



**Wellington Astronomical Society  
2020-08 eNewsletter**

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**Wellington Astronomical Society Inc.  
Email Newsletter for August 2020**

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### **1. WAS SOCIETY MEETINGS – AUGUST 2020**

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## *Over the Rainbow: Spectroscopy and Amateur Astronomy*

*Tom Love*

WAS is back having face-to-face monthly Society meetings after the lifting of COVID-19 restrictions! We are looking forward to seeing you all again on **Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> August at 7.30pm** at Space Place, Carter Observatory, 40 Salamanca Rd, Kelburn.

We understand that there may be some people who are unable to attend in person, which is why we will also be making the meeting available via Zoom online.

To watch online: You will need to register at <https://www.was.org.nz/2020/07/august-2020-meeting/>. An email acknowledging the registration will be sent back to you with a link to a Zoom meeting. Follow the instructions in the email to gain access to the meeting. If you don't receive the email within a few minutes, please check your Spam folder. Contact [webmaster@was.org.nz](mailto:webmaster@was.org.nz) if you have any issues.

This month's meeting will contain the following:

1. Night sky in August
2. Astronomy News
3. Main talk at 8:00 pm

### **Over the Rainbow: Spectroscopy and Amateur Astronomy - Tom Love.**

This talk looks at some of the background to the technique of spectroscopy. It shows how spectroscopic observations have contributed to astronomical knowledge, describes some of the technological advances that have made spectroscopy feasible for amateur astronomers, and gives examples of the science that is being done by amateur astronomers using these techniques.

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Tom Love was an amateur astronomer and a member of the Dunedin Astronomical Society as a teenager. He later spent a winter working as the first observer for the MOA project at Mount John. He has recently returned to active participation in astronomy, and is enjoying the dark skies of the Wairarapa.

## 2. EVENTS

### **WAS Astrophotography Group / Dark Sky Observing**

Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> August, 7 pm onwards, Star Field - John Whitby's dark sky site.



Come along to this Astrophotography / Deep Sky event at a dark sky site in the Wairarapa. There will be a tour of the Night Sky for beginners with a pointer before we get on the telescopes. There is also a lot of expertise available for anyone wanting to photograph the Night Sky.

As this is a private property, you will need to register if you want to come along by contacting us through Facebook Messenger or by emailing [president@was.org.nz](mailto:president@was.org.nz). Include your email and mobile phone in the text if you are using Facebook Messenger. Directions to the site and any updates will be emailed out. Preference will be given to members of the Society first. This event is free to all WAS members. Non-members are required to pay \$10 per person. (To join the Society see <https://www.was.org.nz/join-us/>).

What to bring for astrophotography:

- A DSLR or mirrorless camera
  - A wide-angle lens (preferably)
  - A tripod to fix the camera to
  - Warm clothes as it gets pretty cold at night
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- Snacks and warm drinks if you want

With people taking photos, keep lights to a minimum (red lights if you can) especially car headlights (use parking lights). For those just interested in Deep Sky Observing, telescopes will be provided unless you want to bring your own.

Please contact Chris (021 890 222) or Antony (021 253 4979) for further details or cancellations. Updates will be available by the afternoon on the day of the event if the weather forecast is not looking good. This site is made available to the Wellington Astronomical Society through the generosity of John Whitby.

### **Lights out: Observe the Wonders of the Dark Sky**

Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> August 2020, 6 - 8 pm, Wainuiomata Water Collection Area.



Have you ever seen the Milky Way with your naked eye? Join us at this FREE family-friendly event to get a close-up look at the galaxy, set to the background music of ruru calls and rustling trees.

Light pollution in the city washes out our view of the space, and only the brightest stars pierce the glow. Wainuiomata Recreational Area might be one of the quietest spots on Earth, yet it has one of the busiest dark skies in the universe.

So grab the unique chance to explore our Southern Skies, looking for Jupiter, Saturn and the Moon through powerful optical telescopes with [Wellington Astronomical Society](#) guiding you through the

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journey. [TuMeke Face Painting & KD's Makeup Services](#) will be joining us with their glow in the dark facepaint from 6.15- 7.45pm.

Meet us at the carpark and the bus will take you to the ranger's office for the welcoming hot drinks & biscuits.

This is a FREE family-friendly event, so don't hesitate to take your little ones. No booking required.

Please bring: torches/headlamps (red lenses preferred), sturdy walking shoes/boots, waterproof jacket in case of wet weather  
Getting there: <https://goo.gl/maps/jPrNkCQ9zc6z5Qaz8>

### **WAS RAG**

The WAS research group (WAS-RAG) will be meeting online on 12<sup>th</sup> August and details will be communicated on the group's mailing list. Everyone in the group will be contacted beforehand for a decision on the timing.

The group will keep contact via the WAS-RAG mailing list. Roland can be reached on [roland@cno.org.nz](mailto:roland@cno.org.nz) in the meantime.

