

THE NOVAC CORONA

to observe and to
help others observe

BLTM DATES
SCHEDULED

SEE DETAILS INSIDE

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE NORTHERN VIRGINIA ASTRONOMY CLUB

Issue No. 13

Volume 7

March 1987

President, Blaine Korcel 703-256-4777
Treasurer, John Huggins 703-644-4331

CALENDAR

for more information about activities call 703-644-4331

March 21.....Manassas Observation at the Picnic Area 8:00pm
March 27.....Manassas Observation at the Picnic Area 8:00pm
March 30.....Membership Meeting at George Mason Regional Library
We are holding elections this night! 7:00pm
April 17.....Manassas Observation at the Picnic Area 8:00pm
April 25.....Manassas Observation at the Picnic Area 8:00pm
May 23.....Manassas Observation at the Picnic Area 8:00pm
May 29.....Manassas Observation at the Picnic Area 8:00pm
June 19.....Manassas Observation to be announced
June 27.....Manassas Observation to be announced
July 17.....Opening day of the Burke Lake Telescope Meet
July 18.....Second day of the Burke Lake Telescope Meet
July 24.....Manassas Observation to be announced
August 1.....Public observing session at Lake Fairfax Amphitheater
August 19.....Public observing session at Elinore C. Lawrence park
in the Walney Visitor Center
August 21.....Public observing session at Burke Lake Park
August 22.....Manassas Observation to be announced
September 25.....Manassas Observation to be announced
October 24.....Manassas Observation to be announced
November 20.....Manassas Observation to be announced
December 19.....Manassas Observation to be announced

Editorial

by Blaine Korcel

I must again apologize for the redundant delays in our newsletter mailings. I have forced a deadline upon myself such that I cannot be late with it. You will be happy to know that soon I will have my evening hours free to tinker on the word processor and on the Ventura Desktop Publishing system. This I hope will entice myself and others to write many interesting articles for our members and other regular readers.

Until further notice, all photographs within this newsletter will be half-toned electronically using a 300x300 DPI Cannon Image Scanner. The final materials that will be sent to the printing company will be provided by a Cannon laser printer. I hope this will improve the image quality of our published astrophotos. The hardware is being provided courtesy of Systems Solutions Plus, Inc., Arlington, VA.

For those of you who have computers and modems, you can leave me mail and articles and, oh of course, public domain programs on my office computer bulletin board, "SSP Intertech." The number is 703-243-6918 and we currently operate at 1200 and 300 baud and hope soon to be up at 2400 baud. It is an Arlington based number so it should be local for most of us.

Another great BBS is ASTRO. It is run by a gentleman who works for the National Science Foundation. It contains many, many files and has an extensive message facility for all astronomical topics under the sun. Pardon the pun. His number is 703-547-4418 and he operates at 1200 and 300 baud.

Enough rap. We have had to dump quite a few members since they were not paying their dues. We cannot afford to send too many newsletters to those who do not pay for them. There are a few exceptions. Those exceptions are our complimentary subscribers, such as **Redlich's Binocular and Optical Repair**, who have repeatedly sent people our way for help and assistance. To those subscribers, we are greatly appreciative.

At the Last Meeting: Amendment I

by Blaine Korcel

At the last meeting, an amendment was introduced which allowed the Secretary and Treasurer offices to be combined into the Secretary/Treasurer office. This will greatly simplify and improve the accuracy of the clubs records by eliminating the transfer of information from one person to another. We feel this will expedite check processing and mailing list updating.

This implies that the club may exist with a minimum of two officers instead of the predefined three under the Article of Organization, Item 1.

Officially stated as follows:

Amendment I: Secretary/Treasurer Office

Section 1. The offices of Secretary and Treasurer are hereby combined to provide the office of Secretary/Treasurer.

Section 2. The office may be split into two entities if the elected official feels he/she cannot satisfactorily fulfill the obligations of both Secretary and Treasurer. The Secretary/Treasurer must immediately notify the President of his/her decision regarding the split. A meeting will be immediately scheduled and a second official will be elected to fill the empty office.

Section 3. The office may also be split if the membership feels there is a need for separate offices. A second official will be elected to fill the empty office.

Section 4. If the office of Secretary/Treasurer has been split and the end of the officials' term has been reached or the offices suddenly become empty, a new official will be elected as Secretary/Treasurer.

