

UNIVERSE

Journal of the Astrological Society of New South Wales, Unco.

1 April, 2007

Volume 9 #1

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Sophisticated radar measurements of Jupiter conducted with a 12,000 Ångstrom fusion flux radar installation at the Bogong High Plains in Victoria's High Country have revealed hitherto unsuspected findings about our neighbouring giant planet.

The research is being carried out as a co-operative venture between the Oodnadatta Campus of the University of Adelaide, Honours science students at Sofala High School, and the Bogong Lovers Society of Australia, the latter group having donated a portion of their acreage atop the high plains to host the 98 metre interferometric dual radar dishes.

The grand opening of the installation last June was performed by the Prime Minister who cracked a bottle of Star Port over each dish and was pleased to be able to say that he was alert but not alarmed. Distinguished guests had included Emmanuel Snodgrass, Dipso Maniak, Ivor Merino and the late Albert Einstein (in absentia).

Initial findings suggest that not only does Jupiter have a solid core of metallic hydrogen approximately 41,870km in diameter but that it also features an elevation, or mountain some 3,400km high corresponding with the latitude and longitude of the Great Red Spot.

It seems that the moon reported in Alternate Universe Volume #7 as having been discovered orbiting within the atmosphere of Jupiter directly beneath the Great Red Spot has quietly settled on the surface of the inner core without the forecast fireworks, gravitational effects, electrical arcing or massive explosions. But curiously, forms a high, but narrow mountain which defies explanation.

The clear inference is that the nonsense talked of for centuries about the Great Red Spot being a long lasting storm, or cyclone is nothing more than nonsense. The "Spot" is nothing more than turbulence and updrafts around the summit of this natural feature - a good example of why superstitions like this, the big bang, the red shift and recession, and little green men on Mars should be the subject of constant doubt and rigorous testing.

When fitted with digital Hydrogen-alpha filters, it is proposed to turn the radar dishes on to several comets as they approach perihelion to ascertain if comets are uniform in composition containing, for example, only frozen gases, or contain rocky or metallic cores.

In order to allay the fears of animal liberationists and the Greens, radar emissions are scheduled well outside the annual Bogong Moth migration period.



DISCOVERY OF SUBSTANCES IN GREAT COMET McNAUGHT (C/2006 P1)

Professor Hyoktane Saki, senior researcher in Astronautical Dipsomania at the University of Tokyo has announced some exciting new findings from data downloaded from the Japanese spectroscopic satellite “Peekaboo”, which was launched from Okinawa last October.

It seems that the satellite was analysing the spectral signature of volatile gases emitted on 12 January 2007, when Great Comet McNaught (C/2006 P1) was close to perihelion, and chanced on an amazing discovery.

It had long been known that proto amino acids and tenuous hydrocarbons existed in minute amounts in interstellar gas clouds and comets, and this fact had produced theories on the dissemination of those compounds deemed essential for the emergence and support of life in the cosmos.

In fact, it has been proposed by some researchers that the widespread existence of these compounds made it a certainty that some would be present on any Earth-like planet, so that the corresponding development of life on such planets was a certainty.

Therefore, the Japanese researchers had been fully expecting to find traces of hydrocarbons and amino acids in Great Comet McNaught.

What surprised them, however, was that one of the compounds identified proved almost identical in composition to a good quality single malt Scotch whisky, in quantity enough to suggest that perhaps 100 million tons were contained within the comet. Not only was the malt whisky clone of good quality, but it had been aged for approximately four billion years, a factor that should contribute to a unique and very smooth flavour.

This finding has been supported and verified by back-up research by NASA, which it seems is turned on by the prospect of sourcing rocket fuel from the smaller members of the Solar System to refuel vehicles in orbit or in passage, though such a usage would likely cause alarm in Scotland at such sacrilegious behaviour.

The Professor noted in published data from oil companies drilling for oil both offshore and within the British Isles themselves, that deep cores from 100 metres beneath the bed of Loch Ness have been found to contain a layer akin to the K2 boundary including a solidified compound almost identical to the single malt Scotch whisky look-alike identified in the comet.

There has long been a theory held by progressive oil experts, including one Sir Rob Vanderson of Starsend Observatory at Limpia

Crossing in West Texas, that the origin of the world's oil reserves is extra-terrestrial rather than being produced on Earth by decaying organic material.

This has led to many oil companies being motivated to drill for oil in places that had not formerly been considered as likely sources. This has fuelled speculation that when the Loch had been cut off from the sea during the late Pleistocene, it may have been totally filled with this compound as a result of impact by a slow moving cometary body which had not exploded or been totally consumed in the process.

Anthropologists, who had been at a loss to explain bone structural evidence of acute alcoholism in the remains of early hominids excavated both in the Highlands and Lowlands are now speculating that the early population in the vicinity of the Loch may have been consuming alcohol in quantity from what seemed an unlimited source and that highland dancing may have been invented as a means of sobering up inebriated hunters who were needed to bring back game to feed the tribes.

It is now believed that the earliest historical sightings of the fabled Loch Ness monster were in fact caused by an imperfect understanding in tribal society of the nature of delirium tremens.

As the level of the Loch diminished over thousands of years of solid drinking, some early Scots genius no doubt discovered how to replicate the waters of life by distilling the secret herbs and spices.

PLUTO EXILED

Thinking Australian astrologers, and even those who write for newspapers, are deeply concerned at the irresponsible behaviour of the International Astronomical Union in demoting Pluto from its long held position as a major planet.

Interestingly, the Hubble Space Telescope recently found that Pluto's moon Charon was not its only moon, and that Pluto has two further moons, named Nix and Hydra, but this did not deter the International Astronomical Union from demoting Pluto from planet status to dwarf-planet.

Such a relegation to the minor league can have far reaching implications and severely disrupt the carefully developed scientific methodology currently used in casting horoscopes by professional astrologers.

And by professionals, I don't mean those hack journalists writing for the newspapers etc, but serious practitioners like Dr Con Huckstar, who holds a PhD in Astrological science, the History of Astrology, and where Hitler's astrologers got it wrong, from America's top three prestigious non-accredited universities.