### **WAS meeting presentations on Video**

If you were unable to attend any of the Society meetings but are interested in watching our brilliant speakers deliver their presentations, you can find them online at <https://www.was.org.nz/2019-meeting-presentations/>. To access the videos, you will need the password: *WASvideo*.

### **WAS newsletters**

Similarly, if you are interested in accessing WAS newsletters, going all the way back to 2007, you can find them on the following link: <https://www.was.org.nz/was-monthly-newsletters/>. The newsletters are accessible for anyone that is interested in reading them.

### **ASTRONZ Binoculars for Sale**

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WAS, in conjunction with ASTRONZ, has these 10x50 high-quality light-weight binoculars available at a reduced price to members. Binoculars are available for **\$80** each (usually sell for \$99 excluding freight). Please email Antony Gomez, [president@was.org.nz](mailto:president@was.org.nz), if you would like to buy a pair

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### 3. ASTRONOMY NEWS

**SpaceX Crew Dragon carrying NASA astronauts to depart space station today. Here's how to watch it live.**

It's time to come home, Bob and Doug. Splashdown is scheduled for 6:41 am August 3 (NZST). But it depends on Hurricane Isaias.



Behnken and Hurley, or "Bob and Doug" as they've been affectionately dubbed by the public, launched to the space station May 30 as part of SpaceX's historic first crewed mission to space. The launch, which is part of NASA's Commercial Crew Program, also marks the first crewed commercial mission for NASA.

SpaceX's Demo-2 mission will conclude with the crew's return to Earth, which will be the [first U.S. splashdown in nearly 45 years](#). The

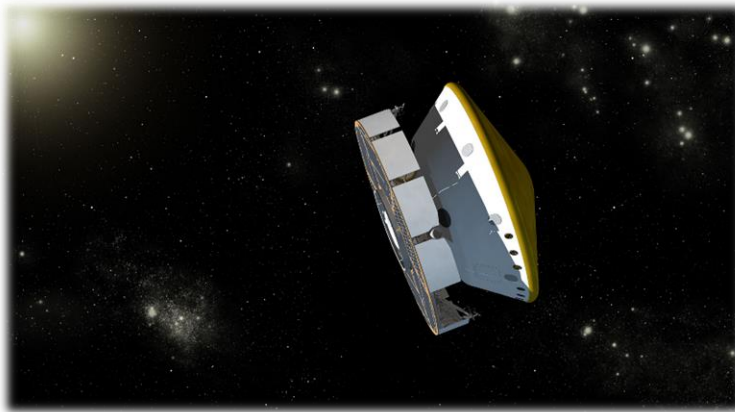
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pair of veteran astronauts are set to splash down in the Gulf of Mexico off the coast of Panama City, Florida, one of seven options available, at 1841 GMT (6:41 am NZST) if weather conditions are favourable.

<https://www.space.com/spacex-crew-dragon-demo-2-undocking-watch-live.html>

### **NASA's Mars rover Perseverance is fine and out of 'safe mode'**

The life-hunting rover bounced back fast. You can breathe easy now: All is officially well with NASA's newly launched Mars rover Perseverance.



Perseverance went into a protective "safe mode" shortly after its liftoff yesterday (July 31) because part of the spacecraft got a bit colder than expected when it zoomed through Earth's shadow.

NASA officials stressed at the time that this development was not particularly concerning and that Perseverance, the centerpiece of the agency's \$2.7 billion Mars 2020 mission, would likely bounce back quickly. That optimism was borne out: The rover has exited safe mode and resumed normal operations, mission team members announced today (August 1).

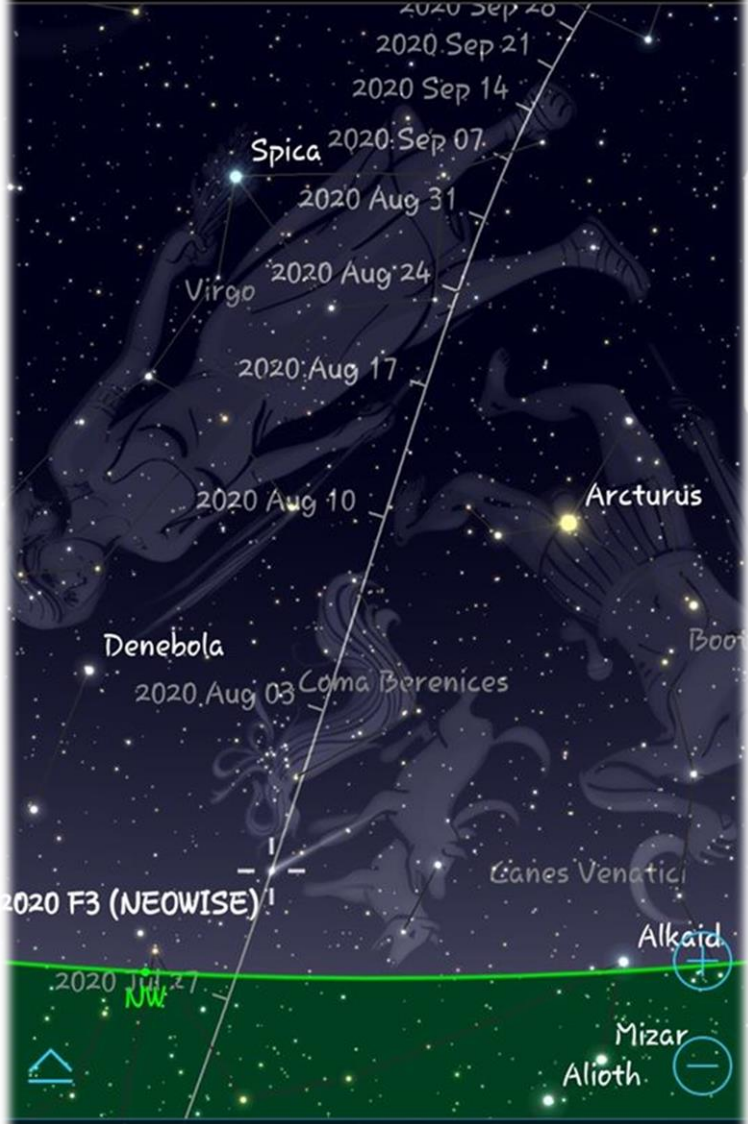
<https://www.space.com/mars-rover-perseverance-is-fine-exits-safe-mode.html>

