



### The best laid plans.....

The scheduled Messier object hunt slated for April 17th wound up with a good turnout of people, especially some newer members. The social part of the gathering was certainly fulfilled since Mother Nature beclouded the night sky and made hands on training academic. Unlike our Tucson brethren, who can call their observing shots for most nights, our nights are subject to a succession of weather fronts with "good seeing" time slots in between. We just didn't luck out.....but all was not lost! Besides snacking on goodies that were brought for the occasion, Chalk talks were given on various scanning techniques to find a Messier object within a specific constellation. Lastly members had another opportunity to get to know one another.

Another area that is experiencing some delays, is the plans for replacing the current meeting area in the "Quonset Hut" with a more modern structure. Many of the original MAS facilities were built before New Berlin expanded into a burgeoning suburban city. Current day requirements for architecturally drawn (and approved) plans plus certain construction material and techniques for public facilities have caused a delay in our proceeding with a new hall. It is likely that this project will be deferred at least a year.

### First Saturday Sessions Resume

Informal telescope sessions for members will be held on the first Saturday nite of every month starting in May. These sessions are run by Scott Jamieson and will try address question on scope use, observing technique et al. Scott is usually there, rain or clear nite after sundown. Want to get your feet wet?.....come out!

### MAS May Election Notice

The offices of President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer are up for annual election. Additionally four board seats are up for election (two year terms). If you have any desire to run for one of these positions, please contact Scott Jamieson or any officer or board member. The election will be at the MAS observatory, May 21st,

### We Meet Friday, May 21st at 8:00PM

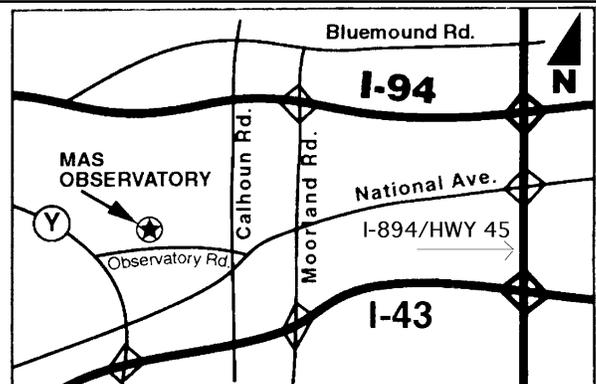
Besides the Election Officers and some board members (see box elsewhere on this page), we have a speaker that addresses some historical aspects of astronomy. Dr. Frank Steckel, Professor from UW Whitewater will discuss the field of Archeo- Astronomy and some specifics such as Mayan Astronomy, Application to Effigy Mounds, etc. Dr. Steckel has been teaching for 34 years and has a varied educational background that includes a Bachelors from UW LaCrosse, Masters from UW Madison and a PHD from Indiana. MAS has had speakers that have touched on many aspects of astronomy and Dr. Steckel's talk will certainly highlight some of the historical aspects of this subject. Don't miss this one.

**There will be a regular board meeting at 7:00PM preceding the regular member meeting at eight o'clock.** All board members are urged to attend. If a board member is unable to attend, **please advise the president** (see back page for phone number).

As required by MAS By-laws, the board shall also meet during the course of the regular meeting and elect the Officers from the slate of candidates presented.

### Focal Point Publication Notice

The Focal Point is published monthly from September to May each year. A mid-summer issue is published in July (usually just prior to our summer picnic. Please be aware that there is no June or August issue. Regular publication resumes in September.



**MAS Officers/ Staff**

President	Scott Jamieson	896-0119
Vice President	Lee Keith	425-2331
Treasurer	Dan Yanko	453-3382
Secretary	Margaret Warner	327-7427
Observatory Director	Gerry Samolyk	529-9051
Assistant Observatory Director	Paul Borchardt	781-0169
Focal Point	Rudy Poklar, Editor	786-8931

**Future MAS Events**

MAS Open House: ; May 7, 14; Aug 13, 27; Sep 24; Oct 1  
Annual Picnic (Observatory) Sat. July 17  
Greenbush (North Kettle Moraine) Campout Oct. 8 & 9

**MAS Membership** is open to all with an interest in Astronomy and expanding their knowledge of the Universe. Yearly Membership Dues are: Individual \$28/yr; Family \$32; Non-resident (individual \$18, Family \$22); Student (under 18) \$12. **For more information, contact Membership Chairperson Julie Frey, 11040 W. Meinecke Avenue, Milwaukee WI.**

