

# FOCAL POINT



Newsletter for the

*Milwaukee Astronomical Society*

February 1993

## From The Editors

This issue of the *Focal Point* takes a look back (the observing results of 1992) as well as a look forward (the 1993 Calendar of Events).

And speaking of the future, have you ever considered seeking a position on the MAS Board of Directors or Officers? Several board positions will be available in May and now is a good time to start thinking about it.

You don't need to be an expert astronomer or even a "board type" person—all that's required is a willingness and desire to get more involved with the inner workings of your club. You will experience a feeling of reward knowing that your time and energy are going to benefit all the members and as a bonus you'll find out that it can be a lot of fun as well!

*-Tom Gill & Matthew McNeely*

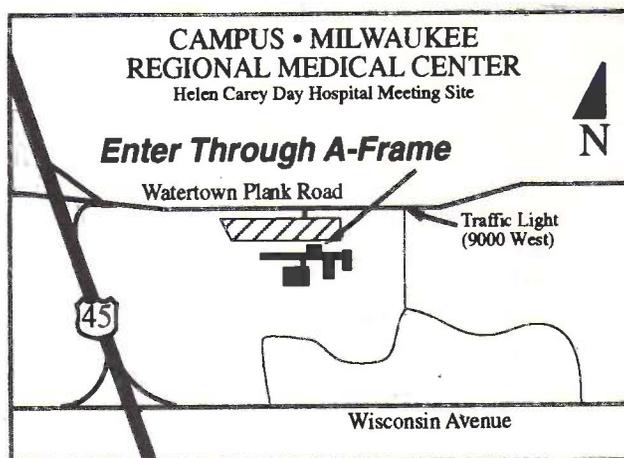
## Program/Meeting

The speaker for this month's meeting is John Gallagher from the University of Wisconsin, Madison.

His talk is titled "The Common Galaxy—small objects in the nearby universe."

Our sources tell us that John is an excellent speaker so his talk should prove very entertaining. John is also a veteran of many Texas Star Parties.

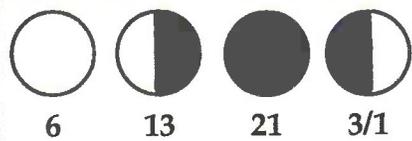
*- Tom Renner*



Note: This month's *Focal Point* should contain information about the annual Banquet (April 23rd) with a sign-up form. If yours is missing and you wish to attend, contact Tom Gill ASAP. Get your reservations in early—we look forward to seeing you there.

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## Calendar of Events

- February 8, Monday ..... **MAS Board Meeting**  
7:30pm at Paul Borchardt's house
- February 19, Friday ..... **8:00 pm Program-Meeting**  
Deadline for next *Focal Point*
- February 27 & 28..... **Graze (see article)**
- March 3, Wednesday ..... **First Wednesday Meeting**  
7:30 at the Observatory
- March 8, Monday..... **MAS Board Meeting**  
7:30pm at Tom Gill's house
- March 19, Friday ..... **8:00 pm Program-Meeting**

*Saturday Nights—Member night at Observatory—Call key holder*

## Library News

Curl up in a comfy chair while the snow swirls outside and enjoy Patrick Moore's Fireside Astronomy. This popular British author/astronomer offers a compilation of over 100 astronomical snippets with an astonishing range of subject matter. Just a sampling of titles includes: "Down Among the Penguins" (CARA program at the South Pole), "The Black Widow" (a murderous binary star system), "Eggstrordinary" (some Haley mania), and finally "How to Welcome an Alien" (a serious declaration of the 1991 IAU Conference).



MAS has been enrolled in the International Dark Sky Association (IDA) for several years, and some of our members are even more personally involved in the struggle to make the community aware of the degradation of our view of the night sky. The "astronomical" term for the ever-growing, ever-glowing dome of artificial light over our cities and towns is LIGHT POLLUTION. We have recently acquired some more ammunition for the battle—a set of 20 slides with introductory booklet and captions by Dr. David Crawford and William T. Robinson of IDA. An alternative scrip by Alan MacRobert (*Sky & Telescope*) is also included.

**HELP WANTED:** The library is in need of an assistant to write an occasional descriptive review for the Focal Point and to help with inventories. Further training will be offered to anyone who might enjoy going on to become the next librarian.

—Sally Waraczynski

**CORRECTION:** I incorrectly announced the anniversary of William Morgan's (of Yerkes Observatory) compilation of the Revised MK Spectral Atlas. The correct number should have been 50 years, not 5.

—Tom Gill

## Dec. 1992 Board Meeting

**CORRESPONDENCE:** Available for those interested: Messier books, light pollution information, Golden Guide Books (\$3.75) and phone tree sign-up forms.

