



From The Editor

Highlights for October include the Greenbush Campout and the ever popular MAS Annual Banquet hosting a nationally known speaker. Whether under the stars or under a roof, MAS sponsors diverse activities for all to enjoy. See banquet details in the September *Focal Point*. Hope to see you there!

In our ongoing effort to make the Focal Point a newsletter you can relate to, we are inviting contributions for an exciting new section introduced this month called Night (de) Light.

If you have any suggestions for the format or content of the Focal Point we would love to here them.

— Matthew McNeeley & Tom Gill

No Program Meeting in October - It's Banquet Time!

Friday, October 19 is the date for our Annual Banquet. This year we are meeting at the Old Town Restaurant and if you haven't dined there yet, you are in for a real treat. Following dinner, we will be entertained and enlightened by Ms. Carolyn C. Peterson of Denver Colorado. Her program, titled Old Ice and First Light, will explore in layman's terms some of the exciting new science gleaned from earth-bound observatories and a flotilla of spacecraft that studied Comet Halley in 1986.

Plan on enjoying good company, good food and an interesting speaker at a memorable MAS activity. As always, if you can't attend the dinner, you are still welcome to attend the program. Reservations are due by October 15th. See September's *Focal Point* for reservation form and full details.

Calender of Events

- October 12-13, Fri - Sat Greenbush Campout
Kettle Moraine North
- October 18, Thursday New Moon
- October 19, Friday **Annual Dinner Banquet**
Old Town Ethnic Restaurant
- October 26, Friday Deadline for Nov. *Focal Point*
- November 2, Friday Full Beaver Moon
- November 7, Wednesday First Wednesday Meeting
7:30 at the Observatory
- November 12, Monday MAS Board Meeting
7:30 pm, site to be announced

Saturdays—Observatory maintenance and improvements

Saturday Nights—Member night at Observatory—Call key holder

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Library News

Bryan Brewer sets the stage for a solar Eclipse with an explanation of one of man's most ancient preoccupations: the cycles of sun and moon. The drama culminates in a thrilling experience for the fortunate audience in the path of totality. Recommended reading for the Baja or Hawaii-bound in 1991.

Bringing our textbook section up to date is Contemporary Astronomy, 4th Edition by Jay Pasachoff. The contents are richly illustrated and diagrammed and includes study guides and extensive appendices. This 1989 edition covers Voyager at Uranus.



Night (de) Light

Everyone who studies and appreciates the night sky has probably accumulated a few favorite objects, asterisms or eyepiece views. You find yourself returning to your personal treasures time and time again, and they never fail to stir up special feelings within you.

It may be the way it looks, the challenge in locating it, information known about it (or lack of information), sky lore or any of countless other reasons. But for you, it has earned a special status amongst the thousands of other objects.

This section is to share brief kudos to your special night delights. Editors Matthew and Tom share some favorites in this first column. If you'd like to contribute, send to Focal Point Editor.

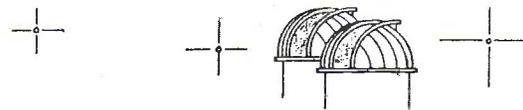
My sky favorites are not simply photons from afar; but rather poetic expressions aglow. M-71 in Sagitta for example. Sure, I appreciate the discussion (confusion) – open cluster or globular – now determined to be globular, but who knows the response tomorrow with the gathering of more data? From my view in a light-scattered urban sky, M-71 looks rather nebulous at low power, a misty star-patch at medium power, and finally is resolved at higher power into pinpoints of starry-like gems. To me, M-71 looks more like an open cluster, but apparently there is contrary evidence. I wonder what you see and think when gazing at this sky delight
Matthew McNeeley.

There are the others, and there is the Veil. I've had many memorable views of the Veil in 'Big Guns' and with filter enhancement. I lose myself following the wispy tendrils and graceful arcs amongst the starry backdrop of Cygnus, amazed at the extensions and extent of detail, forgetting altogether that I'm not really in space, but rather 'in line' and others too are anxious for their turn at eyepiece euphoria.

