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INTERIM REPORT - THE LION PROGRAM

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Prepared by Louis E. Schneider
Louis E. Schneider

Approved by Norman Allen 1-7-70
Section Supervisor

Approved by W. R. Walker
Department Manager

NASA Manned Spacecraft Center
Houston, Texas



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PREFACE

This report has been prepared by Lockheed Electronics Company for the Geophysics Branch of the Lunar and Earth Sciences Division, by Mr. Louis E. Schneider under Action Documentation 3044-AD-03-02 of the NASA Contract NAS 9-5191.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
PREFACE	i
INTRODUCTION	1
HISTORICAL BACKGROUND	1
THE LION PROGRAM	3
REPORT STATISTICS	3
ASSESSMENT OF PROGRAM	4
RECOMMENDATIONS	6
REFERENCES	7
TABLE I	8
APPENDIX I	9

-INTERIM REPORT
THE LION PROGRAM

INTRODUCTION

At this point in time, when all NASA programs are under review, it seems appropriate to submit an interim report on the LION program. Accordingly, a brief review of lunar observation programs, a summary of operation LION results and recommendations for further study are submitted.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Sightings of transient lunar phenomena have been recorded since 1540. A catalog of nearly six-hundred reports was compiled by Middlehurst, Burley, Moore and Welther and published in 1968 as a NASA Technical Report.

The first coordinated program for lunar observation was developed under a NASA contract in 1964. Operation Moon Blink established the first of ten observation stations utilizing the "blink" device at Port Tobacco, Maryland, in August of that year. The Moon Blink program was supported by both professional and amateur observatories. The network was expanded to include twenty-three observing stations in fifteen states. A conference telephone system provided rapid communication.

This program, monitored by Mrs. Winifred S. Cameron, Goddard Space Flight Center, stimulated interest in lunar transient phenomena. Considerable support was obtained from amateur astronomers in the U.S., and Moon Blink stations were established in England.

Detailed discussions of project Moon Blink and the evaluation of data acquired, are presented in cited references.

In March of 1965, ARGUS, a group of amateur astronomers, and ASTRONET, a network of amateur radio operators, joined to form ARGUS-ASTRONET. The network, managed

by W. R. Calkins and L. C. Bornhurst with headquarters in West Covina, California, now contains about sixty observers who own and operate their own radio stations. The acquisition of data on transient lunar phenomena is one of the objectives of this organization. To date, ARGUS-ASTRONET has logged well over 9,000 hours of lunar observing time. Much of the information obtained is stored on tape and is yet to be evaluated.

The Association of Lunar and Planetary Observers conducted a two year program (1966-1968) of lunar observation. Program ALPO was restricted to the observation of six selected lunar features. A blink device, developed by P. K. Sartory of the British Astronomical Association, was employed in an attempt to determine the degree of enhancement observed.

A report and analysis of phenomena recorded during this program was published in "The Strolling Astronomer" by C. L. Ricker and H. W. Kelsey.

In December of 1968, the Smithsonian Center for Short-Lived Phenomena was requested to contribute communications support to a lunar observation program organized by Barbara Middlehurst and William Chapman. The purpose of this program was to utilize a world-wide network of observers to keep the moon under observation during the Apollo 8 mission. It was hoped that a lunar event reported by an observer on earth could be confirmed by the Apollo 8 crew.

An observing plan was developed by the Smithsonian Center and sent to participating observers. During the alert period, 2100 GMT, December 21 to 2200 GMT, December 25, sixteen observer reports were received. Ten of these were event reports, six were negative reports. A summary of this program was published by the Smithsonian Center on January 5, 1969.

Although the Smithsonian report concludes that this voluntary program had "limited success," it did lead to the establishment of the NASA-funded Lunar International Observers Network.

THE LION PROGRAM

Operation LION, funded by the NASA/MSC, Geophysics Branch, Houston, Texas, was organized in March 1969. Lockheed Electronics Company, Lunar and Earth Sciences Department, Geophysics Section, under NASA Contract NAS 9-5191, was assigned the responsibility to: "Establish and maintain a reporting network for observers around the world with emphasis on periods of Apollo flights." Miss Barbara Middlehurst was retained by LEC on a consulting basis to assist in the performance of this assignment.