Amendments to Discuss At the March Meeting by Blaine Korcel

This month we will be holding our meeting at George Mason Regional Library on Monday, March 30. The library is located at 7001 Little River Turnpike in Annandale, Va. The meeting will begin promptly at 7:00pm. The main topic for the meeting will be elections. Pending the approval of the following amendments to the club constitution, the new officers and board of directors will be elected by ballot that night.

Since the response to the last mail ballot was outrageously small, I will propose amendments to the constitution which will do away with mail ballots. All decisions regarding the disposition of the club will be held by ballot at membership meetings. This will allow the club's active members to decide on the future of the club.

The proposed amendments are stated as follows:

Amendment II: Elections and Ballots

Section 1. All preceding references and implications to mail ballots prior to the acceptance of this amendment, shall be disregarded. Sections 2 through 5 of this amendment describes election and ballot procedures pertaining to the club and this constitution.

Section 2. All elective offices shall be voted upon by secret written ballot at a pre-announced membership meeting. Election shall be by a plurality of the votes of the members present. In the event any candidate should fail to receive a plurality of the votes, a run-off election shall immediately be held between the two candidates having received the largest number of votes.

Section 3. A plurality at any regular or special meeting shall be the number of votes that is received over and above the number of votes cast for the nearest opponent.

Section 4. All decisions or settlements regarding the activities and status of the club, with the exception defined in Section 2, shall be held at any regular membership or special meeting. With the exception of those ratios and percentages defined elsewhere in this constitution, a majority of the votes of the members present will decide.

Section 5. A majority of the members present shall be greater than 50 percent of the total number of members present.

An amendment must also be made to accommodate the combined Secretary/Treasurer office. This will also be proposed at the March meeting. It is stated as follows:

Amendment III: Minimum Number of Officers

The club shall exist with a minimum of two officers, President and Secretary/Treasurer. If the office of Secretary/Treasurer has been split as defined in Amendment I, the club shall then exist with a minimum of three officers for the remainder of the term.

Members Running for Offices

These people are currently running for the Board of Directors of the Northern Virginia Astronomy Club. Please choose five people for the Board of Directors and one each for President and Secretary/Treasurer. Bring your choices to the next meeting. Only TWELVE (12)! responses were turned in to me last time. An executive decision has been made and will be up for approval at the meeting. Upon ratification, all official offices and those otherwise will be voted upon at the meetings.

Notification of the new officers and the five Board of Directors will be announced in the next newsletter and at the next meeting.

The following people are running for the Board of Directors.
Choose 5:

- Gerald Perman
- Al Boldt
- Gilbert Swift
- Al Schumann
- Lynn Schumann
- Bruce Smoller
- Robert Ridgely

The following people are running for official positions. Choose one in each category:

- Blaine Korcel - President
- John Huggins - Secretary/Treasurer
- Dane Toler - Secretary/Treasurer
- Lynne Gilliland - Secretary/Treasurer

