

NOVAC

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE NORTHERN VIRGINIA ASTRONOMY CLUB

Issue Number 42

Volume 12

July/August, 1992

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UPCOMING EVENTS

<u>Club Observing Dates</u>	<u>Monthly Meetings</u>
July 3, 4, 24, 25, 31	July 15
August 1, 21, 22, 28, 29	August 19
<i>Mt. Hood Field Trip - Sat., July 18</i>	
<i>Crockett Park Star Party - Sat., July 25 (rd-Aug. 1)</i>	

NOVAC, Inc.

NOVAC is a one small step away from making the giant leap to non-profit corporate status! To make it official, we must vote on a modification that the IRS insisted we make. The modification is as follows:

The following sentence is to be removed from Article Six of the NOVAC Constitution, "Where possible such receivers of assets shall have an astronomical or related purpose."

The vote will occur during the July club meeting. If the correction passes, we will be a non-profit corporation!

Special thanks to Brent Archinal and Blaine Korcel who spearheaded the laborious effort to achieve our new status.

NOVAC Receives Tax Exempt Status From IRS

by Brent Archinal

Our Corporate Agent, Blaine Korcel, was notified in June that our

months (and even years) of effort to obtain tax exempt status for the Northern Virginia Astronomy Club have finally paid off. The Internal Revenue Service has indeed recognized us as a non-profit corporation. Although the precise details of this are better explained in the documentation received from the IRS, this effectively means that as a

dues will generally be deductible), and donors must already itemize taxes, among other restrictions. Interested donors should consult the IRS or their tax advisor.

We will be glad to provide copies of any of the paperwork that we have received from the IRS.

I'd also like to express my personal thanks to Blaine Korcel, as I'm sure NOVAC would like to express its "corporate" thanks, for dealing with the IRS in the final stages of this work - I'm sure all of us are aware of how fun that can be!

In any case, this is an important time in the life of NOVAC, since if we desire we can now begin looking for donations in support of the various educational activities we have expressed interest in for some time. Perhaps even more importantly, we now are a fully and officially recognized non-profit educational corporation. We are set to fulfill our motto: "To Observe and Help Others Observe"!

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not for profit educational corporation, we are exempt from paying taxes, and that donations to us may be tax deductible for the donor.

Some restrictions still apply, in particular that this recognition is provisional, and further information much be filed with the IRS in late 1995 to demonstrate that we have remained a non-profit corporation. Not all donations will be tax deductible either, as there must be no specific return from any donations (e.g. only a portion of

Upcoming NOVAC Meeting Programs

by George Uhl

The next two meetings will feature NOVAC member speakers. Our July 15 meeting will feature Lloyd P. Verhage whose topic will be sundials. With all our modern gadgetry and scientific knowledge, the sundial has been surpassed by more convenient devices. As such, we have turned our backs on the techniques that our ancestors used to tell time. So, reaffirm your roots and show up to the July meeting!

The topic for the August 19 meeting will be Stellafane. This annual telescope makers extravaganza is always fascinating. There should be a large NOVAC contingent attending and thus many informative (not to mention amusing) stories to tell! So don't miss any of our upcoming meetings!

The monthly meetings of the Northern Virginia Astronomy Club are held on the third Wednesday of every month at 7:30 P.M., at the Arlington County Planetarium, 1426 N. Quincy Street, Arlington, VA 22207. Admission is free and open to the public. Call the NOVAC hotline (703 256-8359) for upcoming events, special announcements, or to leave a message in order to obtain further information.

President's Column

As you may be aware, our club is in the process of deciding whether or not to get third-party liability insurance. I have studied the literature sent to me by the carrier and have summarized it below. We will be voting on this issue at the July meeting. The total cost will be about \$500 (\$248 annual premium plus \$250 to join the Astronomical League).

Who is covered?

The club when named in a lawsuit for acts committed by members working for the club at a sponsored activity.

High limit aggregate

We will be covered up to \$1,000,000 for each occurrence and up to \$2,000,000 aggregate coverage each year. There is no deductible.

Year round coverage

Covers lawsuits resulting from bodily injury and property damage at club sponsored activities.

Includes concession stands, dances, banquets, parties, auctions, raffles, picnics, and meetings.

Pays court and legal defense costs for covered claims.

Reimburses for first-aid expenses at the site of the accident.

Pays \$100 per day for expenses incurred which are related to the investigation or defense of a claim.

The owners of the premises used or rented by the club can be named as additional insureds.

What kind of suits are covered?

