

THE NORTHERN DISTRICTS SOCIETY
OF AMATEUR ASTRONOMERS

NEWSLETTER

No. 1.

April, 1987.

Dear Member,

Herewith the first attempt at a regular newsletter for our Society. This should be reasonably obvious, as no one has received a previous issue. I hope that it will appear bi-monthly, unless bi-monthly means twice a month, in which case it will be four times as infrequent.

As the N.D.S.A.A. was only formed last October and is not as yet properly rolling, copy for this publication will not be all that thick on the ground. So right from the start I will exhort members to keep their ears peeled for any snippets of information which might be of interest to the rest of us. I will fill in the gaps, and as nobody has ever accused me of having too little to say, between us we could turn this rag into something worth reading.

That piece of the last paragraph up to the first comma is important. A fledgling society such as ours always undergoes a sort of wobbly period in which nobody is quite sure of what direction it will take, or if in fact it will go anywhere at all. One also has the faintly disappointed feeling that it hasn't burst in all its glory into a startled world. Well, things just don't happen that way, so it is up to every member to keep nudging it along until it acquires the hoped for momentum, and even after. How? you ask. Firstly, come to the meetings. The Committee cannot promise that every meeting will be enlivened by a lecture, a film, dancing girls or whatever, although these will be provided whenever possible. And if not, it is always pleasant to get together over a few drinks and talk about the subject which brought us together. Secondly, give some thought to things which you believe our members can do. Not all of us have telescopes (yet), but there are many useful and interesting activities which can be carried on without one. If you have any ideas, wheel them along to a meeting and we will toss them about a bit. I believe that we will have come of age when each of our members is engaged in some sort of project. Then there is our social life. We don't have a social committee, so we hope that individual members will take it upon themselves to organise events such as parties, theatre visits, dinners, barbecues and such. They would be assured of plenty of support and it could add a few dollars to the Society's coffers.

And now the news. Two groups have so far spent nights making photometric measurements of the supernova in the Large Magellanic Cloud. They used unfiltered light and four reference stars, δ -, ϵ - and θ -Doradus and γ -Hydrae. Unfortunately, θ -Doradus was too blue and δ -Doradus too red to give a good calibration line, and consequently the results were not satisfactory. For a second attempt five more reference stars have been selected, all close in colour to the nova, and a V (visible) filter will be used.

Dr. Alan Vaughan wants as many of us as possible to be competent in the use of the apparatus by the end of April, so there could be a period of frantic activity coming up. We would like all members interested in this project to register with our everloving Secretary, Peter Hemphill, the nights of the week on which they are available.

Also, Alan has received a letter from the Space Telescope Science Institute of Baltimore, U.S.A., requesting help with photometric observations of an eclipsing binary. It is a G.6.II double with a period of 195 days, and goes by the fascinating name of HR2554. We will be participating in this project.

A friend of mine, a very good fitter and turner with a well equipped home workshop, has agreed to make for us any mechanical bits and pieces that we may need. He will charge a small fee, which he tells me will help to finance his own hobby, restoring and collecting model trains. His name is Errol Godden, and he can be contacted after hours on 871-1209.

Finally the bad news. Our delinquent President, Bob Feeney, should be back among us at either the April or May meeting. He has been organising what is the equivalent of the Logie awards for Australia's cinematographers, and over the last couple of months has sat through more films than most of us see in a lifetime. I can imagine worse things, but not many.

Good looking,

Gordon Stott.

N.B. In case you've forgotten, meetings are held at 7.30 p.m. on every third Tuesday of the month. Until such time as the Society grows too large for our living room, the venue will be the Chateau d'Stott, 29 Robert St., Telopea.

Meetings	May	19th	August	18th
	June	16th	September	15th
	July	21st	October	20th (A.G.M.)
