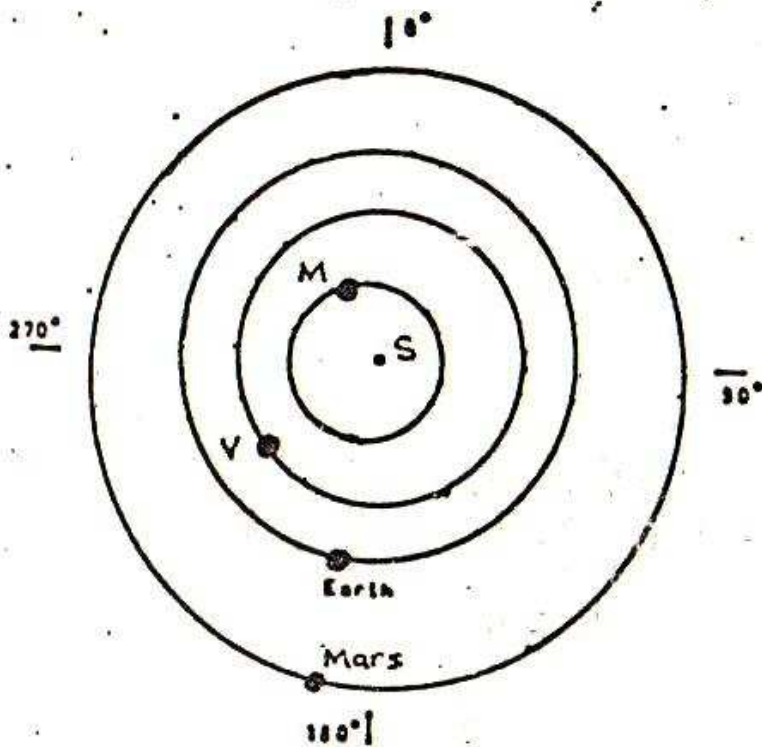
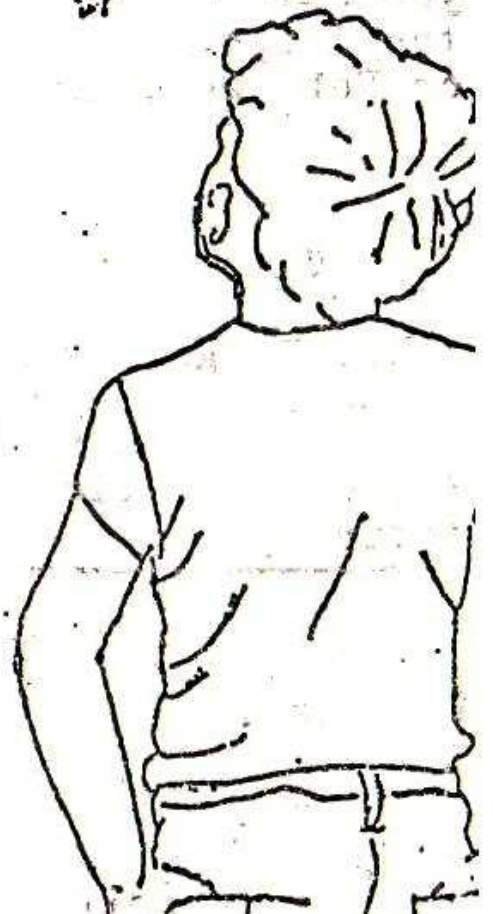


MARCH 1982

Astronomical Society of Frankston



Inner solar system as at April 1, 1982.



S K Y N O T E S

Several interesting planetary alignments occur in the coming month. The diagram on the front page should help you understand the comments below.

MERCURY is too close to the Sun for viewing from April 4, reaching superior conjunction (opposite Earth on far side of Sun) on April 12. Mercury returns in the evening sky from April 19.

