

Halley's Comet
as observed
and photographed by
The Oklahoma City
Astronomy Club
1985 - 1986

Our club wanted to highlight this very special astronomical happening by publishing a keepsake issue of our newsletter that included some of the terrific astrophotographs our club members have taken of this most widely known and famous event to grace the science and hobby of astronomy. As you will see for yourself, our club has been blessed with some outstanding astrophotographers.

I know we all share the same sense of pride that our members who took these photos hold.

- Mike Dennis

This article from the October 12, 1985 issue of The Daily Oklahoman, announced the Okie-Tex Star Party of 1985. This was the first chance many members of the Oklahoma City Astronomy Club had to view Halley's Comet. In fact, the large turnout at this annual club event may in part be attributed to Comet Halley. Though bad weather plagued the party again this year, a few hardy club members and others stuck it out until the final night when the clouds parted for a few hours. Anxious and excited Okie-Tex participants lined up at Larry Beatty's DS-16 and Eric Allen's 17 1/2 inch newtonian to be among the first Oklahomans to view the return of Comet Halley. Though not much to look at yet, few of those present that night will forget it.

Price Wooldridge

Night Sky Party Set

Amateur astronomers from as far away as Canada are expected at Lake Murray when the Oklahoma City Astronomy Club conducts its second annual Oklahoma-Texas star party Oct. 17-20.

Group camp No. 3 has been reserved.

Rules governing the use of lights and travel within the camp after 8 p.m. will help assure good conditions for star gazers.

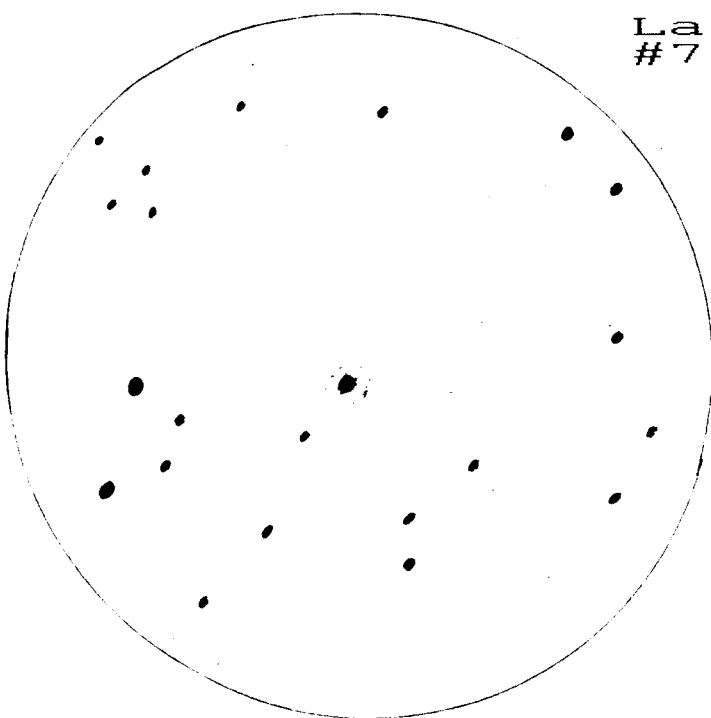
Halley's Comet and other celestial objects will be observed.

Amateur and professional-grade telescopes will be set up, club president Mike Dennis said.

Seminars, a swap meet and observatory tours near Ardmore are planned.

A \$10 registration fee will be collected.

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Larry Beatty
#7

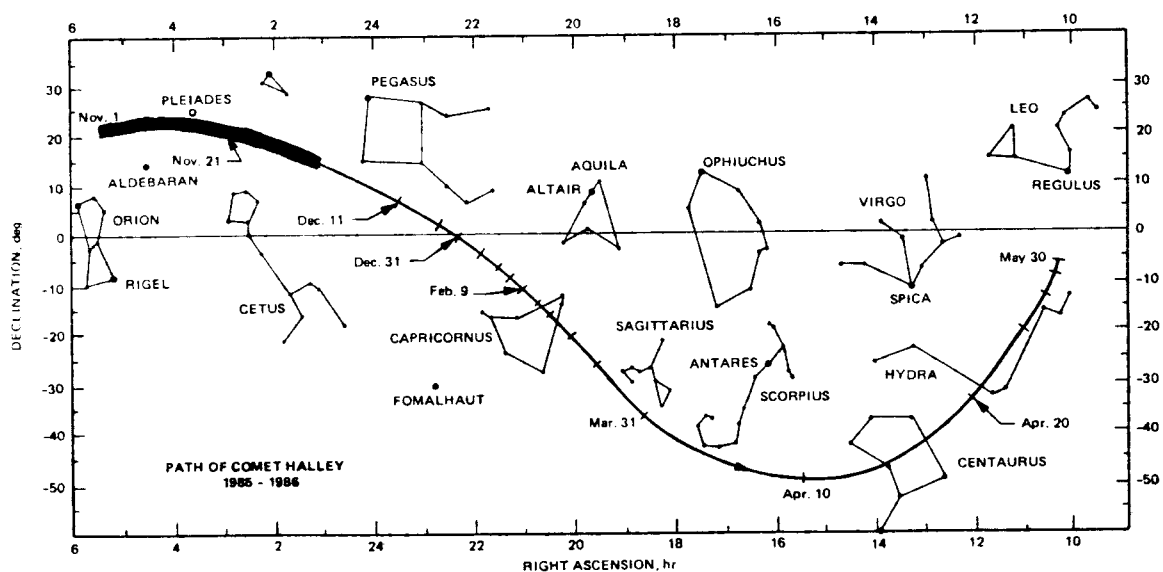
Observed from his home in south Oklahoma City, Larry writes: Fairly bright. Approximately 8.5 magnitude. Easily seen & large. Some central brightness. Outer area very faint and fuzzy. Can see definite edge, though.

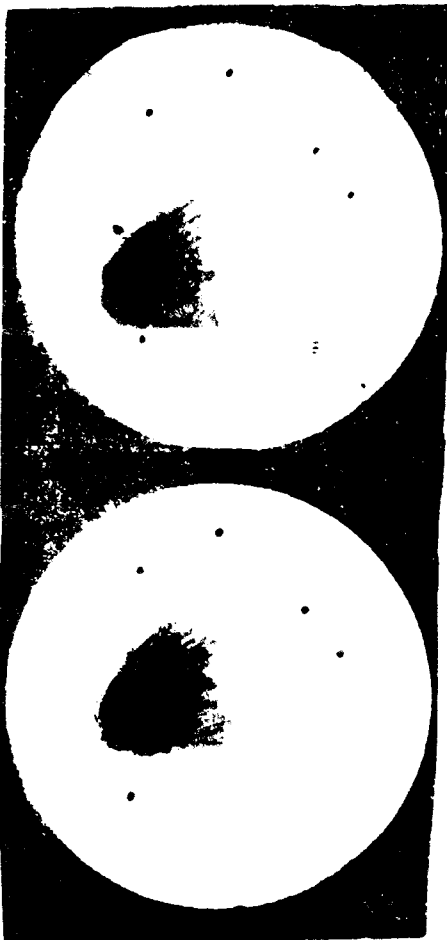
This observation follows many other visual observations, including Mike Dennis' first sighting in the early morning of August 16, 1985 - the first sighting from Oklahoma skies!