- Bodily injury
- Property damage
- Personal injury and advertising injury (libel, slander, etc.)
- Injury related to sale of food, beverages
- Suits for real or alleged faults in work performed by members of the club
- Fire damage

Exclusions

Any injury resulting in the following areas or events are not covered:

- Swimming pools
- Powered races
- Camps or campgrounds
- Sporting events

The benefits of joining the Astronomical League include a subscription to the "Reflector", the quarterly newsletter, a 10% discount on astronomical publications, and access to the League's resources on observing guides for beginners to advanced amateurs. If you have any questions, perhaps I can answer them at the July meeting, or you can call the carrier directly at 1-800-323-2106.

Myron Wasiuta
President - NOVAC
703-786-9276

Sometimes You Just Get Lucky...Again!

by Al & Lynn Schumann

As you know, we try to gin up something special for family birthdays. Since our youngest daughter, Rena, was coming up on her 31st, we got on the horn and dialed: 1-900-ECLIPSE (\$2.99 per minute with a ten minute minimum, all major credit cards accepted). Our budget just couldn't handle a total lunar eclipse, but we were able to swing a good partial for June 14. They said we could expect right around 69% at the moment of maximum eclipse, which was even better than we anticipated. However, we had to demand some fancy juggling to make the timing work out. You see, Rena lives in California. She crunches numbers for EDS, and we had to make sure she could still see the eclipse and still get a good night's sleep before going to work on Monday. The time didn't matter to us in Virginia; we're retired, so we could stay up late.

Anyhow, they confirmed the eclipse schedule right on the spot. Well, actually, they did put us on hold for a couple of minutes while a comedian told a few tired old eclipse jokes. Then, they were back and said we could have mid-eclipse at 12:57 a.m. EDT on June 15, and Rena would see it at a respectable 9:57 p.m. PDT on her birthday. It was great! Couldn't be better. However, before you go rushing to the phone, be aware that there are NO GUARANTEES. You can't change your mind and cancel out an eclipse once it's scheduled. Also, there are no refunds in the event of bad weather or any natural, manmade or other unforeseen calamity.

For a while, we thought we were going to lose it all. Throughout the week, the Weather Channel was calling for gloom and doom on June 14. The local forecasters were just as glum. They were saying that if you had anything to do over the weekend, do it on Saturday, because the outlook for Sunday sucks...or words to that effect.

Fortunately, the weather guessers were wrong. By early evening our patio was fairly bristling with optical aids. The Celestron C-8 was mounted on its permanent pier. The copy scope, along with a 25X spotter scope, were set up on tripods nearby. Binoculars were at the ready. Our camera was loaded with ISO 400 film and installed on the C-8. Comfortable chairs were set out, coffee was ready, and so were we. There were some scattered cloud decks here and there, but we knew we'd be able to work effectively despite them.

Ours was to be a big picture operation. We had no interest in crater timings or watching individual features disappear. We wanted to enjoy the entire show from a low power perspective without consulting watches and scribbling

minutia in notebooks. The idea was to relish and enjoy the whole program, and that we did. When we first spotted the moon, it was a beautiful ball climbing through the trees to the southeast. It burst through the clear shortly before entering penumbra, and it was a better part of an hour before we were able to see any diminution of the moon's glow. In fact, we were faked out by some clouds at the onset of the umbral phase, but after a few minutes we saw the moon begin to disappear.

Meanwhile the picture taking was going along beautifully. In contrast to deep sky photography, where guiding for long periods of time is so important, lunar photography is more akin to snapshots. Even with a 2,000mm, F/10, C-8 as a "lens", we were using shutter speeds of 1/125th sec. at full moon (ISO 400 film) and gradually slowing down the shutter speed as the moon waned. The camera's light meter was very effective until we got down to the thinner slivers of the moon. Then, a bit of educated guesswork came into play, and we started doing a little bracketing; that is, varying the exposure time by one stop on either side of where you're at. It's always something of a crap shoot, and you are never really sure until the pictures are developed.

When 1:30 a.m. rolled around, we were getting a bit weary and wet. We packed up the smaller instruments, removed the camera from the C-8, replaced the said camera with the star diagonal, put Dad to bed and continued to watch the eclipse.

What a night! We saw the big show...from coast to coast. As advertised, the eclipsed part of the moon was very dark. We could see no trace of the reddish hue one normally expects during lunar eclipses. When a feature on the moon passed into the umbra, it was

gone! So, the dust and assorted stuff from the Mount Pinatubo eruption had the expected effect. Otherwise, the atmosphere was steadier than we had any right to expect; seeing was great. The clouds cooperated very nicely, the pictures came out well, and thanks to a low riding moon all night, we had no problems with dew.