VENUS is still visible in the morning sky, reaching its greatest western elongation on April 1. It is then 46° W of the Sun and best placed for viewing. At greatest elongation, an inferior planet reaches its maximum distance from the Sun as viewed from Earth. At this time the Earth-Planet-Sun angle is 90° (see diagram), and the planet's phase is 0.5 - i.e. half the planet's disc is visible. Venus will remain more than 40° from the Sun until late May.

MARS is moving retrograde (westwards) in Virgo between February 23 and May 11, reaching opposition on March 31. A superior planet is at opposition when the Sun-Earth-Planet lie in a straight line. At this time the planet rises at sunset and is visible throughout the night. Viewing conditions at oppositions vary depending on where the planet is along its orbit. Viewing is most favourable if opposition occurs when the planet is nearest the Sun (perihelion). The effect is greatest for Mars, the current opposition not being very favourable. Mars will be 95 million km distant from the Earth, with an apparent angular size of $15''$. Favourable oppositions will occur in July 1986 and September 1988, when Mars is 60 million km away with an angular size of $23''$.

JUPITER and SATURN also lie in the constellation Virgo with Mars, and the changing pattern of the three planets and the bright star Spica will make interesting viewing. Jupiter and Saturn will also both reach opposition in the coming month.

(more →)

ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY OF FRANKSTON
 Newsletter March 1982

C O M I N G E V E N T S

March 24 Monthly ASF Meeting, 8 pm , Room 16,
 Wed. State College, Frankston.

Bruce Tregaskis, one of Australia's most experienced amateur astronomers, will discuss ' ALL YOU EVER WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT THE AUTUMN NIGHT SKY AND WERE NEVER GAME TO ASK ! '

April 2 Monthly Viewing Night. Introduce some
 Fri. friends to the ASF.

May 1 International Astronomy Day

M E M B E R S H I P

Members who have not yet paid their 1982 annual subscription should receive a reminder notice with this newsletter. This will be the last newsletter sent to non-financial members.

M F O N E W S

The Development Sub-committee has commenced its drive for support and funding for the proposed ' Matthew Flinders Observatory ' from the public sector.

A model of the MFO is to be placed in the Frankston Tourist Information Centre.

The Frankston 'Standard' has commenced running a series of astronomical articles, which will publicize the ASF and MFO.

A U R O R A

Two ASF members, Steve Malone and Bruce Tregaskis, were among many people who reported observations of a bright aurora, lasting over an hour, around 9 pm on Tuesday March 2.

Saturn is at opposition on April 9, 95 million km distant with an angular size of 19". Jupiter is the last of the three bright superior planets to reach opposition, doing so on April 26, 663 million km away and 44" in size.

(Keen observers with access to at least a 12" telescope might look for a faint magnitude 14 Pluto at opposition on April 15. A finder chart will be available at the March 24 meeting. Also available then will be details of a grazing occultation to take place on March 31, the viewing track being close to Frankston.)

March 31 (day 90) Sunrise 6.32 Sunset 18.15

	RA	Dec	Mag	Rise	Set
	h.m	° '		h.m	h.m
Mercury	0.00	- 2 14	-0.8	5.37	17.53
Venus	21.41	-12 14	-4.0	2.47	16.07
Mars	12.43	- 1 24	-1.2	18.25	6.32
Jupiter	14.26	-12 59	-2.0	19.30	8.52
Satur	13.17	- 5 07	0.5	13.46	7.17

April 20 (day 110) Sunrise 6.50 Sunset 17.46

	RA	Dec	Mag	Rise	Set
	h.m	° '		h.m	h.m
Mercury	2.28	15 27	-1.4	7.43	18.05
Venus	23.02	- 6 36	-3.8	3.07	15.50
Mars	12.16	0 43	-0.9	16.46	4.39
Jupiter	14.18	-12 13	-2.0	18.06	7.22
Saturn	13.11	- 4 32	0.6	17.24	5.50

The Moon:	New Moon	March 25	April 23
	First Qtr	April 1	April 30
	Full Moon	April 8	
	Last Qtr	April 16	
	Perigee	March 29	April 25
	Apogee	April 13	