Craig Crawford # 1 1

This picture represents only one of the increasing attempts by members to capture Halley on film. Craig's picture was aired by KOCO-TV as part of it's series on Halley's Comet in November. Also included in this series (and other series on KTVY and KWTv) were appearances by Club members. The publicity began to make an impression on our star parties and our monthly meetings... our membership grew and eventually doubled during the Comet's apparition.

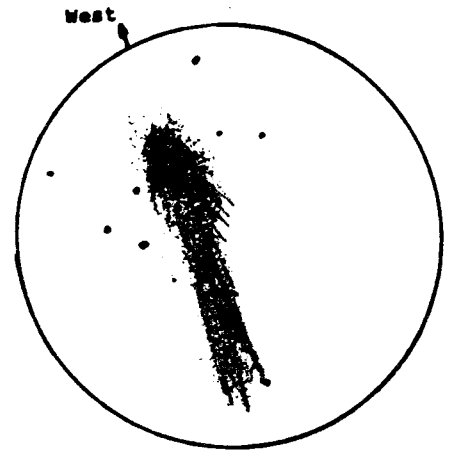




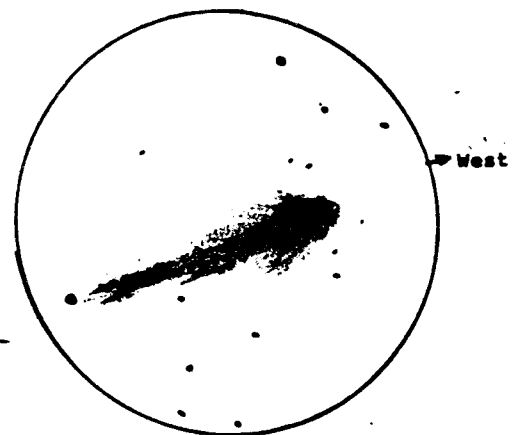
After passage of
the Comet over
background star,
star was visable
through coma.

Could not see
background star
as Comet passed
in front of it.

