



THE LUNAR OBSERVER

Newsletter of the American Lunar Society

March 1997

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Lunar Calendar

March (All Times UT)

- 2 09:37 Last Quarter
- 5 19:00 Moon 4.1 degrees
North of Neptune
- 6 07:00 Moon 4.7 degrees
North of Uranus
- 6 13:00 Moon 4.4 degrees
North of Jupiter
- 8 09:02 Perigee (357,758 km)
- 9 01:15 New Moon
Start of Lunation 918
Total eclipse of the Sun
- 10 08:00 Moon 1.4 degrees
North of Saturn
- 14 19:00 Moon 0.5 degrees
North of Adlebaran
- 16 00:06 First Quarter
- 20 23:00 Apogee (405,958 km)
- 23 11:00 Moon 3.9 degrees
South of Mars
- 24 04:45 Full Moon
Partial eclipse of the Moon,
see timetable on page 2
- 31 19:37 Last Quarter

Feature of the Month Promontorium Agarum



VIEW



IMPRESSION

Prom.
AGARUM
1/23/97

Text and sketches by Robert Bruce Kelsey

It's a Walnut Shell! It's a Skull! It's ...it's...gone...

Living in a temperate rain forest may be great for the sinuses, but it's tough on observing time. When the skies are cloudless in Tacoma, WA, it's cause for celebration. A short one, generally - living this close to the ocean when the upper atmosphere clears the fog sets in. What you see one night you won't see again for another few weeks, which is fine for NGCs and frustrating for lunar work.

Which brings me to my request. While trying for the zillionth time to get a drawing of Mare Undarum that caught the curvature (nope, not this time either ...) I picked up a feature in Promontorium Agarum with my 80mm refractor at a barlow-assisted 145X. With a red (25A) filter to dim the Full Moon, it stood out like a half-shell of a walnut, two dark ellipses in the 'slope' of the promontory's ridge separated by a thin bright line. With a green (56) filter, a small bright point appeared just below the two cavities. I admit the resolution under these skies with a barlow isn't wonderful, but the promontory looked as if it had a skull etched in it - the ridges curved around the two "eyes", thinned along the bright "nose" and then met the lunar floor.

The most detailed map I have is #38 in Rukl's "Atlas of the Moon", and that doesn't show any structures in Agarum that help me make sense of what I saw. Has anyone else seen this? (Over)

Deep Partial Eclipse

North American observers will be treated to a deep partial eclipse of the Moon on the evening of March 23/24. At mid-eclipse 92.4% of the Moon will be immersed in the Earth's umbra. The appearance should be that of a red-orange disk with a thin white cap. With a stretch of the imagination it might be compared to Mars and its ice cap, which will be only 10 degrees away.

There is not much photographable color on the Moon so black and white films are normally the films of choice in lunar photography. For eclipses, however, it is usually best to load your camera with a fast (ISO 400) color film to capture the full beauty of the event. Correct exposures are hard to predict so take plenty of pictures. As a starting point try 1/250 sec. for an f/8 system on the nearly full Moon. Increase the exposure as the eclipse progresses; 1/2 sec. should be about right for most of the partially covered phases. Proper exposure for maximum eclipse is really tough to predict but will often be in the 2-3 minute range. Shoot often, bracket generously, and keep your fingers crossed.

Observers are urged to send their eclipse observations to Francis G. Graham, P.O. Box 209, East Pittsburgh, PA 15112. Francis is not only the A.L.S. President and Editor of *Selenology*, he is also the A.L.P.O. Coordinator for Eclipses and Photometry.

From the Editor

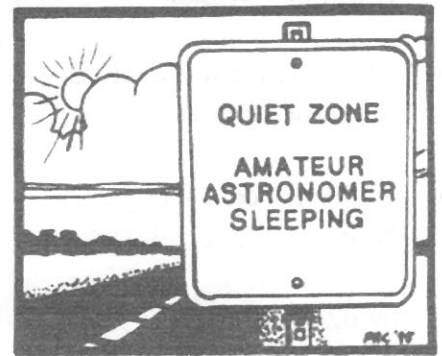
This marks the final issue of *The Lunar Observer* as a publication of the American Lunar Society. Although the work has been enjoyable and the response has been gratifying, we find that it is not economically feasible to publish a monthly newsletter on the limited budget of the Society.

Thanks to all those who sent encouraging words and especially those who contributed their work to this noble experiment. Please continue to send your observations to Francis Graham for publication in *Selenology*. I will also gladly accept any observations in my capacity as ALPO Coordinator of General Lunar Programs.

Wishing you clear & steady skies W.M.D.

Eclipse Timetable March 24 (U.T.)

- 01:41 Penumbral eclipse begins
- 02:58 Partial eclipse begins
- 04:39 Mid-eclipse
- 06:22 Partial eclipse ends
- 07:38 Penumbral eclipse ends



Cartoon by:

Paul R. Castle
Rock Island, Illinois

Feature of the Month (Cont.)

Does anyone have more detailed maps or photographs that show two ravines in the northwest end of Agarum? The fog rolled in just as I finished this drawing, and with Tacoma skies being what they are, I might not see another Full Moon until July. Patience is not my strong suit - perhaps those of you with bigger apertures or better maps can tell me if I was "seeing things" or not.

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