

Summer Picnic

Need we say it? It's summer and time for our annual MAS picnic! Every year Vern and his wife Di-
anne and their volunteers work their hearts out providing the rest of us members a wonderful time with wonderful food, drink and a raffle at the day's end.

This year's picnic will be a little later than usual in order provide the best phase of the moon for evening viewing. So mark your calendar on August 4, at 4 o'clock at our observatory.

The MAS provides the hamburgers and hotdogs and the fixings and the beer and soda. All you need to bring is something to sit on and maybe something to sit under whether it rains or shines.

So, bring your favorite lawn chairs or blankets and reconnect with old friends or connect with new ones. And of course if the weather permits there will be observing/star-gazing after dark.



The Annual Yerkes Star Party

We have a problem this year. The Space Explorer Summer Institute Star Party coincides with the MAS picnic on August 4, 2007. This is the first conflict for these events.

The MAS has been helping Yerkes Observatory with this educational project since 1991. I hope, weather permitting, the MAS regulars will join us to volunteer at Yerkes for the evening. Starting at dusk and going until you decide to packing it up. **There are better skies there than Waukesha.** If you have a telescope and can teach kids how to use it, you will be a hit for this event. "Have Telescope, Will Travel," my motto.

If you have helped Yerkes before, like the fun with the hot-air balloon launches last year, please do so again, Saturday August 4, 2007.

- Scott Laskowski - Yerkes U of C

Henry Gerner demonstrates the finer points of robot dancing to a skeptical Jill Roberts while waiting to sign up for last year's raffle. (No, not really. I don't know what he's doing.—Ed.)

The New Board

As of the May meeting the Board of Directors of the Milwaukee Astronomical Society is comprised of:

Ray Albarelli
Al Hovey
Kipp Hoffman
Vern Hoag

Brian Greniere
Rebecca Sher
Dave Weier

Steve Diesso
Paul Greuner
Kevin McCarthy
Jill Roberts

Ray, Al, Kipp and Vern were newly elected to a 3-year term. Jill Roberts was appointed by the board to fill the vacancy left by the departure of Scott Berg, serving the 1 year remaining on his term.

In addition, the slate of officers for the Society has been voted on by the newly elected board as the following:

President, Steve Diesso
Vice-president, Rebecca Sher
Secretary, Henry Gerner
Treasurer, Brian Greniere

Congratulations all, and thank you for stepping up to volunteer your time!

Annual Dues News

Sky & Telescope magazine subscribers - renew directly!

MAS members who subscribe to Sky & Telescope magazine at the discounted club rate will now be able to renew directly with Sky Publishing by mail or by phone (but not through their website).

When you receive your magazine subscription renewal notice in the mail, return it to Sky Publishing / New Track Media with payment, or renew by phone at 800-253-0245. You will not be required to validate your MAS membership at the time of renewal.

New subscribers to Sky & Telescope magazine, and all subscribers to Astronomy magazine, please send payment with your MAS membership renewal form or application form.

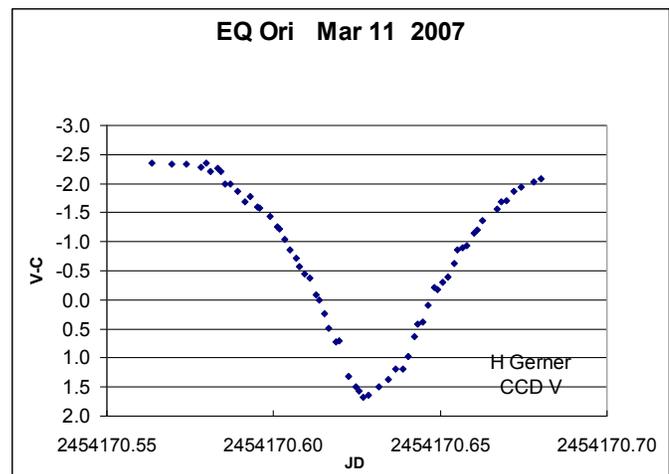
Brian Ganiere - MAS Treasurer
2212 E Stratford Ct
Shorewood WI 53211-2628

OBSERVATORY NEWS

Earlier this year, the MAS purchased a 12" LX200 from our member Chris Limbach. After Scott Jamieson did some cleanup work on the drive gears, the scope was mounted in the Tangney Observatory. The MAS also purchased a used ST9-E CCD imager with a filter wheel. This filter wheel contained an LRGB filter set. A Johnson V filter was added for photometric observing.



