FOCAL POINT

The Newsletter of the Milwaukee Astronomical Society November-December 2001

From the President

As most of you have heard by now, our fearless FP editor, Rudy Poklar, has finally come to his senses and decided to spend the winters in Arizona. I have been aware of Rudy's plans for some time and, though we will miss him and his hard work in the club's behalf greatly, I am sure he will enjoy the mild weather. True to form, he has already become involved in the local astronomy club and I am sure he will become very involved as time goes on. That's Rudys nature. It is people like him that make clubs run and stay active. Thanks for everything Rudy, and we look forward to your return with the flowers in the spring! (Wish I could go too!)

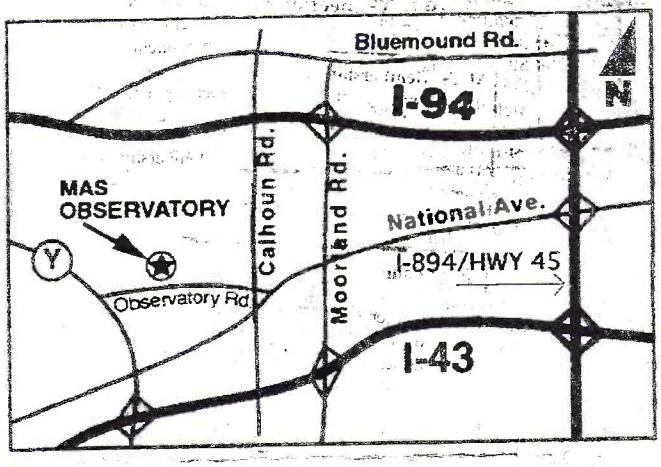
The clubs LX200 Telescope and St9 camera combination is in full operation and performing beautifully. Quite a few people have learned how to use this wonderful combination. With the recent addition of remote focusing, it can be controlled completely from within the Control Center in the lower floor of the Z-dome. It will be mildly heated (About 30 degrees above ambient during use in the winter) so come out and learn how to use this wonderful equipment. Contact Gerry Samolyk or myself to schedule a test-drive. Anyone can learn to use this equipment. It's sure to be popular when the cold arrives, especially when you consider how many beautiful objects are in the mid-winter sky and are a perfect match for this cameras 20-minute field of view.

I have had several inquiries about current plans for the Quonset hut. At this time we intend to keep this building as long as we can stay at this location. At the current rate of light pollution we will probably have to start looking for a new location within 5 years even with the pollution subtracting capabilities of our cameras. This makes building a new facility on the hill impractical. Therefore, we intend to rebuild the floor and possibly remove the back 10 feet of the hut since that is where most of the problems are. This work is now scheduled for early spring and we will be repainting the outside as soon as weather permits.

Scott Jameison, President, MAS

Going...going.....

If you want to stay on the cutting edge, don't let your membership lapse.....



We meet at MAS observatory, Nov. 16 At 8:00 PM.

Our featured speaker is **Prof. Christopher Anderson, Department Chairman, UW-Madison who will give a talk on "South African Large Telescope (SALT)".** SALT,presently under construction, is a joint project of the Republic of South Africa and a consortium involving US, UK, and German universities plus the governments of Poland and New Zealand. The University of Wisconsin-Madison is the largest non-African partner. When completed. it will be the largest telescope (effective aperture of 11 meters) with a capability of scanning 70% of the southern sky. SALT is envisioned primarily as a spectrographic instrument capable of parallel evaluation of many objects in a field of view.This is a well done and fascinating presentation to both see and hear.

A MAS board meeting will be held prior to the meeting at 7:00 PM. All directors should be there to continue the business of the club. Others are welcome to attend.

MAS Holiday Party
Friday December 14th, 7:00 PM
At
Giuseppe's
Mark your calendars & see page 2 for details

Annual MAS Holiday Get-Together

is Friday, December 14th at Giuseppe's Restaurant starting at 7:00 PM. The game plan is a little different this year in that we will have assorted Pizzas plus ample servings of beer and soda.....all this for a nominal charge of $12.00 per person.The management has assured us of a better flow of and assortment of pizzas as well as a good appetizers and salad.These holiday gatherings have been picking up in attendance in recent years and its just a nice time to renew acquaintances and share some Gemichlekeit.

