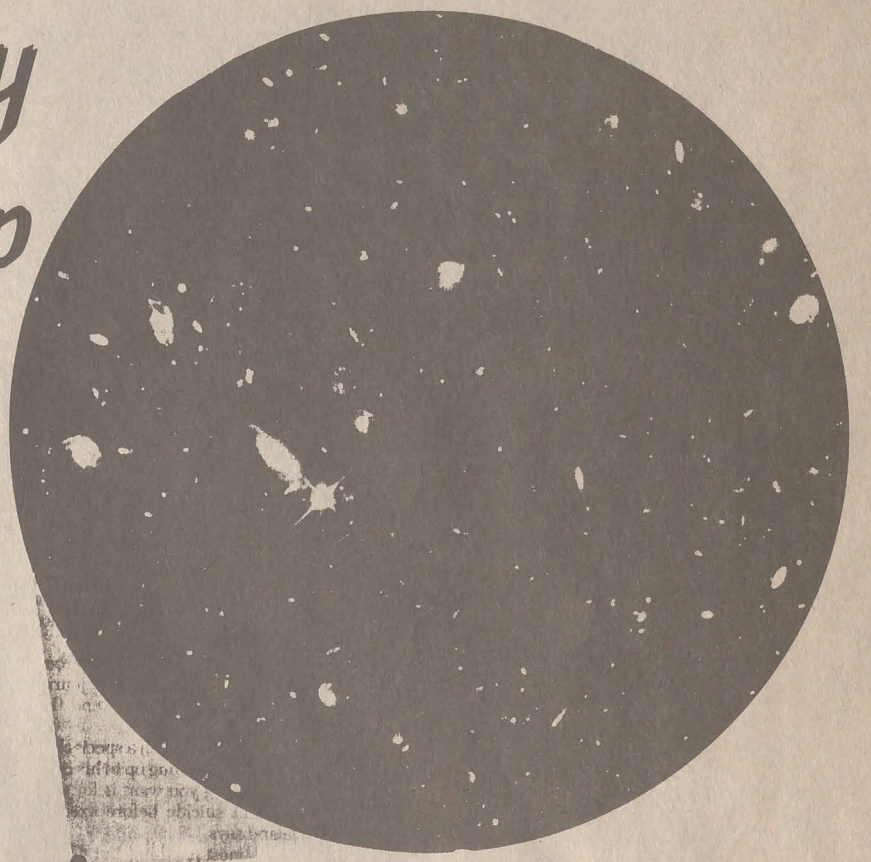


PHOTO BY DEBBIE PARKS
Astronomy Instructor Tom Gougeon discovered no damage to the telescope at the Jesse Besser Museum's Planetarium

ACC's Astronomy Program looks up

Seeing Eternity in a Grain of Sand

For 10 days in December, the orbiting Hubble telescope focused on one thin sliver of the sky near the handle of the Big Dipper. The telescope transmitted 342 separate images; together they formed the deepest image of space ever taken.



Cosmic menagerie: The Hubble image shows galaxies as spirals and ellipticals, but also as odd shapes, spurring new theories of how galaxies formed, and when.

Hubble photos enlightening

By JOEL POTRYKUS
STAFF WRITER

Astronomy has always fascinated people and bewildered the world's minds. The limits of space and the countless stars are nearly impossible for most to fathom. For centuries, astronomers have been in pursuit of an answer to the mysteries of the sky.

One such tool for exploration, the strongest viewing instrument ever created, is the Hubble Space Telescope. The Hubble was built by NASA and first placed in orbit on April 14, 1990, by the shuttle *Discovery*.

The Hubble was named after the deceased astronomer Edwin Powell Hubble, who had constructed some of the largest telescopes prior to the Hubble.

This telescope has been used to explore planets, search galaxies, photograph star formations, and investigate nearly every mystery astronomers want to solve. Most recently, the Hubble stunned scientists and observers by discovering previously hidden galaxies.