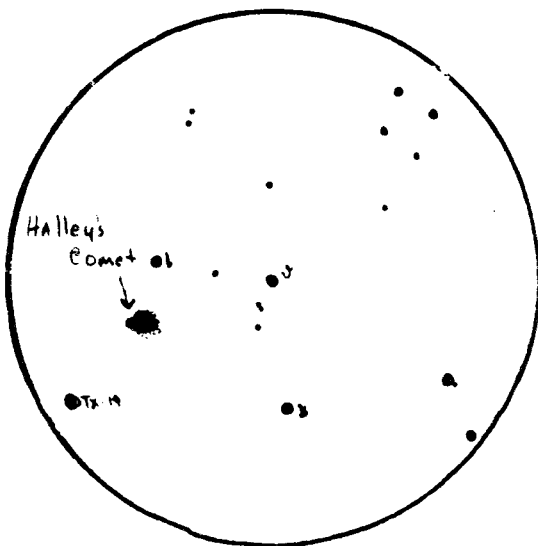
David Higgins
#5



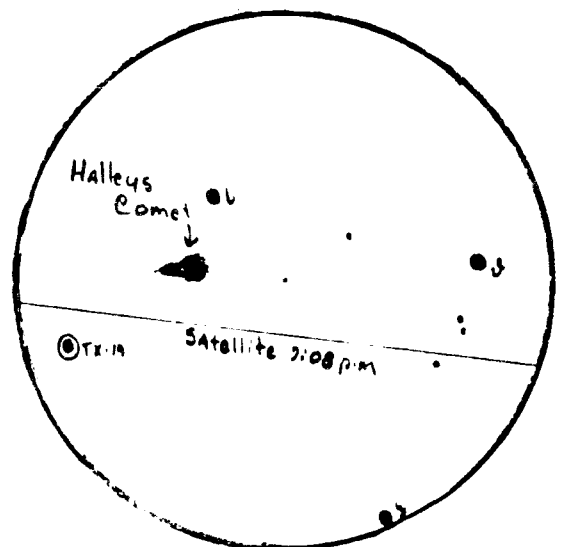
Joe Pearson
#2



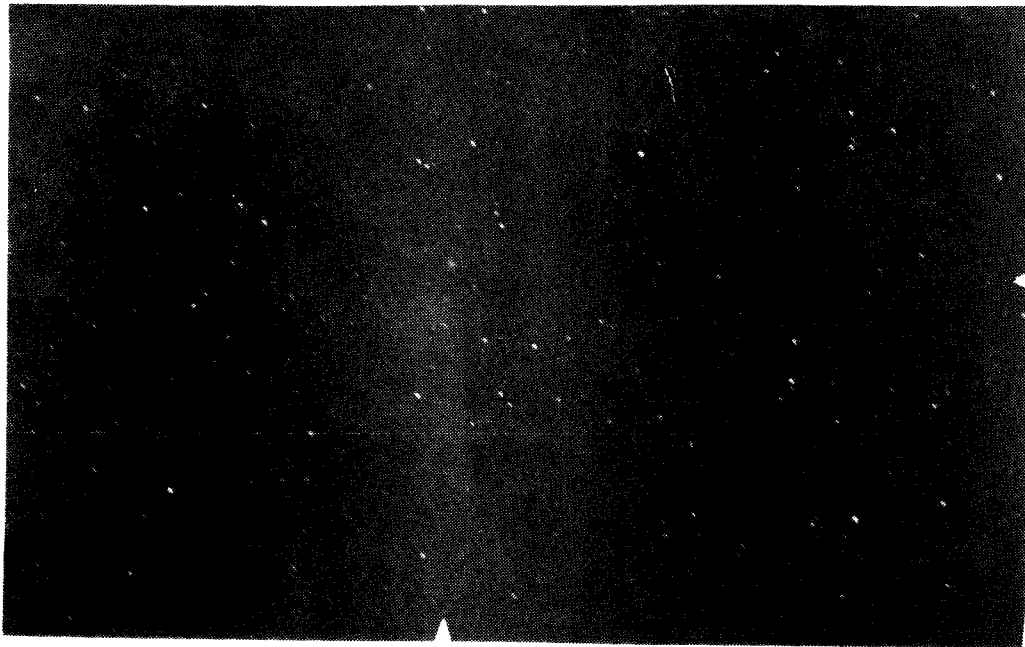
Joe Pearson
#1



Scott Owen
#4



Scott Owen
#3

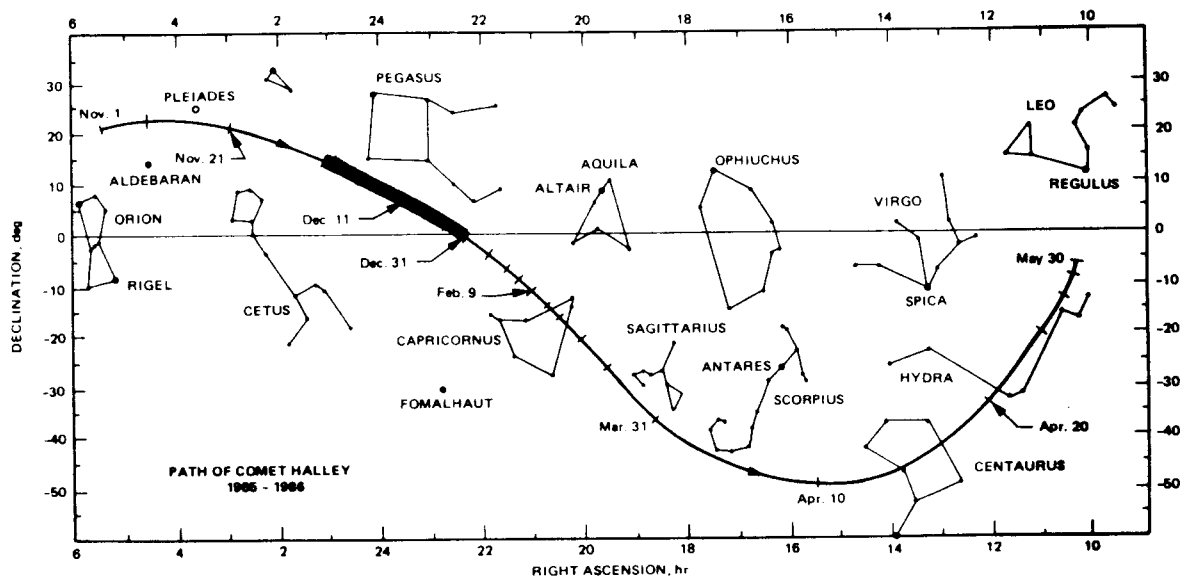
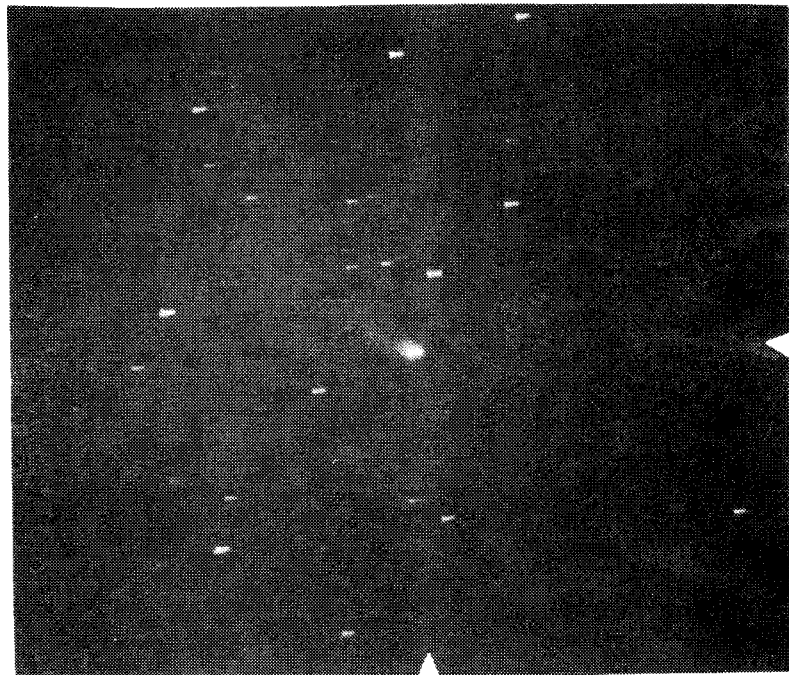


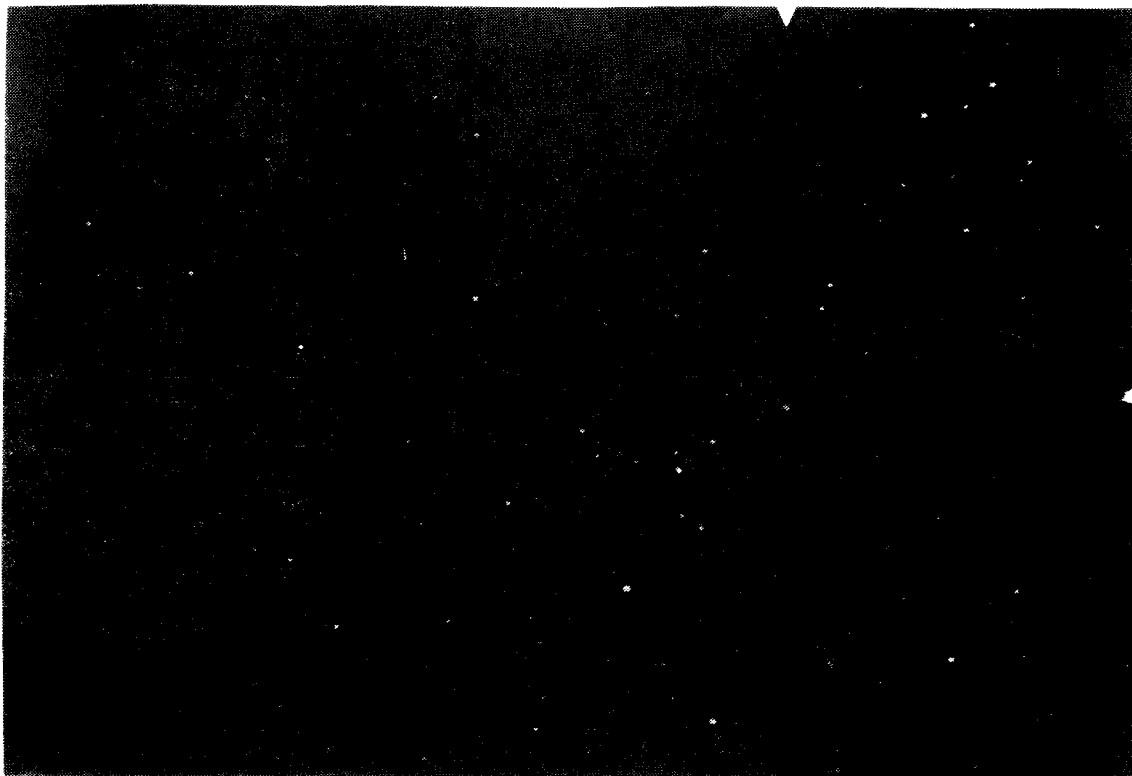
Joe Pearson
#9

John Dutton
#3

In December 1985, the club began its public star parties in earnest and hundreds of people saw Halley's through our scopes! The Kirkpatrick Planetarium became a focus for Halley info, and the Oklahoma City Astronomy Club became its eyes. These pages show the comet at various stages of development. Its tail became much more evident and it had brightened more than predicted by month's end.