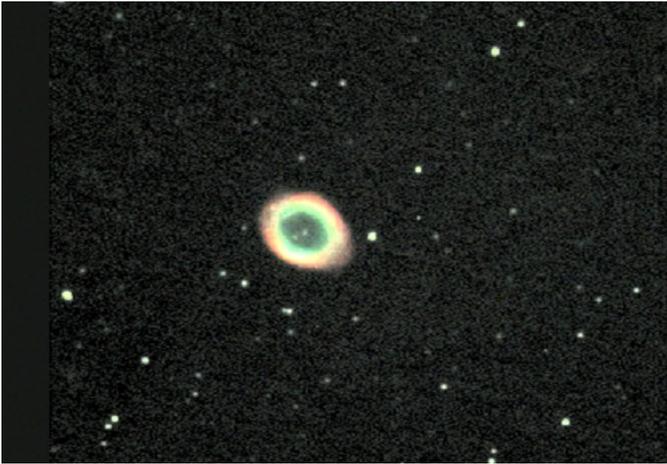
This new scope got its first good workout on the night of Mar 11. Henry Gerner started off the night by observing the eclipsing star EQ Ori, obtaining the lightcurve below.



Steve Diesso then ran a lightcurve on TY Boo. There was enough darkness left in the morning for me to shoot the first color image with the new system using M57 as a target. This system has a focal length of 120" giving us a field of about 10 arc-minutes square. This is a good plate scale for imaging many smaller objects and is a good compliment to the 10", f/6.3 scope and it's 20 arc-minute field.

(Continued on Page 3)

(Continued from Page 2)



Next, we had to build a new home for our 10" scope. This project started off by digging a trench and laying conduits for the power and signal lines to the new observatory. Henry and I spent a couple of Saturdays digging the trench, running the conduits, and filling the hole back in.



The concrete was poured in two stages. A footing for the pier is separated from the rest of the slab to reduce any vibration. The pier was welded up from scrap steel and the wedge is a spare that I had machined when I built my home observatory.



The building is a flip top design that has worked well for me for several years. The entire thing was built in my garage, complete with siding and the hinged lid. Henry and I hauled it to the observatory and anchored it to the slab. Meanwhile, Vern Hoag built a door for the new observatory and had it primed and ready for installation.



At this time both LX200 scopes can be run from the same heated office under the big dome. It will take some drift alignment to get the 10" scope better aligned to the pole but the scope is usable right now.

We also had a cleanup in May to get rid of a lot of junk that had accumulated in our buildings over the years. We had a 40 yard dumpster on hand, it was close to full by the end of the day. We had a good turnout and got a lot of work done. While Steve, Jill Roberts, Neil Simmons, and myself focused on junk disposal; Ray Alberalli and Henry did some repair work on the A building. Scott did some repair work on the lawn tractor and Brian Ganiere and Beca Sher took care of some yard work. The day ended with a few of us having a bite to eat and some refreshments at Chumley's Pub (per MAS tradition).

We also received a donation of four WIN2000 computers last winter (thank you Titan Inc.). One of these machines is now set up in the Quonset and is connected to the newly acquired projector. This system is used for powerpoint presentations at our meetings and public nights. Another system is set up in the A dome with the software loaded for the operation of the CCD imagers. We may use another of these systems to store our historical photos and documents in digitized form. All of these machines have USB ports and will communicate with all memory sticks and jump drives currently in use.

