

Halley's comet stars in show at Morehead Planetarium

By ANIKET MAJUMDAR
Staff Writer

"Julius Caesar saw it, some 80 years before the birth of Christ. . . Christopher Columbus saw it, and Leonardo da Vinci, in the middle ages of Europe. . . It was seen by the ancient astronomers of China. . . and by great minds in Europe: Kepler, Isaac Newton, the Englishman Halley. . . It was seen by our grandparents when the present century was young. . . And now, it comes again."

Thus begins *Return of the Comet*, the current Morehead Planetarium show spotlighting Halley's comet, which visits our solar system again after a 76-year absence.

The 50-minute presentation, written by assistant planetarium director James Manning and prepared by six technical assistants, took more than six months of research and hard work to put together. The show describes the comet's nature, talks about its visits — past and current — and points out where and how to see it once it comes within view.

"The work was titanic," Manning says.

Halley's Comet comes closest to us on its inbound journey Nov. 27, when it will be about 58 million miles away. April 11 will mark the comet at its closest position to the Earth on its outbound journey; it will then be 39 million miles away.

The comet's appearance in the night skies is being touted as a "once in a lifetime experience." Observatories around the globe are prepared to monitor the comet's movement, and planetariums prepare popular shows to inform and inspire people. Planetariums in Richmond, Va., and Salt Lake City, Utah, have already prepared

shows for commercial distribution. The staff of the Morehead Planetarium has prepared not only information sheets giving relative positions of the earth and the comet but also star maps depicting the night sky in winter and the early morning sky in spring. They will later release a sheet tracing the path of the comet. On a lighter note, the planetarium is selling colored comet pill candies, T-shirts and other comet memorabilia.

Meanwhile, *Return of the Comet* which began Sept. 3, is drawing large crowds. According to Ross Darrow, a graduate student in Operations Research and an avid follower of events at the planetarium, "The show is informative, easy to understand and self-explanatory — about as good as *Planet Search* (the previous show) but not as good as *Star of Bethlehem*."

While area residents flock to the planetarium to get a preview of the blazing swath Halley's will cut across the night sky, UNC physicists and astronomers exhibit excitement of a different kind.

Under the tutelage of Bruce Carney, a UNC assistant professor, Derek Meares, a senior from Lumberton, and Rodney Jones, a graduate student from Statesville, have made preparations to photograph the comet using the 24-inch main telescope at the Morehead Observatory. Weather permitting, photographs may be available within a week's time, well before the comet becomes visible to the unaided human eye.

In addition, approximately 500 students in Astronomy 31 will get an opportunity to look at Halley's through the main telescope as part of their lab work.

