

Zane told me that his extensive collection of Nagler eyepieces would pale in comparison to that of Chris Toohey's. Gee, makes my collection of eyepieces seem a tad feeble.

Want to know more!

Go to [www.goulburn.net.au/~magellan](http://www.goulburn.net.au/~magellan), for details about Zane's observatory. Also in Sky and Space magazine see Chris Toohey's review of the Orion apochromatic refractor. That's in the Nov/Dec 2004 issue. I'll bring a copy in my bag tonight.

Well that's all from me. Let's hope that the cool dark skies of autumn can bring some great stargazing.

Noel Sharpe President ■

### Vice President's Report

With Noel's absence from last months meeting due to a very needed and earned holiday, I was thrust into the position of running the show.

We decided in the absence of a guest speaker to run a series of casual conversations, they were in no particular order, **What I've learnt from the Internet, Computing in Astronomy, and Astrophotography.**

Ian, Bruce and Daniel facilitated each group. Each person came with a different level of expertise, and with the usual M.A.S. friendliness, help was at hand to solve problems in the area of interest. Due the great success of the night we hope to be able to hold nights like these a couple of times a year.

John Rombi

### President's AGM Report

This report gives us the opportunity to reflect and make comments on the various activities of the Society from one AGM to the next, basically covering 12 months.

It's been a year of mixed observing for most of us due to the poor weather. We have had some excellent speakers and some exciting events.

My thoughts before writing this report were around the cancellations and reschedules courtesy of the weather. When I look back in some detail I was amazed as to what has been accomplished by the Society over the 12 month period.

Of course the Society can only operate successfully by the time and expertise given to it by many members. To everyone who has contributed in any way to our success please accept my sincere appreciations.

### Speakers

**April 2004: Ian Cook presenter** - The Herschel family, discovery of Uranus and construction of large Telescopes.

**May 2004: Bob Bee presenter** - White Dwarfs, the star Sirius and the Pup.

**June 2004: Dr John O'Byrne**, senior lecturer School of Physics Sydney University - Adaptive Optics and the Near Infra Red Spectrograph instrument.

**July 2004: Dick Everett presenter** - Cassini Space Probe.

**August 2004: Ned Pastor presenter** - Tektites, Meteorites and the Maldivites.

**September 2004: Dr Stuart Ryder,** Astronomer Anglo-Australian Observatory - Supernova and Gamma Ray Bursts.

**October 2004: Michael West, Mars Society** - Rocket Propulsion Systems.

**November 2004:** Video on exploration of Mercury and Venus

**January 2005:** News from Cassini and Huygens probe, other updates **Dick Everett.** Also a quiz on astronomy was held by **Ian Cook.**

**February 2005: Peter Elston Presenter** - Solar Eclipse Chasers, flight over Antarctica,.

**March 2005:** Various conversation groups.

As you can see it's been a great year for speakers with a wide variety of topics covered. It's always great to get professional astronomers and lecturers to visit us. All comments that I have received indicate how well our Society is received in the wider astronomical community. It's equally important to also seek the engagement of our own members to act as speakers when the opportunity arises. I certainly extend the appreciations of everyone in saying, well done!

## Events and Activities

**22/05/04** Dudley Chesham sportsground at The Oaks, major public night.

**23/05/04** Same as above, another public night to view two comets.

**08/06/04** Macarthur Anglican High School, Transit of Venus and star night.

**24/07/04** Lunar night at the Sports Ground.

**07/08/04** International Students star party, The Forest.

**28/08/04** Guides Australia, a night under the stars.

**21/09/04** St Mary's Catholic School Eaglevale star night.

**15/10/04** Campbelltown Rotary Observatory.

**23/10/04** Public night at the Sports Ground.

**19/11/05** Campbelltown Rotary Observatory.

**05/12/04** MAS Christmas Party.

**15/03/04** Wollongong Diocese Teachers Retreat, Bowral - Star night and lecture by Rev Chris Toohey.

## Special Mentions.

The transit of Venus was a fantastic event, Daniel Ross held a viewing at the Macquarie Boys Technical college where he is a teacher, Ian Cook set up his scope near his house for all to grab a view and Bob Bee assisted his work colleagues in gaining a glimpse of the transit through binoculars.

At other times during the year other members have made contributions. Bruce Reardon held a viewing night for his son's cub group and John Koster gave discussions on astronomy to the Probus club. Also Bob Bee continued with the successful Mount Annan Botanical Gardens dinner and star nights.

Also Bob Bee has a regular column in the Chronicle newspaper, *Heavens Above!* This is a strong linkage to the overall community.

To everyone please accept my appreciations, I do apologise in advance if I have missed anyone.

## Other Things

We have attended many field nights at the Oaks and the Forest. These two venues form the basis of our observing activities, we also were able to get our web site up and running.

Yours sincerely Noel Sharpe

### Internet News About Titan

Here's a grab-bag of items off the internet following the successful Huygens probe landing:

#### Switzerland's news and information platform:

**14.1.05, 1.45am.** Space probe nears Titan encounter - Los Angeles (Reuters). One of the most ambitious space missions in history nears its climax today when a European built space probe lands on Saturn's largest moon Titan and sends back the first look at its fog shrouded surface.

Titan, believed to be the only moon in our solar system with an atmosphere, is larger than the planets Mercury and Pluto.

#### B.B.C News U.K. Edition

**25.1.05.** Search for life signal on Titan, scientists will comb data sent back from Titan by the Huygens probe for the chemical signature of life in a bid to identify the moon's source of methane.

Dr Francois Raulin, University of Paris said: "We cannot say there is absolutely no chance of life, we have liquid water, organics not far

away, we have everything on Titan to make life."

#### C.N.N. COM.19.1.05

Los Angeles, California (Reuters). Scientists said today:

Titan has a crème brule like surface: data sent back by Huygens space probe from the Saturnian moon Titan show a frozen orange world shrouded in a methane rich haze with dark ice rocks dotting a riverbed like surface, the consistency of wet sand.

#### 14.1.05 AIJAZEERA.NET

Titan probe beams back breathtaking photos. The world has had its first look at the surface of the Saturnian moon Titan with European space probe Huygens beginning to send back breathtaking images.

### Other Internet News

The Boston Globe has reported that astronomers have figured out a way to measure the universe using a kind of cosmological ruler.

Finding the cosmic ruler required two teams of scientists to map more than 260,000 galaxies. They conclude that the universe is flat with ripples. The ripples are left over from the big bang about 15 billion years ago.

"The infant universe was naturally making a sound and those waves produced the ripples," said Daniel Einstein an astronomer at the University of Arizona. The way galaxies are scattered across the sky now corresponds to sound waves in the early time of the cosmos. The sounds of the microwave background (left over from the big bang) turned into galaxies and cluster of galaxies that we see around us.