(Continued on Page 4)

(Continued from Page 3)

Scott has been implementing a new GOTO scheme on the Z scope. The system is not fully 'de-bugged' at this time but the scope is usable as is. The planetary views have been excellent. We have seen as many as eight moons of Saturn in a single night (including 16 mag Phoebe). Jupiter is now the dominant planet, I suggest that everyone take a look. The brightness of the NEB, SEB, and EZ have changed from the norm. The EZ is now darker than it has been for years.

In summary, the last six months have been very active at the observatory. I would like to thank everyone who helped out. It takes a good team to keep the observatory up and running. - Gerry Samolyk

Summer Campout

Dan and Helen Yanko have once again graciously opened their farm in Rib Lake, Wisconsin for the annual MAS campout this **August 10 - 12**.

There is plenty of room for tents and campers on the property, and there are a few hotels and many campgrounds within the area if anyone is interested in staying there.

The farmhouse has everything you need to make you comfortable; running water, stove, microwave, refrigerator, a stove in the garage to warm up by, and power for telescopes and laptops, etc. All the lights in the house and garage are outfitted with red bulbs so you can keep your dark eye adaption when going inside the house for a snack or to get something warm to drink.

But best of all, the skies are very dark! For the daytime, a 30 mile bike trail nearby as well as the Ice Age trail about three miles away if anyone wants to do some hiking. We can also hike around the property since there are 40 plus acres to hike on. There are restaurants in the area or you can cook out on the grill.

For directions to the farm see page 4 or contact Dan at DanHelenY@aol.com or 262-255-3482.

This is a great opportunity to have some dark skies and have a great weekend of observing.

Editor - Dan Yanko provided input for this article.

Directions to the Annual Campout

Yanko Farm
W2119 HWY 102
Rib Lake, WI 54470
715-427-3012
Dan's cell # 414-331-9647

From Milwaukee

Take Hwy 41/45 North to Hwy 45 (Oshkosh)
Take Hwy 45 North to Hwy 10 West
Take Hwy 10 West to Hwy 51/39 North (Stevens Point)
Take Hwy 39 North to Hwy 64 (Merrill)
Take Hwy 64 West (left) to Hwy 13 (Medford/30 miles)
Take Hwy 13 North (right) to Hwy 102 (about 15 miles)
Take Hwy 102 East (right) to Rib Lake (5 miles)
Take Hwy 102 East past Rib Lake 3 miles to Yanko Farm on bottom of hill past HWY C. It is 3 miles past Rib Lake. There is a green house, black mailbox and Copper creek next to the house.

Local Motels in Rib Lake 3 miles away:

Camp 28 Motel/Restaurant/Bar
750 Hwy 102
715-427-2828

Pete's Rustic Cabins
1230 Hwy 102
715-427-3270

Any questions call Dan Yanko at 262-255-3482 or cell 414-331-9647



Gerry Samolyk and Steve Diesso wait for nightfall while Neil Simmons decides it is easier to view with the cover off his scope during the 2005 MAS camp

Presidents Corner. By Steve Diesso

Hi Everyone. It has been a very busy few months at the observatory as we prepare to celebrate our 75th year as a society. I've been looking back at some of the photographs taken when the observatory was first dedicated. The MAS observatory has change many times over the years, but the primary mission of the Milwaukee Astronomical Society has not. We are here to contribute to the science and hobby of astronomy.

Although many of us use the latest in technology, including GOTO telescopes, CCD imaging and video astronomy, I feel the best part of the hobby is still visual observing and the observatory is a terrific place for all of our members to do just that.

Of all the telescopes for use by the members, the two LX200's are used solely for CCD photography. The remaining telescopes are excellent visual telescopes. Even from the light polluted skies of New Berlin, these telescopes can be used to view the Moon, Planets, double stars, and most of the brighter Messier objects. What a wonderful opportunity we have as members of this club to have all these high quality instruments at our disposal. Unfortunately, most of them go unused on a clear Saturday night.

Not sure where and how to start? Then here's a suggestion. Visit the observatory one clear Saturday night especially when the moon is around first quarter phase. Have the keyholder setup one of the telescopes for you and using one of the lunar maps that are in the library, spend an hour looking at the Moon. Try to identify some of the larger craters and mountain ranges. Also, Astronomy does not have to be a lonely hobby. Bring along a friend or family members to help you observe and keep you company. You will learn about observing together and make it a much more enjoyable evening, and it sure beats watching television reruns.