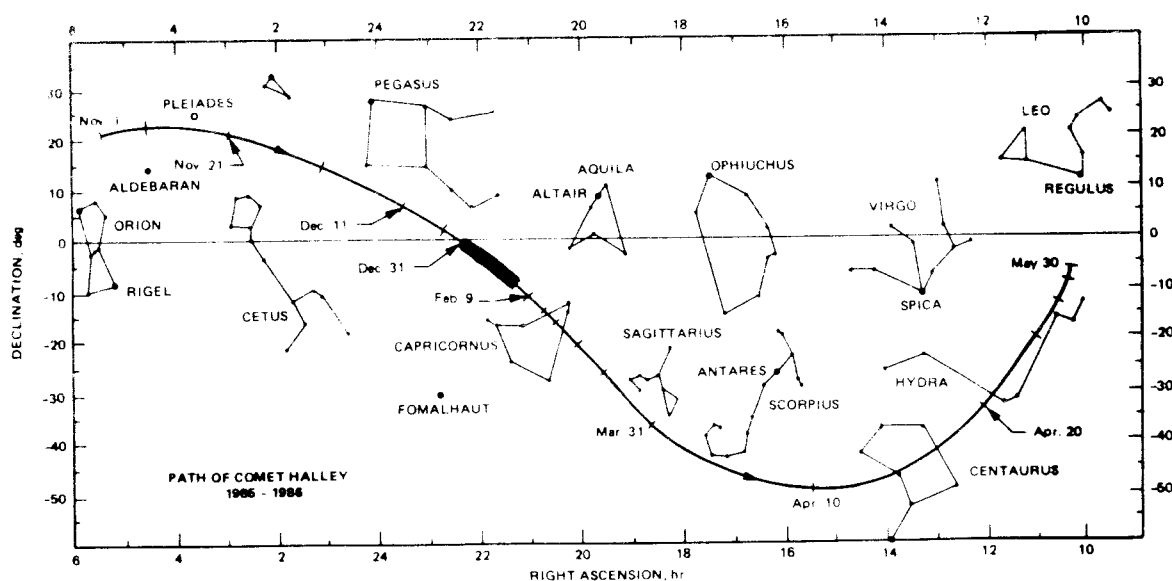
The sketches were taken from past issues of the Gazer's Gazette, the monthly newsletter of The Astronomy Club.



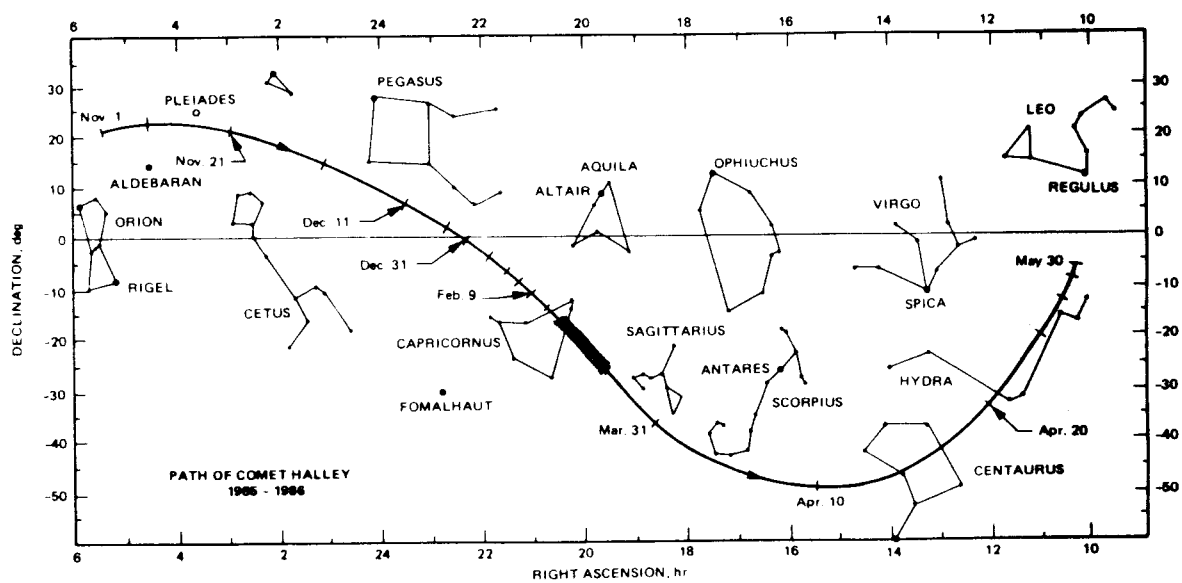


Joe Pearson
#10

Racing toward perihelion, the comet plunged towards the horizon. The Club held a public star party at Martin Nature Centre (which was well publicized) and drew a crowd which lined Memorial Road on both sides for over a mile! A parking lot was hastily set-up in a nearby orchard, and the crowds persisted even after the comet had set! Club scopes were there for the 4200 people who came to get a look! Finally, in February, a reprieve came as Halley's disappeared behind the sun and reached perihelion on February 9th. Larry Beatty caught the comet soon after in the early morning hours with the photo on the opposite page. Halley was not accompanied with a glorious tail as had been expected, but was an appreciably brighter "fuzz-ball"!



Larry Beatty
#13



During 1985 and 1986 thousands of Oklahomans viewed Comet Halley thanks to members of the Oklahoma City Astronomy Club. Public star parties were scheduled at the Zoo Amphitheatre and Martin Nature Center, among other places. Members brought their telescopes and a curious public showed up to get their "once in a lifetime" look at Halley. Club members' efforts received good press reviews as noted in this article from the March 20, 1986 issue of The Daily Oklahoman.

