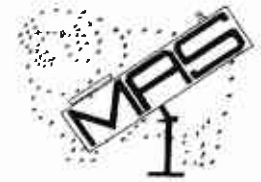


MACARTHUR ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY Inc.



Journal

PRIME FOCUS

Volume 5 Issue 3

April 2000

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President's Report

Sadly this will be my last President's report, and after almost 5 years at the helm it is hard to leave the position but absolutely necessary.

This year has been a good one for the Society in having more of our local talent come and talk and show their expertise to all of us.

I would like to thank everyone in the society for their help and contributions whilst I was at the helm. However, I must especially thank: Bob Bee for his outstanding contribution with Prime Focus. I started doing the first edition and thankfully he took over and the Journal has grown from strength to strength, with The Campbelltown Library holding every copy in its Local Studies section, plus his enthusiastic help and knowledge at star nights;

Noel Sharpe who without his tireless efforts as Treasurer, Vice President, mailing out the Prime Focus, Star nights and site hunting and most of all taking over running the Monday nights when I was either sick, working or just plain burnt out, etc; this club would not be in the healthy state it is in today with 70 + members;

Daniel Ross the quiet achiever organising the room every monthly meeting, setting up the Internet site, committee contributions and coming and assisting at many star field nights.

Other special mentions must go to Pete and Bobbie for opening their house for committee meetings, their advanced knowledge of astronomy and organising the suppers;

Peter Dreary for his wonderful talks, star nights and observing tips, plus helping in the committee;

Chris Barnett for his constant output with Internet and library information; Eric Brown at the start of the Society for treasury and observing nights and camps; John Rombi for being a great help to the Society on star nights and writing articles; plus all the other members who wrote articles for Prime Focus, my sincere thanks goes to you all. Anyone I have forgotten you know your contribution was very much appreciated.

Phil !



Vice President's AGM Report

Our AGM is an important event in any organisation and marks the official passing of one year to the next.

Thankfully MAS is no 'BHP' or 'NRMA', so I'm sure that tonight will be handled in our usual style. My report to you this month will contain aspects of my official AGM Report to our membership and to the year ahead.

The Year just past: 15/3/99 to 17/4/00:

- 26 field nights, including wash outs.
- 13 general meetings at UWS Macarthur
- 7 external presentations i.e. general public, other clubs etc.

**...our 5th year will be our
biggest and best...**

The above mentioned, combined with the installation of the observatory telescope; the many contributions to our Journal *Prime Focus*; the excellent 'Heavens Above!' series of articles in the Chronicle; the Messier Hunt; the ever expanding astro-photographers; the many new telescopes purchased and a membership now officially as at 17/4/00 peaking at 73... all I can say is...

...phew! What a year.

It would personally be remiss of me not to thank all those

who have made many contributions to our Society, but there are just too many of you to list by name. So I might just say a simple and sincere... thank you.

To the Year Ahead:

An expected change in the management committee; our own website up and running; regular monthly access to the University's observatories combining with telescope workshops; younger members joining to learn more; increased reliance on our own members to become guest speakers; better and darker field nights; larger spread of contributions to *Prime Focus*; core group membership renewing to say 50 or more; identification of members with similar interests and expertise; training and up-skilling of astronomers to use the observatories' telescopes, availing ourselves to assist university observing programs when required.

I might point out the above mentioned is a guide only as to how I see the year going personally, and does not necessarily reflect an official position. But one thing I'm sure of is that coming into our 5th year it will be our biggest and best with highlights being the coming on line of the observatories. These alone auger well for the future.

Good Luck and Good Observing.

Noel Sharpe (Vice President)

Image & Quality--Slow & Fast Seeing

You probably think that image quality in a telescope begins when light bends through a lens or bounces off a mirror right? Wrong!

Most of the time telescopes don't work at their best because of what's called 'Bad Seeing', air turbulence along the path that the light from the object you're viewing takes. This turbulence could be several thousand metres up. There are several clues that will allow you to identify and hopefully avoid it.

Saturn is in your eyepiece, the image is doing a slow dance around the field of view, this is slow seeing. This is caused by nearby sources that radiate heat into the cool night air.

Avoid observing over roofs, large areas of concrete roads, etc. Taking certain precautions with your telescope will also help. Let the telescope's temperature equalise with the surrounding air for at least one hour.

Some telescopes with open tubes (eg, Newtonians) could be hooked up to a battery powered fan to speed up the process.

Telescopes with closed tubes (eg, Refractors) cannot use this option, and must wait out the cooling period. This may not be as bad as it sounds, a closed tube won't belch out warm air like an open one.