**Focal Point Publishing Guidelines**

Focal Point Newsletter is published monthly from Sept through May with a Mid-summer issue in July. Articles, Announcements, Graphics, Photos, Swap/Sale Ads etc should be submitted at least 10 days prior to the first of the month ( of the desired issue). Article inputs are preferred via E-Mail, or diskette in a text or Word compatible format, if possible. Submit FP inputs to:

MAS Focal Point c/o Rudy Poklar  
12905 W. Crawford Drive

**Saturday Keyholders****May**

1	Brian Garness	538-3888
8	Chris Hesseltine	482-4515
15	Vern Hoag	548-9130
22	Tim Hoff	662-2212
29	Scott Jamieson	896-0119

**June**

5	Lee Kieth	425-2331
12	Dan Koehler	662-2987
19	Jim Kube	691-8771
26	Scott Laskowski	421-3517

**July**

3	Rudy Poklar	786-8931
10	Terry Ross	784-2093
17	Gerry Samolyk	529-9051
24	Tom Schmidtkunz	352-1674
31	Ken Waraczynski	321-0918

**Aug.**

7	Dan Yanko	453-3382
14	Wanda Berner	646-8229
21	Paul Borchardt	781-0169
28	Brian Ganiere	538-3888

\* If members want to be assured of observatory access on a given Saturday nite, they should call the keyholder ahead of time.

**MAS Observatory** 542-9071

**Visit our MAS Website:**

<http://members.aol.com/masmemb/index.html>

**The Milwaukee Astronomical Society**

2933 N.68th Street  
Milwaukee, WI. 53210-1208

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\* *We meet May 21st, 8:00PM at the Observatory*  
-Election of officers  
- Dr Steckel, UW Whitewater, talks about Archeo-Astronomy

\* *MAS Open houses, May 7 and 14 at Observatory, 8:00PM*



## Northwoods Astrofest '99

MAS member Robert Kempka alerted the editor about the forthcoming Northwoods Astrofest 99 scheduled for August 13 & 14. The annual event is sponsored by the Chippewa Valley Astronomical Society and is held at the Hobbs Observatory, Beaver Creek Reserve, Fall Creek, WI. The Hobbs facility has two observatories; a 25 inch F/5 and a Celestron 14 inch.

Cabins and a Lodge are available as well as campsites.

This group has Speakers on Saturday, a swapfest, and nightly observing sessions on both Friday and Saturday nights.

Registration Fee is \$30/person until August 1st and \$40 thereafter.

For more info contact Hobbs Observatory 715-877-2787 or Bert Moritz at 715-835-4034. Also complete details and application are available on the following Web Site:

[www.cvastro.org/starfest.htm](http://www.cvastro.org/starfest.htm)

Bob Kempka had a very enthusiastic write up on last year's annual gathering (in the October 98 issue of Focal Point) and highly recommends it to all interested amateurs.

## In Sympathy

The MAS Officers and Board extend their sincere sympathy and condolences to Membership Chairperson, Julie Frey and family whose father, Sydney Frey, passed away April 15th at the age of 53.