The Geophysics Branch contracted with the Smithsonian Center, under NASA Contract 9-9537, to furnish communications support to the LION operation during Apollo missions.

Arrangements were made through the Chief, Mapping Sciences Laboratory, for desk space in the Staff Support Room. Proper channels were established for communications with Apollo Spacecraft -- through the NASA, Room Monitor, and Mission Control Center. Two "hot line" phones were installed for communication with the Smithsonian Center in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

REPORT STATISTICS

The LION network has now operated during three Apollo missions. A LION operations summary and a compilation of reports received by the Smithsonian Center have been published for each mission alert. Therefore, only a brief review of report statistics will be included here.

Although the Apollo 8 program was not part of the NASA-funded LION operation, the data tabulated in Table I includes reports acquired during Apollo 8. From these data, it is apparent that Aristarchus is by far the most "active" lunar feature. Approximately 46% of event reports are for phenomena observed in or near this crater.

Statistics tabulated in Table I also indicate an increase in the number of reports received for each succeeding mission. Weather conditions and the position of the moon from the northern hemisphere, probably account for the slight decrease in number of events reported during Apollo 12.

Approximately sixty-five between-mission reports have been received. Many of these are multiple reports covering periods of observation extending over intervals of from two to nine days. These reports are not included in Table I, which lists only those reports received during LION alerts.

ASSESSMENT OF PROGRAM

It is very difficult to determine the number of observing stations actually contributing observing time to operation LION. If the number of observers who send in reports and/or letters, pictures, etc., is an index to activity, the following estimate may be derived:

During Apollo 8, only 7% of the 125 stations listed sent in reports. There are now 225 stations on the mailing lists; of these, 35 to 38% appear to be active in the program. It is interesting to note that response to questionnaires sent to LION members by the Smithsonian Center also indicates a 35 to 38% participation.

Those observers who are known to have contributed their time and efforts to operation LION are listed in Appendix I.

The initial stage of operation LION has been highly successful. An excellent network of observers is on the alert for all Apollo missions; a very efficient communications system has been established; and, a large number of reports of lunar observations has been acquired. The primary objective of this program may or may not have been achieved. It is not certain that the area reported by the Apollo 11 crew to be "considerably more illuminated than the surrounding area" was indeed the same phenomenon reported as a transient event by earth

observers. More concrete evidence is required before it can be unequivocally stated that the same transient event has been sighted by astronauts and earth observers. A diffraction grating for attachment to the Hasselblad camera could provide the means for substantiating reported events. The proposal to provide such an attachment has been approved, and work is in progress. It is hoped that Apollo 13 will be equipped to obtain spectral evidence of any unusual lunar phenomena.

The second objective of operation LION, "to determine the cause of lunar events" is as far from attainment as it was at the beginning of the program.

Data acquired by the LION operation, and all previous programs, are subject to statistical evaluation only. Such a study should be made, and the method has been discussed. Mrs. W. S. Cameron has completed a statistical evaluation of approximately eight-hundred transient events and will publish the results in the near future. She has offered her assistance and advice on a similar evaluation of LION reports. Mr. W. R. Calkins has offered the support of ARGUS-ASTRONET to any effort to evaluate LION data. This offer includes all reports acquired by ARGUS-ASTRONET during the past five years, assistance with computer programming, and possibly computer time.

It is evident that a study of all available lunar event reports would be most interesting and informative. It is also apparent that a statistical evaluation of such a large quantity of data could be done most efficiently and economically by computer program.

