

ROYAL ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY OF CANADA

COMET AND NOVA SECTION

Bulletin No. 4

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"From Nova Persei 1901 to Nova Puppis 1942, seven nova of 2nd magnitude or brighter were discovered. Yet it is now 20 years since any such really striking novae have appeared. Perhaps another one is due soon. Who will discover it?

"The fortune might fall to some amateur astronomer who knows his constellations well and who regularly takes five minutes whenever he first goes outdoors on a clear night, surveying the star patterns down to 3rd magnitude."

This excellent quotation was taken from the November 1962 issue of "Sky and Telescope", and it is reprinted here as a morale booster for the observers who may be getting impatient with negative reports all the time. Keep searching, and you are bound to find a new star (or comet)!

There is a nova in the sky now. It was discovered by two independent observers on February 5 and 6, but not by any C & N Section member. This nova is about five degrees north-west of Vega at R.A. 18h 13m, Dec. +41°50' (for epoch 1960). The magnitude was about 3.9 when discovered, and was 4.1 on February 9. It was estimated at 5.1 on February 24 by the undersigned.

This nova is in C & N Area #23, and upon a check of the "Search" records, it was found that this area was last checked on November 18, 1962 by Mr. J. G. Craig of Hamilton. This was a negative report to magnitude 6.0. This shows the value of negative reports, as it enables us to determine the period of time in which a nova occurred. It is hoped that this nova will spark more interest in this programme as better coverage of the sky is required.

New Programme: Since the C & N Section is "on its feet" now, a new type of search programme can be introduced. One or more observations are made on almost every night now, and to increase the chances of discovering a bright nova (which can appear in less than a day), it was felt that many observers could make naked-eye searches of the "dome" to about third-magnitude. If you are already familiar with the constellations, this would be an easy matter, and if you are not familiar with them, this would be your chance to learn. To take part in this programme, all that you require is a pair of eyes, and charts of the sky for the different times and seasons. Then you can search the outline of the constellations for anything that may appear "irregular" taking care to note the position of the planets. C & N Form #2 may be used for recording your searches of the dome. Would your Centre please let the members know about this programme. Let the C & N Section National Co-ordinator know of any ideas and suggestions that you may have.

This section expects to have a display at the 1963 General Assembly of the R.A.S.C., and the Co-ordinator hopes that Centres will send material on Comet Ikeya and on the nova. To be included in the display, material should be mailed to the undersigned no later than April 15.

On the next page is a summary of the work done in this section during 1962. A total of 1953 searches were made by 27 observers, and 88 observations of two comets were reported by 20 observers. It is hoped that 1963 will be a better year, and we are off to a good start with the appearance already of a bright comet and a nova (see Announcements #5 and #6). At present, three Centres (Hamilton, Montreal, and Niagara Falls) are active in the search part of this programme. Let's hope that more Centres will take an interest in searching for comets and novae.

Special thanks are due to Mr Hugh N. A. Maclean who was the most active observer during 1962. He made 354 searches of 6 areas and he made 35 observations of two comets. Keep up the good work, Mr Maclean.

Review of Comet Humason, 1962e: From observations received, it appears that this comet was a bit unusual. Until the middle of August it was reported close to the predicted magnitude. Then, after August, instead of getting a little brighter as predicted, it rapidly became fainter. A total of 57 observations were reported for this comet, and it was under observation from June 27 until September 19, 1962.

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The following list summarizes the number of searches made by each observer during 1962. Note that September was our best month. The decline in the number of searches during the last few months was probably caused by the colder weather.

OBSERVER	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	TOTAL
Bridgen, Mrs C. L.	12	12	18	9	16	11	24	47	45	21	33	8	256
Buntain, S.	2	8	11	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	21
Craig, J. G.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	7	0	8
Dack, Miss E.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	6	2	1	0	16
DeKinder, F. J.	14	5	6	0	11	0	3	16	23	10	22	4	114
Duchow, L. R.	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	8	4	0	0	0	16
Frappier, D.	3	12	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	15
Gaherty, G. Jr	4	7	13	8	0	3	14	23	10	0	0	0	82
Good, C.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	2
Laur, I. A.	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	7	5	0	0	0	14
Little, C.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	7	2	0	17
Long, J. T.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	11	11	24	46
Low, J.	0	28	21	12	7	3	0	15	30	50	7	39	212
Maclean, H.N.A.	0	0	0	0	7	31	66	72	70	42	52	14	354
McCallum, R.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	22	0	0	22
McDonald, C. A.	0	0	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	10
McNamara, K. E.	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	7	5	0	0	0	18
Neysmith, B. I.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	20	0	0	0	25
Rippen, G. W.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	14	22	12	14	62
Schneider, F.	0	0	0	0	0	0	15	17	11	0	0	0	43
Seville, N.	0	0	13	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	18
Sheldon, L. E.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	2
Sylvester, N.	0	0	0	22	18	8	0	0	0	16	18	18	100
Warren, W. A.	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	8	17
Williams, V.	15	11	15	5	0	15	23	41	44	30	48	30	277
Williamson, Miss I. K.	4	5	9	4	0	4	39	31	30	10	13	0	149
Zorgo, Mrs K.	17	2	5	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	11	0	37
TOTALS	74	90	121	67	59	75	196	298	325	244	245	159	1953

The following list summarizes the number of observations reported of comets observed during 1962.

OBSERVER	CENTRE	1962c	1962s	TOTAL
Allen, B. W.	Halifax	1	0	1
Anthenien, Larry	Montreal	3	3	6
Brasch, K. R.	Montreal	4	4	8
Burke, Father	Halifax	1	0	1
Cahill, Bill	Montreal	0	1	1
Connelley, J. D.	Halifax	1	0	1
Creighton, Warren	(Lakehead A.A.)	0	9	9
Gaherty, G. Jr	Montreal	1	0	1
Gardner, G. C.	Niagara Falls	1	0	1
Gilson, John	(Lakehead A.A.)	0	3	3
Hinton, Peter	Montreal	1	0	1
Low, Jim	Montreal	3	0	3
Maclean, H.N.A.	Niagara Falls	5	30	35
Papacosmas, C.	Montreal	2	0	2
Rippen, George	Montreal	0	1	1
Scatliff, Dr J.	Winnipeg	3	0	3
Wedge, George	Montreal	1	3	4
Williams, Vic	Montreal	2	0	2
Williamson, Miss I.K.	Montreal	2	0	2
Zackon, David	Montreal	0	3	3
TOTALS		31	57	88

To Centres not taking part in this programme at present, but would like to, please contact the National Co-ordinator of the C & N Section.

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