

ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY OF FRANKSTON INC.P.O. BOX 596 FRANKSTON 3199NEWSLETTER AUGUST 1990OBSERVING NIGHT SATURDAY AUGUST 11th

Weather permitting, an Observing Night with portable instruments will be held at the Moorooduc airfield on Saturday August 11th. This could be a good night for viewing all those interesting objects towards the Milky Way's centre. However, if clouded we will try again on August 18th. (Note the August 11th night is before the August General Meeting).

MEETING WEDNESDAY AUGUST 15th

The August meeting is to include a video on the proposed construction of an Earth orbiting Space Station by NASA, another instance of yesterday's Science Fiction becoming today's Science Fact.

In addition, the meeting will feature a sequence of talks by members, including Ken Bryant who will explain how the enormous distances to the furthest reaches of the Universe are measured, Bob Heale and, it is hoped, Bruce Tregaskis regarding astronomical aspects of his current visit to Thailand.

Make a date for this night, the third Wednesday of August. The meeting, in Room F6 of the Upper School, Peninsula School, Mt.Eliza will start at 8 p.m.

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BBQ AND OBSERVING NIGHT SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 15th

An evening at the Moorooduc airfield is planned for Saturday September 15th with a BBQ followed, if the sky is clear, by an Observing Night, together with a further display of astronomical slides by South Australian David Miller, the speaker at our June meeting, and some astronomical videos.

A modest charge will be arranged to cover the expenses of the evening and provide some aid to Society finances and it is expected that the evening will also be a "Welcome Home" for Peter and Doreen Norman after their Round World Trip.

MEETING WEDNESDAY SEPTEMBER 19th

A display of equipment and other items of interest is planned for this night. If you have, or are making, something of interest to other members this will be an opportunity to show, describe and explain it and assist others in their own activities.

SOCIETY NEWS

The Astronomical Quiz at the July meeting featured a total of 16 questions, selected by Quiz Master Don Leggett from a list of 40 prepared by Ken Bryant.

Questions ranged from the nearest location of a meteorite on display (Cranbourne Shire Offices) to which happened first the explosion of Supernova 1987A or the end of the last Ice Age. (Supernova 1987A some 170,000 years ago, Ice Age finish some 20,000 years ago).

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Answers to the questions were provided and discussed by Ken, the winner of the Quiz being Vice-President David Murray, who was congratulated by Quiz Master Don.

Bob Heale once again provided his "Sky for the Month" segment and distributed charts for the location of the "Bug Nebula" NGC 6302, a strange gaseous nebula in Scorpius.

Past President Peter Norman and wife Doreen have been overseas since April visiting institutions associated with superconductivity research and other, more typical, tourist attractions. From postcards received the trip has proved very enjoyable and we look forward to their return in the near future. Meanwhile, within Australia, both Steve Malone and Laurie McIntyre have headed northwards for warmer climes with Steve planning to visit a number of other astronomical societies.

The Society Committee is continuing to look at means of raising finance for the long term aim of an independent Observatory and Club Rooms. One possibility that has emerged is the running of public Bingo nights in the same way as some other local organizations for which a group of some 5 members per month would be required. If you are prepared to assist (in particular if you have some experience in this area) please contact David Murray or Steve Malone.

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TREASURER'S REPORT FROM PETER BROWN

Balance brought forward			\$1,371.76
<u>Receipts</u>	Subscriptions	187.80	
	Interest (Bank of Melbourne	77.79	
	Interest (Com- pass Bdy Soc.	12.90	277.69
			<hr/>
			1,649.45
<u>Expenses</u>	Caravan	30.00	
	Newsletter postage	22.55	
	Federal Tax (Compass)	0.43	
	Federal Tax (Bank Melb.)	0.82	53.80
			<hr/>
Balance carried forward			\$1,595.65

SKY NOTESPartial Eclipse of the Moon August 6/7.

Moon enters penumbra	Aug 6	21h 29m
enters umbra	6	22 44
leaves umbra	7	01 40
leaves penumbra	7	02 55

Nearly 70 percent of the Moon will be eclipsed in this event.

Comet Levy 1990c. It is reported that this comet, discovered earlier in the year, may reach naked eye brightness in the southern

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sky during August. More details when available.

Constellations. High above, towards the zenith, we see this month the bright stars of Sagittarius, in mythology the constellation of the 'Archer' - actually a Centaur half man, half horse - which is drawing a bow to send an arrow towards Scorpius and if we look we see the arc of stars Epsilon, Delta and Lambda Sagittarii representing the bow with Gamma the tip of the arrow. More familiarly the constellation is known, at least in the Southern Hemisphere, as the "Teapot" with the same stars as above plus Phi, Zeta, Tau and Sigma providing the "Teapot" shape complete with lid, spout and handle (see Norton Map 14).

Yet another asterism or star grouping associated with Sagittarius is the "Milk Dipper" as known in America, where Phi, Zeta, Tau and Sigma - the same stars forming the Teapot's handle - are the bowl of the "Dipper" or Ladle) and Lambda is the "Handle".

This region of the sky not only contains the centre of our Milky Way galaxy, where one may imagine the awesome prospect of a vast "Black Hole" inexorably drawing stars into itself to be annihilated, but also contains many fine groups, clusters and nebulae easily seen in the telescope, including the nebulous cluster known as the "Lagoon Nebula" M8 at around 5,000 light years, the much photographed Trifid Nebula N20, also around 5,000 light years, and the attractive "Omega" or Swan Nebula M17 at around 6,000 light years distance on the border with Scutum. See Norton's Maps 14 and 13 for the location of these and other Milky Way groups extending into Aquila and northward to

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the fine star fields of Cygnus.

Planets. Mercury. The best Souther Hemisphere viewing opportunities for this elusive inner planet occur in mid-August when it may be seen (with naked eye) in the western sky after sunset setting up to 40 minutes after the end of twilight. Mercury, being between Earth and Sun, shows phases in the telescope like the Moon - and Venus - and will be about 50 percent illuminated at this time.

Saturn, Uranus and Neptune are now visible for most of the night in Sagittarius, whilst Jupiter and Venus are both in the morning twilight.

THE MOON

New Moon	Aug 20	Sept 19
First Quarter	Aug 28	Sept 27
Full Moon	Aug 07	Sept 05
Last Quarter	Aug 14	Sept 12

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