

THE ROYAL ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY OF CANADA

COMET AND NOVA SECTION

Bulletin No. 6

Starting with this bulletin, the National Office will be printing and mailing the bulletins for all observing sections with the intention that these will be issued at regular intervals, will help reduce the expenses of the National Co-ordinators, and will receive wider circulation. This is an appropriate time to acquaint you with our programme and to summarize the work done to date.

Our purpose is to have members make systematic searches for Comets and Novae and to observe these objects when they appear. Little or no optical equipment is required. Some members make naked-eye searches of the dome, others search selected areas of the sky regularly with binoculars, and a few members search small areas with telescopes or by photography. Instruction and report forms are supplied to members on request. A record of searches may become important when an object is later discovered and it is desirable to determine the time that the object first appeared.

At present, members of four Centres (Hamilton, Niagara Falls, Montreal and Victoria) and several members unattached to Centres are making regular searches. Observations of Comets and one Nova were reported by members of three Centres (Niagara Falls, Montreal and Quebec) during 1964.

If your Centre is not participating in the activities of the Comet and Nova Section, the Co-ordinator invites you to consider this possibility in the near future. If only one or two members of a Centre start on this programme, across Canada the total should result in much being accomplished during the next few years. If you are interested, please reply to the undersigned, who will be pleased to forward detailed instruction and report forms. Centres are requested to make this programme known to their members. When more than one person in a Centre is interested, appointment of one person as a contact is recommended.

Periodic Comet DeVice-Swift (1678, 1844I, 1894IV)

Although this comet is not expected to become brighter than eleventh magnitude, it will be very well placed for observation for several months, being in opposition on October 15 and nearest the earth on September 30. The following ephemeris was taken from the I.A.U. Circular 1911 (June 18) and it differs from the B.A.A. Handbook ephemeris by as much as ten degrees. Every effort should be made to recover this comet because a very close approach to Jupiter in 1968 will increase the period considerably.

| <u>Date 1965</u> | <u>R.A.(1950)</u> | | <u>Dec.</u> | | <u>Mag.</u> |
|------------------|-------------------|-----------|-------------|----------|-------------|
| | <u>h.</u> | <u>m.</u> | <u>o</u> | <u>'</u> | |
| July 29 | 00 | 47.0 | -00 | 05 | |
| Aug. 8 | 01 | 01.9 | +01 | 39 | 11.8 |
| 18 | 01 | 14.1 | +03 | 11 | |
| 28 | 01 | 23.0 | +04 | 30 | 11.5 |
| Sept. 7 | 01 | 28.1 | +05 | 34 | |
| 17 | 01 | 29.4 | +06 | 23 | 11.4 |
| 27 | 01 | 27.1 | +06 | 59 | |
| Oct. 7 | 01 | 22.4 | +07 | 24 | 11.5 |
| 17 | 01 | 16.8 | +07 | 44 | |
| 27 | 01 | 12.1 | +08 | 04 | 11.9 |
| Nov. 6 | 01 | 09.4 | +08 | 30 | |

Predicting magnitudes for comets is difficult; observers should expect the actual brightness to be somewhat fainter. This comet should, however, be visible in six-inch or larger telescopes.

Summary of searches reported during 1964:

The following thirteen members made a total of 2,222 searches last year - Mrs. E.E. Bridgen, (Vic) 115; Miss Ella Dack (M) 28; Reginald Gallant, 155; David Levy (M) 102; Justin T. Long (M) 228; Jim Low (M) 29; H.N.A. Maclean (NF) 400; George W. Rippen (M) 298; Norman Sylvester (Ham) 400; Alan D. Whitman (Hfx) 48; Vic Williams (M) 285; Miss I.K. Williamson (M) 65; Mrs. K. Zorgo (M) 69.

Suggested Reading:

Many observers are interested in learning more, through reading, about Comets and Novae, hence a policy of including a section on suggested reading in some of the Bulletins is being introduced. The following is a list of some interesting articles on Comets and Novae published in the R.A.S.C. JOURNAL and in SKY AND TELESCOPE during the past few years.

From: the JOURNAL of The Royal Astronomical Society of Canada:

1. Comet Arend-Roland, Editors, August 1957, p. 246.
2. Observations of Comet Mrkos in Northern Alberta, Ian Halliday, December 1957, p. 323.
3. Comet and Nova Section, Jim Low, August 1963, p. 153.

From: SKY AND TELESCOPE:

1. Comet Hunting for Amateurs, January 1962, p.10.
2. Comet Humason 1961e, September 1962, p.124; October 1962, p.216; December 1962, p.336.
3. Rambling Through November Skies (on Novae), November 1962, p.307.
4. Nova Hercules 1963, April 1963, p.206.
5. Comet Ikeya 1963a, April 1963, p.196; May 1963, p.263, p.278.
6. Comets, I, January 1964, p.22; II, May 1964, p.283.

Jim Low, National Co-ordinator,
Comet and Nova Section,
Standing Committee on Observational
Activities,
108 Roy Avenue, Apt.102,
Dorval, Quebec