In mid-December, NASA astronomers pointed the Hubble at the handle of the Big Dipper. The telescope re-

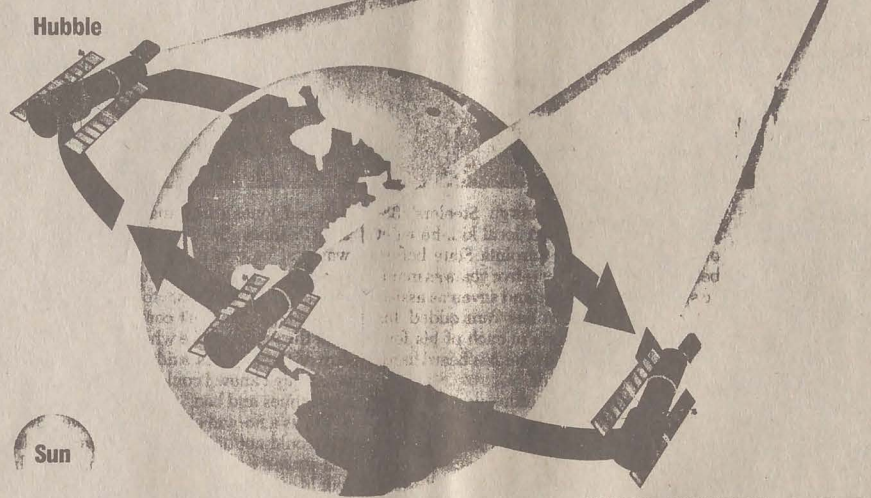
mained stationary for ten days. The photographs it returned showed at least 1,500 new galaxies. The discovery of these galaxies amazed astronomers. Their estimate of the number of galaxies existing increased from the previous guess of 10 billion, to an astonishing 50 billion.

What also shocked the scientific community was the detection of two new planets outside our solar system. The surprise is that these planets are at the right temperature to hold water and harbor complex molecules. As a result, it is now official that their is real potential for life on other planets.

Discussing the finds of the Hubble Telescope, ACC's physics and astronomy instructor Tom Gougeon said he wasn't too surprised at the nearly-infinite galaxies it had found. He also believes that humans are not the only life in the universe. "It would be egocentric to assume that we are the only ones."

These recent discoveries have created a small outbreak of interest in astronomy among the public. This interest can be developed through ACC's astronomy course.

ACC offers a three-credit course at the Jesse Besser Museum's Planetarium. There



are currently nine students enrolled in astronomy, held once a year. Gougeon brought the class back last year after a small lapse of enrolling students.

Besides teaching at the college, Gougeon also is the director of the Planetarium. He began volunteering at the Planetarium in the early '80s and has been director since 1992.

Like most people, Gougeon's attraction to space began early, in the first grade, he stated. Since a young age, astronomy has always been a hobby and learning experience for Gougeon.

Gougeon is excited at this new interest in space and hopes more people will become involved in answering any questions they may have. These recent discoveries, according to Gougeon "have brought astronomy to the forefront of the public."

To further pursue the many mysteries of the sky, visit the Planetarium, open Sundays, with shows at 1 and 3 pm.

March Evening Skies



This chart is drawn for Latitude 40° North, but should be useful to stargazers throughout the continental United States. It represents the sky at the following local times:

Late February	10 p.m.
Early March	9 p.m.
Late March	8 p.m.

This map is applicable one hour either side of the above times. More detailed charts appear monthly in the magazines *Astronomy* and *Sky & Telescope*.

The planet Venus is plotted for mid-March 1996. At chart time 10 objects of first magnitude or brighter are visible. In order of brightness they are: Venus, Sirius, Arcturus, Capella, Rigel, Procyon, Betelgeuse, Aldebaran, Pollux, and Regulus. In addition to stars, other objects that should be visible to the unaided eye are labeled on the map. The double star (Dbl) at the bend of the handle of the Big Dipper is easily detected. The famous Orion Nebula, a cloud of gas and dust out of which stars are forming, is marked (Nb) in that constellation. The open or galactic cluster (OCI) known as the "Beehive" can be located between the Gemini twins and Leo. Coma Berenices, "The Hair of Berenice," is another open cluster (OCI), between Leo and Bootes. The position of an external star system, called Andromeda Galaxy after the constellation in which it appears, is also indicated (Gbx). Try to observe these objects with unaided eye and binoculars.

— D. David Batch



Flowerland Designs

Fresh ~ Silk ~ Dried
Arrangements

Gifts

Balloons

10% OFF
WHEN YOU SHOW YOUR
STUDENT ID

635 West Chisholm
Alpena, MI 49707
517-356-9377

©Abrams Planetarium
Subscription: \$7.50 per year,
from *Sky Calendar*, Abrams
Planetarium, Michigan State
University, East Lansing,
Michigan 48824.