



# THE NOVAC CORONA

to observe and to  
help others observe

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## THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE NORTHERN VIRGINIA ASTRONOMY CLUB

Issue No. 10

Volume 6

August 1986

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Treasurer. John Huggins 644-4331

Secretary. Blaine Korcel 256-4430 *EDITOR*

### CALENDAR

Call 644-4331 for details

August 1 and 2.....Stellafane  
August 5.....MEETING AT GEORGE MASON REGIONAL LIBRARY 7:00PM  
August 9.....Manassas Observation at sunset  
August 23.....Astronomical Orientation Session  
September 5.....Manassas Observation at sunset  
September 12.....Astronomical Orientation Session  
September 27.....Astronomical Orientation Session  
October 3.....Rescheduled Manassas observing session at sunset  
November 1.....Rescheduled Manassas observing session at sunset

## NOTES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Thomas

Hum. Let's see. The fishing is slow, hunting season is two months away. Oh yes, astronomy. It's 90°+, hazy, and muggy. So much for transparent skies. It's the usual "Canis Major" days of summer folks. (Sorry for the astronomical corruption.) Other than visiting the skunks at Big Meadows, nothing astronomical has taken place since BLTM. However, we do have a meeting (1st week of August) coming up. The July meeting was postponed to August so that Todd Prydybasz, Blaine Korcel, and Joe Macrie could give a slide show of their trip to Stellafane.

Also we have two corrections to the observing schedule. October 9 has become October 3 and October 31 has been moved to November 1.

So much for the President's column. Here's to the end of your summer. ■

## EDITORIAL

Korcel

A new feature appears in this issue. It is called Lookin' Up. I hope it will encourage people to go out and try to locate deep sky objects regularly.

Also, we are starting a new observing program in addition to our regular Manassas observing. This new program is an astronomical orientation session dedicated solely for those "novices" who wish to build their observing and telescope operating skills. The article within gives further details. I hope it will be a successful and rewarding program for everyone.

It was brought to our attention that we had an observation scheduled on October 9 this year. This happens to be a Thursday! Therefore, please mark on your calendar that our October observation is rescheduled for Friday, October 3.

To facilitate the haunting of our little neighborhood gremlins, our October 31 observation is being moved up to November 1; one day closer to new moon! Again, please make notes of these changes on your calendar.

Our last newsletter was mailed in a different manner from all of the previous ones. This time I did not receive from the post office any undeliverable mail in plastic bags. If your last newsletter, or this one for that matter, was damaged in any way, please let me know. Your feedback will allow us to refine our mailing methods such that your newsletter will arrive at your door in its entirety. Sometimes the postal service gets a little carried away!

I had too many complaints last month about our 17 characters per inch (cpi) type size. Therefore, you will be pleased to know that we are returning to the larger 12 cpi type size. Our change of format was a result of minimizing publishing costs by reducing weight. Thanks for your feedback! ■

## TREASURER'S REPORT

Huggins

As of July 1 we have \$421.46 in the bank. Recent purchases include many stamps, mailing labels, and "zeroxing" for the newsletter. We got the club scope a much needed finderscope and our library has increased by three books via the Astronomy Book Club.

I would like to take the time to welcome all those who have recently joined the club.

Jaime Castillo  
Bruce Smoller  
Katherine Sprague  
Pam Roch  
Mary Ward

Robert Ridgley  
Minnie Gallman  
Lynne Gilliland  
Andrew Friedman  
Jerry Ewing

Welcome to the organization. I hope it accomplishes the tasks you ask of it.

For those members who have not paid their dues for January, 1986, you will be receiving a notice in the mail. ■

## ITEMS FOR SALE

Minolta Hi-matic 11 35mm manual range finder camera with electronic metering and a 45mm f/1.7 lens and Vista auto 30B electronic flash. This camera is in excellent condition and produces very sharp images. The camera uses a leaf shutter for flash speeds up to 1/500 second, shutter priority. No manuals. Contact Blaine at 256-4430 if you're interested - \$50.00. ■

## BURKE LAKE TELESCOPE MEET

Huggins

This years BLTM was the most successful ever. The sky cleared off for one of the nights. This has never happened in the history of BLTM. The two gentlemen from Fredricksburg stole the show with their "Sky Car." This thing allowed the user to sit in relative comfort while motors aimed you and the mounted binoculars at the same time. This machine was truly inspiring. I am now writing an article that will hopefully get published in one of the astronomy magazines.