The recently demoted Dwarf-Planet Pluto and its three moons Charon, Nix and Hydra

Dr Huckstar refutes the implication that Pluto was only a planet for little more than 65 years since its discovery at Flagstaff Observatory, citing an important and recent paper on the subject by Doctor Hu, Laucasian Professor of Archeotautology at the University of Oxbridge.

Dr Hu argues powerfully that Pluto was actually known to the ancients, and considers that the discovery in recent years of large and very ancient telescopes at an archaeological dig in Iraq, reported in our usual efficient manner in a previous issue of Alternate Universe, is the missing link.

It seems there is an obscure reference in Homer's Iliad to the planet Pluto, albeit by his Greek name Hades, which has never appeared in English translations owing to the difficulty of rendering a coherent meaning.

However, when the Iliad is read in the original Etruscan, this reference, together with the chance that Homer knew that the Chaldean astronomers observed Pluto through the historic Iraqi telescopes, it all comes together with undeniable logic.

The reference which has so long puzzled scholars refers to Achilles sulking in his tent while “*the consort of Persephone (Hades, God of the underworld and Mortician in Chief to the Olympians) passed by the eye of the Bull high above his accustomed domain*”.

Homeric scholars just could not figure this out so left it alone - and out.

Now during the accepted time frame for the Trojan War, computer calculations show that Pluto was in Taurus close by Aldebaran – and in fact was in Taurus for the whole lifetime of Achilles.

Clearly Achilles' personal horoscope was being mightily perturbed by this conjunction as he was

born under the sign of Taurus, and without realising that old Hades was up there organising his imminent demise and entry to the underworld.

Had Achilles known that Pluto had been hanging about his sign from his birth he may not have become a warrior at all but maybe a wine merchant or at least a tradesman grape treader.

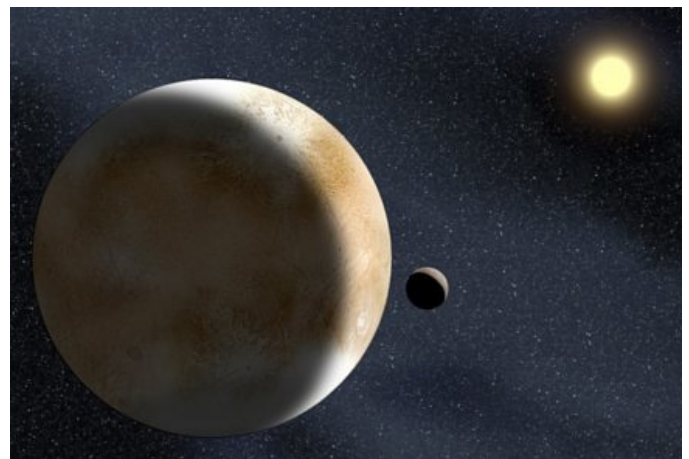
One in the eye for classical scholars too as Hera has been getting all the blame from them these past three thousand years for starting the Trojan War without anyone realising that all along Hades had a piece of the action.

And to compound all this, those damned astronomers have stolen Xena's planet (and moon Dysnomia) from her.

Xena, a household name, and darling of all butch females has been replaced by some obscure Goddess, Eris, whom few people had ever heard of and whose main attribute seems to have been stirring up strife amongst men.

A bit over the top, as the world is full of liberated women who can manage very successfully to stir up strife amongst men without needing any assistance from a minor Goddess parking in their constellation - in fact even a minor level of such assistance could wreak havoc in the world.

Astronomers, have you no shame? At least give Xena a small asteroid by way of compensation.



Eris (formerly Xena) and her Moon Dysnomia

EXTRA-TERRESTRIAL INFLUENCES ON REPTILIAN LIBIDO

Dunedoo's most famous son, Emmanuel Snodgrass will be visiting with his cousin, Iskandar, who runs one of the most respected hog breeding farms at Po Bidy Crossroads, Georgia, this coming May.

Emmanuel is to be a keynote speaker at the combined Rattlesnake Sexing/Hog Calling contest being held during the county fair that month.

He will be expounding on his theory concerning the circadian rhythms of snakes being affected both by lunar cycles and the solar maxima and outlining his formula to determine optimum breeding times for these endangered reptiles.

Snakes having their bodies mostly in constant contact with the ground are more susceptible than most reptiles to the minute changes in lunar tidal attraction during the movement from apogee to perigee, while it is believed that highly charged particles from the sun interacting with the upper atmosphere cause not only auroral activity but also weak electrical transferences between a snake's ventral scales and highly mineralised soils which can arouse reptilian libidos even in cooler weather.



Xenophidian orgies like this may be a result of highly charged particles from the sun

He has established a very successful Death Adder breeding program using these principles and is now adapting the formula to take account of the larger body dimensions of adult Tiger Snakes.

This research has attracted much interest in Georgia owing to the steady decline in Rattlesnake numbers in recent years and the need to establish Rattlesnake farms to produce belts, snake oil and pets for the politically minded.



One of Emmanuel's adult Tiger Snakes in a semi-aroused state

Emmanuel was most recently in the news when he got the civic fathers of Dunedoo to introduce dramatic new traffic control measures in the town.

Alarmed by the increasing air pollution from automobile hydrocarbon emissions, and the danger to pedestrians and reptiles from high speed traffic, he has secured a new by-law by which all motor vehicles passing through the town must turn off the ignition one kilometre outside the town boundary and be towed to a location one kilometre on the far side of town by a team of horses which are also fitted with an LED array for use at night time.

The results have so far been encouraging and Emmanuel says he can now reach a whole two magnitudes fainter with his binocular telrads owing to the darker and clearer skies over the town.

He hopes to be a guest speaker at the 2007 Texas Star Party, where he will be arguing for a similar law to be passed to protect the sky over Fort Davis, particularly during TSP week.

Such a law is already being proposed for Limpia Crossing, close to the TSP.