Giuseppe's is on HWY100 (Mayfair Road) is located on the northeast corner of Highway 100 and Bluemound Ave. Its very easy to spot with its assorted Flags flying above the place. Coming from west of the city. take I94, exit on Hwy 100 and proceed north to Bluemound. From the east, take I94 to Hwy 45 north and take first exit (Bluemound), then proceed west to Hwy100. North or south traffic can us 895/45, exit on Bluemound, then to Hwy 100.

Please do join us to renew old acquaintances and catch up on what's new.

Lastly, a brief board meeting will be held ,during a break in the activities ,to take care of any immediate business.

It's been a priveledge.....

to be associated with so many hard working members who have, in the last three years, been both renovating the existing observatories, adding new observatories, and adding phenomenal CCD imaging that has brought about another resurgence in MAS. A determined nucleus of members rolled up there sleeves and built new facilities without fanfare. The result has been new window(s) into the universe that is phenomenal.

As editor of the Focal Point for the last four years, I've tried to support this effort, in a small way, by providing a positive (and upbeat) voice (in the Focal Point) for the Officers and Board in their successful efforts to breath new life into this club.

I'm taking these aging bones (my mind is still young!) to warmer climes for the winter but I do look forward to being back at MAS next summer to do some observing and being with good friends again.

Again, thanks for the priveledge.

Rudy Poklar, outgoing Editor,MAS

New Focal Point Editor

MAS Board member, Gary Parson, volunteered to take over the editorship of the Focal Point, effective with the January/ February issue. Gary is a relatively new member of MAS, an active observer with his Meade LX-200 and a board director as well. Please extend to Gary any assistance he requests to help in doing this job.

New Member Welcome

We are happy to welcome new member,

Andrew Kurz, Brookfield WI

Please join us in any or all of the activities herein

Carlos Garces, New Member Chairman

Library News

Kalmbach Publishing Astronomy 2002 calendars will be available at the next meeting. The calendars are only $6.00 for MAS members (not $11.95), a substantial savings and have a larger format of "striking images" with dates of celestial events.

There was a request that the library should acquire more astronomy literature for young people. The Usborne books are highly recommended by teachers; here are two

1. **Astronomy: Usborne Understanding Science;** by Stuart Atkinson- 1999
2. **The Young Astronomer:An Usborne Guide**; by Sheila Snowden -2000
3. **Astronomy For All Ages: Discovering the Universe through Activities for Children and Adults;** by Philip Harrington & Edward Pascuzzi -200 (donated by Chris Hesseltine).

Some other acquisitions include:

1.**Dragonfly: NASA and the Crisis Aboard the MIR**; by Bryan Burrough - 1998. Problems, solutions, and politics in space, (donated by Lee Keith).

2. **Video Astronomy;** by Steve Massey, Thomas A. Dobbins, and Eric J. Douglass -2000. Video recording has become a renewed interest by MAS members over the last several years. **V.A.** is a manual for all matters of equipment and techniques that can be used by amateurs for impressive results, filming still or time-lapsed events. (recommended by Vern Hoag).

3.**Wide Field Astrophotgraphy:Exposing the Universe Starting with a Common Camera;** by Robert Reeves- 1999.. Not only cameras, but **W.F.A.** ranges in discussion of of other instruments (lenses, filters, mounts),and films along with darkroom methods and tricks.- And on to electronic image processing; but if one were very ambitious, there is even a chapter of "Build It Yourself Projects". (recommended by Vern Hoag).

4. **Shoemaker By Levy: The Man Who Made an Impact**; by David H. Levy - 2000. Eugene S. Shoemaker was the pioneer who showed that craters were formed by meteoric impact on Earth and the moon, not of volcanic origin. He taught the astronauts to what to look for in moon rocks. The visionary saw a comet impact a major planet in our time, vindication: Comet Shoemaker- Levy 9 hit Jupiter in 1994. The biography end in 1997 with a rod crash in Australia; the legacy of knowledge in meteoric continues.