Constellation of the Month
Prydybasz

CANES VENATICI

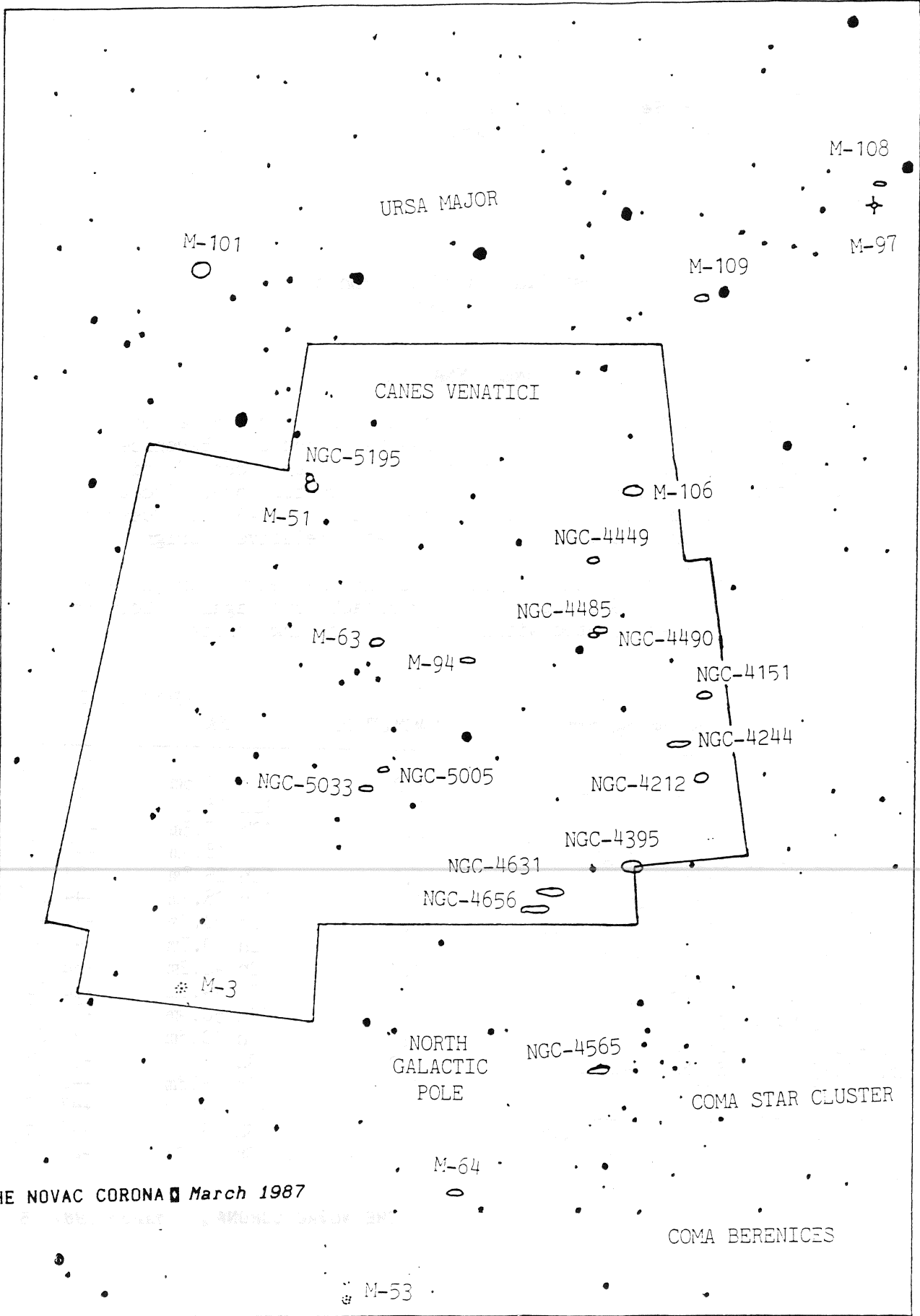
Canes Venatici, the hunting dogs, contains only three naked eye stars, and is inconspicuously located between Ursa Major and Coma Berenices. Canes Venatici is very richly populated with galaxies, most of which belong to the Virgo supercluster. The most recognized object located within Canes Venatici is M-51, the whirlpool galaxy. M-51 is indeed one of the best galaxies in the sky, and shines at a relatively bright magnitude of 8.7.

With the coming of Spring, we can trade in the heavy down jackets for something lighter, and begin observing comfortably once again. Goodluck with the many galaxies located within this interesting constellation.

OBJECT	TYPE OF OBJECT	MAGNITUDE	(EPOCH 2000)	
			RA.	DEC.
NGC-4151	BARRED SPIRAL GALAXY	11.2	12h 10.5m	+39 24'
NGC-4214	IRREGULAR GALAXY	10.5	12h 15.6m	+36 19'
NGC-4244	SPIRAL GALAXY	10.7	12h 17.5m	+37 48'
NGC-4258 M-106	SPIRAL GALAXY	9.0	12h 18.9m	+47 18'
NGC-4395	SPIRAL GALAXY	11.0	12h 25.8m	+33 32'
NGC-4449	IRREGULAR GALAXY	10.5	12h 28.2m	+44 05'
NGC-4485	IRREGULAR GALAXY	12.5	12h 30.7m	+41 41'
NGC-4490	SPIRAL GALAXY	10.1	12h 30.7m	+41 38'
NGC-4631	SPIRAL GALAXY	9.7	12h 42.2m	+32 33'
NGC-4656	IRREGULAR GALAXY	11.0	12h 44.0m	+32 10'
NGC-4736 M-94	SPIRAL GALAXY	8.9	12h 50.9m	+41 07'
NGC-5005	SPIRAL GALAXY	10.8	13h 10.8m	+37 03'
NGC-5033	SPIRAL GALAXY	11.0	13h 13.5m	+36 35'
NGC-5055 M-63	SPIRAL GALAXY	9.8	13h 15.8m	+42 01'
NGC-5194 M-51	SPIRAL GALAXY	8.7	13h 29.9m	+47 12'
NGC-5195	IRREGULAR GALAXY	11.0	13h 13.0m	+47 16'
NGC-5272	GLOBULAR CLUSTER	6.0	13h 42.2m	+28 23'