RECENT EXPERIMENTS ON SCHRÖDINGER'S CAT

Schrödinger's cat is a famous illustration of the principle in quantum theory of superposition, proposed by Erwin Schrödinger in 1935.

Schrödinger's cat serves to demonstrate the apparent conflict between what quantum theory tells us is true about the nature and behaviour of matter on the microscopic level and what we observe to be true about the nature and behaviour of matter on the macroscopic level.

Here is Schrödinger's (theoretical) experiment: We place a living cat into a steel chamber, along with a device containing a vial of hydrocyanic acid.

There is, in the chamber, a very small amount of a radioactive substance.

If even a single atom of the substance decays during the test period, a relay mechanism will trip a hammer, which will, in turn, break the vial and kill the cat.

The observer cannot know whether or not an atom of the substance has decayed, and consequently, cannot know whether the vial has been broken, the hydrocyanic acid released, and the cat killed.

Since we cannot know, the cat is both dead and alive according to quantum law, in a superposition of states.

It is only when we break open the box and learn the condition of the cat that the superposition is lost, and the cat becomes one or the other (dead or alive).

This situation is sometimes called quantum indeterminacy or the observer's paradox: the observation or measurement itself affects an outcome, so that it can never be known what the outcome would have been if it were not observed.

We know that superposition actually occurs at the subatomic level, because there are observable effects of interference, in which a single particle is demonstrated to be in multiple locations simultaneously.

What that fact implies about the nature of reality on the observable level (cats, for example, as opposed to electrons) is one of the stickiest areas of quantum physics.

Schrödinger himself is rumoured to have said, later in life, that he wished he had never met that cat.

Schrödinger was never able to demonstrate by experiment that his theory had validity, living as he did at a time when advanced test apparatus of sufficient accuracy and sensitivity had not been developed.

Over the past 30 years, researchers at both Oxford and Cambridge had proposed conducting suitable research using more advanced equipment but these plans were aborted owing to violent objections from the Royal Society for prevention of cruelty to animals. In addition, the Queen was not amused.

Similarly, promising preliminary work at both Yale and Harvard over the past decade had been stymied by similar objections from a powerful coalition of Animal Liberationists and the Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals.

However, we have recently become aware of discreet experiments being conducted by PhD students at the Angeles City University in the Republic of the Philippines.

It seems these researchers had struck a deal with one of the top ten Chinese restaurants in the city which had been developing a tasty variant of Mongolian feline and was prepared to make suitable study specimens available from its breeding stock.

Cats suitably anaesthetised and fitted with heart and respiration monitors have been placed in sealed stainless steel containers along with delicate equipment designed to release hydrocyanic gas or hydrogen cyanide ($\text{H-C}\equiv\text{N}$) should the appropriate radiation activity occur.

To meet objections from cat lovers it has been pointed out that the procedure is entirely painless, hydrocyanic acid very fast acting in the rare event of it being released, and that the cats in question are grown for culinary purposes and destined for the table in any case.

Going to the table after fulfilling a serious scientific purpose would merely give a greater purpose to their short lives.

Japanese researchers are excited by these developments and are actively investigating whether their ongoing research into whales could be adapted - after all, Cats were originally proposed almost by accident, and just scaling up the apparatus, stainless steel tank, quantum of hydrocyanic acid etc is a technical challenge.

Though Japan produces first rate engineers, opticians, astronomers, car designers, electronics experts etc, their biologists have always been a particularly inept lot, no doubt drawn from the lowest intellectual strata, as they have spent nearly a century catching whales, strictly for research purposes, but have only just figured out that they are not fish but mammals.

Similarly, if hydrocyanic acid can successfully be removed from cats by appropriate cooking techniques, the Japanese are stimulated by the prospect of developing Mongolian Whale - strictly for further research purposes, of course - Honest!

FURTHER CONFIRMATION OF EXTRA-TERRESTRIAL INTELLIGENCE

In the 2006 issue of Alternate Universe, there was a preliminary report of an apparent declaration of war on neighbouring galaxies by a dwarf galaxy in the Virgo cluster.

Being responsible journalists we undertook to investigate further and report back to our readers, all of whom are highly intelligent but some of whom are of a delicate and nervous disposition and perhaps easily alarmed. We have good news to report.

Professor Kirk Picard, of the University of Southern California's Trekketryvia Department has spent the past year analysing the message in the context of all historical precedent and has published his findings.

It seems that what had been taken on its face to be a declaration of war was actually a Klingon love song. Apparently what passes for romance in Klingon society resembles world champion wrestling.

The Professor said that the difficulty of distinguishing Klingon love songs and poems from declarations of war had long been recognised and

misinterpretations had in fact been responsible for most of the civil wars which had bedevilled the Klingon Empire for thousands of years.

The present case was complicated by the fact that “neighbouring galaxies” happens to be the Klingon colloquial terminology for certain prominent features of Klingon female anatomy and to really make things murky indeed, it seems that the song was dedicated by one male Klingon to another male Klingon.

As any undergraduate student of Trekketryvia can tell you, in such a context a love song usually provokes a declaration of war in reply.

Although the message came from the direction of the Virgo cluster, this was just a line of sight illusion as the message actually came from an interposed space vessel a mere 478 light years away.

Any declaration of war by way of reply has not yet been received on our planet, so the message may well be directed the other way - towards the Virgo cluster, where, if received, it may well cause alarm and confusion in a little less than 43 million years. Let us hope our galaxy does not get blamed for all this.

Senator Head has been informed and is alert but no longer alarmed.

ANCIENT EGYPTIAN OPTICS

There have been tantalising suggestions in ancient writings concerning possible technical innovations in the near east during the period 2000 BC to 400 AD.

The famous Antikythera Device, a corroded mass of bronze found in a shipwreck and dated to around 60 AD has, for example, been identified only in recent years as the first known analog computer.

Similarly, the Lighthouse at Alexandria, built by the Ptolemaic Dynasty during the Hellenistic period to guide shipping into port along an otherwise flat and featureless coast is another case in point.

