OUR NEXT MEETING will be at the home of Mac Morgan, 408 Monte Largo NE (296-3953, see map), on Friday, February 8 at 7:30 PM. Telescopes—how to choose and use them—will be the topic of the meeting, and we will have several of our experienced members there with a number of different types of telescopes to explain the mountings, optics, advantages and disadvantages of the various designs. The club's 8" Montgomery (Newtonian) reflector will also be there. If it is clear, we hope to be able to see Comet Bradfield. At the business meeting, we will discuss plans for improvements at the Tolles' site in Sandia Park. A committee will be established to collect proposals from the membership on pads, pier, and facilities that the club should have at our dark-sky site, and to coordinate the eventual construction of these improvements. All interested members are requested to attend. Please be there!

AT OUR LAST MEETING, we had only eight people present, but the club elections were held, we discussed future programs and activities, and saw slides of club history, telescopes, and the Jovian satellites.

After some lamentation about the small turnout and the state of the club, Bill Wampler and Derek Wallentinsen volunteered to serve another year in the respective posts of president and secretary-treasurer. Mac Morgan offered to become vice-president. This slate was nominated (indeed, the only nominations were these three) and “unanimously” elected.

Programs to increase knowledge of astronomy, the benefits of the club, and club activity were the central topic of the meeting. Among the ideas that are being examined for future gatherings of the Albuquerque Astronomers are educational sessions on the use of telescopes, celestial coordinates and time, and astrophotography. Members with experience and expertise in these subjects will be invited to share this information with others at various get-togethers during the year. It was suggested that plans be formulated for improvements for observing at Jim Tolles’s site east of the Sandias. A work party of volunteers would be formed sometime in the summer to lay the pads, etc. NASA films will be presented at several meetings. James Reese will get the film “Universe” to be shown to the club. Field trips: the now completed VLA is tentatively scheduled for a summer visit, as is Capilla Peak Observatory of UNM. Speakers we will try to get include Mike Zeilik and Klaus Keil. Bob Kyrlach will seek out information on the Visiting Scientists Program for further possibilities. We will arrange a show at the Hefferan-Planetary with Rich Reif. Solar observing at Jerry Coffe’s and a tour of Carson Astronomical Instruments were also mentioned. Numerous star parties are planned, both in town and out at Tolles’s site. It is hoped that several astrophotography nights can be arranged. Comet Bradfield in February provides a good opportunity for photography.

With the help of our members we can accomplish these activities, which will benefit the club and individual participants as well.

The club will print a handout briefly describing club activities and benefits for members. We will also try to give the club’s 8” telescope a higher visibility in the coming year. During 1979 it was virtually unused.

(COVER)
As it was cloudy, we did no observing at the January meeting. Host Bob Kyrlach showed slides of early club history, his 12" reflector and 6" refractor, the solar eclipse trip he took last February, and of the Jovian satellites.

STAR PARTY will be held on Saturday evening, February 9 at Bullhead Park (see map below). This will be a good chance to spot Comet Bradfield, which should then be visible in small telescopes and, perhaps, binoculars. Everybody cross your fingers for clear weather!!

NEW MEMBERS: Gordon Lawrence, Rt. 1, Box 1504, Los Lunas, NM 87031. Gary Ashurst, 10316 Delicado NE, 87111, 293-8523. Welcome!

MEMBERSHIP POSTER is included with this newsletter. Many thanks to Wilfred Pedroncelli for compiling and printing it!

CLUB TELESCOPE: A reminder that this 8" Newtonian reflector can be checked out by qualified members for a two-week period for a $2 fee. This instrument has eyepieces, filters, and a durable transport box. Telescope Curator: Kerri Seay (983-4279).

GOLDEN ANNIVERSARY of the discovery of the ninth planet, Pluto, is on February 18. Clyde William Tombaugh found the object blinking back and forth on a pair of plates taken from Flagstaff, Arizona on January 23 and 29 and the discovery --a notable achievement of astronomy in this century--was announced by Lowell Observatory on March 13, 1930. Its detection was a tribute to both Tombaugh's observational diligence and Percival Lowell's persistence in the belief of the existence of a trans-Neptunian planet. Tombaugh, now Professor Emeritus of Astronomy at NMSU, annually celebrates both his February 4th birthday and the discovery anniversary with a commemorative lecture. This month, a scientific meeting on Pluto will be held in Las Cruces to observe the planet's Golden Year.

ASTROLOGICAL EVENTS CALENDAR. Enclosed find your annual pocket calendar of meteor showers, planetary conjunctions, etc. Clear skies!

MAILBAG MISCELLANY. Astronomical Data Service offers several predictive publications for astronomers. Skywatcher's Almanac gives a quick reference for information on the Sun, Moon, planets, stars, and constellations. Lunar and solar risings, settings, and phases are predicted at daily intervals for your specific location. Eclipses, occultations by the Moon, constellation index, star maps and catalog, planetary phenomena and visibility, and explanatory material round out the Almanac. Also available is Sunlight Summary, a compilation of daily risings, settings, and twilights, good for any year at a given latitude and longitude. Local Planet Visibility Report and Comparative Ephemeris present data on the five bright planets. Prices for these useful publications range from six to sixteen dollars. I will have further information at the next meeting or you can write them at Astronomical Data Service, 3222 Leisure Lane, Colorado Springs, CO 80917.