Constellation of the Month

"CANES VENATICI"



The Burke Lake Telescope Meet (BLTM 87)
by Blaine Korcel

Believe it or not, our advertisements are in on time this year for our annual Burke Lake Telescope Meet, otherwise called BLTM 87. The official dates of the event are Friday, July 17 and Saturday, July 18. This year should be spectacular.

For our new members, BLTM is held annually on a Friday and Saturday most conveniently scheduled around the new moon and the availability of the park's facilities. Friday night is amateur night. On this night we invite amateur astronomers, both individuals and other clubs, to come out and share their equipment and experiences. A slide show is presented with amateur astronomers in mind. After which, we engage in a massive observing session or "Star Party" as the case may be. This has proven to be an excellent opportunity for aspiring astronomers since it gives them a chance to view through many different types of equipment.

Saturday is open to the public. We invite everyone to attend this night. A slide show is presented on a general and popular astronomical topic that suits the occasion. After which, the amateurs get to show off their expensive equipment to wide eyed kids and parents alike in yet another massive observing session. We hope to eventually consider this event as the Stellafane of the south. Yes, the sky IS the limit!

Make sure that you mark these days on your calendar along with our other public sessions in August.

For more information on BLTM 87, send a self-addressed, stamped, legal size envelope to:

NOVAC
c/o John S. Huggins
5608 Flag Run Drive
Springfield, VA 22151

and call 703-644-4331 for NOVAC's recorded announcements.

A Word From Our BLTM 87 Coordinator
by John Huggins

Blaine has outlined well what BLTM is all about. Every year this event continues to put NOVAC a little more into the limelight. For many people this is the way they find out that, yes, there is an astronomy

club in Northern Virginia. The membership always increases due to the exposure our club acquires from BLTM. If you want an information packet containing details just send me that SASE. I urge you to get one because... well, they're free. It would be of great assistance to the advertising effort if you could zerox the poster that comes with the packet and put it wherever you can. Great places to post include your place of work, public libraries, shopping centers, public schools, etc. You might be surprised at what a simple poster can do to spread the word. Our goal is to simply get that poster on as many walls as possible via the NOVAC members.

To help promote the idea of BLTM being the "Stellafane of the South," I am going to advertise that there will be awards presented to clever telescope designers. Winners will receive a small plaque that they can attach to their telescope showing it as a champion of design. I have not yet chosen award categories. Your ideas will be graciously received at the meeting.

The Burke Lake Telescope Meet is a treat for anyone who attends. The past four have been great even though they were cloudy. Let's don't forget that even though amateur astronomers will be present, laymen will be also. Let's make sure that they get the most out of astronomy by helping them with their questions. We hope to have a successful BLTM this year. Let's see that we do.

THE AMATEUR'S AMATEUR

and my remarkable slides...

by Bryan Bloomer

I am a person who knows next to nothing about photography. F stops and film speed are a mystery to me still, but never-the-less I am extremely interested in capturing those things that I can spot through my scope on a permanent record. Whenever I want I can go back and look at or show someone those things that I have seen. Perhaps I'll even end up with some unexpected company out by the scope some night under the stars.

Reading in literature such as Astronomy and Sky & Telescope, I get a sort of sinking feeling when ever I contemplate their so called amateur astrophotos (which I say are as good most of the time as the professional shots I see in textbooks.) The captions are always filled with all of this mysterious talk of hypersensitized film and pushed processing and f this and speed that and all of this other really technical sounding stuff. I considered this for a long time and since I am currently buried under a university curriculum of engineering at the University of Maryland I felt that I did not have the time to learn all of this stuff. I still don't have the time but I know now that you don't need to know all of that to capture some really fantastic shots!!!