A fire was kept burning day and night on it's top, so that the glow by night and smoke by day could be seen by ancient mariners from far out at sea, and one writer refers that a mirror was placed behind the fire to direct it's glow, saying that it had the peculiar property of “making distant ships look closer”.

What the mirror was made of, whether glass or bronze, we don't know, but the reference hinted that the principle of the telescope may have long been known in Egypt.

The Egyptians however were fine glass workers, and small glass bottles and other personal items, often of glass with a greenish tinge, have been found in tombs, and when glass blowing was introduced during the Roman period a number of big vases and phials were produced, notably at Fayum.

Glass had been used in an ornamental fashion as far back as 1,300 BC when glass paste was used in decorating features of the funerary mask of Tutankhamun.

However, a strange discovery was recently made in connection with that mask, which is on display in Room 3 on the first floor of the Cairo Museum.



Tutankhamun's Funerary Mask with the quartz “lenses” discovered by Dr Zymble

While undergoing its annual cleaning by Chief Conservator Dr Abu Zymble, Dr Zymble noticed that a small part of the left eye had been slightly dislodged.

The eyes in the mask are made of an obsidian pupil inset in a background of milky quartz, realistically slightly tinged red in the corners, but what had happened was that a hitherto unsuspected lens, or window of clear quartz, had been layered on the surface of each eye.

Acting on a hunch, Dr Zymble had the lenses examined by an optician, who determined that each conformed to the optical formula needed to correct chronic short sightedness in the very young.

Examination of the silver sarcophagus of Psusennes 1, twenty first Dynasty, reined 1045 -

994 BC, which was discovered at Tanis in the Delta by Pierre Montet in 1940 revealed similar lenses over the eyes, also designed to correct the vision of a short sighted person.

Further inspection has found similar lenses on the eyes on some other sarcophaguses, notably Ramses 11 and Ahmes Nefertari, but not on those of Queen Ahhotep or of Maatkara.

This discovery has sparked a spirited debate amongst Archaeologists, some of whom maintain that it was necessary for the deceased to be able to read the complicated instructions in the book of the dead which were commonly inscribed or painted on the walls of tombs in order to pass through the perils of the afterlife and that this optical aid would have been a necessary survival aid.

In fact, enemies of the deceased often gouged out the eyes from painted representations or funeral masks of their dead foe to destroy his or her chance of survival in the afterlife.

They could then neither read the Book of the Dead, nor see the food and drink offerings.

Contrarily, others maintain that the lenses were purely decorative and do not believe the Egyptians had any knowledge of optics, corrective or otherwise.

However, all the lenses so far tested fall squarely within the range familiar to modern opticians dealing with short sighted patients.

It seems now that further research by Dr Zymble has put the matter beyond doubt.

Dr Zymble re-examined the “mystery” canopic jar found in the tomb of Psusennes, this jar having been the cause of much speculation, as the other canopic jars had contained all the King's vital organs, while this surplus one was totally empty.

Montet had noted that it had a small inset glass base 42mm in diameter, while there was also a 15mm glass insert in the push-in lid but had assumed this was some new decorative feature.

However, Dr Zymble found that the glass base was convex and the inset in the push in lid was concave, and by adjusting the distance he pushed the lid into the jar he was able to use it as a ten-power Galilean telescope.

Any suggestion that it was not used in this way is countered by the decorative design on the jar, which shows the constellation of Orion, a star grouping sacred to the Egyptians and most significantly, clearly shows the four stars of the Trapezium which could not be identified without such optical aid. There is also evidence of a much larger telescope.

In fact, fragments of glass at the top of the 20cm square “ventilation shafts” leading from the King's chamber in the heart of the Great Pyramid to the outside of the structure are now considered the possible remains of very long focus Galilean telescopes, like $f/524$, situated so that the ka of the dead King could observe the (then) pole star Thuban from inside his tomb.

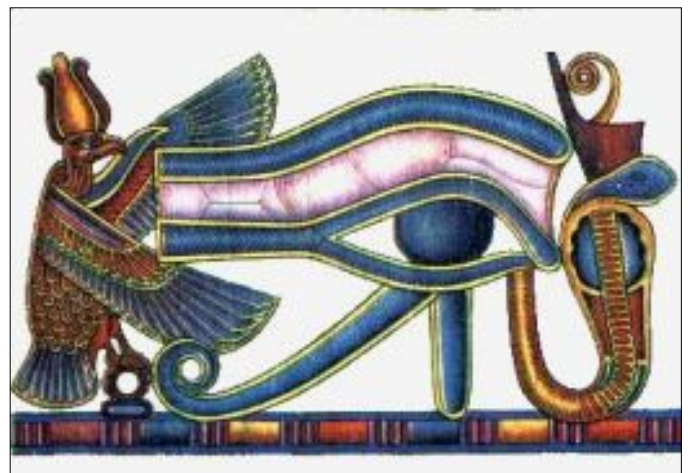
In fact there is now growing speculation that the entire Great Pyramid was designed as nothing more than a VERY solid mounting for a very long focus telescope for the deceased King to commune with the heavens, a fact which should upset the pyramid power and alien pyramid construction freaks considerably.

High power Galilean telescopes can only avoid chromatic aberration by being very long.

Following on this discovery, a careful re-examination of many other items in the Cairo Museum is now under way along with possible re-interpretation of well known items.

For example, the faces of many Egyptians on statues, Sarcophaguses, and paintings shows what appears to be a painted feature around the eyes - see photo, and hitherto believed to be cosmetic eye shadow.

There are now a growing number of archaeologists who now believe that this may be a stylistic representation of persons wearing spectacles during their lifetimes.



Udjat: The Sacred Eye of Horus - a stylistic representation of ancient spectacles?

Although no spectacles have yet been identified among grave goods, there is the alternate possibility that the Egyptians invented contact lenses around 1400 BC.

It is believed, however, that a number of hitherto unidentified telescopes may yet be discovered, either among existing examples of grave goods or in future excavations.

