

MAY 1982

Astronomical Society of Frankston

M E E T I N G S

' AMATEUR RADIO-ASTRONOMY ' is the title of a talk to be presented by Jim Drewery and Peter Norman at the ASF's next general meeting . This will be held on Wednesday May 26, commencing in Room 16 of the Chisholm Institute of Technology (the old State College) Frankston at 8 pm .

This month's Practical Astronomy Viewing Night will be on Saturday May 29 . The date has been changed from Friday to Saturday following the success of the Viewing Night held to celebrate International Astronomy Day on Saturday May 1 . Thank-you to the many members who assisted at the Astronomy Day event. Your assistance on May 29 will also be appreciated.

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

At their last meeting the Development Sub-Committee decided to disband, dividing its workload between a number of smaller sub-committees, each reporting directly to the full ASF Committee.

The three main sub-committees now working towards the establishment of the Matthew Flinders Observatory are: Telescope Building (Co-ordinator: B. Tregaskis), Fund Raising (J. Palmer), and Building (S. Malone).

GRAZING OCCULTATION (PART 2)

In last month's Newsletter, the observation of the grazing occultation by the Moon of the star called ZC 907 was described. Briefly, nine sites in Stumpy Gully Rd., Moorooduc, were manned by members of this Society, who set up their telescopes, short wave radios and tape recorders on the night of 31 March 1982 to see and time the event, in an effort to improve our knowledge of the Earth - Moon system and the star's position.

After the event, six tapes were collected from the observers. Unfortunately, for various reasons, three sites were not able to tape the occultation. The six tapes were passed on to Peter Raw of the Astronomical Society of Victoria for later analysis. Peter reported the results by phone recently and they were as follows:

Site 1, Clive Nichols. One good timing of a disappearance.

Sites 2&3, Aubrey Mather & Peter Norman. No tapes.

Site 4, Steve Wilbourne. 2 disappearances and 1 reappearance timed.

Site 5, Arthur Higginson. No tape.

Site 6, Jim Drewery. 7 events were timed, but 2 observers voices could be heard with differing times. 2 times were doubtful due to the bright limb.

Site 7, Ken Bryant. No commentary could be heard. Unfortunately, Ken was distracted over the critical period by a rather irate farmer who wondered what was going on!

Site 8, Nigel Mason. 8 events were timed but the last 3 were affected by the bright limb.

Site 9, Bruce Tregaskis. 2 disappearances and 2 reappearances were timed.

All in all, an excellent set of results considering it was a first effort for most observers. Some tips from Peter Raw for any future occultations were to keep extraneous conversation to a minimum over the critical timing period but to keep talking before this period so that whoever listens to the tape later knows that you are still "on the air". Also, don't be hesitant when calling the times or accuracy is lost. Remember that this particular event was a difficult observation, so it may be easier next time - we hope! Thanks go to all who helped

TENTH NACAA

The 10th National Australian Convention of Amateur Astronomers was held in Brisbane from April 9 - 12 . Keith Ward represented the ASF :

Taking Fred Hoyle's advice that "it is better to be an on-duty novice than an off-duty expert", I drove along the Newell Highway to the convention venue at the Mount Gravatt College of Advanced Education.

This route north presents a series of astronomical places: the Parkes Radio Telescope, John Estens' Gilgandra Observatory with his 31 cm Newtonian, and the Siding Springs Observatory.

At the convention, twenty-one half hour papers were presented. Only two of these (by T. Halpin and P. Norman) were cosmological in content. The others reflected those areas of observational astronomy in which amateurs are making useful contributions.

Their observations ranged from the discovery of supernovae and comets (Bill Bradfield collected the Berenice Page Medal for his comet successes) to painstaking records of variable stars, aurora, sunspots, occultations (lunar and Jovian), solar eclipses (total and annular), Jupiter's larger spots, binaries, and so on .

I also visited the Taylor Range and Bardon Observatories, and the world-class Sir Thomas Brisbane Planetarium which uses its 150mm Coude refractor with a closed-circuit TV system to provide excellent daytime displays of solar flares.

A copy of the NACAA Proceedings, which includes the full text of most papers, together with a large selection of astronomical papers collected at the convention and at the Parkes' visitor centre, and Keith's slides from his trip have been placed in the ASF library , and are available to members for loan.

S K Y N O T E S

After inferior conjunction on June 2, Mercury returns to the morning sky, being visible close to the Sun between June 10 and July 18, increasing in brightness from mag +2.3 to -1.5 during this period. It is at its greatest western elongation on June 26, being 23° from the Sun.

Venus is also a morning object throughout June, being located about 35° from the Sun with a magnitude of -3.4.

In the evening sky, the planets Mars, Saturn and Jupiter remain well placed for observation.

Neptune, the outermost planet until 1999, reaches opposition on June 17. At magnitude 7.7 it should be visible in binoculars or a small telescope. The ASV Astronomical Yearbook contains finder and telescope charts.

A partial eclipse of the Sun occurs on June 21 (just prior to the June 22 solstice) but the event will not be visible from Australia.

June 20 (day 171)

Sunrise 7.34 Sunset 17.07

	RA	Dec	Mag	Rise	Set
	h.m	° /		h.m	h.m
Mercury	4.28	17.35	1.2	5.50	15.57
Venus	3.26	16.50	-3.4	4.46	14.59
Mars	12.31	- 3.20	0.3	12.48	1.07
Jupiter	13.55	-10.27	-1.8	13.49	2.54
Saturn	13.01	- 3.43	0.9	13.17	1.38

The Moon:	New Moon	May 23	June 22
	First Qtr	May 30	June 29
	Full Moon	June 7	
	Last Qtr	June 15	
	Perigee	May 24	June 22
	Apogee	June 8	