I started my amateur career with a pair of Sears special binoculars and later moved up to a Meade 80 mm refractor on an equatorial mount. I chose this scope because it was the most scope I could afford and it has all of the necessary features like setting circles and a 1.25" eyepiece barrel. Every time I take it out I am amazed at what I can see with

this so called "small scope." M-51, the Whirlpool Galaxy, is as plain to my eye on a good night as could be imagined. Anyway, I soon wanted to seriously start recording the amazing things that I was able to see.

By this time I was scared off from astrophotography by the upcoming final exam season and the apparent vast amounts of knowledge that were going to be necessary to get even a single shot of the moon. I tried sketching. Needless to say I was the worst artist you can imagine and after several nights of chasing objects by turning dials I decided that a clock drive was necessary to help improve my sketches. I was wrong. I simply cannot draw!!! So it was back to wishfully wondering about astrophotography (a word that is even hard to type!) and wishing that it weren't so darn technical.

Several months went by while I contemplated the situation. Then one day a remarkable thing happened -- this man I had been working with for two years suddenly turned out to be a back yard astronomer too!! Then as if that wasn't enough he had been suffering the same frustrations about astrophotography (ugh) that I had!! I asked him what he had done about it and you know what he told me? He had bought a regular roll of film and wasted it. Well I did the same thing already and had concluded that I would either have to learn how to do it all myself or find one of the guys in the club to do it for me or show me how. I explained that I really did not want to impose upon these other guys whom I knew were as busy as I if not more so. He then told me that someone had suggested trying using regular color slide film. We talked a while and then had to get back to work.

A couple of weeks went by and here comes Art with this huge grin on his face. I asked him what was up and he proceeded to hold a single slide up in front of my face. I couldn't believe my eyes!! There before me was the constellation of Orion in full glorious detail captured on film!!!! Needless to say I was psyched and rushed out and bought a roll of regular ASA 400 color slide film from Safeway, slapped it into my camera and rushed outside, only to find out it was cloudy. Anyway, on the next clear evening, I tried star trail shots and they turned out pretty nice but still I was not satisfied. The star trail shots were very important though in setting a lower and an upper limit on exposure times. I then built a piggy back mount for my telescope out of some old sheet metal lying around in the garage. After about two hours of cutting, drilling, sanding and smoothing I was set to track the stars!!!

I still know absolutely nothing about all of that technical stuff (that knowledge looks like it will have to wait until graduation) but I have since amassed a collection of what I consider tremendously remarkable slides. Out of one roll of film I may get 10 good shots (a roll of 24 exposures) and I don't even have to know how to develop the film myself because the process of developing slides is so simple that even Kodak can't mess up!

In the beginning, when I first started, I wasted a lot of film. After learning the limits of exposure times, I have been able to get really good shots of the sky and I have increased the number of items I can observe by increasing the amount of light I collect without even investing in more aperture. I still have many problems. I can't get any shots using eyepiece projection because I haven't figured out how to

get the thing focused. Still, my piggy back shots more than make up for all of that. But the beauty of all of this is that I have not had to ignore my studies and bury my head in a bunch of technical books on photography. I still managed to capture some really outstanding shots of those most impressive items; -- Heavenly Bodies (and I don't mean the kind lying on the beach -- although...)



The Moon as photographed by Joseph Macrie using an 8" SCT.

HYPERED 2415 FILM, PROCESSING, AND PRINTING

Hypersensitized 2415 Astrophotographic film is now available to our club members only, at discounted rates.

Fresh 2415 is kept on hand and is available in 20 exposure rolls. All hypering is done by an experienced astrophotographer to guarantee the highest possible quality.

Hypered 2415 in 20 exposure rolls is.....\$5.00

For details call Joe Macrie, 703-660-6042.



Halley's Comet photographed by Joseph Macrie on January 11, 1986.

FOR SALE

6 inch F/8 newtonian, German equatorial mount, setting circles, clock drive, piggy back bracket, eyepieces and loads of other accessories. Contact Richard Lawson at 703-569-4458 for prices.

Thanks again to Todd Prydybasz for supplying the tedious chart of Canes Venatici.

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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 (703-256-4777), 5401 Danville Street, Springfield, Virginia 22151. *



N.O.V.A.C.

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Dec 31 87

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