

ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY OF FRANKSTON, INC.P.O. BOX 596 FRANKSTON 3199NEWSLETTER OCTOBER 1988MEETING, WEDNESDAY OCTOBER 12th

The theme for the talk at the October meeting will be "Meteorites in Australia", with the speaker being Reg Lawrence, a member and former President of Astronomical Society of Victoria. Reg has an extensive collection of meteorites and the talk should provide much information on Earth's encounters with these small bodies from outer space.

The meeting will be followed, if the sky is clear, by observations of Mars through members' telescopes, (please bring yours along), or, if cloudy, by a NASA film on space probe investigations of Mars.

It is expected that this meeting, with subsequent Mars viewing session, will be advertised to the public through local newspapers to publicise Mars' closest approach since 1971.

The meeting, starting at 8 p.m. will be in Room F6 of the Upper School, Peninsula School, Mt. Eliza.

DISPLAY OF EQUIPMENT, MEETING WEDNESDAY  
OCTOBER 26th

An additional meeting, for the purpose of displaying members' telescopes and other astronomical equipment, is to be held on October 26th at Peninsula School. It is

- 2 -

expected that the display will be held either in the locker area adjacent to Room F6 or in the room used by the Society for after meeting coffee and biscuits. This meeting is intended to allow members to exchange ideas and information about equipment in use, or in the course of construction. If you have equipment, home-made or commercial, suitable for such a display please make a date for the 26th.

### CASSEROLE DINNER SATURDAY OCTOBER 15th

The Society's fund raising Casserole Dinner will be held on Saturday October 15th at the home of Jan and Peter Brown. If you intend coming along to enjoy this social event please call Jan Brown on (03) 789-5679 if you have not already made arrangements to attend. (Please see circular included with September Newsletter).

### OBSERVING NIGHT SUNDAY OCTOBER 16th

The Observing Night for October will be on Sunday, October 16th, a time 6 days after New Moon. Mars will remain a fine object for observation at close to its minimum distance from Earth, and in the evening hours the hemisphere with the most conspicuous dark marking, Syrtis Major, will be facing towards Earth. Jupiter will be rising in the later evening and after moonset the deep sky objects of the Spring constellations will come into view. Please bring portable instruments for a viewing session on the oval above the previous Observatory site (turn left after crossing the causeway).

If Sunday October 16th is clouded out then rgw Observing Night will be carried forward to Saturday 5th November or Sunday 6th November if clouded. Please note that the scheduled night

- 3 -

is a Sunday October 16th as the preceding Saturday October 15th is the Society Casserole Dinner Night.

### SOCIETY NEWS

The meeting on September 14th featured "Questions and Answers" with a panel consisting of Bruce Tregaskis, Bob Heale, David Murray and Ken Bryant answering members' questions on a range of topics related to astronomy. Questions included the meaning and effects of precession, the meaning of Julian Date, the relationship of the Sun with auroras, types of telescope mountings, the greenhouse effect and planetary atmospheres, and more abstract discussions on the nature of Space and the Steady State and Big Bang theories. The meeting proved stimulating and entertaining for both questioners and questioned and was judged a success.

At the same meeting Bruce Tregaskis displayed a kit from the CSIRO's Radiophysics Division, with material on the new Australian telescope and Radio Astronomy, including high quality astro-photos. This kit is available from AT Project Kit, P.O. Box 76, Epping 2121 for \$5.00 plus an envelope 35 x 25 cm minimum, self-addressed with \$2.00 postage attached.

At the Society Observing Night held on Sunday September 18th members present viewed Mars close to opposition, with a small south polar cap and dark areas identified from charts. Views of the Moon approaching first quarter and some deep sky objects were also enjoyed before a cloud blanket terminated observing for the evening.

The B. J. Smith telescope from the Society's late Observatory has now been returned to ASV

for use at its Burwood Observatory premises. We wish them success with its operation and look forward to the possibility of observing with it at its new location.

### SOCIETY FEES FOR 1988

If you have not already paid your ASF subscription for 1988 and wish to continue a member please pay at the earliest opportunity to the Treasurer, Peter Brown at meetings or by mail to 7 Kiandra Court, Frankston 3199.

Adult Members	\$15
Member and Associate	\$25
Pensioner Member	\$12
Junior Associate	\$12

### SKY NOTES

Constellations. The Spring skies lack the conspicuous bright stars of either winter or summer and the general appearance to the naked eye is of a somewhat barren sky with mainly faint stars and the Milky Way low on the horizon. High towards the zenith lies a group of faint constellations named after various birds, Grus the Crane, Pavo the Peacock, Toucan the Toucan and Phoenix the bird resurrected from the fiery furnace in mythology. To the north and east by contrast are another set of "watery" constellations, Cetus the Whale, Aquarius the Water Bearer, Pisces the Fishes and Eridanus the Celestial River, a long chain of stars leading to Beta Eridani close to Rigel in Orion. Also in the watery category are Dorado the Swordfish, Hydrus the Water Snake, Volans the Flying Fish and of course Argo the Ship now lying close to the horizon in the South.