MOON LANDING COMMEMORATED

The President of the Snakey Gulley branch of the National Party, the Hon Trevor Cowpat (Dip.Ed) said last month that he intended to invite our beloved Prime Minister, Mr Howard to preside over the sausage sizzle to be held at the nearby Parkes Radio Telescope at 1pm on 20 July, 2069 to mark the role of that installation on the 100th anniversary of Armstrong's and Aldrin's landing on the Moon.

Mr Howard will also be asked to captain the Parliamentary team in the one day cricket match to be held in the dish.

Mr Cowpat said that though it could be said that the invitation was a little premature, not only was Mr Howard the most intelligent and handsome member of the Parliamentary Liberal Party but is the most clean living and has a superb level of fitness.

This means that now he has indefinitely postponed his retirement he would certainly be alive and well in 2069 and no doubt still be Prime Minister in 2069.

While in the unlikely event that he met with a tragic accident before that date, there was nothing in the Australian Constitution that specified that an Australian Prime Minister need actually be alive at all times while holding office.

The PM could then be deep frozen, he said, and an associated computer programmed with appropriate responses.

"I have no recollection of that", and *"I have in the past made my position on that quite clear so there is nothing further to add"* would, Mr Cowpat said, be a suitable answer to most questions the PM has to respond to.

Additionally, he said, the Deputy Prime Minister Mr Costello could be placed in a cryogenic chamber and kept in reserve as an emergency understudy should the PM be abducted by aliens and not promptly returned, in the hope that one day it might prove possible to revive him. This would likely represent his best chance of becoming Prime Minister anyway.

On a cautionary note, Mr Cowpat warned Australians to be wary of his political opponents.

He said that it was reliably rumoured that the Left Right Left wing of the Australian Labor Party had a secret plan to extinguish the Sun if elected at the next Federal poll.

The Australian National University was to be charged with devising a means of turning off the Sun in a more user friendly manner than that

proposed by the Awfully Far Out Left, i.e. inducing the Sun to go Supernova.

The Left Right Left apparently considered that the fact that the Sun was a fusion reactor was in conflict with their anti-nuclear position, a position which they considered was thoroughly vindicated by the many cases of skin cancer and sunburn, which the Sun was so commonly responsible for.

They planned to replace solar radiation with geothermal power, wind-generated power from wind-mills placed adjacent to Federal and all State Parliament houses, council chambers etc, and grow food hydroponically under sun-like lamps.

Mr Cowpat said that though the National Party itself was as yet not entirely convinced as to the exact nature of the Sun, the (alleged) Labor Party plans sounded highly irresponsible and that they would be vigorously opposed with the combined intellectual skills of the members of the Liberal / National coalition.

"The National Party loves a sunburnt country", he said.

STAR PARTY UNDER THREAT

Readers of Alternate Universe will be aware of the proposed annual Star Party at Cunnamulla, timed to take place during the Eulo-Cunnamulla Festival of Opals in general and the annual World Championship Lizard Races held at the magnificent Paroo Lizard Racing Track situated right in the central business district of the fair town of Eulo.

However, bad news has been received from top gun amateur of the Paroo Shire, Ludwig Litehardt who had been heavily involved in the planning for that Star Party and had even upgraded from his research-grade 60mm Tasco to a vintage 8-inch Coulter dobsonian in anticipation of the event.

Ludwig advises that the lizard races have been cancelled for the immediate future, apparently because of complaints from persons about them being a hazard to the health and well being of the lizards.

He is at a loss to understand this as the Queensland Government had enacted the *Nature Conservation (Eulo Lizard Races) Conservation Plan 1995* to control the event and to make it an offence to mistreat, nobble or otherwise infringe on the physical integrity of the lizards.

He theorises that as the shingleback lizards and bearded dragons of the Paroo Shire have long been acknowledged as the most intelligent lizards in Australia, some conservationists might see them as intellectual soul mates.

Of greater concern to him however, is the proposition put forward by the Beyond The Black Stump Alternate Society Brotherhood that the Star Party should be cancelled owing to it conflicting with their anti-nuclear principles.

They consider that Star Parties are tantamount to worship and glorification of those nuclear furnaces in the sky, and apparently are so fervent in their beliefs that they keep their solar-cells covered by day and uncovered only on cloudy nights.

This has so far proved so unsuccessful in generating any electricity, that lighting and cooking is done by them by burning dried kangaroo and rabbit droppings.

Ludwig has been negotiating with the civic fathers of Cunnamulla to see whether the Star Party might proceed at such time as the President of the Beyond The Black Stump Alternate Society Brotherhood, Mr Bert Dropkyk, is not allowed out on day release.

His followers are not able to read and write, have no radios, and have few visitors to their Ashram on the reed island in Taipan Swamp and therefore would be unaware of the event and so not cause disruption.

As soon as Ludwig gets a response to his representations he will inform Alternate Universe.

CULTURE AT THE TSP

Sir Rob Vanderson, America's first Astronomer Royal and Squire of the Royal Duchy of Fort Davis has graciously announced that a command performance entertainment will be performed at the next Texas Star Party under his patronage.

On the first non-observing night, "Count Dracula the Opera" will be presented in the "Valley of the Dobs".

Sir Rob said that the modest lighting requirements for the performance can easily be met by the usual contingent of laptops, DSC's and red torches around the Dobs which generally would, in combination, be sufficient to cater for night baseball.

This opera, by the foremost Transylvanian composer of the 18th Century, Trad Opus, has never before been performed outside the boundaries of Romania.

Composed because of a twenty guilder bet with the young Mozart with whom he shared lodgings in Paris during the traumatic period following the death of Mozart's mother, it commences with the funeral dirge he had composed for Mrs Mozart's burial service and celebrates the life of a true Transylvanian hero.

Sir Rob explained that Count Dracula had taken an unfair beating from Hollywood during the 20th Century.

True, he had his political opponents and anyone else he didn't like skinned alive, boiled, decapitated, hanged, impaled, strangled, burned, buried alive etc but this is routine stuff for many a third-world country today and nothing half the politicians in the Western World would not do if and when they could get away with it.

