



THE NEWSLETTER OF THE
ROYAL ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY OF CANADA - KINGSTON CENTRE



MAY, 1979

THE SUPERNOVA IN M100

Some members of our Centre may be aware of the recently observed supernova in M100. It was mentioned by David at our last meeting and I was pleased that David phoned me to tell me about it shortly after he heard about it. However, there may be others who have still not heard of this exciting discovery and I wish to pass on the information to them.

In late April in the large spiral galaxy called M100, a supernova was detected. For those who are unfamiliar with the term, a supernova is detected as a result of a spectacular outburst by a star in the later stages of its career - a massive explosion, occurring when the star's temperature has become extremely high and following which it throws off vast amounts of gaseous material. The supernova may appear as a star bright enough to rival the brightness of the entire galaxy in which it is found. Supernovae are known to have occurred in our own galaxy in the years 1054, 1572, and 1604.

Here is some information for those who wish to observe it. M100 is an open-armed spiral galaxy in the Coma cluster of galaxies. It may be 40 million light years away. It is in the southern part of the constellation Coma Berenices and its 1975 coordinates are: R.A.: 12h. 21.7m, Dec.; 15° 58'. The magnitude of the galaxy is 10.5 and the early estimates of the magnitude of the new supernova were in the 11th magnitude range. More information on the galaxy can be found in the Revised New General Catalogue on pages 200 and 201.

I hope that several members of our centre can see or photograph the supernova within the next month, if possible. Best of luck in obtaining a clear night!

THE NEW EXECUTIVE

The executive chosen for our centre for the coming year beginning September 1979 is actually little change from 1978-1979. Continuing as president is Denis Belanger, and as vice-president is Mike Payette. Enrico's office is divided for the coming year. Enrico Kindl is Treasurer and Angelika Kahrkling is secretary. I (Leo Enright) continue as your newsletter editor.

A hearty welcome to the Executive to Angelika!

FOR YOUR COMPENDIUM OF ESOTERIC FACTS

Add these two facts to your list of information.

Firstly, you may know of the Harvest Moon and the Hunter's Moon, the names of the full moons occurring in the fall but do you know the name of the full moon of this month, May? May's full moon is called either the Planting Moon or the Milk Moon.

Secondly, you may be astounded at the magnitude of star that can actually be seen with the naked eye. Do you know that without using optics it is possible to see stars of magnitude 8.6? (That's right; that's over 3 1/2 magnitudes fainter than seen under normal conditions.) With average dark-sky conditions a person can see down to 5th magnitude, and under superb conditions one can see to 6th magnitude, even 6.5, and perhaps occasionally even beyond that in some places on the earth's surface. However, by merely viewing through a hollow blackened tube the limiting magnitude for visibility may be increased to 8.6, an astonishing increase without the use of any optical glass. ("Naked-eye" viewing of the Whirlpool Nebula? Don't say it's impossible!)

REPORTS AND REMINDERS

1. On the evening of May 5th, I saw at least 5 very large sunspots - 4 in one remarkable group near one limb? Did anyone else see or photograph the group? (Incidentally I 'set up' equipment that evening hoping to see the supernova and hoping that the moon would still be far enough away from that abject of interest to let me see it. However, after sunset the weather was non-cooperative. The heavy, cloudy haze was such that I could see the moon, first-magnitude stars, and sometimes Saturn!! Hope we have better weather in the latter part of the month!)
2. Two of the dates I suggested in the February newsletter for our occultation observing program have passed without any successfully recorded observations of the events by members of our centre (at least to my knowledge.) The weather on both occasions was just not very cooperative. Please refer back to the February newsletter and try to keep the June 7th date in mind.
3. Did you see the coverage given to the eclipse in the April issue of Life magazine? Whether you agree with the rotation of eclipse pictures or not, you may still find the coverage interesting and the landscape views of totality fascinating.
4. I have not exactly been swamped by letters for a "write-in" or "letters" column for this newsletter. Remember the suggestion mentioned in the last newsletter.
5. I hope to see many of you at the Annual Assembly of the R.A.S.C. in London, May 18th to 21st. Let's give our centre a good representation. Don't miss David's slide presentation on Friday evening.
6. Remember the date of the next meeting has been moved up two days from May 17th to Tuesday May 15th (The change of date applies to this one meeting only.)

Good observing!



Membership Directory: This is it, guys, your list of who's who and where in the Kingston Centre. Hang it on the wall, stick it to the 'fridge, drape it over your bedpost, but keep it handy for those times when you might really need it.

Life Members

Baker, Douglas; 895 Purdy's Mill Road, Kingston, Ontario;
K7M 3N1; 549-4379

Covington, A. E.; 269 Pleasant Park Road; Ottawa, Ontario
(Ottawa Centre); K1M 5M7

Enright, Leo; P. O. Box 196; Sharbot Lake, Ontario

Levy, David; 19 Manitou Crescent, Apt. 1; Kingston, Ontario;
K7N 1B7; 389-4615

Honorary Life Member

Douglas, A. Vibert; 67 Sydenham Street, Apt #402; Kingston.
Ontario; K7L 3E2

Adult Members

Belanger, Denis; 194 Sydenham Street, Apt. 3; Kingston,
Ontario; 542-8867

Brown, Paul; 719 Harris Place; Varsity Courts; Calgary,
Alberta; T3B 2V4

Dufresne, Richard; 15 Glenarden Place; Kingston, Ontario

Kennedy, Michael; #8 Squadron; Royal Military College;
Kingston, Ontario

Mason, John B.; RR#3; Brockville, Ontario; K6V 5T3

Payette, Michel; 131 Charles Street, Apt. #2; Kingston,
Ontario; K7K 1V8; 546-1059

Roberts, Leslie G.; 203 Phillips Street; Kingston, Ontario;
K7M 2Z9

Schell Roger; 21 Sandy Drive; Morrisville, Pennsylvania;
19067; USA

Sergeant, Christopher; 325 Main Road; Hudson, Quebec; J0P 1H0

Wailer1 Ted; 895 Pembroke Cres., Kingston, Ont., K7M 6C6

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Student Members

Fret, Jeff ; 69 Kingscourt; Kingston, Ontario; K7K 4N8

Kindi, Enrico; 315 MacMahon Avenue; Kingston, Ontario;
K7M 3H7; 544-4317

Assoc. Members

Kahrkling, Angelika; 800 Castell Road, Apt 317; Kingston,
Ontario

Payette, Lyte; 131 Charles Street, Apt. #2 Kingston, Ontario;
K7K 1V8; 546-1059

Spersrud, Jan; 32 Gibson Avenue; Kingston, Ontario; K7L 4K2