

STAR GAZING

On occasion many people must have the uneasy feeling that perhaps it would be appropriate to know something of the Universe, and furthermore, that such an undertaking might be enjoyable. At this point the question arises: Where do I begin? Should I go to the library to look for a book on astronomy? Doesn't one need a telescope?

The first point to be emphasized is that if you really want to become familiar with the night sky, you have to do most of it on your own. Initially progress will be slow and mistakes will be made; but only through this groping do techniques and knowledge really sink in. Guided tours of the heavens are pleasant social affairs; however, the lesson seldom sticks, and one is being cheated out of the much more meaningful experience of discovering the Universe in a personal way.

A telescope is not necessary, in fact, it is not even desirable. One should first become familiar with the large scale features of the night sky, and this is best done with the unaided eyes over a period of many weeks or even months. Only after you know your way around, should you consider some optical aid such as binoculars or a small telescope. (Incidentally, telescopes usually sold at Eaton's or Simpson's, or hobby shops are not suitable for astronomical use.

Books provide an excellent way to get started. The information is readily available, and yet you have the pleasure and education of digging it out yourself. Below are three recommendations. The first is an excellent book for the beginner. It is attractive, easy to read, and well laid out as an introduction to the night sky. Anyone from 9 to 90 would enjoy it. The second contains much information on astronomical events for the current year. It is not suitable for the beginner. The third is a monthly magazine. Although not designed to introduce one to the sky, once one has some knowledge of astronomy, it is very interesting to read. Each issue contains star maps, an account of current astronomical events, articles, and advertisements from book publishers and telescope manufacturers.

Guideposts to the Stars
L. C. Peltier (About \$6.00)
Collier-Macmillan Canada Ltd.
1972

The Observer's Handbook
Royal Astronomical Society of Canada
252 College Street
Toronto, Ontario M5T 1R7

Sky and Telescope
Sky Publishing Corp.
49-50-51 Bay State Road
Cambridge, MA 02138
U.S.A.

- Adapted by: Kathy Martin

From: Blomidon Naturalists
Society Newsletter
March, 1975

CANADIAN NATURE FEDERATION ANNUAL MEETING

During mid-June, the 1975 annual meeting of the Canadian Nature Federation was held in Victoria, British Columbia. At least three members from the Natural History Society of Prince Edward Island attended.

The main subject of the board meetings was the financial crisis the federation has found itself in. In July all of you who belong to the Canadian Nature Federation received a letter requesting an immediate donation. I would urge all of you who did not contribute to do so at once. The Canadian Nature Federation is the most creditable voice for