

## **DIRECTORS REPORT**

### ***Outreach***

There is a lot of outreach activity throughout the country, almost all of which is planned and executed “in isolation” by individuals or groups at the various Centres or elsewhere, with little or no interaction with other outreach practitioners (OPs).

The Outreach Section was formed with the objective of tapping into this vast pool of experience and expertise and sharing these outreach experiences, successes and challenges as widely as possible with the intention of getting new ideas and learning from each other.

With this in mind, an invitation was sent to all the OPs that the Section was aware of to share a summary of their activities and, particularly, their successes. The communication also showed some examples of a Centre’s outreach activities. Details of the hugely successful Touwsrivier Primary School’s Maths & Science Club’s were also attached as an example of what enthusiastic and dedicated *teachers* can achieve with primary school children. All Centres were requested to share this example with all good science teachers in their respective Centres.

The Hermanus Centre did learn from Touwsrivier’s Maths & Science Club experience and formed a Science & Technology Club with learners from 3 local schools with the objective of stimulating an interest in and confidence with science and technology. Apart from Star- & Moongazing and Sunspot counting, *workshops* on the Solar System, Season, Sundials were conducted, and *excursions* to science & technology facilities were arranged: SANSA, Iziko, SAAO, Palmiet hydro-electric pumped storage, Caledon Wind Turbine Farm, Fernkloof Botanical Gardens, ABAGOLD abalone farm, Palmiet water purification plant (where a biological process is used to remove excess heavy metals, Birkinhead Lighthouse).

The *concept* of sharing outreach experience and expertise received enthusiastic support, but unfortunately this was followed up by only a single contribution.

Outreach is one of the cornerstones of increasing an interest in Astronomy and is also one of the responsibilities of Centres. During a meeting with Centre Chairs by the President the request was made for Centres to add a separate Outreach page to their websites, on which all outreach initiatives or activities can be updated.

To date only one Centre has established such a page on their website and a direct link to it forwarded to the WebMaster. The general (and understandable) trend is to embed outreach activities or invitations into the Centre newsletters.

Clearly a different approach is needed. After the ASSA AGM the Section will contact each Centre Chair individually to encourage such outreach pages on their Centre websites and establish direct links to the ASSA Outreach page.

The concept of including links to meritorious but non-ASSA outreach activities such as OOG or the Leeuwenboschfontein Observatory will be tabled at a future Council meeting.

### ***Global Meteor Network***

The Section assisted Tim Cooper in identifying participating schools and the installation of the GMN cameras at these schools. It will continue assisting Tim in whatever manner it can, including leading the Hermanus/Gansbaai group of learner participants.