A careful statistical study will no doubt indicate some interesting correlations between transient events and certain interrelations of the Sun-Earth-Moon system. The study will indicate patterns or relationships upon which to focus attention. It will not resolve the question as to the cause or nature of transient phenomena. Such a study can be used to focus photometric, spectrometric and similar techniques upon restricted targets during specific times. From data acquired by these studies, the answers to specific questions may be derived.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is strongly recommended that:

1. A cooperative statistical study of all available TLP reports be undertaken, utilizing the combined efforts of ARGUS-ASTRONET, Mrs. W. S. Cameron and the LION program.
2. The results of this study be applied to the development of a lunar observation program employing photometric, spectrometric and similar techniques, to obtain physical data on selected lunar areas for scientific evaluation.
3. The observer network be expanded to include more professional observatories where spectrograms and photographs can be obtained.
4. A closer relationship be developed between the management of the lunar event study program and Apollo crews to develop the interest and cooperation necessary to obtain maximum assistance from astronauts in acquiring photographic and observational data.

This program could resolve the ambiguity and uncertainty as to the validity of transient lunar phenomena.

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TABLE I

Apollo 8 - 12
Report Statistics

Lunar Feature	Reports for Apollo Missions					Reports Confirmed by 2 or more Observers				
	8	10	11	12	Total	8	10	11	12	Total
Alphonsus			1	2	3				2	2
Arago/Sinas			1		1					
Argæus				1	1					
Aristarchus	7	22	41	15	85	1	5	7	1	14
Aristoteles				1	1					
Atlas		1	1		2					
Baillaud			1		1					
Biela		1			1					
Biot			1		1					
Birt				1	1					
Bouger		1			1					
Cauchy			1		1					
Censorinus		1	1	4	6					
Chevalier A				1	1					
Copernicus				2	2					
Dionysius				2	2					
Eratosthenes				2	2					
Euclides				1	1					
Eudoxus			1	1	2					
Gassendi				4	4					
Goldschmidt				1	1					
Grimaldi	1		5		6					
Guericke	1				1					
Harpalus		2			2					
Janssen			1		1					
Kepler			1	2	3					
Krafft			1		1					
Lambert				1	1					

TABLE I (Continued)

Apollo 8 - 12 Report Statistics

Lunar Feature	Reports for Apollo Missions					Reports Confirmed by 2 or more Observers				
	8	10	11	12	Total	8	10	11	12	Total
Landsberg				1	1					
Langrenus			1		1					
Manilius			1		1					
Manzinus		1	1		2					
Maskelyne		1	1	1	3					
Maurolycus			1		1					
Mayer T.				1	1					
Menelaus			1	3	4					
Moretus			1		1					
Pickering	1				1					
Pierce			2		2					
Piton				1	1					
Posidonius		1			1					
Proclus			2	2	4					
Ptolemaeus				1	1					
Rabi Levi		1			1					
Ross D		2		2	4					
Theophilus			5		5					
Yerkes			1		1					
Caucasus Mts.				1	1					
Southern Cusp			1		1					
Schroter's Valley				1	1					
Mare Crisium			2		2					
M Serenitatus				1	1					
M Tranquilitatis			3	1	4					
50N, 45W				1	1					
60S, 80W				1	1					

TABLE I (Continued)

Apollo 8 - 12 Report Statistics

Lunar Feature	Reports for Apollo Missions					Reports Confirmed by 2 or more Observers				
	8	10	11	12	Total	8	10	11	12	Total
2° N, 27° E			1		1					
5° N, 8° W			1		1					
12° N, 8° W			1		1					
TOTAL	10	34	83	59	186	1	5	8	3	17
Negative Reports	6	60	151	137	354					

APPENDIX I
LION OBSERVERS

Argentina

Dante Avasse
Grupo Espacial Mendoza
Chuquisaca 1139
Godoy Cruz, Mendoza
Argentina

Brazil

Prof. Jose Manoel Luis da Silva
Observatorio Colegio Estadual do Parana
Ave. Joao Gualberto, 250
Curitiba, Paraná
Brazil

Mr. Raimundo Nonato da Silva
Observatorio do Sagitario
c/o Comissao de Estudos
e Obras do
Caixo Parnaiba Parnaiba-Est.
do Piaui, Brazil

Prof. R. R. de Freitas Mourao
Observatorio Nacional
Rua General Bruce 586
Sao Cristovao-Rio de Janeiro
Brazil