## Library News

Here are some more of Brian Ganiere's donated books

**1. Race to Mars:** The Harper & Row Mars Flight Atlas; Frank Miles and Nicholas Booth - 1988.

**2. Beyond The Blue Horizon:** Myths and Legends of the Sun, Moon, Stars and Planets; E. C. Krupp- 1991.

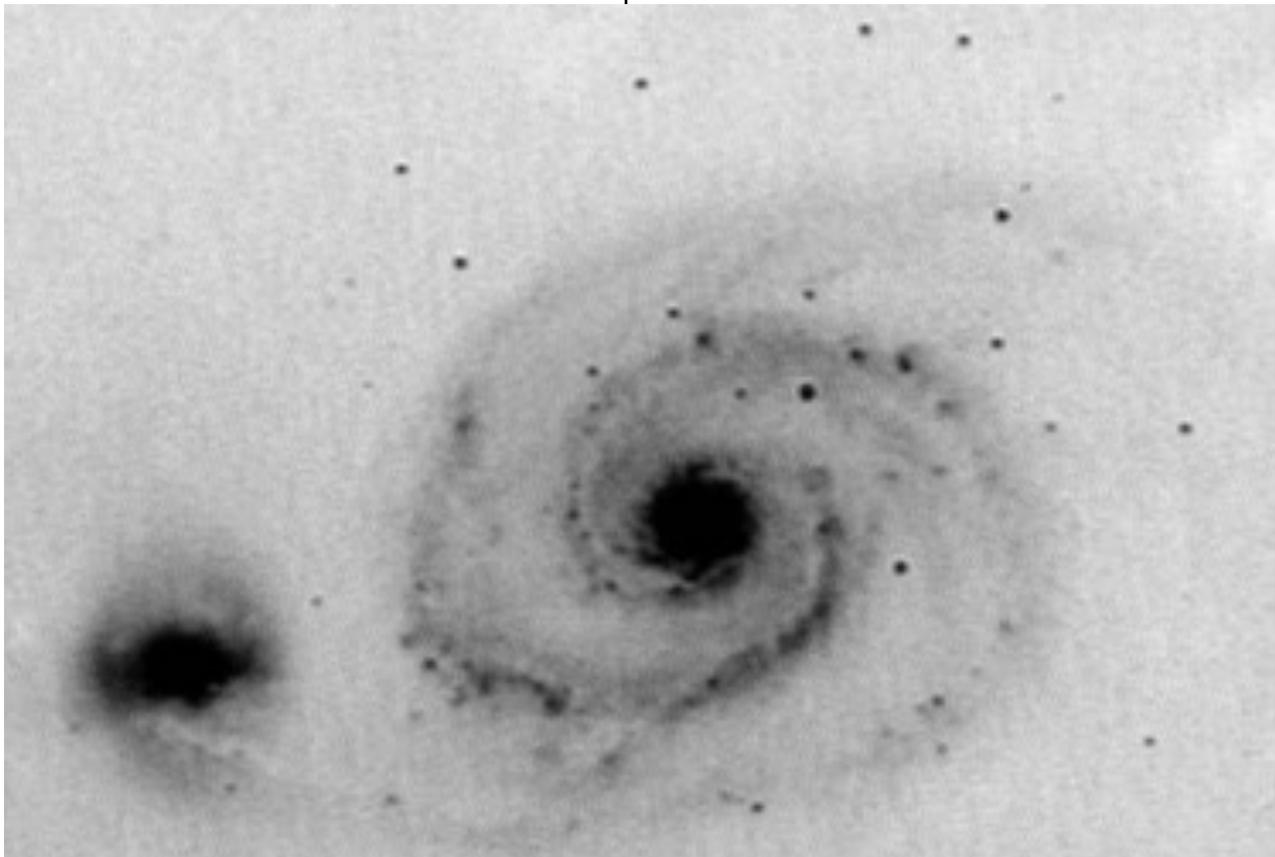
**3. The Practical Astronomer:** From Naked Eye Observation to Using a Telescope....Every Enthusiast's Guide to the Skies Above Us; Brian Jones, Stephen ed berg - Editor-1990.

**4. Exploring Space:** Voyages in the Solar System and Beyond; William E. Burrows - 1990.

**5. Stars and Planets:** The seirra Club Guide to Sky Watching and Direction Finding; W. E. Kals- 1990.

*Scott Laskowski, MAS Librarian.*

*Ed's Note: Scott submitted the above list for publication in late January. The Editor inadvertently let the sbmitall drop in the cracks. This printing should now complete the listing of Brian Ganiere's large number of donated books. My apologies to Scott for misplacing the original submittal.*



**CCD Image of the Whirlpool Galaxy (NGC5194) and its companion NGC5195 (lower left).** The image was taken by Scott Jamieson, April time frame, on our 12 inch "A" Scope. The image is shown as a negative to allow the repro process to show some of the spiral detail.

## Corvus

*The Crow, or Raven*

Zoologists know the term “Corvus” as the genus to which the crows belong. Astronomers are also familiar with the term since a constellation by the same name makes its appearance in the mid-evening this time of year, reaching the meridian at 11 pm during the middle of April. If you look southwest of Spica in Virgo you will see an irregular quadrilateral of stars that is the constellation of Corvus, measuring 184 square degrees (Orion, by comparison) occupies 594 square degrees.)

One legend states that the god Apollo gave Corvus a cup to fetch some spring water. Along the way, the crow was tempted by a fig hanging from a tree, but since the fruit was still green, the crow couldn't resist waiting for it to ripen. When he returned, Corvus explained his tardiness by bringing back a water snake along with a full cup of water, saying the snake had attacked him. Apollo was too wise to believe the foolish bird and banished Corvus, the cup (Crater), and the water snake (Hydra) to the sky. Another legend says that Apollo was suspicious that Coronis, with whom he was having an affair, was being unfaithful, so Apollo sent Corvus, who then was a silver bird, to spy on her. Corvus reported back that Apollo's suspicions were correct, so the god slew Coronis and sent Corvus to Hades where his feathers were burned black.