5.**Asteroids: A History**; by Curtis Peebles- 2000.The minor planets of our solar system are of new concern. Earth impacts-is the new Tangney observatory's project listing still including an asteroid survey? The science of asteroids id new and serious , valuable work can be done by amateurs in this field.

Scott Laskowski, MAS Librarian

Eds Note:

Those blustery and extended cloud cover times are upon us once again. Take a look at some of the books above. They really look like enjoyable reading. There are many more of the same on our shelves in the lower level of the Z building. Take a look.....your in for a surprise.

Bit and Pieces

The following are items of significance from the last two board meetings

* There is a new 1 GHz computer for running the Tangney scope.It features a CDR to make it easy for members to copy their images to their home computers.

*The drive control for the Z scope has been upgraded.The computer interface is also being upgraded. The drive motor for the lower slit has also been replaced

* A reminder that the restrooms and darkroom are heated electrically. Keep those doors fully closed in the winter months so we keep our electric bill down.

*The redo of the hallway walls (under A scope) is on hold pending additional electrical work .

* The Phone company replaced the outside connection box. The renovated phone system , including inter-building intercom is now fully functional. All phone lines between buildings are now buried.

* A buffer of some type will be provided to keep people from bumping into the roof rail s of C & D observatories.

*$400 was approved for additional tree plantings on the Observatory grounds. These trees are now planted.

*$300 was approved for additional library purchases in the next year.

* A separate switch/ latching relay setup has been installed right near the base of the Z scope mount. This to avoid the inadvertent driving of the scope when some one accidentally throws the breakers on (downstairs).

* Vern Hoag has renovated the rest rooms off the meeting hall . They definitely appear fit for human use.

* new eyepieces, previously ordered from Orion, have enhanced observing from our roll-off roof facilities

* Rear corner of Z shed will be repaired.

* Possibility of purchasing an ST7 imager for Planetary use (with Z scope) may be considered in the near future.

MAS Officers/ Staff

President	Scott Jamieson	262-896-0119
Vice President	Lee Keith	414-425-2331
Treasurer	Dan Yanko	414-453-3382
Secretary	Henry Gerner	414-362-4441
Observatory Director	Gerry Samolyk	414-529-9051
Assistant Observatory Director	Paul Borchardt	262-781-0169
Focal Point	Rudy Poklar, Editor	

Future MAS Events

Jan.18 MAS monthly meeting, usually at UWM Physics Bldg
Verify via WEB page or Jan/Feb Focal Point

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 Chairman, Carlos Garces, 16430 Melody Drive, New Berlin, WI. 53151. Phone 262-786-2623. Email : carlosg@ execpc.com

Focal Point Publishing Guidelines
Focal Point Newsletter is published bi-monthly (Sep Nov Jan Mar 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 Gary Parson
7521 E. Wind Lake Road
Wind Lake, WI 53185-1513
E-mail: gipar1951@prodigy.net

Saturday Keyholders

Nov		
3	Neil Simmons	262-889-2039
10	Chris Weber	262-789-7128
17	Dan Yanko	414-453-3382
24	Wanda Burner	262-646-8229
Dec		
1	Paul Borchardt	262-781-0169
8	Tim Burrus	262-783-6572
15	Brian Ganiere	414-961-8745
22	Carlos Garces	262-786-2623
29	Brian Garness	262-538-3888

Loaner Telescopes (available to members for local use)

Lee Keith (Franklin)	414-425-2331	8" Dob reflector
Scott Jamieson (Waukesha)	262-896-0119	8" Dob reflector
Paul Borchardt (MAS site)	262-781-0169	6" Dob reflector

MAS Observatory 262-542-9071

MAS Web Page: www.milwaukeeastro.org
New and timely, Check it out

The Milwaukee Astronomical Society
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Milwaukee, WI. 53210-1208

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Next MAS Meeting, Friday, Nov. 16, 8:00 PM; Dr Chris Anderson, UW-Madison, talks on the "South African Large Telescope (SALT)"
**** MAS Annual Holiday Get -together at Giuseppe's, Dec. 14, 7:00 PM***

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