Hats off to Nils. He did a terrific job with the club slide show on Friday night. He was able to explain the problems we had with great ease.

Appreciation goes to Steve Smith for giving the public slide show. If you remember, we got cheated out of the Amphitheater on Saturday night. Steve was able to acquire the icecream parlor to take its place. I was very happy to see that when I got there that the problem was solved as soon as it appeared. I am complaining heavily to the park people for letting this happen. We did have signed documents saying that we had the Amphitheater for that night. Oh well! As far as I am concerned the park owes us a favor; let's see what I come up with.

I would like to thank all that came to this event. Every year it gets better. Your efforts are greatly appreciated. ■

## LOOKIN' UP!

Korcel

Al Boldt and myself did some deep sky "challenge" observing a while ago. Some are challenging, some are not. Anyway, I would like to share our finds with you with the hopes that you will try them yourself.

The constellation of Hercules contains one interesting object, other than M-13, that is often overlooked. This is NGC-6207. It lies less than one half of a degree north of M-13 at RA 16 42.2, DEC 36 53. You can find it on page 8 of Tirion's Sky Atlas 2000. It shines at magnitude 12.5 and is easily visible in my 8" f/6. 6207 is somewhat edge on and appears small and bright even at magnitude 12.5.

We found the elusive M-101 in Ursa Major right away with the 50mm Plossle and "resolved" M-82 in Canes Venatici with my 4.8mm Nagler and in turn M-13 with Al's 7mm Nagler. By now we were on a roll and hit M-97 in Ursa Major. We tried every Light Pollution filter in the book but could not resolve the "Eye of the Owl."

The next night, we started out with NGC-4565 in Coma Berenices. This was very prominent. Magnification helped "resolve" this one. The dark dust lanes were not visible with the 7mm Nagler but faintly appeared with the 4.8mm.

Al suggested locating NGC-6543 in Draco. This one was tricky however easy to find. It appears on Tirion map 3 at RA 17 58.6, DEC 66 38. It shines at magnitude 9. Dreyer describes it as a very small bright planetary that brightens suddenly towards the middle with a very small nucleus. His description is quite accurate yet under high power, (263X) with the 4.8mm Nagler, the planetary appears to become granular. This may or may not be an effect due to the high magnification. However, it is interesting to note that M-57 in Lyra under the same magnification did not appear granular.

The planetary is just discernible from a star at 50X. Small indeed but what planetary isn't?

Next on our list was NGC-6946. This one proved quite a challenge again! This galaxy is located in Cepheus and can be found on Tirion map 3 at RA 20 34.3, DEC 60 4. It shines at magnitude 10.5 near the boarder of Cygnus. Dreyer describes this one as "A very large faint galaxy with a small but bright middle being exactly round." "It is an Sc type galaxy that has well defined diffuse knotty arms." We

could not see much detail due to its low surface brightness and great extent. It might be possible in the mountains to reveal these "knotty arms."

When searching for NGC-6946, beware of a small cluster, NGC-6939 which lies only 3/4 degree away. Instruments smaller than 8" may not be able to resolve it and conclude that it is the galaxy 6946.

Believe that if you think it's visible you are going to question your find. It is a fine challenge object requiring the ideal exit pupil to view easily.

Next was M-11 or NGC-6705 located in Scutum at RA 18 49.7 DEC -6 18 and shines at magnitude 7. It is located on Tirion map 16 approximately 2 degrees ESE of Beta Scutum. As observed by Dreyer, 6705 is a very bright large cluster that is irregularly round and is very rich in 9th magnitude stars. What makes this cluster interesting is a peculiar formation that is "planetary like" lying in the northern fringe of the cluster.

