

## *Contents*

### **Figures**

### **Preface**

<b>Chapter 1—An Introduction to Meteors</b>	<b>1</b>
Introduction	1
Meteors	3
Fireballs and Bolides	3
Trains and Persistent Trains	4
Meteor Showers and Storms—Comet Contact	6
Categorizing Meteor Showers	10
Meteor Shower Timing before 1999	13
Predicting Times of Maximum Today	14
Sporadic Meteors	15
Solar System Remnants or Interstellar?	16
Shower Member or Sporadic?	16
The Plan for the Rest of the Book	21
<b>Chapter 2—The Basics of Naked Eye Observing</b>	<b>25</b>
Getting Started	25
The Need for Dark Skies	25
Knowledge of the Stellar Background	26
Comfort	26
Where Do I Look?	27
When Do I Look?	28

Table 2.1; Prominent Annual Showers of the Northern Hemisphere	30
More Meteors Can be Seen as the Radiant Rises Enjoyment	30 33
Table 2.2; Theoretical totals assuming a constant flux of 100 meteors per hour	35
<b>Chapter 3—More Advanced Naked Eye Observing</b>	<b>37</b>
More Advanced Observing	37
Stellar and Meteor Magnitudes	37
Meteor Shower Profiles	38
Magnitude Distributions for Meteor Showers and the Population Index	39
Observational Perception	41
Observational Perception—Color	43
Observational Perception—Sound	45
Plotting Meteors	46
Distinguishing Shower Meteors from Sporadics	48
Recording the Meteor	51
Other Conditions	51
Scientifically Approved Group Observing	55
Now What?	56
<b>Chapter 4—Some Important Meteor Showers</b>	<b>59</b>
Some of the Best-Known Meteor Showers	59
The Leonids	59
Nov. 12, 1799	60
Nov. 12, 1832	61
Nov. 12/13 1833	61
Nov. 13/14 1866	62
Nov. 13, 1867	62
Nov. 13, 1868	62
Nov. 15, 1900	62

Nov. 15, 1901	62
Nov. 16, 1931	62
Nov. 16, 1932	63
Nov. 17, 1961	63
Nov. 17, 1965	63
Nov. 17, 1966	63
The Current Cycle for the Leonids (1994 – 2007)	65
1994 – 1996: The First Hint	66
1997: A Nice Return	66
1998: The Shower of Fireballs	67
1999: Meteor Storm over Jordan!	69
2000: Not Bad, Not Bad at All	69
2001: Leonids and Bolides and Trains, Oh My!	69
2002: Leonids Dance in the Moonlight	70
Predictions for the coming Leonid Showers	71
2006:	72
2008:	72
2009:	73
The Perseids	73
<i>Perseids 2004—the predictions</i>	75
<i>Perseids 2004—the result</i>	76
<i>Coming Attractions</i>	76
The Geminids	77
The Quadrantids	80
Some Other Favorites	81
The Orionids	81
The Delta Aquarids	82
The Taurids	82
The Next New Annual Shower (?)	83
Meteor Showers of the Northern Hemisphere	84
Solar Longitude	84
Universal Time (UT)	85
Radiant	85
Apparent velocity	85
Zenithal Hourly Rate	86
Table 4.1 A List of Prominent Meteor Showers	87

<b>Chapter 5—A History of Meteorics before the IMO</b>	89
Meteors are Celestial	89
The Great Leonid Storm of 1833	89
The Search for Other Showers	91
The Comet Connection	93
An Amateur Enterprise—Denning	96
The American Meteor Society and Dr. Olivier	97
Olivier vs. Denning—the question of stationary radiants	98
Olivier's K5	99
<i>Meteor News</i>	100
<b>Chapter 6—Recent History—A New Dawn in Meteorics</b>	101
The International Meteor Organization (IMO) and <i>WGN</i>	101
A New Dawn—Recent Theoretic Discoveries	102
A First Breakthrough: Far-Comet Outbursts	102
A Second Breakthrough: Dust Trail Theory	103
1999: "Storm at 2:08 UT";	
Asher - McNaught Prediction Vindication?	106
What About Lyytinen and the EPH?	108
2000: Nothing Settled	109
2001: Reality Gets in the Way	110
2002: Bring In Vaubaillon	111
2003: A Unique Encounter With the 1499 Dust Trail(s)	112
The Leonid Legacy	113
Meteors, Meteoroids, and the Internet	114
Meteoroids	115
<b>Chapter 7—Meteor Stream Formation and Dynamics</b>	117
The Genesis of our Solar System	117
Comets	119

Long and Short Period Comets	119
The Formation of Meteor Streams	123
Gravitational Perturbations and Resonance	126
Non-Gravitational Drag Forces	129
Absorption	131
Absorption and Re-emission	132
Reflection	133
A Summary of Radiation Effects	133
Mass Separation	134
A Meteor Stream's Four Stages of Life	135
Stage 1: <i>Dust trails—storm maker</i>	135
Stage 2: <i>Filament—strong shower maker</i>	135
Stage 3: <i>Annual Shower maker</i>	136
Stage 4: <i>Sporadics</i>	136
<b>Chapter 8—Zenithal Hourly Rates and ZHR Determination</b>	137
Zenithal Hourly Rates (ZHRs)	137
ZHR Determination	138
ZHR Profiles	141
Forecasting ZHR Strength	143
Initial Stream Density	143
Stream Density over Time	148
Miss Distance	150
The Full ZHR Density Forecasting Model	153
Appendix 8.1—ZHR Computation, an Example	155
Appendix 8.2—Another Look at the Population Index, $r$	158
<i>Mathematically Deriving a Population Index</i>	159
<i>The Problem of Differing Observing Conditions</i>	162
<b>Chapter 9—The Factors Influencing Radiant Positions</b>	165
Radiants are an Illusion	165

Zenithal Attraction	167
Diurnal Aberration	169
Radiant Drift	169
Annual Radiant Variation	170
<b>Chapter 10—Meteor Stream and Cometary Orbits</b>	<b>173</b>
Meteor Stream Orbits	173
First, the Orbital Elements in One Plane—the Ellipse	173
More Orbital Elements in One Plane—	
Orientation of the Ellipse	176
Orbital Elements in 3 Dimensions	179
An Example from the well-known Leonid Meteor Shower	182
A Second Example, The Orionids and Eta Aquarids	185
<b>Chapter 11— A Meteor <i>Potpourri</i></b>	<b>189</b>
Tying some Loose Ends	189
Sporadic Radiants?	189
Categorizing Meteor Showers—Revisited	190
Table 11.1 Recent Perseid Meteor Shower	
dates and rates	191
Outbursts	192
Finding New Showers	193
Real Shower or Statistical Aberration?	195
Unpredictability; the Birth and Death of Showers	196
Are Meteors Randomly Distributed Within a Shower?	199
Table 11.2 Theoretical Expectation of meteors per minute	201
A Random Example	201
Table 11.3 A Comparison of theoretical expectation with actual occurrence	202
Anomalous Meteors	202
<i>Zigzagging meteors</i>	203
<i>Sound emitting meteors</i>	203

<i>Black meteors</i>	204
<i>Nebulous meteors</i>	204
At the Fringe—Small-comet Theory	205
More Fringe—Are Meteors the Catalyst for Life?	206