Price Wooldridge

The Saturday star party that was mentioned in the above article drew a crowd of over 15,000 people! It was mistakenly billed as the last chance to see the comet!

Frank & Helen Phipps
#2



2,000 Show Up To See Comet

By Wayne Singleterry

About 2,000 curious star gazers crawled out of bed early Wednesday and traveled to the Oklahoma City Zoo amphitheater to catch a rare glimpse of Halley's Comet.

They peered through 10 telescopes, including the Kirkpatrick Planetarium's large 16-inch reflector, and others set up by the Oklahoma City Astronomy Club and Lawrence Photo.

Lines started forming about 4 a.m., while the comet was still low on the horizon, planetarium director Wayne Wyrick said. The best view was between 4:30 a.m. and 5:15 a.m..

Wyrick said astronomers were prepared for a large crowd although lines were long waiting for views through the telescopes. During similar star parties in November, December and January about 1,000 people a night came out to see the comet when it wasn't as bright as it is now.

Wednesday's crowd included viewers from

age 3 to 90, Wyrick said. Many people were there who saw the comet during its last appearance in 1910.

Everyone who came got to see the comet, but those who stayed until almost daylight got a sparkling view of Saturn and its majestic rings, said planetarium education specialist Paula Tooley.

Saturn, Mars and Halley's Comet are in the same section of the sky this month.

Telescopes will be set up again at the zoo amphitheater at 4 a.m. Saturday.

Planetarium officials suggested that everyone bring binoculars.

Although telescopes give a close-up view, "it's surprising what you can see with binoculars," Wyrick said.

The planetarium will host a reception for its Twice in a Lifetime Club at 2 p.m. Friday. Anyone who saw the comet in 1910 is invited to the reception.

The club has about 120 members, Wyrick said.

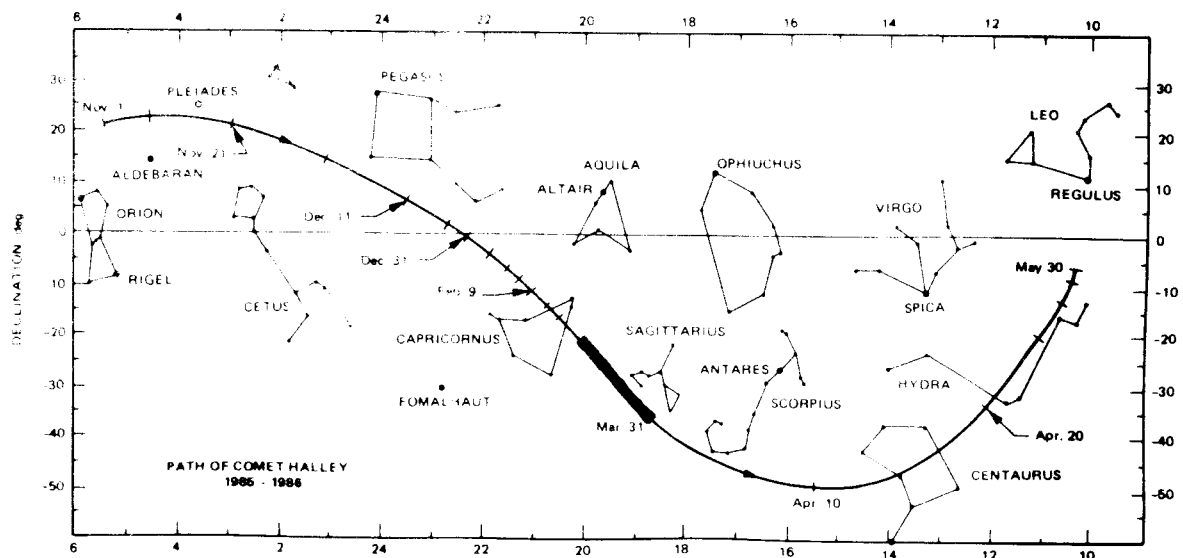
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Clive and
Beryl
Cadle #14



Craig
Crawford
#8



Frank and
Helen Phipps
#5



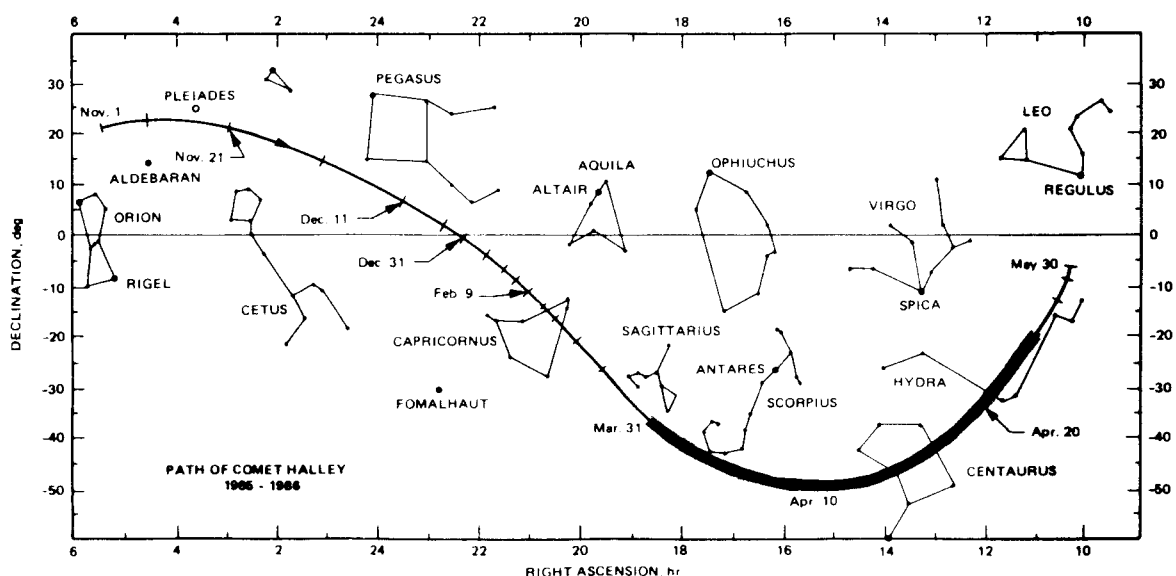
While some club members were getting great pictures in March, most were waiting for April, when the comet was closest to earth. Halley was suppose to be brightest and have the longest tail! And just when we ran to dark skies to catch the apparition, Halley's comet lost it's small tail and returned to it's 'fuzz-ball' status. Moving fast, and losing altitude, it was more difficult to capture on film, but our club members managed to turn in some winners. For most of the public, this was really the last chance to see the comet before it faded into obscurity. Still, the Oklahoma City Astronomy Club had members who had film left over....