According to Wayne Christiansen, coordinator of Astronomy 31, a new

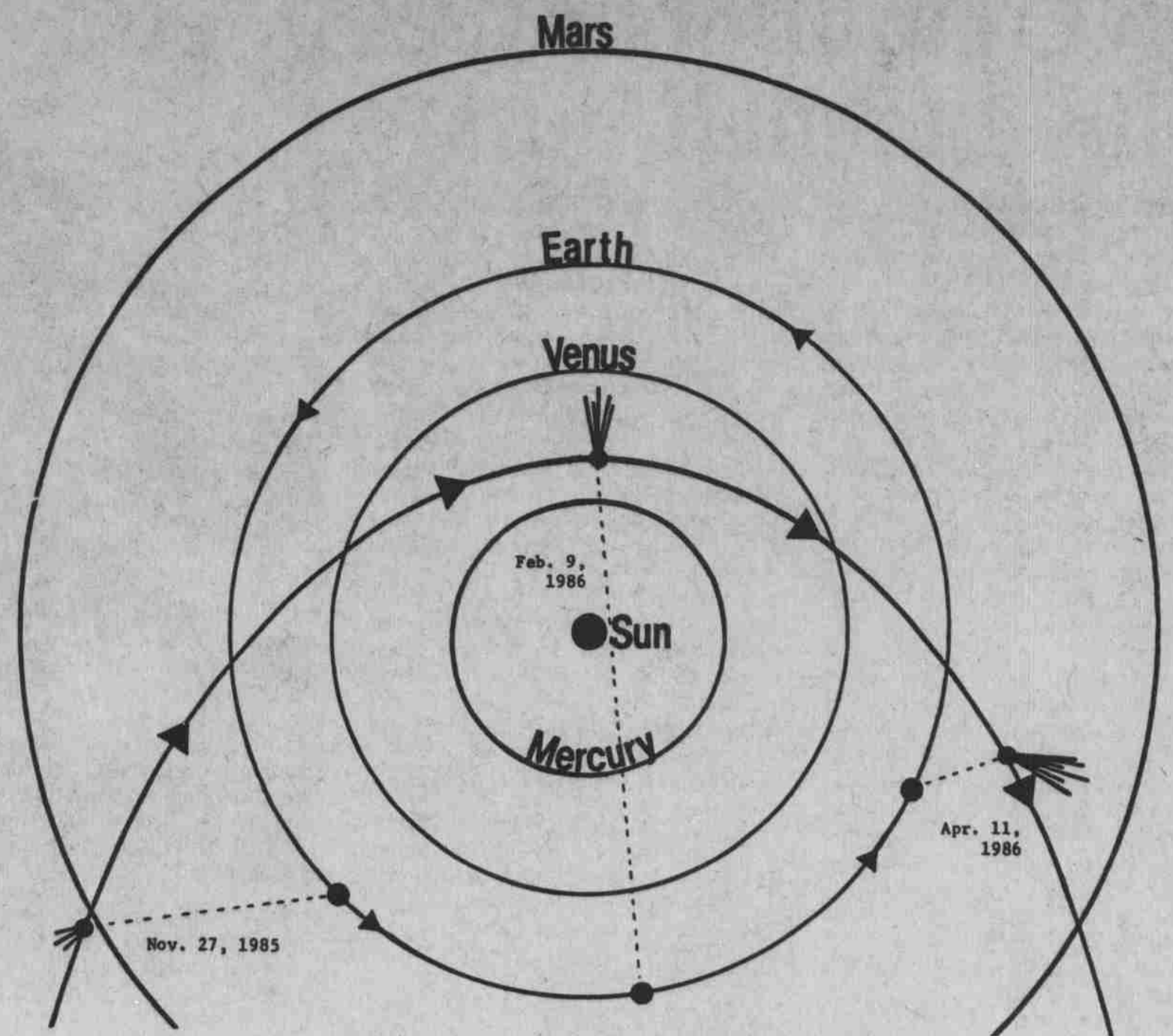
section that opened this year to accommodate more students was promptly got filled up. "Astronomy is the only science that interests me, and getting to see Halley's comet will be an added bonus," said Bryan Adams, a freshman who signed up for the course despite plans to major in Radio, Television and Motion Pictures. Other students echoed Adams' remark about the comet.

Austin Giles, who organizes the planetarium portion of Astronomy 31 curriculum, plans to devote several lab hours to Halley's comet so that students can familiarize themselves with the nature of the comet, its position relative to the earth and good dates and times to view the comet. His preferred formula: a dark sky, a good view of the southern horizon and a pair of binoculars.

But the privilege of viewing the comet through sophisticated instruments, won't belong to students alone. Christiansen said that the physics department, which operates the Morehead Observatory, will try to accommodate public interest with open viewing sessions, beginning November and running through April.

The last time such attention was paid to a comet was in 1973, when Comet Kohoutek made an appearance on our horizons. But unlike Kohoutek, nicknamed "the weak streak" and a visual fiasco, Halley's comet should be visible to the naked eye and will definitely be visible with the aid of binoculars or small telescopes.

As the iceball cometh nearer and nearer and media attention to it escalates, more people will be flocking to the Morehead Planetarium. Fortunate for them, *Return of the Comet* will run through Nov. 18 and then resume showings spring semester.



Halley's comet comes closest to Earth April 11, when it will be 39 million miles away.

Foreign eyes on U.S. in Union movies

By IAN WILLIAMS
Staff Writer

The first festival in the Carolina Union Film Committee's '85-'86 schedule keeps with the committee's dedication to showcase varied perspectives. "Foreigners on America" features works by foreign directors on the subject of America and American society. These aren't films with subtitles and foreign actors, nor are they documentaries; they are movies in which a director from abroad tries to create what he perceives to be a good representation of American behavior.

