the planetary conjunctions to look for this month, I would suggest the Mercury-Saturn conjunction in the early morning of September 13th or 14th.

(3) You may watch the approach of the moon to the star Aldebaran in the early morning of September 22nd but do not count on photographing the occultation because of the sunrise.

(4) With a lot of planning and luck you might be able to see the planet Uranus pass between the two components of the star Zubenelgenubi on October 7th. This is an unusual event.

(5) Please remember the dates of our next two meetings as advertised in the last newsletter:

(1) Thursday September 7th - Room 222 - Ellis Hall
(2) Thursday September 21st - Room 222 - Ellis Hall

Clear skies! Good observing!

Leo.

Last minute (post-printing) news:
I saw a very unusual and absolutely fantastic Aurora between 12:45 and 1:20 a.m. E.D.T. on Wed. Aug. 30. It was the strangest I have ever seen. I may write more about it later or report it at a future meeting.
Did anyone else see or photograph it?

Leo.