M-63 is an interesting galaxy seen best with a 26mm Konig with my eight inch. It shines at magnitude 10.0 in Canes Venatici. It is faint, however detectable.

M-94 is a bright galaxy also in Canes Venatici which shines at about magnitude 8. Dreyer conservatively gave it 9.5. It is fairly bright and compact. Easy to find.

I hope that these fine objects will give you hours of observing excitement as they did me. ■

OBJECT	TYPE	CONSTELL.	RA	DEC	TIRION	MAG
NGC-6207	GALAXY	HERC	16 42.2	36 53	8	12.5
M101	GALAXY	URSA M.	14 2.4	54 29	2	8.5
M82	GALAXY	CA. VEN.	9 53.8	69 48	2	9.5
M97	PLANET	URSA M.	11 13.3	55 10	2	12.0
NGC-4565	GALAXY	COMA B.	12 35.1	26 8	7	10.5
NGC-6543	PLANET	DRACO	17 58.6	66 38	3	9.0
NGC-6946	GALAXY	CEPH	20 34.3	60 4	3	10.5
NGC-6939	OPEN C	CEPH	29 30.9	60 33	3	10.0
M11	OPEN C	SCUTUM	18 49.7	- 6 18	16	7.0
M63	GALAXY	CA. VEN.	13 14.7	42 10	7	10.0
M94	GALAXY	CA. VEN.	12 49.7	41 16	7	9.5

## ASTRONOMICAL ORIENTATION PROGRAM

Korcei

A number of new members have asked me if we currently hold observing sessions where novices can get specific help in the field. We don't...until now! I am scheduling two programs a month at the Manassas picnic area to give these people the specific help they need to get them on their way. Telescope operation and star chart reading and how to relate the two have been highly discussed topics. Photography is another area that people have expressed an interest in.

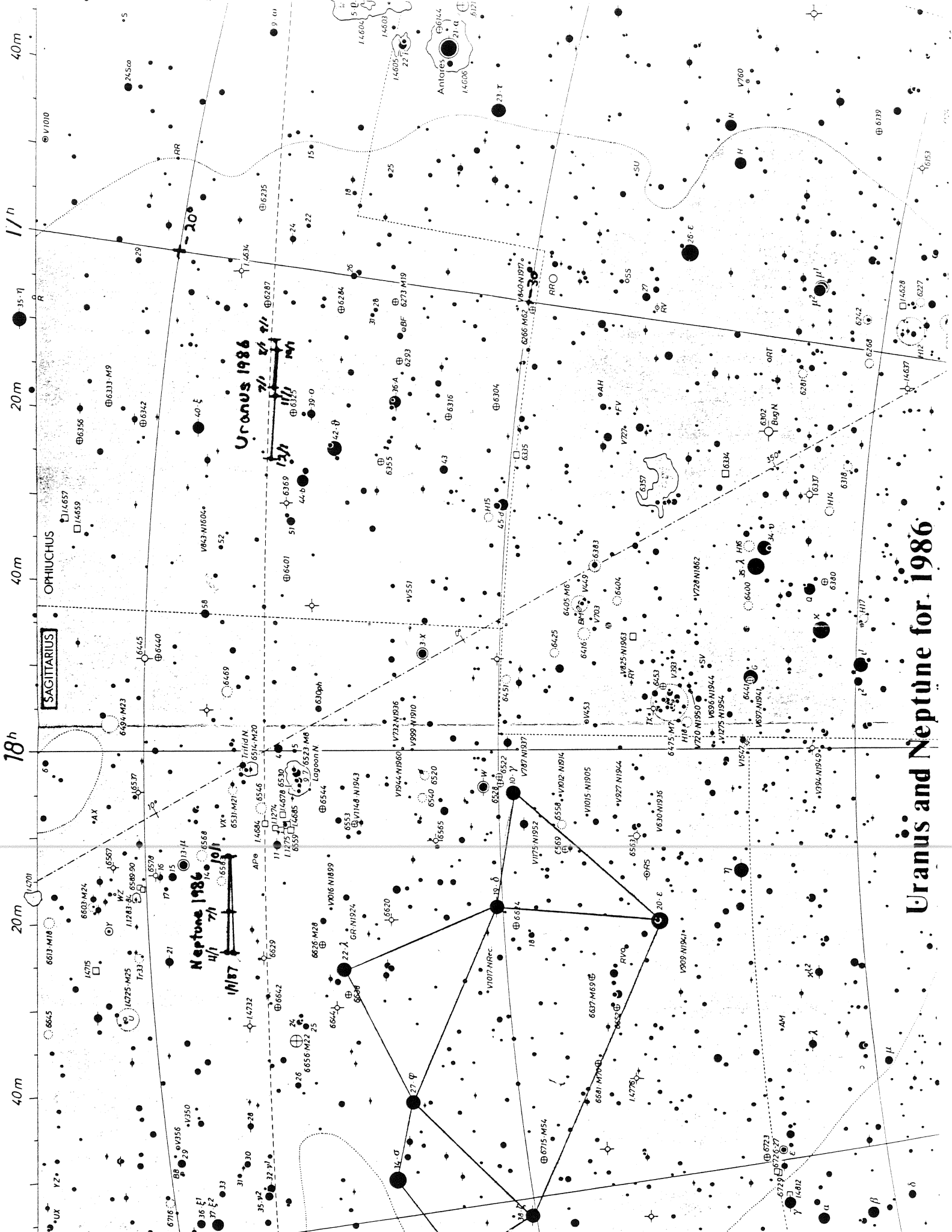
If you are one who is having difficulty figuring out your setting circles or polar alignment etc., and would like some serious help in the matter, give me, Blaine, a call and arrangements will be made to solve these and other problems. This service is open to all club members and their immediate families.