Some interesting notes:

Clive & Beryl Cadle's picture on page 8 [picture #14] was taken from Arequipa, Peru in South America!

The Astronomy Club accumulated about 120 members over a six-month period, largely due to Halley's Comet!

Of all the photographers who contributed to this publication, only 3 had prior astrophotography experience!





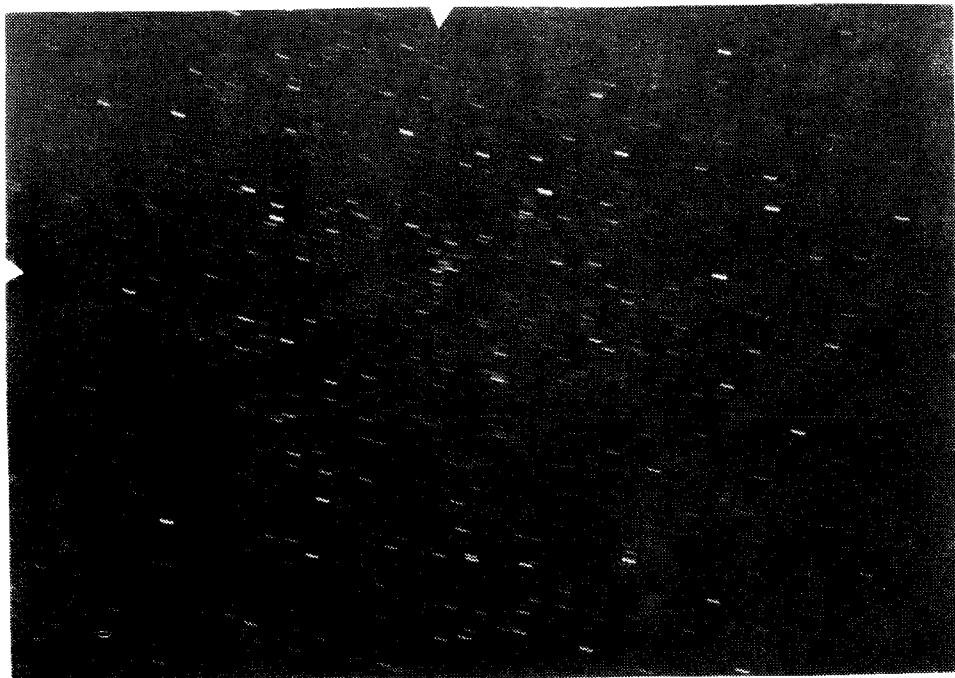
#15 (above)

Price Wooldridge

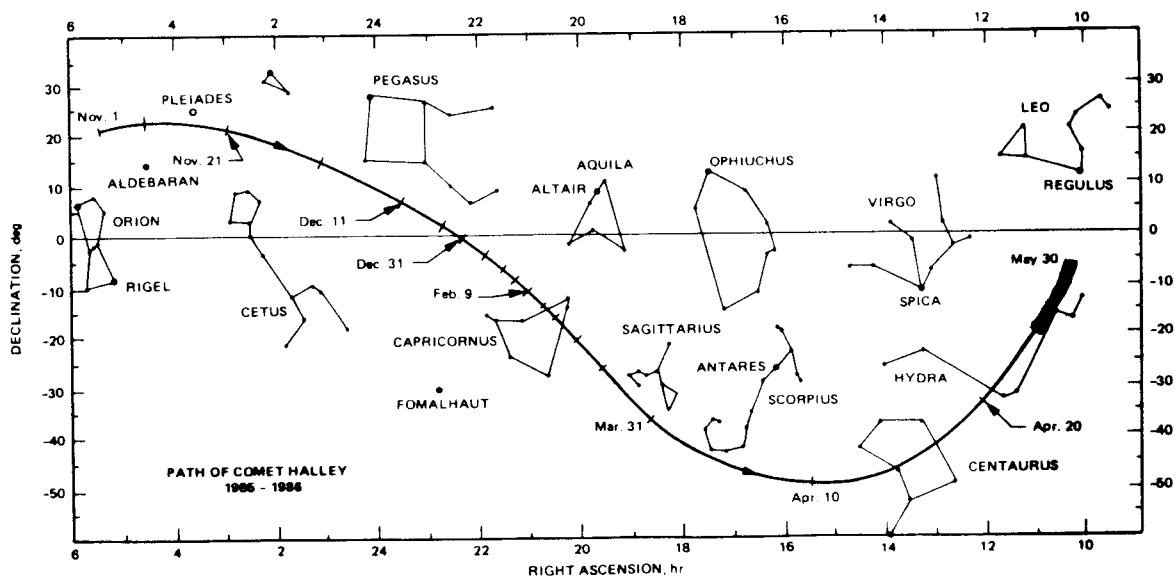
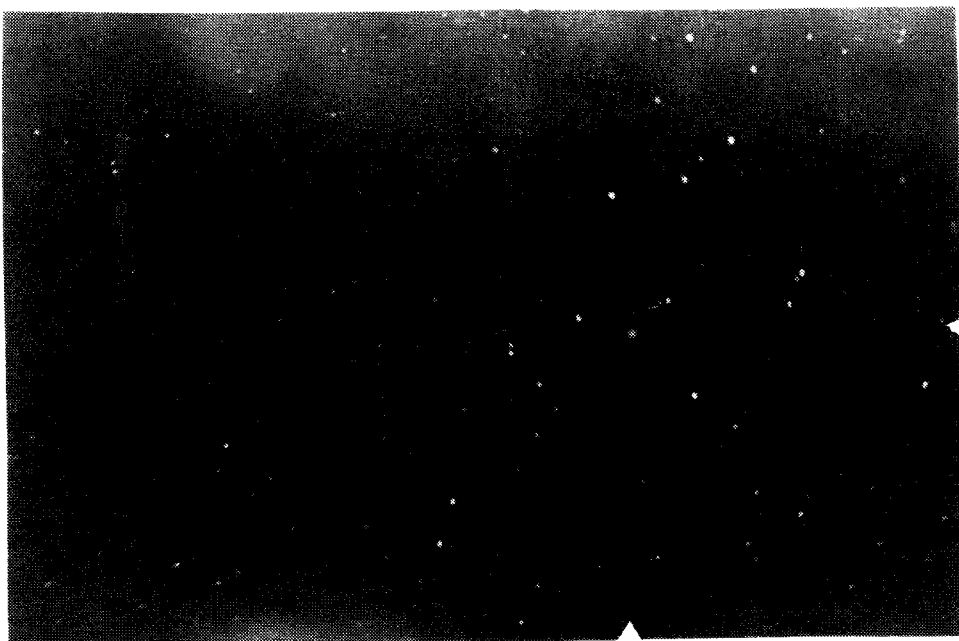
#16 (below)