**OBS DIRECTOR'S REPORT:** Dec. 9th eclipse clouded out. (other information was time dependent).

**OLD BUSINESS:** Light Pollution: Gerry Samolyk explained that in order to be successful in getting lighting ordinances and to survive as an observatory, people are needed to: 1. Go to the immediate neighbors and ask them to shield their lights or install favorable lighting. 2. Explain proper lighting to all the neighbors in the vicinity of the Observatory. 3. Pursue the political aspect, by approaching and trying to influence planning commissions and legislatures. Volunteers are needed as of now.

—From notes taken by Dorothy Kube, MAS Secretary

## Program on Indian Skylore

All MAS members are invited to attend a program on **February 25, 7:00pm** which is sponsored by Pius XI High School's Astronomy Class. The speaker is J.C. Higheagle of NASA (Houston) who will speak on Native American Skylore. (We had him at an MAS meeting last year). J. C. Higheagle will use photos and an Indian flute to embellish and illustrate the presentation. The event takes place at St. Anthony of Padua on 76th Street and Stevenson. Donations accepted.

## A Plea for Help, and a Solution

Does this strike a chord in you?

*You know, I've thought of the astronomy club thing—there are a couple in the area, but for some reason I'm intimidated by my utter lack of technical expertise. Astronomy for me is more of an artistic, poetic, philosophical, theological medium. What's out there simply knocks my socks off, but I don't know an azimuth from a right ascension from an injector valve. My magazine is Astronomy rather than Sky & Telescope because Astronomy avoids the technical focus. I really don't want to appear like a complete doofus, so I remain a closet astronomer.*

*Remember the big deal about Comet Whatizname a year or two ago? I went out every morning for weeks with binoculars, and never did see the bloody thing. Everyone else seems to have such an easy time locating deep-sky objects using the bottom of a Coke bottle, and I still struggle with some of the major constellations.*

*Guess I'll stay in the closet for a while...*

The above "letter" was seen by an MAS member while linked into an astronomy computer "forum." While not directed at MAS, it illustrates the point that beginners sometimes are overwhelmed by our hobby.

If you can relate to that, then get to a meeting or to an MAS event and tap someone on the shoulder to find out just how helpful your fellow MAS members can be. Or call one of the people in the special directory published in the Member's Packet and in a recent *Focal Point*.

—Tom Gill

## Updated MAS Roster

A newly updated (1/4/93) member roster is now available. Contact Dan Koehler at a general meeting or at 662-2987 if you would like a copy.

# Observatory Summary - 1992

-From Gerry Samolyk, Observatory Director

## LUNAR OCCULTATIONS

	TOTAL OCCS	GRAZE MAY 8
Wanda Berner		*
Paul Borchardt	6	*
Marty Brunet		*
Tim Burrus		*
Chris Hesseltine		*
Lee Kieth		*
Dorothy Kube	4	
Jim Kube		*
Scott Lascowski	1	
Charlotte Nelson		*
Nick Nichols	95	
Gerry Samolyk	22	*
Virgil Tangney		*
Jim Toeller		*
Ken Waraczynski		*
Sally Waraczynski	27	*
	155	13

The graze of May 8 was our most successful for over 10 years. Our 13 observers were joined by 3 from the Racine A. S. Together we timed 46 contacts of SAO 97357 with the Moon.

Asteroid Occultation Attempts - This has been another poor year for occultations of stars by asteroids, only one negative report was made.

Jupiter - Terry Ross made 87 CM timings of features in the planets atmosphere. In addition the following observers timed eclipses of Jupiters satellites.

Terry Ross	2
Gerry Samolyk	5
Sally Waraczynski	5

The following Observers made observations of variable stars last year.

	EB Minima	RR LYR Maxima	EB&RR OBS	LPV OBS
Marty Brunet				15
Chris Hesseltine		1	13	2
Scott Lascowski	2		63	
Gerry Samolyk	193	12	2998	750
	195	13	3074	7

## Saturday Night Keyholders

Feb 6	Paul Borchardt	781-0169
13	Marty Brunet	544-1342
20	Greg Cieslak	529-0548
27	Brian Ganiere	961-8745
Apr 3	John Pfannerstill	475-6494
10	Frank Roldan	608-787-1730
17	Terry Ross	784-2093
24	Tom Schmidtkunz	352-1674

## For Sale

10' Diameter Observatory Building/ Dome with 17 1/2" shutter opening, power dome rotation and power shutter operation. Asking \$1500. Call Bob James @ 421-2162.

## 2 February Grazes

Two grazes will occur during February and both are close to Milwaukee and have "prime time" hours. On Feb 27th, 7:26 pm CST, a 7.7 mag star will graze the 34% sunlit Moon. MAS members will travel to Newburg, WI (about 1/2 hour from Milwaukee).