If you are an experienced astronomer or you would like to volunteer your services at these programs, give me a call. Your help would be greatly appreciated. My number is 256-4430. ■

## URANUS AND NEPTUNE

Korcei

Two of our fainter major planets are visible in the southern skies this summer. They are Uranus and Neptune. Uranus shines at about magnitude 5.5 and lies approximately 4 degrees east north east of M-20, the Trifid Nebula, in Sagittarius (See the chart on page 4.) It appears as a blue green star under low power but moderate magnification will resolve a disk. It may be difficult at first to distinguish it from a star since it is in the Milky Way. However, its blue green color makes it easily identifiable and should not pose a problem to locate and verify.



# Uranus and Neptune for 1986

Uranus 1986

Neptune 1986

SAGITTARIUS

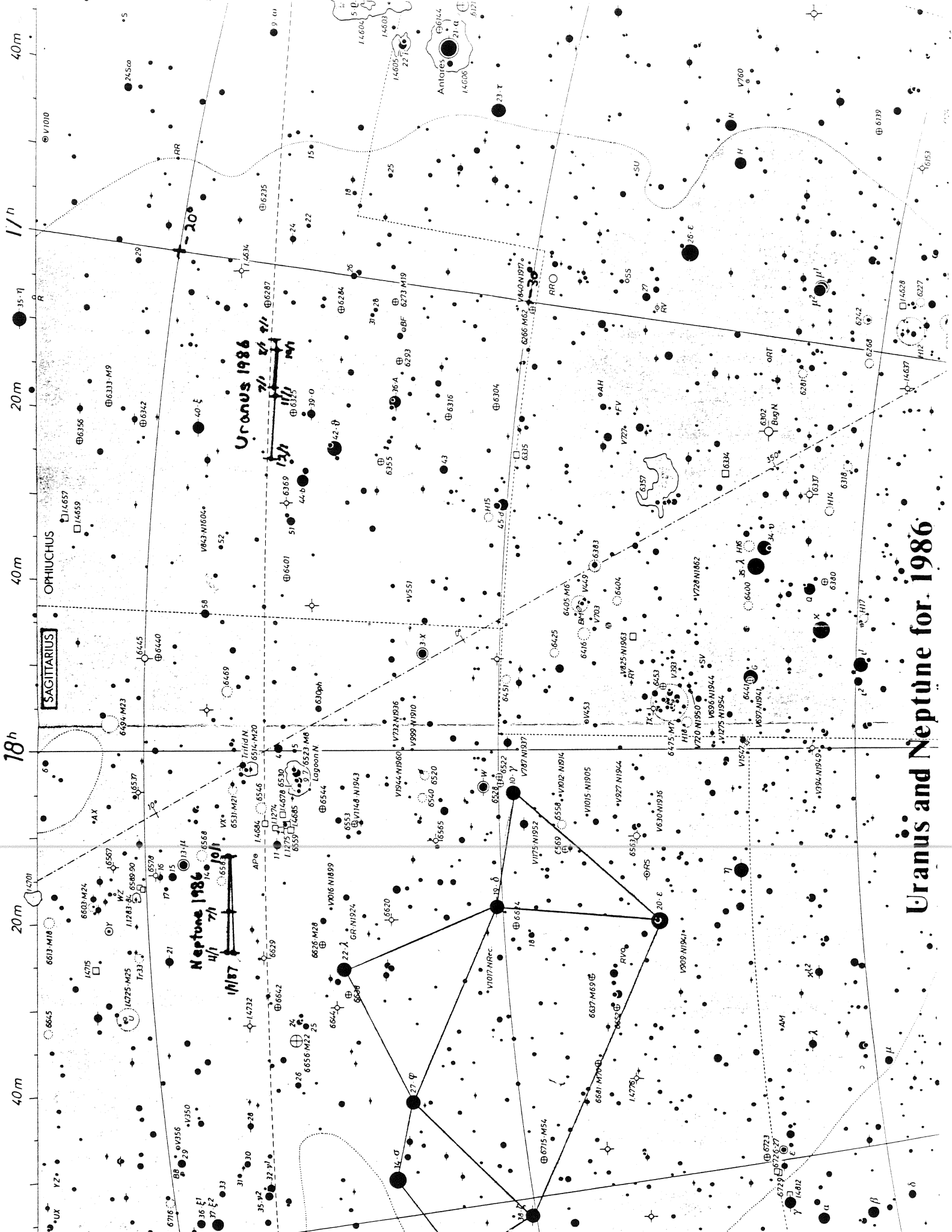
OPHIUCHUS

Antares

Lagoon N

M8

M20



Uranus 1986

Neptune 1986

SAGITTARIUS

OPHIUCHUS

Antares

Lagoon N

M8

M20

Neptune on the other hand is slightly smaller than Uranus, 2.3 seconds of arc as compared to Uranus' (Try saying that fast 3 times!) 3.8 seconds of arc and will be a little more of a challenge to find. It shines at magnitude 7.9 and lies approximately 4 degrees south of M-9 in Ophiuchus (See the following chart.) Since it also lies in the Milky Way, it will be slightly more difficult to identify against the multitude of stars in the field. Again, its blue green color will give you a hint as to which "star" you should be looking at.

It is best to familiarize yourself with the brighter stars in the vicinity. Both planets are visible in binoculars and knowing the star fields in the area will make finding the planets easier. When you find the field you suspect contains the planet, turn your scope onto the field and find that blue green "star" under low power. As a further note, using excess magnification will result in stars that appear as disks. These are called airy disks and may lead you to a false conclusion. Check your suspicions by looking at a known star in or near the field.

Good luck and while you're at it, check out the rest of the deep sky objects located on the chart. My favorite is M-22 above the "Teapot" in Sagittarius. ■

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The CORONA deadline is the 15th of the preceding month. For more information regarding club activities call 703-644-4331. Send all material regarding the club, including that for publication, to the Secretary/Editor; Blaine Korcel (703-256-4430), 5401 Danville Street, Springfield, Virginia 22151. ■

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# NOVAC FALL 1986 ROSTER

As of July 17

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