

ASSA OBSERVING DIRECTOR REPORT
and
OUTREACH OFFICER REPORT
2017 – 2018

I have included both Observing and Outreach reports in one, the two often going hand-in-hand.

Observing and Outreach events during the past were advertised and posted using the various channels available, namely the ASSA Facebook page, web page and Discussion group. Sighting reports have been answered using input from specialists, Tim Cooper, Greg Roberts and Shallow Sky Director Clyde Foster. For their help, I would like to extend a warm thank you. A special word of thanks to Tim for co-ordinating the meteor/fireball reports, especially the 15th June event where we were both inundated with emails for well over a week, and he had the task of sifting through and analysing the data.

Once again Pretoria Centre's Michael Poll is thanked for submitting the Centre's observing reports.

Outreach queries and calls for assistance have come from many parts of the region, including Namibia, and these have all been routed through to the Discussion group. I have been actively involved in some of these requests for assistance, the last one being on the evening of the 5th July at ATKV-Goudini Spa in Worcester. This was a presentation on Space and Stargazing attended by 95 Matric students and a handful of teachers from 17 schools in the Western Cape.

For novae and variables I would like to thank Specialist Dave Blane for keeping us up to date. The 2016 – 2017 observing year started nicely with comet X1 PANSTARRS visible in small to medium sized telescopes, followed by the subsequent outburst of Comet C/2015 ER 61 PANSTARRS, which I was fortunate to capture.

Two outreach as well as observing events that received much exposure via the various channels as well as in the media, were the partial solar eclipse in September 2016 and International Observe the Moon Night in October. The ASSA community, Centres and astronomy Clubs throughout the country contributed to promoting these events assisting in many ways from web page creation and design, to live streaming, and of course to organizing venues, guest speakers and telescopes.

There were many observing opportunities during the course of the year with ASSA members having various success in observing/imaging these. Of these, one that really stands out for me was the close pass of Asteroid 2014 JO25. I've had the privilege of seeing a number of astronomical events over the years and have also had many of them clouded out. Observing/imaging Asteroid 2014 JO25, ranks right up there with some of the best ones.

Having recently relocated with my family to the Western Cape, I'm excited to be getting involved in new communities, seeing a new perspective of our southern skies, and meeting all our Cape members.

In conclusion I would like to wish everyone clear skies and encourage you to submit your observations to the relevant ASSA sections. I look forward to promoting astronomy in SA, the Society and working closely with Hermanus Centre during the course of the following year.

Kos Coronaios
ASSA Observing Director
Outreach Officer

Asteroid 2014 JO25 was first acquired shortly after 21:00 (SAST) as it cleared the horizon, surprising enough with all that light/haze pollution. First attempt to view at the eyepiece at 22:15 (SAST) was successful, as was the second attempt shortly before midnight. Images is 30 second frame.

Outburst of Comet C/2015 ER 61 PANSTARRS