### **Comet NEOWISE**

Comet NEOWISE provided a great show in the Northern Hemisphere with some stunning images taken by various astrophotographers. Unfortunately, the cloudy weather we are having hasn't given much opportunity to see it yet with only a few images taken from Aotearoa NZ. Below is the path of the comet over the next month.

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Current Location Wed Jul 29, 2020 19:00:00

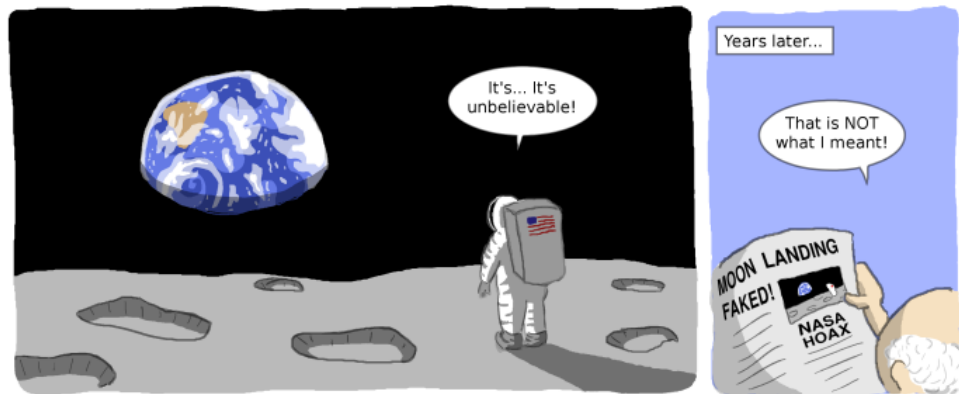


Wed Jul 29, 2020 19:00:00

1 Day ◀ ◁ Now ▶ ▷



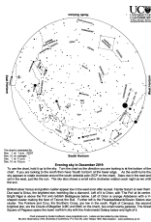
## Astronomy Humour



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## 4. NIGHT SKY FOR AUGUST 2020

The [Night Sky for August 2020](#) courtesy of the University of Canterbury.



## 5. CONTACTS

The following members were elected to Council at the November 2019 AGM:

President: Antony Gomez ([president@was.org.nz](mailto:president@was.org.nz)) - 021 253 4979

Vice President: Andrew Fuller ([vice-president@was.org.nz](mailto:vice-president@was.org.nz))

Secretary: Matt Boucher ([secretary@was.org.nz](mailto:secretary@was.org.nz))

Treasurer: Duncan Hall ([treasurer@was.org.nz](mailto:treasurer@was.org.nz))

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Membership Secretary: Shazia Gazi ([membership@was.org.nz](mailto:membership@was.org.nz))

Newsletter Editor: Shazia Gazi ([editor@was.org.nz](mailto:editor@was.org.nz))

Website: Peter Woods ([webmaster@was.org.nz](mailto:webmaster@was.org.nz))

Telescope custodian: Chris Monigatti

Research Group coordinator: Roland Idaczyk

Council: Murray Forbes, John Homes, Isabella Eftimov, Grace Esterman

Postal Address:

Wellington Astronomical Society,

PO Box 3181,

Wellington 6140, New Zealand

Website: [www.was.org.nz](http://www.was.org.nz)

Instagram: [@was.nz](https://www.instagram.com/was.nz)

Facebook page: [Wellington Astronomical Society](https://www.facebook.com/WellingtonAstronomicalSociety).

Facebook group: [WAS – Wellington Astronomical Society](https://www.facebook.com/WAS-WellingtonAstronomicalSociety) (for members)

Facebook Astrophotography group: [WAS Astrophotography Group](https://www.facebook.com/WAS-AstroPhotographyGroup) (for members).

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