Nelson Travnik
Observatorio Flammarion
Matias Barbosa
Minas, Brazil

Rubens de Azevedo
Observatorio Astronomico da Paraiba
Caixa Postal 151
Joao Pessoa PB
Brazil

Jean Nicolini
Caixa Postal 9011
Sao Paulo, Brazil

Raul Kuplich
Rua Gomes Jardim 421
(Santana) Porto Alegre RGS
Brazil

Mr. Vicente Ferreira de Assis Neto
Observatorio do Perau
Sao Francisco de Oliveira
Minas Gerais, Brazil

S.B.A.A.-O.A.H.E.
c/o Claudio B. Pamplona
Rua Coronel Joaquim de Andrade
Fortaleza, Ceara
Brazil

Chile

Asociacion Chilena de Astronomico
Y Astronautica
Casilla 3904
Santiago de Chile, Chile

Jacques Bellenand
Asociacion Chilena de Astronomico
Y Astronautica
Casilla 3904
Santiago de Chile, Chile

Rafael Capdeville Celis
Observ. Astro. de Paso Hondo
Quilpue, Chile

Armando Lagunas-Martinez
Casilla 9672
Santiago, Chile

Mario Loocks Vasquez
Casilla 2042
Valparaiso, Chile

Denmark

Gosta Persson
Arn. Nielsens Boulevard 16
2650 Hvidovre, Denmark

England

P. Ringsdore
Rosedale Road 5
Stoneleigh, Surrey
England

C. Duckworth
Spring Bank Cottage
Kay Street
Stalybridge, Cheshire
England

J. Hedley Robinson
Helmington
Inverteign Drive
Teignmouth, Devon
England

W. E. Fox
40 Windsor Road
Newark, Notts.
England

J. K. Bolton
7 Delbooth Ave.
Flixton, Lancs. M31 2SD
England

William Henshaw
6 Shelton Close
Fairholm Est.
Mansfield, England

Mr. Alan Whittaker
Cragside, Cliff Ave.
Summerseat, Bury
Lancashire, England

Mr. Richard Baum
25 Whitchurch Road
GT. Boughton, Chester,
England

England (Cont'd)

Patrick A. Moore
"Farthings"
39 West Street
Selsey, Sussex
England

David H. Cutts
c/o R. Baum
25 Whitchurch Road
GT. Boughton, Chester,
England

Mr. Thomas Hill
23 Boyd's Walk
Dukinfield, Cheshire
England

C. M. Pither
Silver Birches
86 Canberra Road
Christchurch, Hants.
England

France

Dr. Criet Titulaer
Section D'Astrophysique
Observatoire de Meudon
92 Meudon, France

M. J. P. Othenin-Girard
Chemin de L'Aiguelongue
34 Montpellier, France

Delaye Yves
193 Bd. de la Liberation
13 Marseille 1 E
France

Germany

Heinz Kaminski
Inst. for Space Research
4630 Bochum-Sundern
Blankensteiner, Str. 200
West Germany

Michael Lindhorst
P.S.S. Observatory
Ahfeld 54
2000 Hamburg 62
West Germany

Ulrich Eckert
Kolbstrasse 27
7031 Dagersheim
West Germany

Ludwig Wiedman
799 Friedrichshafen
Eckenerstrasse 58
West Germany

Dr. H. Haffner & Nowak
Astronomisches Institut
Der Universitat
Buttner Strasse 72
87 Wurzburg
West Germany

Mr. Gerd Kuveler
527 Gummersback
Wiesenstre 33
West Germany

Gunter Lambek
Kepler-Beobachtungs Station
723 Schramberg
West Germany

J. Classen
Sternwarte Pulsnitz
Schloss-Strasse 27
8514 Pulsnitz (Sachsen)
East Germany

Hawaii

The University of Michigan
Haleakala Observatory
P. O. Box 858
2062 Vineyard Street
Wailuku, Hawaii 96793

Hungary

Dr. Peter Hedervari
VI Lenin Blvd. 82
III 6A Budapest, Hungary

Lewiss Bartha
Karst Research Station
Josvafo, Hungary

Ireland

Terry Moseley
3 Rosemount Park
Armagh, Northern Ireland

Iceland

Dr. Trausti Einarsson
Dept. of Eng. & Science Institute
Haskoli Islands
Universitas Islandiae
Reykjavik, Iceland