It seems that the Vampire bit and his affinity for nocturnal activity was all a misunderstanding. The Count, or Vlad, Prince of Wallachia to his bosom friends, and quite nice if you lived long enough to get to know him, was actually an amateur astronomer and spent many a night on the upper turret of his castle using a 6-inch Gregorian telescope fashioned by Pope Gregory himself and presented to the Count in recognition of his role as defender against the heathen Turk.

His black observing cloak for those cold central European nights, and nocturnal habits at a time when most of the peasantry went to bed at sundown, coupled with his red observing lamp shining atop the castle sparked wild rumours.

These rumours were accentuated because the Count, like most amateur astronomers, was something of a boozier and commonly was seen with considerable amounts of the finest Romanian Shiraz which the yokels thought was blood dripping down his face, while legends of virgin sacrifice promoted a great deal of defensive promiscuity in the region which continued even after his assassination in 1746 by his ungrateful surviving subjects.

Alas, his observing notes, star charts and orbital elements of the several comets he had discovered and rumoured (pre-Herschel) discovery positions of Uranus were lost when incinerated with the Count on a rather large funeral pyre.

Auditioning for the principal singing roles will be held in the auditorium adjacent to Starsend Observatory at Limpia Crossing in the week preceding the Texas Star Party while music will be provided by the massed banjo band from Deliverance, Four Corners.

AUSTIN SEEKS ENHANCEMENT

The city of Austin, Texas has much going for it - Nice location, seat of Government, hub of the University of Texas, thriving business centre, computer wizardry in the Silicon Hills, annual book fair, "can do" attitude and of course, the most hyperactive astronomy club in the US.

However, what always seemed to have been lacking was a sense of history.

San Francisco had one hell of an earthquake, New Orleans the flood, Washington was burned by the British - Atlanta apparently by everybody, but as even the most ardent citizens admit, nothing really exciting has happened in Austin since Judge Roy Bean stopped to water his horse on his way to a triple-hanging at Comanche Springs.

Still the city has always been outward looking and has established sister city relationships with such diverse cities as Adelaide in Australia, Koblenz in Germany, Edmonton in Canada and cities in Peru, Leotho, Japan, Mexico, Taiwan, Nigeria, South Korea and Turkey. Now at last it is to establish sister city relations with another go-ahead city in Texas - Fort Davis.

Not only does Fort Davis have a well preserved frontier fort, big court house, exciting outlaw history and Pop's Hamburgers, but it also hosts the world's most prestigious star party at the Prude Ranch, and, of course, the McDonald Observatory. So, instead of just hosting board meetings and administrative crud for the latter, Austin can get a real link to the cutting edge of science, big telescopes and all.

The other advantage for Austin is that it takes away some of the pain caused by the impending flow of the cream of the city's intellectual and cultural elite to Limpia Crossing, the garden suburb of Fort Davis, in that the sister city status will in an emotive way keep these fine folk "in the family" so to speak. Sort of.

Sir Rob Vanderson, resident Squire of Fort Davis has given the proposal his blessing.



Sir Rob Vanderson, resident Squire of Fort Davis, observing double stars by daylight

SOLITON CAMERAS

As everybody knows, solitons are self reinforcing solitary waves caused by a delicate balance between non-linear and dispersive effects in the medium.

They form when pre-present waves of permanent form are so localised that as they decay, they approach a constant at infinity (∞). Under appropriate conditions of harmony and resonance they can interact with other solitons and emerge from the collisions unchanged apart from a phase shift.

The Korteweg-deVries equation $\partial_t\phi + \partial_x^3\phi + 6\phi\partial_x\phi = 0$ (The KdV equation) postulates an undular wavefront followed by a train of solitons resulting in a steady increase in frequency and amplitude with nodal synchronous peaks balanced by dispersive fluctuations.

Examples in the natural world include the famous morning glory cloud in the Australian gulf country where pressure solitons travelling in a temperature inversion layer produce vast linear cloud rolls which have been used by experienced hang gliding enthusiasts to set long-distance gliding records.

However, the less well-known effect of fractoluminescence and screw dislocation in a crystalline lattice inspired the Department of Optics at the University of Bürgerweldt to look for practical applications of the principle within the confines of fibre optic cable which can reduce dispersion and also concentrate and accelerate wave action.

Professor Audi Biemer has now announced that his Department has produced an innovative CCD camera for high-resolution imaging of celestial objects.

Inspired by the 2 degree field spectroscopic instrument used at Siding Spring in conjunction with the 3.9m AAT reflector, Professor Biemer designed a camera around a network of ultra fine fibre optic cables, each linked to an individual pixel within the CCD chip and in that fashion linking an apochromatic objective to the imaging end of the camera.

Using particle accelerator technology to produce soliton surges and so amplify the photonic intensity of the images, the camera is capable of reaching down to magnitude 26 with the use of an 80mm apochromat in only two minutes.

Not being affected by reciprocity fatigue, Professor Biemer hopes to be able to image the original Big Bang, which he believes has been echoing around the universe and curving back on itself several times, provided of course, that you have figured out which direction to look.

Trials are being planned for this northern summer using the 300mm apochromatic astrograph at Baron Beavis von Büttkopf's observatory in the pristine skies of Schloß Ratzhärz.

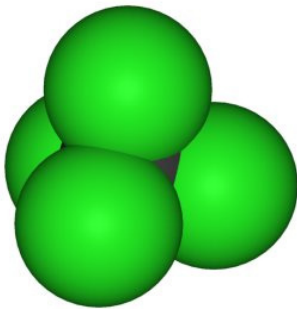
Results will be published in the Scientific American, The National Enquirer and also in the Greyhound Recorder.

PARTICLE DISCOVERY: FOTOPHYTONS

Dr Sven Beanie, of the University of Hámsterdamn has made an exciting breakthrough in his search for new fundamental particles.

While stationed at the University Cook's Gap Field Station, he had constructed a neutrino detector which he located in one of the deeper disused underground galleries of the Ulan coal mine, near Mudgee, Australia.