Are these directors and their portrayals accurate? Yes and no, says Howard Harper, a professor in the UNC English department with a special interest in film. "Sometimes they miss general American ideas, but their objectivity to America allows them to see what we accept as natural," Harper says.

The festival, suggested by committee member Steve Carr, a senior from Raleigh, was originally intended merely to showcase foreign directors, but the theme was specified after consideration by the Union Activities Board.

"There is almost a phobia at the Union about showing films that are obscure or unknown," says Carr. "So I proposed

a festival that would not only showcase foreign filmmakers but show people that some of the most well-known 'American' movies were made by foreigners. The films don't have any superficial similarity, but more of an aesthetic continuum. It's American subject matter with a sort of European quirkiness."

The festival began Saturday with Milos Forman's *Taking Off*. Forman, who recently won an Oscar for his direction of *Amadeus*, examines the late-'60s counterculture with *Taking Off*. The showing of *Taking Off* was special due to the presence of UNC Catalogue Editor Tony Harvey (see Harvey profile, *DTH* page 4), who plays one of the four leads in the film. Harvey entertained Union audiences with stories about the film's making after the first showing Saturday night.

Director Michael Curtiz's *Mildred Pierce*, which boasts an Oscar-winning performance by Joan Crawford, is the second film in the festival and will show tonight. Curtiz, who also directed *Casablanca*, filmed *Mildred Pierce* three years after the Bogart classic.

WEEK'S FARE

TODAY

12 *Mildred Pierce* will be shown at 7 and 9:30 p.m. in the Union Auditorium.
Ann Woodward, violinist, and Francis Whang, pianist, will perform at 8:15 p.m. in East Duke Building at Duke.

The North Carolina Symphony will perform with Charles Treger, violinist, at 8 p.m. in Memorial Auditorium in Raleigh. Call 733-9536 for ticket information.

Return of the Comet is the current show at the Morehead Planetarium. Call 962-1248 for more information.

Other Bright Colors and Modern Mannequin will perform at Cat's Cradle. Call 967-9053 for more information.

Three Hits will perform at Rhythm Alley. Call 929-8172 for more information.

FRIDAY

13 *Beverly Hills Cop* will be shown at 4:30, 7, and 9:30 p.m. and at midnight in the Union Auditorium. Call 966-3128 for ticket information.

Anything Goes will be performed by the Raleigh Little Theatre at 8 p.m. through Saturday and on Wednesday at the Raleigh Little Theatre. Call 821-3111 for ticket information.

Harold Wick, tenor, will perform at 9 p.m. through Saturday at the Jazz Mill. Call 967-0573 for ticket information.

Tunji Band will perform at 10 p.m. at the ArtSchool. Call 929-2896 for ticket information.

U.V. Prom and Bangah will perform at Cat's Cradle. Call 967-9053 for more information.

Terminal Mouse will perform at Rhythm Alley. Call 929-8172 for more information.

SATURDAY

14 *Under the Volcano* will be shown at 7 and 9:30 p.m. in the Union Auditorium.

Away from the Limelight: Abstract Painting Today, a panel discussion, will begin at 1:30 p.m. at the North Carolina Museum of Art in Raleigh. Call 833-1935 for more information.

MOVIES

Plaza I—Fright Night at 3, 5:05, 7:15 and 9:25.
Plaza II—The Emerald Forest at 2:40, 5, 7:20 and 9:40.

Plaza III—Cocoon at 2:45, 5, 7:20 and 9:40, no 7:20 show on Friday. *Creator* sneak preview at 7:30 Friday.

Varsity I—Camilla at 2:15, 4:15, 7:30 and 9:30 today. *The Shooting Party* starts Friday at 2:15, 4:15, 7:30 and 9:30.

Varsity II—The Return of the Soldier at 2 and 7:10 ends today. *The Gods Must Be Crazy* at 4:15 and 7:10 today; starting Friday at 4:15 and 9:10. *Camilla* starts Friday at 2 and 7:10.

Varsity Lateshows—Body Double and *The Gods Must Be Crazy* at 11:30 Friday and Saturday.

