

SOUND

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MONASH-CSIRO SPACE EXPLORERS SCORE AGAIN

The combined Monash-CSIRO group, operating the 210ft. radio telescope at Parkes, NSW, has discovered another rare molecule in interstellar space — this time, formaldimine.

The discovery was announced yesterday by Professor R. D. Brown, professor of chemistry, and Dr. Peter Godfrey, senior teaching fellow in the department, representing Monash, and Dr. Brian Robinson and Mr. Malcolm Sinclair, from the CSIRO Division of Radiophysics.

This discovery adds to the small but growing list of biologically significant molecules that have now been found in the depths of space. The molecules so far found are the basic building bricks of the amino acid and protein molecules of living matter. Enormous concentrations of organic molecules are found in regions of the Galaxy where stars and planets are still forming. **This suggests that carbon-based life could evolve easily in other parts of the Galaxy.**

Formaldimine exists only fleetingly on Earth — only in the last six months have chemists succeeded in making it in the laboratory. The chemists at Monash University had to use special equipment to measure its spectroscopic fingerprint because it survives for only a few seconds in the laboratory. The characteristic spectrum of formaldimine (CH_2NH) was successfully measured only ten days ago.

Scientists from CSIRO and Monash University travelled to the Australian National Radio Astronomy Observatory at Parkes last weekend to use a highly sensitive microwave receiver installed on the radio telescope. Faint signals received from the galactic centre (30,000 light years away) match perfectly the laboratory fingerprint of formaldimine and show beyond all doubt that the molecule exists in space. The power received by the radio telescope was only one micro-micro-microwatt (one million million millionth of a watt). Yet the signal was clear enough to show that the cloud of formaldimine is about 500 times bigger in diameter than our solar system and must weigh as much as Earth. The cloud is part of a larger mass of gas that is contracting slowly and is likely to form a new star in 50,000 years time.

CAROL AT LUNCHTIME

A number of Monash identities will appear on stage with the American comedienne Carol Channing in Robert Blackwood Hall at 1 p.m. today. They include the acting Academic Registrar, Dr. B. Heron, the director of the Hall, Dr. Ian Hiscock, and the director of the Alexander Theatre, Mr. Gordon Troup. The Herald theatre critic, Mr. Gerald Mayhead, and Miss Kaye Cardwell, from GTV9, will be the other guest.

They will be taking part in a panel-forum at which Miss Channing will answer questions on such topics as theatre, pollution, the generation gap, education, ambitions, literature . . . "but NOT politics".

Admission is free and open to all.

MUSICAL STAR HURT IN SMASH

The Monash University Musical Theatre Company's production of "Follow that Girl" suffered a near disaster on opening night last Friday when the leading lady, Jennifer Arndt, and musical director, Conrad Helfirch, were injured in a car smash on their way home after the performance.

Neither was seriously hurt, although Jennifer will be unable to take her place in the cast for the rest of the season. Conrad was able to return for the Sunday night performance.

Happily, Jennifer's stand-in, Kate Strasser, was able to move smoothly into the lead role and delighted audiences with her performance.

The season at the Alexander will continue until Saturday, June 3.

NEW NORTH-WEST PARK WILL TAKE 570 VEHICLES

The construction of new parking facilities in the Science/Engineering area, financed from the University's Siteworks funds, is proceeding.

The first stage, located near Engineering Road, will have an approximate capacity of 570 vehicles and is expected to be completed by spring, weather permitting. The design provides space for motor cycle parking, and the Parking Committee expects that the increase in parking area will reduce the pressure on yellow and green car parks on the western side of the University, and will provide a much needed white or free parking area in that part of the University.

PARKING NEAR ENTRANCE GATES

During recent weekends a number of vehicles have been parked on the road pavements outside the north-eastern and north-western entrance gates. University members are asked to keep these roadways clear as it is important for access to be available through all entrances for fire brigade and other emergency vehicles.

POST-WAR CREDITS

SOUND has been advised that application forms for British Post War Credit repayments (see SOUND No. 78) can be obtained in Australia through the Commonwealth Bank.

NEW-LOOK C.A.B.

The Current Affairs Bulletin, a publication of the Department of Adult Education at the University of Sydney, has recently changed its format to become a 32-page monthly journal.

Most of the articles will be 7000-word surveys on topical issues. Subscriptions — \$3-50 p.a. and \$1-40 for each additional copy — should be sent to the editor, C.A.B., Department of Adult Education, University of Sydney, 2006. The price of a single copy, now available from many newsagents, is 30 cents.

Authorised by K. W. Bennetts, Information Officer.

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The season at the Alexander will continue until Saturday, June 7.