The next night on the 28th at 9:10pm CST an 8th mag star will graze the 44% sunlit Moon. Location is in Northcape which is near Wind Lake. For details, contact Observatory Director Gerry Samolyk at home or at the February general meeting.

## Ski & Stars @ Pike Lake

Pike Lake will again be holding their annual Ski (or Hike) & Stars and invites MAS members to come out and share their love of the sky with the public. In past years the enthusiasm and response of the public was as warm as the huge bonfire that took the edge off the frosty night air.

Skiing and observing takes place near the lake parking lot from 6:30 - 9:30 pm. Ask a ranger for the observing area. A \$3.50 daily park sticker is required for attendees however, MAS members who bring equipment will be admitted free of charge.

# 1993 MAS Calendar of Events

- Feb 3: 1st Wed Meeting @ Observatory
- Feb 8: Board Meeting @ Paul Borchardt's
- Feb 19: Membership Meeting @ H.C.
- Feb 27: Graze
- Feb 28: Graze
- Mar 3: 1st Wed. Meeting @ Observatory
- Mar 8: Board Meeting @ Tom Gill's Home
- Mar 13: Graze
- Mar 19: Membership Meeting @ H.C.
- Mar 31: Graze
- Apr 7: 1st Wed. Meeting @ Observatory
- Apr 12: Board Meeting @ Observatory
- Apr 23: Annual Banquet and Graze
- May 1: Astronomy Day
- May 5: 1st Wed @ Observatory
- May 10: Board Meeting @ Observatory
- May 14: Membership Meeting @ H.C.
- May 21: Greenbush Campout
- May 22: Greenbush Campout
- Jun 2: 1st Wed @ Observatory
- Jun 14: Board Meeting @ Observatory
- Jul 7: 1st Wed @ Observatory
- Jul 12: Board Meeting @ Observatory
- Jul 23: Open House @ Observatory - **MOON**
- Jul 24: Annual Picnic @ Observatory
- Jul 29: National and Regional AL @ Madison
- Jul 30: National and Regional AL @ Madison
- Jul 31: National and Regional AL @ Madison
- Aug 1: National and Regional AL @ Madison
- Aug 4: 1st Wed @ Observatory
- Aug 6: Open House @ Observatory - **METEORS**
- Aug 9: Board Meeting @ Observatory
- Aug 13: Campout @ Wildcat Mountain (Fri)
- Aug 14: Campout @ Wildcat Mountain (Sat)
- Aug 15: Campout @ Wildcat Mountain (Sun) Persiads
- Aug 16: Come Home from Wildcat Mountain (Mon)
- Aug 20: Open House @ Observatory - **CONSTELLATIONS**
- Sep 1: 1st Wed @ Observatory
- Sep 3: Open House @ Observatory - **PLUTO**
- Sep 10: Attend Astrofest @ Kankakee, IL
- Sep 17: Board & Membership Meeting @ Obs.
- Sep 24: Open House @ Observatory - **MILKY WAY**
- Oct 6: 1st Wed @ Observatory
- Oct 8: Open House @ Observatory - **SATURN**
- Oct 11: Board Meeting @ Observatory
- Oct 15: Campout @ Greenbush
- Oct 16: Campout @ Greenbush
- Oct 17: Come Home from Greenbush
- Oct 22: Membership Meeting @ H.C.
- Nov 3: 1st Wed @ Observatory
- Nov 8: Board Meeting @ Observatory
- Nov 19: Membership Meeting @ H. C.
- Dec 1: 1st Wed @ Observatory
- Dec 13: Board Meeting @ Site to be determined

To help you in planning upcoming vacations, etc. here is the MAS 1993 calendar of events.

If you have questions about what the various events are like, contact any of the MAS officers or bring up the subject after one of the general meetings.

We hope to see many new faces (and all the old same faces) at some of these MAS events!

## MAS INFORMATION

### MAS Officers

President	Dr. Richard Wiesen 781-4786
Vice President	Matthew McNeely 354-5347
Secretary	Dorothy Kube 453-8858
Treasurer	Dan Koehler 662-2987
Obs. Director	Gerry Samolyk 529-9051
Ast. Obs. Director	Paul Borchardt 781-0169
Librarian	Mrs. Sally Waraczynski 321-0918
Assist. Librarian	Mrs. June Regis 962-0896
Program Dir.	Tom Renner 524-0932

### Focal Point Staff

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476-6986

### MAS Observatory

18850 W. Observatory Rd.  
New Berlin, WI  
542-9071

\* H. C. = Helen Carey Auditorium @ Milwaukee County Mental Health