The four bright stars of Corvus was seen as tent by the Arabs. In fact, Alpha Corvi is named Alchiba, the Arabic word for “tent”. This is a relatively nearby star lying 68 light years from Earth. Delta Corvi, named Algorab (an Arabic derivative meaning “raven's wing”), is a pleasant double star which has a primary magnitude of 3.1 and a spectral type of B9 V, and a dimmer secondary shining at a magnitude 8.4 and having a spectral type K2 III. The two are separated by a comfortable 24.2 arc seconds, so splitting them is an easy task. You could even consider Delta forming a visual double with nearby Eta Corvi, 37 arc minutes away and magnitude 4.3.

The most intriguing deep sky object in Corvus undoubtedly has to be NGC4038, also known as the ring tail galaxy. The coordinates are RA: 12h 01.8', Dec:-18deg 51.3', or about 14 minutes in RA west and 1.2 degrees south in Dec from Gamma Corvi. This is a magnitude 11 galaxy measuring 2.5 arc minutes on each side. Through medium sized telescopes, this galaxy exhibits a heart shaped structure which results from what is apparently a collision between two separate galaxies. Although too dim to see through a telescope, two

*Corvus continued*

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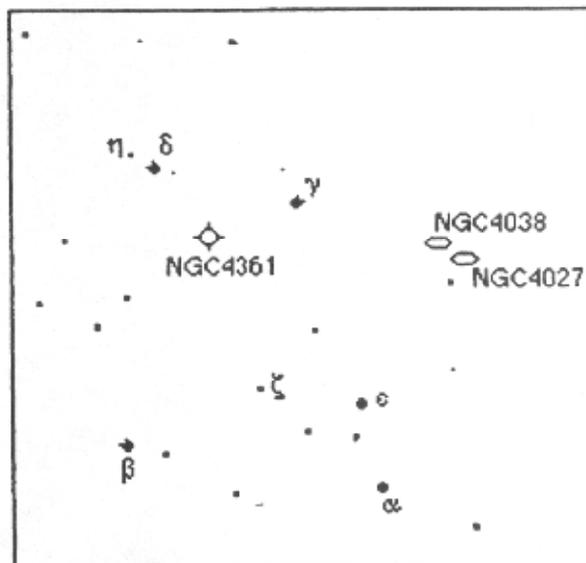
long filaments extend tens of thousands of light years on each side of the main body of the galaxy. It has been determined that these long trails of stars are the result of tidal interaction from the combined gravity of the two systems. You may remember that a Hubble telescope image showed vast regions within the two halves of the merging pair where stars are forming at an incredible rate because of the forces involved with this process.

A short hop of 0.7 degrees to the southwest will reveal another galaxy with similar brightness of magnitude 11.6 and a size of 2.0 x 1.7 arc minutes. This is NGC4027 (RA: 11h 59.5', Dec:-19deg 15.3') which at an actual distance of only about a million light years from NGC4038, appears to be a third member of this small group. In fact, it is an irregularly shaped spiral which also seems to be distorted by the gravity of its interacting neighbor. Through a telescope it shows little overall detail other than a smooth oval.

A fairly easy planetary nebula floats within the heart of Corvus at RA:12h 24.6', Dec: -18deg 43.3'. With the designation of NGC4361, this 10.5 magnitude planetary can also be found by moving 5 minutes west in RA and 2.3 degrees south of Delta Corvi. The diameter of this nebula is about 80 arc seconds (or almost the same size as the often observed M57 in Lyra) and, depending on the size of your telescope, gives you a decent opportunity at glimpsing its central star shining at magnitude 13. The nebula is almost perfectly round with a hint of an oval shape, and its surface is smooth with no apparent mottling.

If you can tear yourself away from the galaxy clusters of Virgo and Coma Berenices, look southward to Corvus where you can find more individual treasures.

**Chris Lancaster**



## Constellation Report

## Corvus

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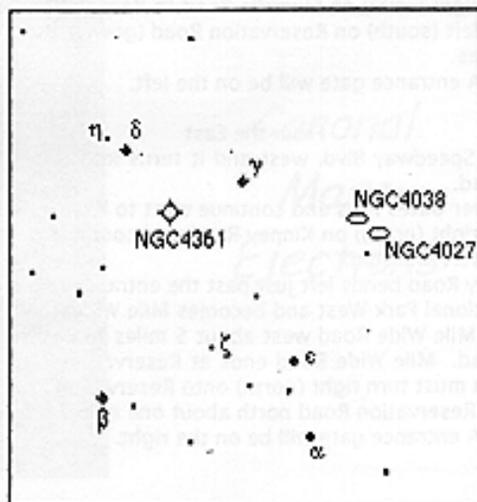
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