

THE ASTRONOMER

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SUPERNOVA 1987a IN THE LARGE MAGELLANIC CLOUD

Preliminary discovery announcements have been made in EWC 89A
(Issued to southern observers. 870224): E-CIRC 8(870224): NSPC 17
(870226). This object is the first SN to be observed in the LMC and
the closest SN seen since 1604.

The supernova was discovered by Ian Shelton at Las Campanas on a
3hr exposure with the 0.25-m astrograph, start time 1987 Feb
24.06UT when the object was of approx mag 5.
Independent discoveries were made by Oscar Duhalde (Las Campanas),
Feb 24.2UT, and by Albert Jones, Nelson on Feb 24.37UT, 6.5-7.0,
both visually.

Richard West, ESO, has obtained a CCD position as follows:

RA 5h35m49s.942 Dec -69 17°57'60 (1950).

The following magnitude estimates are available:

Moreno and Walker, Auckland observatory, Feb 24.454, V=4.81.
Feb 24.455, 4.8 (McNaught=M): 24.472, 4.8(M): 24.635, 4.4
(Garradd=G): 24.679, 4.5 (M): 24.717, 4.4 (M): 24.8, V=4.63
(Winkler=W): 25.219, V=4.63 (Shelton=S): 25.401, 4.3 (M): 25.460,
4.2 (M): 25.572, 4.5 (M): 25.659, 4.4 (M): 26.401, 4.4 (M): 26.512,
4.1 (M): 26.646, 4.1 (M): 26.749, 4.0 (M): 27.406, 4.2 (M): 27.558,
4.4 (M): 27.715, 4.3 (M): 28.408, 4.3 (M): 28.588, 4.4 (M).

McNaught also advises us that Nova Patrol photographs taken with
the 85mm lens show prediscvery images as follows:

Feb 23.443, 6.0: 23.445, 6.2.

He further notes that nothing new was detected in the field to
magnitude 12.5 on an exposure on Feb 22.465 or on a photo by Gordon
Garradd on the same day to 14.5.

In a search for the progenitor, McNaught mentions there is a blue
star at or near the position. Examination of plates during this
century shows no variation.

M. Morel, NSW, mentions that this star is SANDULEAK -69 202, an LMC
member (also= CPD -69 402), measured by Rousseau at V=12.24 in 1978.
Subsequently, Sanduleak and Lasker note there is a companion to the
mag 12 (=star 1) in PA 315, mag 16, sep approx 3'' (=star 2).
West's measurements suggest that star 1 is the likely candidate.
Walborn et al later report another companion (=star 3) 1'' PA 110.

There are conflicting reports as to Supernova's type from
spectral analyses. Early reports from the South African Observatory
suggests Type I on basis of 615-nm dip, but later reports favour
Type II on which basis it could reach mag +1 in the coming weeks.
IUE Astronomers mention that on Feb 25 the Ultraviolet Spectrum
did not resemble any SN (I or II) previously observed in the
Ultraviolet. On Feb 26 the spectrum has changed dramatically and
resembled SN 1983n in M83, 1 week before maximum.

SUPERNOVA 1987b IN NGC 5850

R. Evans has telephoned to report his discovery of a Supernova on
Feb 24.7UT of mag 15, 75''W, 120''S of NGC 5850. McNaught has measured
the position as: RA 15h04m30s.56 Dec +1 41°43'6 (1950).

This yields offsets: 71''W: 145''S. T. Cragg estimates mag 14.4 on Feb
27.70UT.

COMET TERASAKO (1987d)

Ephemeris: Earth Sun m1

Mar 1	2	07.15	-10	05.3		
	6	21.42	-07	56.0	2.042	1.586 10.6
	11	23.50	-05	58.8		
	16	24.61	-04	12.6	2.275	1.751 11.2

EDITORIAL: The Editor will be absent on Mar 2,3,4,5 when urgent
calls should be directed to P. Birtwhistle on (0883) 842415.

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