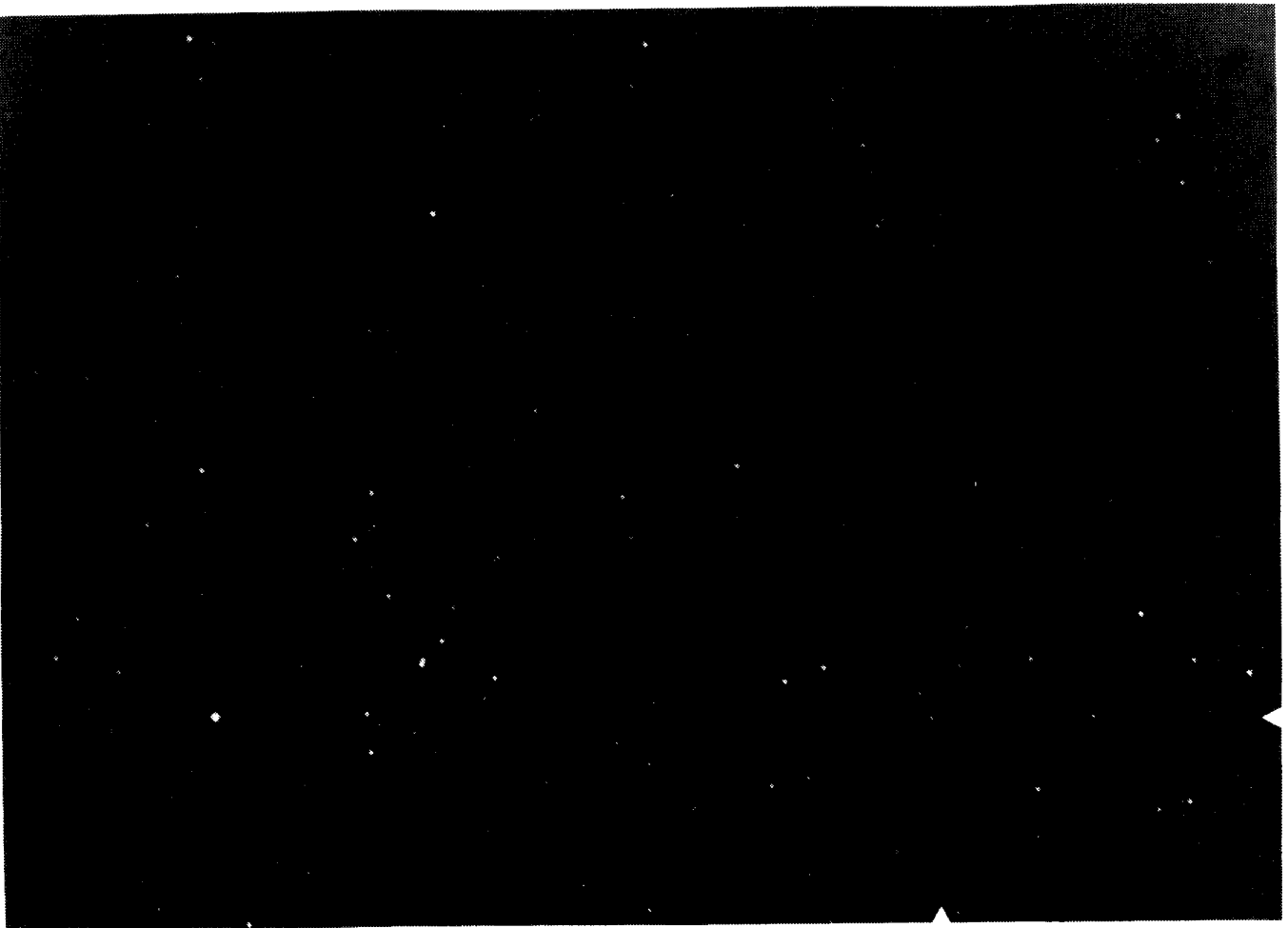


Robin Roads
#6



Phillip Brand
#1





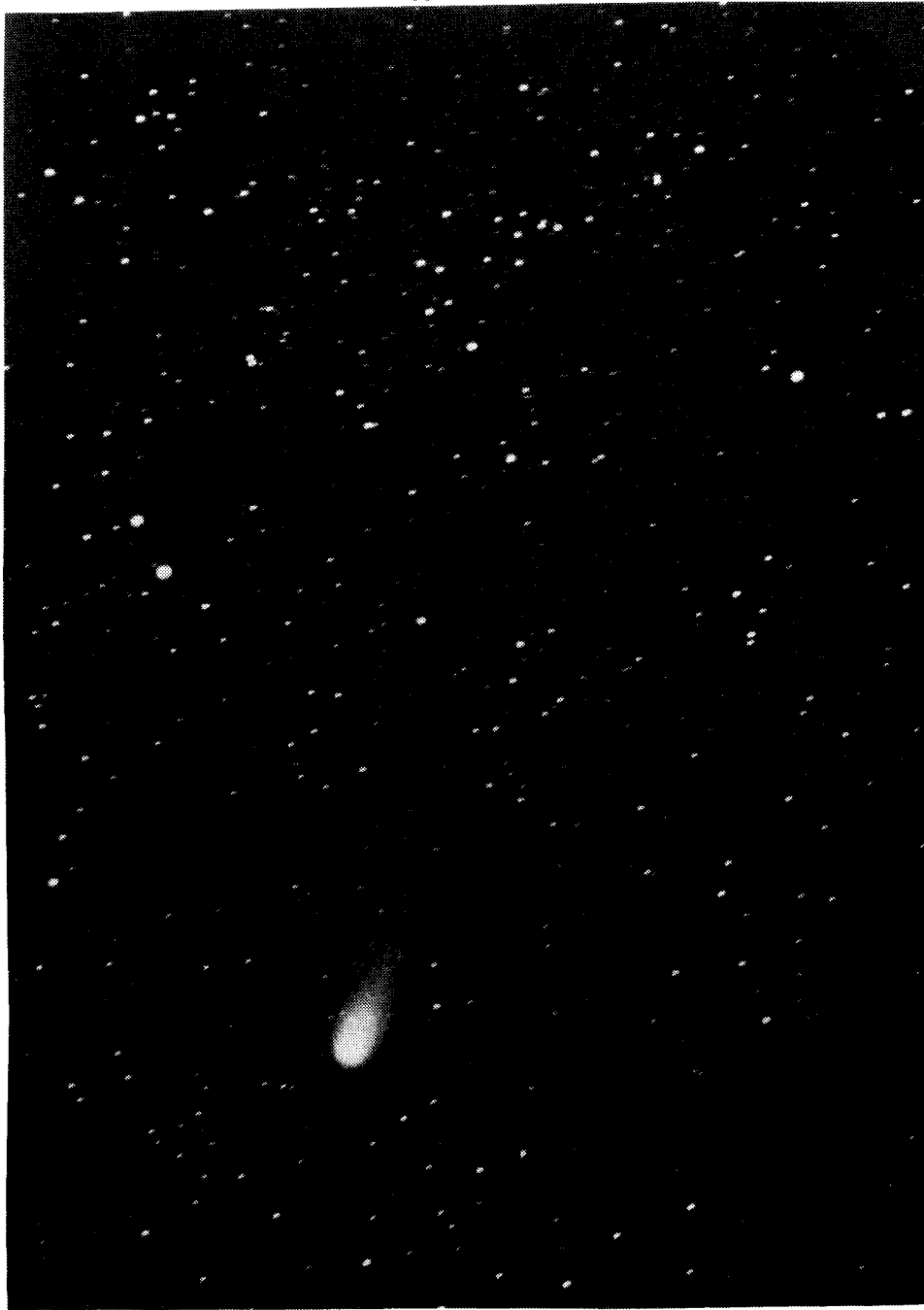
Larry Beatty
#7

Now disappointed by April's apparition, Astronomers from Oklahoma and across the nation gathered in Fort Davis, Texas for the Texas Star Party. Under velvet-black skies, club members sought one last opportunity to catch a glimpse and pix of Halley's Comet! To everyone's surprise, the comet was wonderful! Many remarked that it was the best they'd seen it. Without light pollution or public interference, Oklahoma City photographers got some great photos, including this remarkable picture by Biff Bigbie!



Biff Bigbie
#4

Joe Liddell
#12



Published in the August issue of Astronomy Magazine, this picture of Halley's Comet by Joe Liddell shows what can be done through perserverence and dedication to astrophotography. Joe's technique and experience will be matched someday by other Astronomy Club members but may never be surpassed. Now that Halley's is gone, the rest of the sky awaits the cameras and telescopes of the

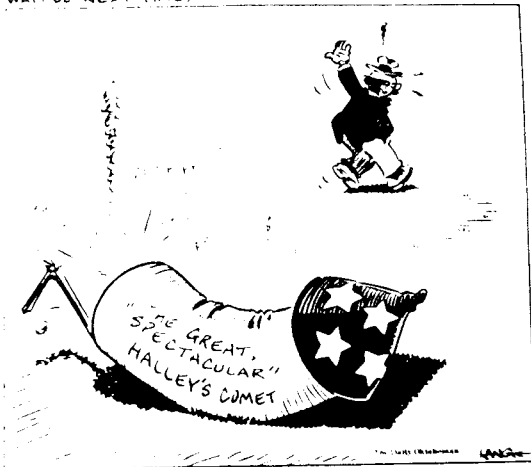
OKLAHOMA CITY ASTRONOMY CLUB

HALLEY'S COMET A MEDIA SUCCESS STORY

The much ballyhooed arrival of Halley's Comet finally occurred in 1985.

Astronomy has probably never endured so much hyperbole, even as astronomers cautioned that this was not going to be an especially favorable appearance by the famous comet. Indeed stories of Halleys approach appeared all too frequently on

WASH'G NEXT TIME!



network television newscasts as well as in newspaper stories and on local television. Occasionally a comic strip, such as Peanuts, would give space to poke fun at or call attention to this historical, once in a lifetime visit. On the editorial page of The Daily Oklahoman artist Jim Lange also found

THE BEST LAY PLANE OF ALL AND MEN

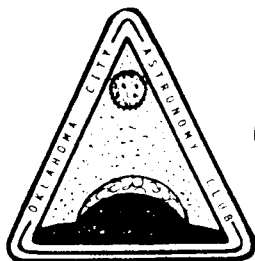


occasion to include Halley's Comet in his cartoons. Our thanks to Jim and The Daily Oklahoman for allowing us to share this collection of his work. These cartoons, which appeared in The Daily Oklahoman during the months of Halleys visit, should remind us how much Halley's Comet actually did penetrate the