Italy

Dr. G. de Mottoni
via Fratelli Roselli 15/23
Genoa, Italy

Dr. F. Zagar, Director
Astronomical Observatory of
Milan and Merate
Merate, Italy

Japan

Mr. Toshihiko Osawa
Danto-Shataku
Igano, Nandan-Cho
Mihara-Gun, Hyogo-Ken
Japan

Netherlands

R. Leeuwenburg
L. Van Egmondstraat 29
Kampen, Netherlands

Th. Vermeesch
Dir. Public Astronomical Observatory
Simon Stevin, P. O. 37
Oudenbosch, Netherlands

Netherlands (Cont'd)

Dick Stulp
Geuzenkade 54
111 Amsterdam W
Netherlands

Mr. L. Box
Raphaelstraat 22
11 Amsterdam NZ
Netherlands

R. Boschloo
Hogenkampseweg 3
Almen, Netherlands

New Zealand

R. A. McIntosh
Auckland Observatory
4 Kingsway, Three Kings
Auckland 4, New Zealand

G. Hall-Jones
P. O. Box 48
Invercargill, New Zealand

N. E. Heath
Richards House
Christ's College
Christ Church, New Zealand

Mr. H. O. Williams
71 Milton Road
Mt. Eden 3
Auckland, New Zealand

W. J. H. Fisher
Carter Observatory
P. O. Box 2909
Wellington, New Zealand

G. W. Christie
36 A Mount Albert Road
Mount Albert
Auckland 3, New Zealand

Mr. L. W. Clark
Lunalog Observatory
311 Pt. Chevalier Rd.
Pt. Chevalier
Auckland 2, New Zealand

Mr. Thomas D. S. Whelan
Tikorangi Observatory
Tikorangi, Waitara
New Zealand

Philippines

Hans Arber
P. O. Box 3765
Manila
Philippines

Ernesto V. Calpo
Weather Bureau
P. O. Box 2277
Manila, Philippines

Spain

Sr. Ignacio Darnaude Rojas-Marcos
Av. Manuel Siurot 3
Bloque San Leondro
Sevilla, Spain

Ramon Compte Porta
Padre Bartolome Pou 107-4 1
Palma de Mallorca
Islas Baleares, Spain

Jose M. Oliver
Edificio Biblioteca Caja de Ahorros
Agrupacion Astronomico de Sabadell
Cl. Cardenal Goma 1-1

Switzerland

Mr. Robert Germann
Hinternordweg 4
8636 Wald ZH
Switzerland

A. Pfenninger
Hinternordweg 4
8636 Wald ZH
Switzerland

Mr. Werner Nater
Florastrasse 11
8570 Weinfelden
Switzerland

Charly Trefzger
4000 Basel
St. Albanring 274
Switzerland

Ed Neuenschander
Urs. Graf-Strasse 9
4000 Basel, Switzerland

Hans Peter Graf
Schermenweg 133
CH 3072 Bern-Ostermundigen
Switzerland

Mr. Walter Brändli
Homel 32
8636 Wald, Switzerland

Mr. Werner Donau
Kreuzstrasse 9
3052 Zollikofen
Switzerland

Thailand

Prasit Karoonvanit
Union Bank of Bangkok
Cholburi, Thailand

U.S.S.R.

N. A. Kozyrev
Pulkovo Observatory
Leningard
U.S.S.R.

Dr. V. G. Teifel
Astrophysical Institute
Kazak Academy of Sciences
Alma Ata 68
U.S.S.R.

Dr. V. P. Dzapiashvili
Abastumani Observatory
Abastumani, Georgia
U.S.S.R.