So I hope to see all of you soon especially at one of the events during the month of August.

Clear Skies...
Steve



For Sale

Meade 14" LX 200 GPS with all the Peterson updates, the Meade Ultra wedge and heavy duty tripod. The scope is 4 years old, in good mechanical shape with some cosmetic blemishes. Asking price is \$4800.00. Interested parties can call Kip Hoffman on his cell phone at 920-980-0670.

4 1/4" Meade. Never been used, but box is gone. Call Roger Kent after 7pm at 262-628-0892.

August Calendar

Aug 3 (Fri) - Public Observing Night 7:30 pm,
Topic: **Meteors**

Aug 4 (Sat) - Annual Picnic 4:00 pm.

Aug 10 to 12 - Summer campout at Dan Yanko's Farm.

Aug 17 (Fri) - Public Observing Night 7:30 pm,
Topic: **Jupiter**

Unless otherwise specified meetings are at the Observatory. Check our website for up-to-date information on meetings and events.

Notes from the MAS Travel Desk 2007 Midwest Astro-Imaging Conference By Paul Gruener

Three and a half hours south of the Bayside home-
stead, straight through the heart of Chicago, lives a
small Midwest university town surrounded on each
flank by a spectacular number of tall corn soldiers.
St. Joseph's College in Rensselaer Indiana was the
site of the first Midwest Astro-Imaging Conference
(MIAC). The conference ran in conjunction with
20/20 Telescope's EPOCH 2007 star party located
15 minutes west of the campus.

So, why did I go? I have been taking pictures since I
was seven and I have been enjoying observing with
my telescopes for the better part of ten years now,
but I have never put the two together in a meaning-
ful way. Sure, I took a few photos of sun spots and
the Moon, but that was about it. I have watched my
friends Tom, Ernie, and Dave take some fascinating
images while I poked around the sky, but I never
spent much learning about astrophotography. I
thought this would be a great chance to figure out
what all the fuss is about.

Ernie Mastroianni reviewed the speaker list and in-
formed me the presenters looked very good. The
early registration fee was only \$60 including break-
fast and lunch for the 2 day seminar. Rooms were a
staggering \$24 dollars a night and there was a star
party a few miles down the road. What's not to like?

The conference started off well. I checked in Thurs-
day, got my room, and was able to spend time meet-
ing and talking with most all of the conference
speakers and the conference organizer Al Degutis.
This included the EPOCH keynote speaker Al
Nagler. Everyone was very welcoming. The conver-
sations were wide ranging and very entertaining.
The conference had not even started and my head
was already filling up with mind bending information,
some of it about astrophotography. As the night
went on the names of the people around me started
to connect with images I have seen printed in Sky &
Telescope and on the covers of books. Yes, Ernie
was dead on about these guys.

On the first day Craig Stark discussed affordable
astrophotography, Jim Burnell went into depth on
color and the use of filters, Alan Chen covered dedi-
cated single shot color camera astrophotography,
Alan Friedman took a deep dive on high resolution
planetary and lunar imaging (see his article in this
month's S&T) and the session wrapped with Warren

Keller's exuberant words on the art in astrophotogra-
phy.

I was floored by Craig Stark's comparison of M51
images separated by more than \$49,000 in hard-
ware and his comment that the photographer's gear
is most often not the "rate limiting factor" in making
good photos.

On the second day Adam Block (see his Rosette
Nebula in the back of S&T this month and his work
in the current TeleVue ads) spent several hours
showing us how to process images in Photoshop.
The first part of talk focused on contrast control.
Next, Greg Piepol reviewed solar imaging and we
finished with the event's host, Jeff Terry, showing us
how to use his free Mac based imaging software.

I think Al Degutis, publisher of Astrophotoinsight
magazine, did an excellent job of recruiting an out-
standing group of presenters. Each speaker did a
fantastic job and as a whole, they complemented
each other's talks. In addition, the event was very
well organized. Jeff Terry kept the show running on
time. I left the conference Saturday happy and over-
whelmed, in a very positive way, with all that I had
learned. It was a great two days!