Overall, we think we did a first class job of scheduling, and we hope you enjoyed the eclipse as much as we did. Now our big problem is how do we follow an act like this?

Apologies To Al Schumann! Unfortunately, the image scanner was unavailable during the preparation of this edition of the newsletter. His 3 photos of the eclipse are forthcoming in a future edition., ed.

May 1992 Meeting Minutes

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 pm on May 20, 1992 at the Arlington County Planetarium with Myron Wasiuta presiding. There were 28 members and guests present.

No old business was discussed.

New Business

1. The I.R.S. has objected to some of the language in our Articles of Incorporation. Specifically, the I.R.S. would like to have us delete the following sentence from Article Six: "Where possible such receivers of assets shall have an astronomical or related purpose." Brent Archinal made a motion to delete the offending sentence from the Articles. As required by our club bylaws, the club Secretary read the proposed amendment to the membership. The next step is to publish the amendment in the Newsletter and then we can vote on the amendment at the July meeting.

2. There will be a partial lunar eclipse on the evening of June 14.

3. Brent Archinal is organizing a trip to Great Falls to time the lunar occultation of a 6.8 magnitude star on June 7. The results of trip will be used to help further define the Moons orbit.

The business meeting was concluded and the program started with show and tell. Jerry Wolczanski showed his new wooden tripod based adjustable observers chair. Al Schumann showed a variety of home-made observing aids. Al also announced the shut down of his neutrino collector and presented Myron Wasiuta with a bottle of neutrinos for club use.

Bill Burton gave a very informative talk on the geology of Venus.

Respectfully submitted,
Bob L'Hommedieu, Secretary

June 1992 Meeting Minutes

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 p.m. on June 17, by Myron Wasiuta at the Arlington County Planetarium. There were 29 members and guests present.

Old Business

1. The Northern Virginia Telescope Meet will be held on September 25 & 26 at Crockett Park. Plans are moving forward for the event.

2. The trip to the Hood Observatory has been moved to July 11, 1992. All interested persons are urged to contact Myron Wasiuta for information.

3. The club has been granted tax exempt status !!!! It has taken a lot of work on the part of Brent Archinal especially and the other

past Trustees. We all owe them a great deal of thanks.

New Business

1. The club has been given two 6" reflectors by Mr. Elmer Reese. These scopes will be available for loan to club members as soon as we obtain eyepieces and a mounting for one scope. The scopes will be cared for by Steve Bodner and Bob L'Hommedieu. Please contact them for information.

2. George Uhl will head up an effort by NOVAC to organize the 1993 meeting of The Virginia Association of Astronomical Societies.

3. The members discussed the possibility of obtaining group liability insurance for the club through the Astronomical League. This would require our club to join the A.L. at a cost of about \$235 plus the cost of the insurance at \$254 for a total of about \$489. Brenda Jones stated that the treasury has about \$3000 at present. We will vote on the insurance at the July Meeting and information would be in the next issue of the newsletter.

Geoff Chester gave a talk about weather satellites after the business meeting.

Respectfully Submitted,
Bob L'Hommedieu, Secretary

NOVAC NOTICES

Crockett Park Star Party

On Saturday evening, July 25 Crockett Park will sponsor their public Star Party as part of their schedule of Summer Activities. The Park has asked for NOVAC's support. The 25th also happens to be a club night at the park, which

should motivate more of us to come out and help. Please consider coming out with your telescope. After all, Roger Pence and the park staff put up with us most of the 48 nights we schedule to use the park, and more than a few unscheduled evenings as well. This is a good opportunity to practice up on your show-and-tell skills before September's Telescope Meet! If you have a solar filter, come out before sunset and show the folks some sunspots. The rain date will be August 1, which is also a club night. Call George Uhl at 703-369-4575 for more information.

Two Telescopes Donated

Mr. Elmer Reese of Alexandria, Va. has kindly donated two telescopes, a Celestron C-6 and a 6-inch Telescopic, to the club. Steve Bodner and Bob L'Hommedieu will be the caretakers of the scopes. Contact either gentleman if you wish to borrow a telescope.

Telescope Makers Needed

The club has a 6" reflector that needs a Dobsonian mount. I have volunteered to make the mount and I am looking for people to help me. Anyone with an interest in telescope making is welcome. We will design a mount, draw up plans, and build it with whatever tools are available. If you have thought about making a telescope, this would be a good chance to learn more about it. For further information please contact Bob L'Hommedieu at 703-978-0946.