Dr Beanie filled the neutrino detector's elliptical tank with super chilled liquid Carbon Tetrachloride (Tetrachloromethane – CCl_4), and focussed the detector on the LMC these last six months hoping to see if any lower frequency of detection indicated any variation in output between galaxies.



A sample molecule of the super chilled liquid Carbon-Tetrachloride (CCl_4) used in Dr Beanie's neutrino detector to detect Fotophytions

Dr Beanie had been monitoring the tank with a sophisticated ground-penetrating radar of his own design and to his great surprise discovered something totally unexpected when a small percentage of particles passing through proved to have greater structural similarity to photons than to neutrinos.

Examination of the radar signatures with a powerful electron microscope adjusted to the same phase showed structured photons linked in joint fashion similar to the phytons in a flowering plant. Dr Beanie has named these particles “Fotophytions” and is now concerned to establish just how photonic type particles can penetrate 100 metres of hard rock.

Preliminary computer modelling using a veteran Unix machine suggests that the semi lattice like structure of fotophytions stops them being

absorbed or deflected by impact but instead imparts spin as one part of the lattice encounters an intervening atom so that the whole fotophyton rotates rapidly and bounces it's way through the matrix beneath, with a new rotative spin on each impact.



Dr Beanie and his sophisticated Ground-Penetrating Fotophyton Radar

This finding has caused great excitement amongst astronomers seeking to uncover the secrets in the hubs of galaxies and dark matter, as such particles could penetrate the intervening gas and dust clouds that have for so long obscured our vision of these remote places.

Research assistants at the University are now busy trying to construct a fotophyton camera which has a special filter built in to exclude all other particles and is sensitive only to these new objects.

Film is out owing to reciprocity problems as each “photo” would take about two years of exposure before enough particles turned up to be imaged, and in this regard the LMC makes a fine target as being circumpolar exposure can be kept up for 24 hours a day seven days a week, even during daylight hours as the camera is not sensitive to normal photons.

A phase-modulated CCD chip with harmonic variance capability and congruent molecularity so that the impact and even glancing hits can be recorded on DVD seems the best bet.

The University of Bürgerweltdt plans to construct a similar camera and locate it at Baron Beavis von Büttkopf's Schloß Ratzhärz Observatory to image the core of M31.

While passing the mullock heaps from surface excavations at the Ulan mines Dr Beanie's attention was drawn to a large quantity of old bones which had been excavated by the miners from surface diggings and casually discarded by them in the belief that they were residue from the long defunct Ulan abattoir.

His trained eye noted some unusual features amongst the bones, and closer examination confirmed that they were not bovine in origin but actually the complete skeletons of a small herd of Alpacasaurus, a dinosaur species thought to have become extinct at the end of the Cretaceous along with the rest of the genus.

Thinking scientists now concede that it is highly unlikely that at a time when 70% of life forms on Earth had become extinct, 100% of dinosaur species had got the chop, and considering that they had occupied a wide range of habitats over 150 million years some at least should have survived.

It is now considered that the smaller feathered dinosaurs, equipped both for mobility and insulation kicked on to become the ancestors of birds.

However, the freaky thing about the Ulan Alpacasaurus (*alpacasaurus beanii*) is that the bones were not only non-fossilised but were carbon dated to a mere 20,000 years old.



The reconstructed Alpacasaurus Beanii skeleton

Cut marks on many bones suggest that the animals were expertly butchered with stone knives and that their eventual extinction in Australia was probably caused by over-hunting.

How they survived when their northern cousins had not may be explained by the fact that in the

late Cretaceous, the Australian land mass was near the Antarctic Circle, and dinosaur species had adapted over millions of years to cope with three or more months of darkness while the sun was below the horizon in winter.

Thus, the “nuclear” winter which had done in the northern hemisphere dinosaurs had less effect on a species better adapted to cope with the new conditions.

A search is now underway for dinosaur remains in late Tertiary deposits throughout Australia, places which had in the past been ignored by dinosaur hunters.

A herbivore about as big as a small horse, and in the case of the southern species, finely feathered, Alpacasaurus has written a new chapter in Palaeontology.

APRIL'S HORRORSCOPES

By Dr Con Huckstar

♈ ARIES

Venus starts the month in your sign and this should stoke the fires of Arians seeking love, fulfilment, sheer lechery or R-rated movies. Try to eat healthy stuff and get lots of bed-rest during March as you will take a beating from 1 April and then spend the rest of the year in intensive care.

♉ TAURUS

After having spent the first week in Aries a somewhat raddled Venus staggers into your sign and cavorts with the Seven Sisters, being also joined in Taurus by minor planet Iris and comet P/2001 Q2 (Petrew). Clearly Taureans of heightened libido will get their chance this month, wag their tails like a minor comet and find their virtue assaulted by hordes of admiring females, and then wake up and find it was all a dream.

♊ GEMINI

Your sign hosts minor planets 44 Nysa and 115 Thyra this month - about as exciting as Gemini ever gets, so expect two major events in your dull lives. Maybe your bus will turn up on time one day or you will win twenty bucks in the state lottery. Await events with breathless anticipation.

♋ CANCER

Minor planet 20 Massalia stirs up the Beehive cluster on 14 April, so expect some small event to stoke a disproportionate reaction from the host of demons you normally work hard to keep at bay - your boss, ex-girlfriends, demanding landlords or the highway patrol. Play safe on the morning of 14 April - reset your alarm clock and go back to sleep until 15 April, but lock your bedroom door to ensure none of the above sneaks into your bed while you are asleep - particularly the highway patrol.

♌ LEO

The occultation of your brightest star, Regulus, by the moon on 26 April puts your major asset at great risk this month. Have your car fully serviced, reduce fire hazards around your house, and try to insure your good looks. Use your charm and charisma sparingly so you don't go into overload and try a month of celibacy.