Post Script

To complete the wall to wall astronomy experience I
visited the EPOCH star party on Friday and Satur-
day nights. On Friday the seeing was very, very
good and many scopes were welded to Jupiter. The
detail in the cloud belts was striking in the 16" dob,
6" AP Starfire, and 8" TEC Maksutov I visited.

Each night at the star party I had a chance to view
through Al Nagler's prototype 13mm Ethos eye-
piece. Al has been recording comments as people
take their first look. Wow! Is the most used phase
according to Mr. Nagler. The new 13mm was in a
25" reflector pointed at M22 when I got my first peak
at the stars. Yep, I said WOW. And yes, it is sharp to
the edge of the 100 degree field. They should be
here by fall.

Focal Point Publishing Guidelines

The "Focal Point" is published bi-monthly (Jan, March, May,
July, Sept, Nov).

Articles, Announcements, Graphics, Photos, Swap/Sale Ads
etc. should be **submitted 10 days prior to the first of the
month** of the pending issue.

Article inputs are **strongly** recommended via email in a Text or
Word compatible format.

Submit Focal Point inputs to: **MASFocalPoint@yahoo.com**

MAS Officers / Staff

President: Steve Diesso (262) 641-0331
Vice President: Rebecca Sher (262) 707-7478
Treasurer: Brian Ganiere (414) 961-8745
Secretary: Henry Gerner (414) 774-9194
Observatory Dir: Gerry Samolyk (414) 529-9051
Newsletter Ed: Neil Simmons (262) 889-2039
Rebecca Sher (263) 707-7478
MAS Observatory: (not working) (262) 542-9071

MAS Membership is open to anyone interested in enriching their knowledge of Astronomy and related topics.

Yearly Membership Dues:

| | | | |
|---|------|--------------|------|
| Student (under 18) | \$13 | | |
| Resident (Milwaukee and adjacent counties resident) | | Non-resident | |
| Individual | \$31 | Individual | \$19 |
| Family | \$37 | Family | \$23 |

Members can get subscriptions to *Sky & Telescope* (©) and *Astronomy* (©) at a club discount.

For more information contact: Kevin McCarthy, 4180 Verna Drive, Brookfield, WI 53045. Phone: (262) 781-3014. Email: kmccarthy@hydro-flo.com

MAS Merchandise

Looking for something to wear to the Summer Picnic?
Check out: www.cafepress.com/MilwaukeeAstro

Saturday Night Key Holder

On Saturday nights the MAS opens its New Berlin facilities to all its members. If interested in using an observatory on the following nights, the following key holders will be on hand. Please contact them in advance to ensure access.

July

| | | |
|-----------|----------------|--------------|
| 21 | Gerry Samolyk | 414-529-9051 |
| 28 | Paul Borchardt | 262-781-0169 |

August

| | | |
|-----------|----------------------|--------------|
| 4 | Tim Burrus | 262-369-1022 |
| 11 | Steve Diesso | 262-641-0331 |
| 18 | Brian Ganiere | 414-961-8745 |
| 25 | Carlos Garces | 262-786-2623 |

September

| | | |
|-----------|------------------|--------------|
| 1 | Henry Gerner | 414-774-9194 |
| 8 | Chris Hesseltine | 414-482-4515 |
| 15 | Vern Hoag | 262-548-9130 |
| 22 | Tim Hoff | 262-662-2212 |
| 29 | Scott Jamieson | 262-896-0119 |

Loaner Telescopes

These telescopes are available to members for local use.

| | | |
|---------------------------|----------------|---------|
| Scott Jamieson (Waukesha) | (262) 896-0119 | 8" |
| Paul Borchardt (MAS site) | (262) 781-0169 | 6" & 8" |

The Milwaukee Astronomical Society
c/o Rebecca Sher
1418 Trillium Court
West Bend, Wisconsin 53095

ADDRESS CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