Observing at Hood College

In one of its first "field trips" in a long time, NOVAC members have been invited to tour the Hood

College Observatory on Saturday, July 18, beginning at 7:30 PM. **PLEASE NOTE** that this is a change from the earlier announced date of July 11. Hood College is located in Frederick, MD, and has its own observatory building with a classical 8" aperture Alvan Clark & Sons Refractor. Our host will be Jerry Josties, the current astronomy instructor at Hood and director of the Observatory, and also an astronomer from USNO. He has graciously invited us to come up and visit and tour the observatory, and assuming the weather is good to observe through the 8" telescope.

After seeing the observatory in daylight when we arrive, if it's clear, we hope to observe Jupiter low in the evening sky, and eventually Saturn as it starts to rise up high enough in the east about 11 PM. The Moon, a few days after full, may also be a target (in this admittedly light polluted area). And if you have a favorite double star, now would be a good time to try to observe it!

Observing will end sometime not too long after 11. We hope that time will also permit (or clouds will force) an informal NOVAC meeting, complete with announcements of upcoming events, perhaps some more information from Jerry on the observatory, and other informal discussion - perhaps on NOVAC's search for a dark sky observing site. Anyway, we hope that as many NOVAC members as possible can attend.

If you are interested in coming give me a call as soon as possible at 703-448-7466 evenings (after 8). This event will be held rain or shine. Should a cancellation occur, as with regular meetings, it will also be announced on the NOVAC hotline, 703-256-8359.

The directions to the Hood College Observatory from Northern Virginia are: a) Take the beltway (I495) to I270 north and follow I270 until it ends at the I270-I70-US15 interchange in Frederick. (Alternatively, take US15 directly from Northern Virginia to the same interchange.) b) Continue north on US15 (I270 north turns directly into US15 north). c) Take the Rosemont Avenue exit, turn left at light at bottom of ramp onto Rosemont. d) Continue to Hood College on left, enter by main entrance. e) Turn left at first stop sign (in from of Alumni Hall). f) Turn right at first right. g) Continue on this road, passing swimming pool on left. h) Jog right at stop sign. i) Continue for about 1 block and the observatory building will be on the right. j) Park as soon as you see the observatory. The building entrance is around back.

The Northern Virginia Astronomy Club would also like to express its appreciation and thanks in advance to Jerry Josties and Hood College for the opportunity to visit the observatory.

See you in Frederick on the 18th!

OBSERVING SITE RULES

NOVAC members may use Crockett park for observing on nights other than those scheduled for club observing; BUT, YOU MUST HAVE PRIOR APPROVAL FROM RODGER PENCE, THE PARK MANAGER. Call early in the day on which you wish to observe; the telephone number is 703-788-4867. If you reach the answering machine leave a message stating that you are a NOVAC member and you wish to observe that night. Also, leave a telephone number where you can be reached. If you do not receive a return call you may not use the park. THERE ARE NO EXCEPTIONS!

Use of the park is limited to NOVAC members only.

The gate is locked at sunset and the combination is shown on your Observing Pass. Do not reveal it to anyone. You must lock the gate behind you after entering and please remember to lock it after you leave.

During EDT, you must set up on the large field to the left. During EST, you may set up on the paved cul-de-sac 200 yds past the gate.

No loud radios, no alcoholic beverages; no loose pets; do not leave trash or debris behind. We are guests of the park and our observing privileges may be revoked at any time because of the carelessness of one person.

Directions to Crockett Park

From the Washington D.C./Northern Virginia area, go west on I-66 to the 47-a exit which is 234 South to Manassas. Continue on 234 for 2.8 miles until then turn right on Godwin Drive at the "Po Folks" restaurant. Follow Godwin Dr. for 1.8 miles to where it merges with Rt. 28 West.

Once on Route 28 continue driving for another 13.7 miles through the towns of Nokesville, Catlett and Calverton until you turn **right** on Rt. 643 towards Warrenton. There is a small country store (Mayhugh's) on the corner of the intersection. Proceed about a mile up Rt. 643 to the Park Entrance road. Look for a small sign for C.M. Crockett Park on your right directing you to turn left. Once on the park entrance road, go 1/2 mile to the park gate.

1992 NOVAC Membership List

The following list is comprised of NOVAC members who have paid their dues for 1992 plus VIPs.

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