United States

Daniel Harris & Rieke
Lunar & Planetary Lab.
University of Arizona
Tucson, Arizona 85721

Laren Dart
1530 Cross Way
San Jose, Calif. 95125

Clifford Holmes
8643 Wells St.
Riverside, Calif. 92503

H. W. Kelsey
3439 Mono Drive
Riverside, Calif. 92506

Astronet/Wally Calkins
814 E. Cameron Ave.
West Covina, Calif. 91790

Larry Bornhurst
Mt. Wilson Observatory
813 Santa Barbara St.
Pasadena, Calif. 71106

Dr. Jon Dews
Dept. of Physics
Fresno State College
Fresno, Calif. 93726

Winifred Cameron - 641
Lab. or Theoretical Studies
NASA Goddard Space Flight Center
Greenbelt, Maryland 20771

C. F. Dillon, Jr.
R. F. Fournier
Lowell, Mass.

Rev. Kenneth J. Delano
2402 Highland Avenue
Fall River, Mass. 02720

Charles Richer
Assoc. Lunar & Planetary Observers
403 W. Park Street
Marquette, Michigan 49855

J. R. Dunlap
(Monitors Astronet)
Corralitos Observatory
Drawer 1120
Las Cruces, New Mexico 88001

Eugene W. Cross, Jr.
I. Elane Cross
1541 Standley Drive
Las Cruces, New Mexico

Mr. Walter H. Haas
Box 3AZ
University Park
Las Cruces, New Mexico 88001

Dr. Wallace R. Beardasley
Allegheny Observatory
Riverview Park
Pittsburgh, Pa. 15214

Rody J. Clutter
610 Saxonburg Blvd.
Pittsburg, Pa. 15238

Prof. Paul Engle
Brent Skinner
Pan American College
Observatory
Edinburg, Texas 78539

Ken Thomson
3320 Norfolk St.
Apt. A
Houston, Texas 77006

J. W. Simpson
16811 El Camino Real
Houston, Texas 77058

Midland Astronomical Society
Attn: Mr. Hudson Philips
3705 Neely
Midland, Texas 79701

Paul D. Maley
Lockheed Electronics Co., A-11
16811 El Camino Real
Houston, Texas 77058

United States (Cont'd)

K. E. Chilton
93 Currie St.
Hamilton 57
Ontario, Canada

Pierrette Jean
2963 Ste. Catherine Rd.
Montreal, P.Q.
Canada

Mr. P. F. Younger
G. C. Aikman
Dominion Astrophysical Observatory
Observatoire Federal d'Astrophysique
R.R. 7, Victoria, B.C.

ASTRONET

Weston Weems
337 Forest St.
Barstow, Calif. 92311

Jim Pennington
P. O. Box 151
Notco, Calif. 91760

Mr. James Young
Table Mt. Observatory
Wrightwood, Calif. 92397

Chas. F. Masters, Jr.
700 Curtin Lane
Sonoma, Calif. 95476

Al Ing
320 North Vermont Ave.
Los Angeles, Calif. 90004

Wm. A. Rogers
P. O. Box 1773
Flagstaff, Arizona 86001

E. O. Neppel
1400 20th St.
Douglas, Arizona 85607

Daniel Cahur
2583 East 128th St.
Shaker Heights, Ohio 44120

Dr. Robert Wallace
227 Old LaHonda Rd.
Woodside, Calif.

Chester L. Brown
Star Route, Rockford Bay
Coeur d'Alene, Idaho 83814

T. C. I'Anson
2946 North 46 Ave.
Phoenix, Arizona 85031

David H. Atkins
130 No. Westgate Ave.
Los Angeles, Calif.

W. Skeen
Rt. 2, Box 615
Brentwood, Calif. 94513

S.F.B. Morse
P. O. Box 3815
Landers, Calif. 92284

Andrew E. Forsberg
890 S.W. Washington
Beverton, Oregon 97005

Lester W. Redman
2249 S.E. 141st St.
Portland 33, Oregon 97233

Robert Jacobson
1444 Gladstone St.
Sheridan, Wyoming 82801

Thomas Cragg
Mt. Wilson Obs.
Mt. Wilson, Calif. 91023

Edward Bently
1010 Tipperary Dr.
Dallas, Texas 75218

David Anthony
4355 Governor Dr.
San Diego, Calif. 92122

ASTRONET (Cont'd)