These views I will always cherish. But it's during marginal sky conditions and/or with small instruments that makes the Veil one of my personal favorites. Maybe it's because I remember the first time, flat on my back with 11x80 binoculars, carefully star-hopping to where it should be, and was. The glowing 'C' I saw that night will forever be etched in my mind. Or maybe it's when I meet someone who has not yet seen the Veil because they thought it 'out of range' for their instrument, and together we dispel that falsity. Or maybe because I've developed my observing skills to a point where I can see and appreciate the Veil (and other objects as well) when they are mere suggestions of themselves, barely perceptible glows which, by virtue of their elusiveness, seem more like discoveries than just objects to look at.

Tom Gill

From the Past



DOUBLE DOME

– 15 Years Ago

Naked Eye Astronomers Please Note: Between Oct. 17 and 27, five planets will be visible at the same time if the sky is clear and the view unobstructed (six if you count the earth). Incidentally the moon will be full on the 20th . . .

MAS is pleased to announce this large group of new members (21 in all and among them . . .)

Francisco Roldan - interested in general astronomy (indeed! ed. note).

– 10 Years Ago

26" Telescope News: Construction is moving along. The concrete floor has been poured, the door is installed and the mounting pier is capped.

Work will begin on a temporary roof to offer some protection to the interior from bad weather. Installation of the second floor is next on the agenda.

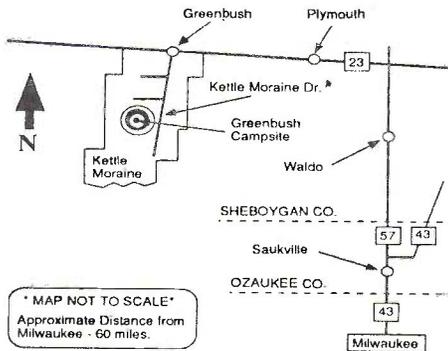
NCRAL

Organizational Meeting

MAS is pleased and honored that we are selected as host to the 1992 Regional Convention. Now the planning begins in earnest.

On **Thursday, October 25, 7:30 pm**, at the Observatory, Dan Kohler will hold the first organizational meeting for those interested in investing their expertise and enthusiasm to assure the convention is a stellar success. Please plan to attend.

Greenbush - Milky Way



Greenbush Campers are meeting Thursday through Saturday, October 12-13, at the Star Party/Campout at Greenbush Kettle Moraine, campsite #5 & 6. A waning Moon will allow the overhead Milky Way to come shining through. Bring your tent, telescope and firewood. Please call in advance if attending. Campers must pay \$2.00/day/person plus vehicle registration (\$3.50 per day or \$14 annual sticker). For more info, contact Paul Borchardt, 781-0169.

MAS Clothing

Sweatshirts and Jackets are available from member Tom Gill. Sweats 50/50 blend and have a large white MAS logo printed on royal blue.

Nylon jackets have a small white MAS logo on either royal or navy. Call Tom at Chest Works, 476-6986, to place your order.

Sweat Shirt	\$10.00
Nylon Jacket	\$27.00
Quilted Jacket	\$33.00

For Sale

Equatorial mount with slow motion controls. \$125.00 Call Tom Gill 476-6986 anytime.

Time to Renew Your Membership

Dues 'R' Due

Just a reminder for those yet to pay their 1990-91 membership dues! While it is too late to get Kalmbach subscriptions, your payment will include Sky and Telescope.

Telescope Cloning Class

Member Peter Smitka is once again offering his services to conduct a telescope cloning (making) class. Here is an excellent opportunity to build and own a quality 6" or 8" telescope. Cost of the scopes are approximately \$450 for the six inch and \$600 for the eight inch.

If interested, please call Peter Smitka at 546-4546 days or 785-0926 eves. Class size is limited and is scheduled to begin in January.

Apollo Generosity

Once again, MAS has been informed by Apollo's Oren Purintun that the Apollo Fund will make a \$2500.00 donation to MAS to be used as a capital investment in the future of our Society. We thank the Apollo Fund and Mr. Purintun for this generous gift.

