

struments to gather data about Venus, for example, the magnetic field, and the radiation of heat from the planet. Even at a distance of a few hundred thousand miles, far more accurate results could be obtained than can be determined from earth. The readings of these instruments will be sent back by radio. But just as the glare of the sun prevents observations of Venus visually at the time of inferior conjunction, so also might there be some interference with radio transmission.

The sun itself sends out radio waves, and with the probe in the same direction as the sun, they might interfere with the transmissions giving data about Venus. Perhaps, however, the probe will be able to store the data, and transmit the information later, when the sun is not in quite the same direction. Then radio telescopes could be pointed to the probe, and could pick up its message more easily. Or if, as originally announced by the Russians, the probe reached Venus in May, which would be about a month after the closest approach, the added distance would not be serious, and again there would be less interference.

In any event, this April astronomers all over the world are awaiting with interest what news of Venus the Soviet probe may tell.

Celestial Time Table for April

April	EST	
1	12:48 a.m.	Full moon
8	5:16 a.m.	Moon in last quarter
9	1:00 a.m.	Moon passes Saturn
	9:00 a.m.	Moon passes Jupiter
10	7:00 p.m.	Venus at inferior conjunction (i.e., between sun and earth)
11	3:00 a.m.	Moon nearest, distance 228,600 miles
15	12:38 a.m.	New moon
17	8:00 p.m.	Mercury passes Venus
21	Midnight	Moon passes Mars
22	4:50 p.m.	Moon at first quarter
23	5:00 a.m.	Moon farthest, distance 251,100 miles
30	8:00 a.m.	Neptune (planet not visible to the naked eye) nearest earth, distance 2,724,000,000 miles
	1:41 p.m.	Full moon

Subtract one hour for CST, two hours for MST, and three hours for PST

• Science News Letter, 79:186 March 25, 1961

ROCKETS AND MISSILES

Russian Venus Vehicle Halfway by April 3

See Front Cover

► THE SOVIET space vehicle sent to probe the secrets of Venus, the mystery planet, is scheduled to be about halfway on April 3.

At that time, the space vehicle, launched Feb. 12, will be about 13,000,000 miles from earth. Radio contact, lost for a while, has again been established with the vehicle that is expected to be in the vicinity of the planet some time in May.

The front view of the Venus vehicle, seen on the cover of this week's SCIENCE NEWS LETTER, shows the two banks of solar batteries and the blinds of the thermal control system. The rod antenna in this view is half opened.

• Science News Letter, 79:187 March 25, 1961

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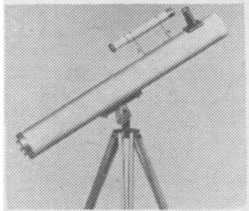
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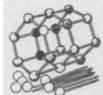
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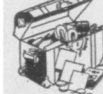
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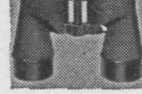
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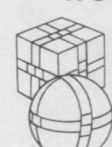
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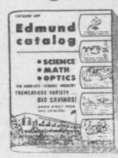
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