Russell W. Ball, Jr.
130 Maple Ave.
Berkeley Heights, N. J. 07922

Harry Snyder
R.R. No. 3
Freemont, Nebraska 68025

Robert E. Babcock
917 South Platinum
Deming 88030

Louis Arasi, Jr.
130 Berkeley Ave.
Selden, Long Island, N. Y. 11784

F. S. Travis
105 East Speedway Blvd.
Tucson, Arizona 85705

Jerry Gallwas
17863 Yorba Linda Blvd.
Yorba Linda, Calif. 92686

C. Richard Sandun
1023 Maple Ave.
Vallejo, Calif. 94590

Albert Lundell
327 Date Street
Mountain Home, Idaho 83647

C. E. Lawler
1856 Polk Way
Stockton, Calif. 95207

Romayne Blantz
235 Monte Vista Drive
Napa, Calif. 94558

Al Peterson
194 Entradero Ave.
Torrence, Calif. 90503

Al Dageford
1719 West Sharon Rd.
Santa Ana, Calif. 92706

F. John Howell
185 Fairview Dr., S.E.
Colgary 27, Alberta, Canada

Carl E. Holton
3728 E. Piccadilly Rd.
Phoenix, Arizona 85018

Barry Leavey
P. O. Box 82
Eddyville, New York 12426

Ken Thompson
3320A Norfolk St.
Houston, Texas 77006

Clifford Holmes
8642 Wells Ave.
Riverside, Calif. 92503

W. Stewart Lindenberger
Bell Telephone Lab, Rm. 2B-315
Murray Hill, N. J. 07974

R. B. McClellan
24233 Welby Way
Canoga Park, Calif. 91304

Robert Veilleux
1130 El Caminito
Livermore, Calif. 94550

Carl Reehl
1031 East Northview Ave.
Phoenix, Arizona 85020

Heinz Blankenship
RFD No. 2
Central City, Iowa 52214

Earl S. Ivie
Table Mountain Obs.
Wrightwood, Calif. 92397

Fred D. Armes
5669 Locust St.
Lookout, New York 14194

Glen Gibson
204 Standley Ave.
Ukiah, Calif. 95482

L. E. Loper
255 Suntan Ave.
Sarasota, Fla. 33577

Warren Weaver
Palomar Observatory
Palomar Mountain, Calif. 92060

Chas. Andrade
P.O. Box 431
Clearlake Highlands, Calif. 95422

ASTRONET (Cont'd)

F. Gene White
251 Marilee Row
Grants Pass, Oregon 97526

M. Harold Smith
5603 Riggins Dr.
Chattanooga, Tenn. 37421

John Miller
207 Second Street
Enterprize, Oregon 97828

Warren Taylor
257 North Palm Canyon Drive
Palm Springs, Calif. 92262

Robert E. Howell
611 Cedar
Leavenworth, Wash. 98826

F. W. Lehmann
P.O. Box 3002
Rapid City, So. Dak. 57701

Donald Williams, Sr.
5209 Branon
El Paso, Texas 79924

Laverne Demler
108 Yjean St.
Bossier City, La. 71010

Richard Ellis
P.O. Box 202
Fort Davis, Texas 79734

Victor Bell
1320 South Crescent Ave.
Lodi, Calif. 95240

Robert D. Leasure
1134 East Oregon Ave.
Phoenix, Arizona 85014

Lloyd Horton
8720 East Arlington Rd.
Scottsdale, Arizona 85251

Wesley Hobbs
34480 County Line Rd.
Yucaipa, Calif. 92399

Wm. F. Lucas
7111 Dennison Place
San Diego, Calif. 92122

Robert O'Connor
P. O. Box 41
Wawarsing, New York 12489

George Trotter
25124 LaLoma Drive
Los Altos Hills, Calif. 94022

John Tonnelli
327 South "B" Street
Lompoc, Calif. 93436

Roy Blankenship
1221 Valle Vista
Vallejo, Calif. 94590

Norman W. Kurtz
17741 S.E. Marie St.
Portland, Oregon 97236