Carolina Blue—Mass Appeal at 7:15 and 9:15.
Carolina White—Back to the Future at 2:30, 4:45, 7 and 9:30.

Carolina Classic—An American in Paris at 3 ends today. *On the Waterfront* starts Friday at 3.

Carolina Lateshows—The Breakfast Club at 11:30 and *Stripes* at 11:45 Friday and Saturday.

Ram I—Compromising Positions at 7:05 and 9:05; weekend matinees at 2:05 and 4:05.

Ram II—Year of the Dragon at 7 and 9:30 ends today. *St. Elmo's Fire* starts Friday at 7 and 9:15; weekend matinees at 2 and 4:15.

Ram III—Pee-wee's Big Adventure at 7 and 9:10; weekend matinees at 2 and 4:10.

Ram Lateshows—Wizards and *Friday the 13th* at 11:45 Friday and Saturday.

Compiled by Elizabeth Ellen, assistant arts editor.

SUNDAY

15 *The Ghost and Mister Chicken* will be shown at 2 and 4 p.m. and *Bridge on the River Kwai* will be shown at 6 and 9 p.m. in the Union Auditorium.

Charles Dungey, bassist, will perform at 7 p.m. at the ArtSchool. Call 929-2896 for ticket information.

TUESDAY

17 *The Terror of Tiny Town* will be shown at 7 p.m., *Santa Claus Conquers the Martians* will be shown 8:30 p.m., and *Glen or Glenda?* will be shown at 9:45 in the Union Auditorium.

Del Fuegos and Right Profile will perform at Cat's Cradle. Call 967-9053 for more information.

WEDNESDAY

18 *Shadow of a Doubt* will be shown at 7 and 9:30 p.m. in the Union Auditorium.

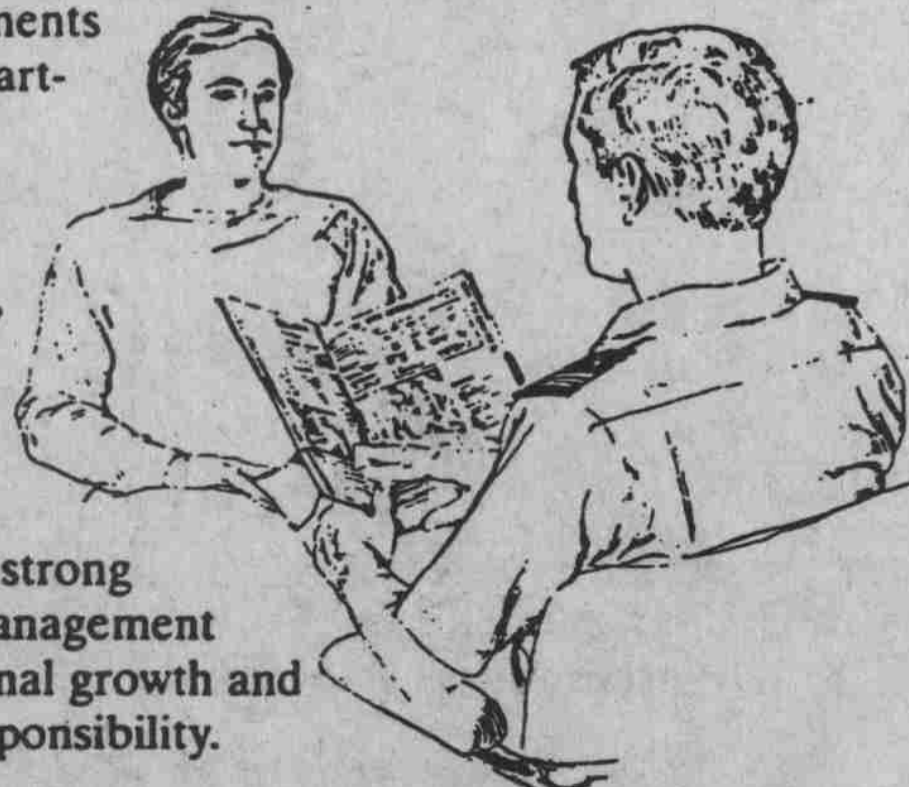
Other Mothers and Miracle Legion will perform at Cat's Cradle. Call 967-9053 for more information.

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