thoughts of everyday people all across America.

Price Wooldridge



Oklahoma City Astronomy Club

PHOTOGRAPH BIBLIOGRAPHY

- 1 Phillip Brand
May 1986, on SR 1600, guided
5 min @ f/4, through CT-100
- 2 Frank & Helen Phipps
March 1986, on 3M 1000, static
45 sec @ f/1.8, 50mm lens
- 3 John Dutton
December 1985, on VR 1000, guided
5 min @ f/4, through CT-100
- 4 Biff Bigbie
May 1986, on hypered SR 1600, guided
30 min @ f/5.5, 550mm lens
- 5 Frank & Helen Phipps
April 1986, on SR 1600, guided
5 min @ f/3.3, 200mm lens
- 6 Robin Roads
May 1986, on VR 1000, static
2 min @ f/1.8, 50mm lens
- 7 Larry Beatty
May 1986, on hypered SR 1600, guided
5 min @ f/5.5, 300mm lens
- 8 Craig Crawford
March 1986, on hypered VR 400, static
30 sec @ f/2.8, 40mm lens
- 9 Joe Pearson
December 1985, on VR 1000, piggyback
2 min @ f/2.8, 135mm lens
- 10 Joe Pearson
January 1986, on VR 1000, piggyback
2 min @ f/2.8, 135mm lens
- 11 Craig Crawford
November 1985, on VR 1000, piggyback
5 min @ f/4.5, 200mm lens
- 12 Joe Liddell
March 1986, on Ektachrome 400, guided
30 min @ f/4.5, 350mm lens
- 13 Larry Beatty
February 1986, on HR 1600, guided
6 min @ f/5.5, 300mm lens
- 14 Clive & beryl Cadle
March 1986, on hypered 2415, static
1 min @ f/1.7, 50mm lens
- 15 Price Wooldridge
April 1986, on HR 1600, piggyback
1 min @ f/1.4, 50mm lens
- 16 Price Wooldridge
April 1986, on HR 1600, piggyback
1½ min @ f/2.8, 135mm lens

SKETCH BIBLIOGRAPHY

- 1 Joe Pearson
December 1985, 59X
- 2 Joe Pearson
December 1985, 109X
- 3 Scott Owen
December 1985, 20X
- 4 Scott Owen
December 1985, 7X
- 5 David Higgins
December 1985, 169X
- 7 Larry Beatty
October 1985, 175X

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Joe Pearson

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Price Wooldridge

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ARTWORK

Craig Crawford

STAR MAP

International
Halley Watch



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IS A MEMBER OF THE
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