- 5 -

Although these Spring Constellations lack the sparkling display of the stars of winter now past, there are many fine deep sky objects to be located. The constellation of Aquarius, for example, has the well known planetary nebulae the "Saturn" Nebula and "Helix" Nebula of contrasting types.

The "Saturn" Nebula, so called because of some resemblance to the planet Saturn in large telescopes, is small and relatively bright and is best seen at a medium magnification. However, the "Helix" Nebula, thought to be the closest of all planetary nebulae, at 450 light years, is much larger in apparent diameter, and fainter, requiring both low power and largish aperture to see.

Try locating these in your telescope; locations are:- Saturn Nebula NGC 7009 at RA 21h 01m, Dec  $-11^{\circ} 34m$ . Helix Nebula NGC 7293 RA 22h 27m Dec  $- 21^{\circ} 06m$ .

Planets. During October and November Mars remains the most conspicuous of the planets and is brighter than zero magnitude for the remainder of the year. As Mars and Earth start to draw apart again angular diameter decreases and surface features become less easy to observe, so make the most of observing opportunities, it will be 2003 before the next approach as close as this year's.

Mars now has summer in its souther hemisphere and the south polar cap is now small but still bright. For maximum contrast try a Wratten 25 red filter in the eyepiece. A blue Wratten 47 may show white clouds in the Martian atmosphere and for general viewing a yellow Wratten 15 filter is recommended.

- 6 -

In addition to Mars Jupiter is now making a re-appearance in the evening skies and is rising at 9 plm. by the end of October. Saturn continues to be visible although becoming low in the western sky, and brilliant Venus shines in the dawn twilight with a steady increasing phase as seen through the telescope.

### THE MOON

New Moon	Oct 11	Nov 10
First Quarter	Oct 18	Nov 17
Full Moon	Oct 25	Nov 24
Last Quarter	Nov 01	Dec 01

<u>PRESIDENT</u>	Peter Norman	(059) 75-3040
<u>VICE-PRESIDENT</u>	Bruce Tregaskis	787-2444
<u>TREASURER</u>	Peter Brown	789-5679
<u>SECRETARY</u>	Don Leggett	(059) 85-4927

### "STARLIGHT EXPRESS" ?

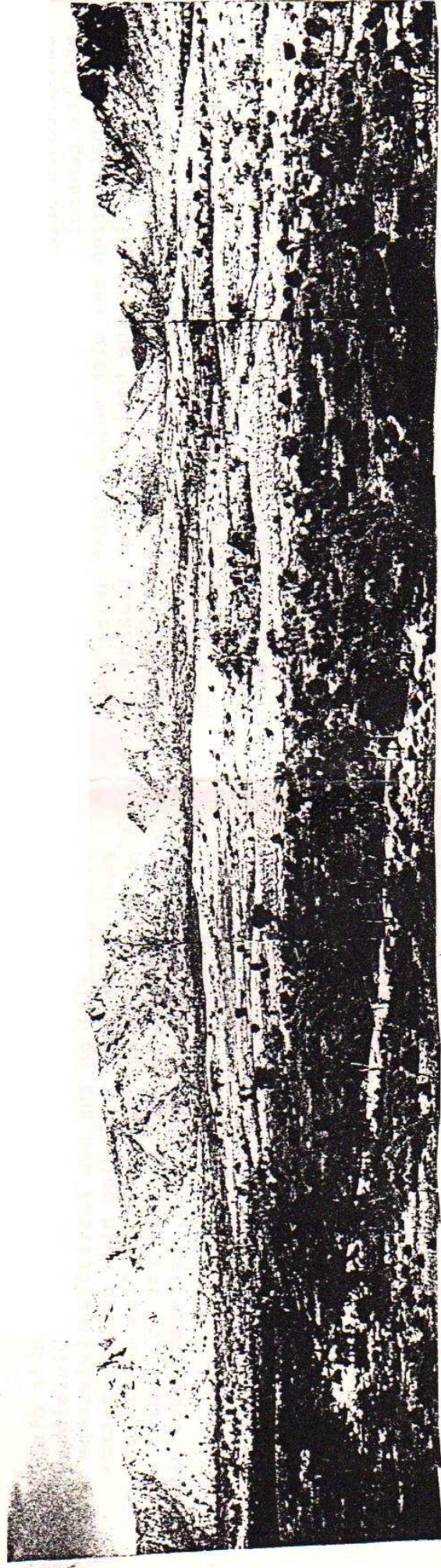
Work has begun renovating our recently purchased caravan into a means of transporting telescopes to suitable viewing sites. This work has been done by several enthusiasts led by Society stalwart, Steve Malone. Unfortunately Steve suffered an injury to his leg at a recent working bee and this has temporarily limited his lifestyle. Best wishes Steve for a rapid recovery!

Model of Gosse's Bluff  
in Alice Springs Museum



5th

4th



INTERIOR VIEW FROM POINT "X" BY KEITH WARD.

