

determine one of the distances in miles, then you can make the scale.

The 1931 program, arranged by the International Astronomical Union, was designed to find one such distance—that of Eros. Coming so near, this was possible. After 10 years of work in analyzing these observations, the late Sir Harold Spencer Jones, who was Astronomer Royal of England, announced that the astronomical unit was 93,003,000 miles. This was a little longer than astronomers had previously supposed it to be.

But other methods of determining the unit's length have given a value somewhat different. And so have radar methods. These involve bouncing radio waves off Mars and Venus, and accurately timing the echo's return to earth. Some of the differences are as much as 100,000 miles, and astronomers do not know the reason for such a discrepancy. Perhaps new work, based on observations of Betulia, may give a clue.

Betulia, incidentally, was discovered on May 22, 1950, and is named after the wife of Dr. Samuel Herrick, astronomer at the University of California at Los Angeles. He is a long-time specialist in observing minor planets. With the aid of a colleague, Mrs. M. P. Francis, he calculated the time table for its visit this year and has urged that it be observed.

Celestial Time Table for May

MAY EDT

5	9:00 a.m.	Neptune nearest earth, distance 2,723,000,000 miles
6	midnight	Moon farthest, distance 252,500 miles
8	1:24 p.m.	Full moon
16	5:00 a.m.	Moon passes Saturn
	9:37 a.m.	Moon in last quarter
17	11:00 p.m.	Mercury between earth and sun
19	noon	Moon passes Jupiter
21	1:00 a.m.	Moon passes Venus
22	midnight	New moon
29	4:00 a.m.	Moon passes Mars
30	12:56 a.m.	Moon in first quarter

Subtract one hour for CDT, two hours for MDT, and three hours for PDT.

• Science News Letter, 83:266 April 27, 1963

GEOPHYSICS

Moon Seen as Source Of Glass-Like Tektites

► DEBRIS splashed out of the moon is the source of tektites, strange glassy objects found in scattered regions around the world, two scientists reported in Washington, D. C.

They believe that some of the debris thrown out by impact of meteors on the lunar surface goes into orbit around the earth and eventually ends up on earth as tektites. The National Aeronautics and Space Administration scientists said their theory is based on observation of a meteor shower and study of the breakup of artificial satellites.

Details of this theory on the lunar origin of tektites is reported in *Science*, 139:1288, 1963, by Drs. John A. O'Keefe and Barbara E. Shute. This would mean that the moon is very much like the earth in its chemistry.

• Science News Letter, 83:267 April 27, 1963

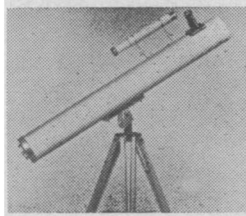
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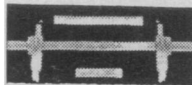
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