♍ VIRGO

Two bright minor planets 3 Juno and 28 Bellona reach opposition in Virgo this month, both on 10 April. Have valium on toast for breakfast on that date as it should be a more exciting day than virtuous Virgos are used to, with two stellar events occurring in synch. You may get both that promotion and the sultry secretary you have been secretly lusting after, or somebody you particularly hate may break both legs. Enjoy.

♎ LIBRA

Well balanced Librans don't usually bother with valium on toast as nobody who knows them would notice any difference. Typical of Libra this month, nothing worth a damn is happening in there, so make things happen to yourself. Try Prozac, Irish coffee, Red Bull, or all three at the same time and enter a line-dancing contest - You will get noticed.

♏ SCORPIUS

Antares gets occulted by the moon on 7 April, so if you are an army guy planning to go AWOL, that is your day of choice. You won't get caught and beaten up by the military police until 8 April so you have a whole day of freedom and fun ahead of you. If you are not in the army but just hopelessly married, have your night out with the guys that night - You won't feel a thing until the morning.

♐ OPHIUCHUS

There, we thought of you again - And so does Jupiter, King of the Gods, who spends time in your sign and does his retrograde motion this month. This clearly means that your ass-kicking boss may mellow, and invite you out to dinner.

Again, it might mean that your caring and understanding boss will suddenly turn feral and bite your hand off. Assess your boss and watch with care. Take a baseball bat to work.

♑ SAGITTARIUS

Minor planets 192 Nausikaa and 9 Metis strut their stuff in your sign this month which is reason enough for Sagittarians to celebrate.

Nausikaa, daughter of King Alcinous developed a case of the hots for Odysseus when she found him washed ashore on the beach while she was doing the laundry, while the Metis are a Canadian Indian tribe, so this conjunction is clearly of great significance - go swimming in Canada and you will find romance on the beach, and being Canada, a touch of frostbite in the nether regions.

♑ CAPRICORN

Be warned you latent goatherds - stay away from war zones or PMT for those three days Mars spends in your sign but keep an eye on minor planet 115 Thyra (ancient queen of Denmark) and Neptune who are waltzing together through Capricorn as, if you have a cruise booked during April, elderly nymphomaniacs will lust hotly after your body. Invest in a chastity belt.

♒ AQUARIUS

Aquarians beware. Mars spends most of the month in your sign, just south of Uranus. Reconsider those thoughts about joining the army as you will likely get it in the end. For those already in the military, try Kevlar underpants with a hubcap sewn into the seat. The rest of your body should have a good month.

♓ PISCES

Apart from the moon wandering through, Pisces should be serene this month, though a burst of Lyrid meteors is expected to invade your space on 22 April and this is heady stuff for the cool dudes born under this sign. Earmark that date for your night on the town, marriage proposals or serious drinking but spend the rest of the month in your usual vegetative state.

CLASSIFIEDS

BOOK LAUNCH

Bokglob Gröseblurter, noted author of *“My Grandmother Was an Alien”*, and *“Zen in Zero Gravity”* has announced the launch of his latest book *“Murrell Objects and Elvis Sightings”* to be held in Sydney on May Day.

Hosted by Mr Spike Myth at his famous Wee and Flee shop, guests will enjoy tastings of vintage Star Port and nibble on delicious leftovers from the SPSP spit roast, while being entertained with a selection of songs by the three crooners who may well sing in harmony this year. Or some year.

Bokglob will explain how although he had actually visited many Murrell Objects, he had never enjoyed the thrill of observing one from planet Earth until he fitted binoviewers to each eyepiece of his 30 inch Newtonian binoculars and got all four of his eyes into the equation.

Published by Bürgerweltdt University Press, autographed copies of the book will be on sale from all good liquor stores from 10am on 2 May 2007.

A steal at only \$49.99!

The Braille and Esperanto editions will be available on 1 November 2007, but the Latin and Romulan editions are not expected before 1 April 2008.

**CITIZENS OF ROSWELL LODGE OFFICIAL
COMPLAINT AGAINST TEXAN ASTRONOMERS**

Concerned citizens of Roswell in New Mexico, have lodged a formal complaint with the Governor of Texas about the behaviour of those pesky astronomers at Comanche Springs.

It seems that as soon as the dedicated UFO observers at Roswell find a whole new class of UFO, those damned astronomers turn their telescopes on the objects and identify them.

They have identified things like stealth bombers, high-flying geese, turkey buzzards in mating rituals, iridium flares and of course those accursed weather balloons.

They have even identified Southern California licence plates situated beneath some of the Marfa lights.

The faith of the faithful is being sorely tested by this flood of inconvenient facts and the tourist trade in Roswell is coming under severe pressure, with another two hundred motels closing in the past month alone.

The Chief Troublemaker at Comanche Springs has been deported to Australia lots of times but keeps finding his way back to Texas, so just trying to get rid of them may not work.

Roswellites consider that the best solution is to upgrade the research at Comanche Springs to get the kind of results UFO fans have come to expect.

This can be helped by equipment at Comanche Springs being revamped to Ufology standards - cameras made incapable of focussing, mirror coatings being stripped, lenses given additional optical coatings of axle grease etc.

In this way the faith-based science on which generations of UFO folk have existed and depended can be enhanced and preserved and all this business of amassing confusing evidence relegated to history.

Grey aliens, little green men and bug-eyed monsters have been creatively designed over the past fifty years to meet a psychological need and deserve to reclaim their place in science.

Aliens rule!

SOCIETY DIARY

6 April	Society Meeting	Emmanuel Snodgrass speaking on Snake Handling, And Astronomical Observing Amongst Nocturnal Reptiles - Survival Techniques.
13 - 15 April	South Pacific Star Party at Wiruna	Your big chance to test your newly learned survival skills amongst real reptiles and assorted human and near-human weirdos.
21 April	Last Quarter Moon observing at Crago	Group attempt to astral travel with Comet McNaught for an hour or two - Use up some frequent flyers accruals
27 April	Society Meeting	Group Discussion: "How Good Was Comet McNaught? Great?; Not Bad?; Bloody Magnificent?; Humungously Awesome?; so so?..." Wear protective clothing and a necklace of garlic.

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