Saturday Nite Keyholders

October 13	Virgil Tangney 327-7976
October 20	James Toeller 352-7144
October 27	Richard Wiesen 781-4786
November 3	Paul Borchardt 781-0169
November 10	Greg Cieslak 744-5703
November 17	Brian Ganiere 272-4649

New Members

The following new members were recently announced by the MAS Board.

John R. Gladieux, M.D.
- South Milwaukee

Harold and John Hopkinson
- Milwaukee

Dan Malloy - Milwaukee

Gloria James and Jason Young
- Waukesha

Kathryn S. Korstanje
- Shorewood

Shane Schipper - Waukesha

The Society extends all new members a big welcome! When you see them at a meeting or other MAS function, be sure to introduce yourself.

Astofest '90 - Red Giant Donuts and Small Scopes

Note: This is more of a personal rehash than editorial reporting. Please forgive any missed highlights, inaccurate data or overly cute monikers. I was too busy drooling over the Vixen 25 X 125 binoculars to get all the facts straight. TG

Approximately 20 MAS members (I never saw them all at once to get a head count) enjoyed some of the clearest Astofest skies in recent years. Amazingly, last years' tire ruts and field damage was gone. Gone too, were the memories of rain soaked tents, soggy clothing and dampened spirits. And there wasn't a single spider visible with a body bigger than a nickel.

With our reputation for bad jokes and unstifled guffaws preceding us, the MAS contingency was located in the boonies, which were actually some very nice cabins in an area of the grounds I didn't know existed. But this year, the sky stole the show. Friday night was clear (I'm not so sure about the seeing since I'm basically a low-power kind of guy) and everyone got their fill of observing, just in case. But Saturday was good too and the reward for the early birds were the famous (?) Astofest red donuts. The shiny, crimson lunkers looked like red giants amongst the other, less flashy choices. After devouring my fill and washing them down with a darn fine cup of coffee, I hit the swap area with high hopes.

Amongst the new vendors this year was a zany guy from out east (Astronomy To Go) who had an interesting array of astronomical goodies and kept trying to swap T-shirts right off of people's backs. Missing and missed was Northern Sky Telescopes and some of the big companies (Celestron, Meade, etc.). But there is always something if you really want to spend some money (and I did) so I ended up with yet another small scope (an admitted fetish) in a 5" f6 reflector which had great images and some weird numbered dials and controls and stuff under the tube assembly (see For Sale section). No matter, since I quickly tore off same and transformed it into a cute little Dobsonian (up and down retain all meaning and side-to-side does just what you expect too). Every one should have a small scope or two for those 'the-car-is-full-now-where-does-the-telescope-go' family trips.

Saturday night, Phase I, gave us 4 or 5 hours of decent skies before the clouds rolled in. Threat of bad weather and a hailstorm had many people and scopes leaving before midnight. Amazingly, about 3 am, during Phase II the skies opened up again and were clear all night. Other sources called it the clearest, darkest Astofest sky, ever. Because all my equipment was packed away and I was too tired from Friday to drag it out again, I settled for naked eye astronomy and wasn't disappointed - the Milky way was outstanding and it was nice to greet the winter constellations: Auriga, Orion, Taurus, etc.

Every conceivable type of scope and astronomer was well represented. The largest attendance yet (460) was still a comfortable and courteous group. Our very own 'Mr. Big', Dave Kriege of Obsession Telescopes, had two of his giant scopes set up, to the constant delight of the 'Big Gun Groupies'. Someday perhaps Dave will one-up the Questar Door prize of 1988. Remember Dave, we knew you when.

The 'Valley of the Refractors' hosted a slew of Astro Physics beauties, one of which sported a solar prominence filter for some outstanding daytime views. For the telescope maker, ideas a-plenty and for the casual astronomer, lots to gape at.

MAS member John Asztalos received an award for his Astrophotos of Mars. Congratulations!

It was great to return to greet old friends and new at one of the premier star parties. If you haven't been to Astofest in recent years, plan on making it next year!

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MAS INFORMATION

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