



# Focal Point



May, 2014

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## The Election Meeting

The MAS's election meeting is on Friday May 16<sup>th</sup> at 8:00 PM at the Observatory. Four Board of Director's terms are expiring. Three current Directors are eligible for re-election.



After the Board election, the Directors will elect officers for the coming year (President, Vice-President, Treasurer, Secretary). One does not have to be a Director to serve as an officer. If you are interested in serving a three year term on the Board or a year as an officer, please contact any MAS officer/Director or just come to the Meeting.

## Next Public Night on May 23<sup>rd</sup>

The second public observing night is scheduled for May 23<sup>rd</sup> at 7:30PM. The topic will be **The Red Planet: Mars**. The evening will include a presentation about the topic by Sue Timlin and viewing thru different telescopes. We will collect a parking donation of \$5/vehicle. The event will be held in rain, shine, and starlight. The kind help of MAS members during the night is encouraged and highly appreciated.

2014 Public Observing Nights		
April 25, 19:30	The Giant Planet: Jupiter	Lee Keith
May 23, 19:30	The Red Planet: Mars	Sue Timlin
June 20, 18:00	The Sun	Celeste Keith
August 22, 19:30	The Wonders of Nebulae	Dennis Roscoe
September 12, 19:30	Ice Giants: Uranus and Neptune	Lee Keith
October 3, 19:30	The Moon	Brian Ganiere

## Treasurer's Report

The MAS has spent \$748.77 on WE Energies bill and the Z-scope project.

There was no income.

Currently the checking account balance is at \$5626.63. The Albrecht fund balance 4694.95.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Russell Chabot, Treasurer

## Observatory Director's Report

The well pump needed replacement. The old one was installed 30 years ago so it served us "well" for along time. I've got my 2044 calendar marked. Thanks to Scott the problem with Z-dome was fixed. The bolts holding the sprocket gear to the drive wheel had backed out and were grinding metal out of the vertical supports. Scott bored a hole in the support to tighten the bolts without removing the entire assembly. We, of course, are all bitterly disappointed because we were so looking forward to lifting the dome.

The website registration contact info has now been successfully updated! The yearly fee of \$120 was paid, I wish this to be treated as a donation. Public Night flyer has been added to the website, has been downloaded 75 times. Our Facebook page continues to rise in popularity. Finally, I would like to know if there is any interest in accepting PayPal for dues and donations? The cost would be 2.9% + \$0.30 per transaction. This would mean a \$1.63 fee on a \$46 membership.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Gene Hanson, Observatory Director

## Meeting Minutes

**Held** on April 18<sup>th</sup> at UWM, Physics building. The meeting was called to order at 8:07 PM by President, Scott Jamieson.

**Minutes** from the March General Membership Meeting, were submitted by Agnes Keszler Secretary and read by Tamas Kriska. Were approved as read.

**Treasurer's Report** was read by Treasurer, Russell Chabot. Copy attached.

**Observatory Director's Report** - was read by Gene Hanson Observatory Director. Copy attached.

**Membership Committee** - One membership renewal arrived since the last meeting. Membership applications of David L. Vogel and John Flynn were accepted by the Board of Directors.

**Old Business** - The Z-dome rotation problem was fixed. The well pump was replaced. First Public Night on April 25<sup>th</sup>, work party on 19<sup>th</sup> to prepare the hill.

**New Business** - The draft of Z-scope user's manual was prepared. The well passed the water test. Election Meeting in May, anybody who is interested in running for position should contact the President.

**The Program** - Margaret Turnbull freelance astronomer and visiting professor at UW Madison gave a presentation about search for habitable exoplanets.



The meeting was adjourned at 9:15 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Agnes Keszler, Secretary

## Public Events

### First Public Night on Jupiter

The first public observing night was held on April 25. Topic was the Planet Jupiter. The evening started with a presentation about the topic by Lee Keith. The sky was mostly clear, so guests have a chance to see the Jupiter thru different telescopes. Later in the night the Mars was also on display. We collected \$100 parking donations from 20 cars. About 50 guests attended the event.



*Lee Keith is presenting during the first Public Night on April 25<sup>th</sup>*

### Observatory Tours

It is only May, but we've already hosted a couple of observatory tours. After a boy scout group in early April, we hosted a group of students from UW Waukesha on May 4<sup>th</sup>.

If you're interested in requesting a tour or manning a telescope during tours, please contact our Tour Director, Paul Borchardt [via the web](#), or call him at 262-781-0169.



## Work Party on April 19<sup>th</sup>

A spring work party was held on April 19<sup>th</sup>, with the goal to prepare the Observatory for the Public Night season. The focus was on cleaning and widening of the west parking lot. Six members participated. As it can be seen from the lower photo, we reclaimed a good chunk of the lot from nature. In case of a big turnout it would be easier for the guests to navigate the parking lot.



## MAS Astrophotos in TIME Magazine



*The Rosette nebula, aka NGC 2237 or Caldwell 49, taken from Waukesha, Wisconsin, on January 6, 2014*

In honor of Astronomy Day on May 10<sup>th</sup>, [TIME.com](http://time.com) teamed up with the Astronomical League to publish the umbrella organization's top photographs of the year. And MAS member, Dennis Roscoe's image of the Rosette Nebula is front and center! And in addition, they also published his images of the Orion Nebula and the Pelican Nebula. We congratulate Dennis for this recognition of his excellent work! You can check out Dennis's other astrophotos in his personal website at <http://www.roscoeskeys.com>

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### Wisconsin Observers Weekend 2014

The NEWSTAR Astronomy Club is having a Wisconsin Observing Weekend Campout May 29, 30 & 31, 2014 at Hartman Creek State Park in Waupaca, Wisconsin. They will have many group campsites reserved with over fifty telescopes looking up at the heavens. Check out the website <http://new-star.org> or give me a call if you have any questions. I have been to about a dozen WOW's and it is always a fun time!

Dan Yanko

## In the Astronomical News

### Our Sun has a Sister

The ancient Egyptians called it Ra. The ancient Greeks called it Helios. The ancient Mayans called it Kinich Ahau. The ancient Germans called it Sól.

Our longest-standing and most deeply held myths have so often revolved around the sun in large part because we humans have revolved around the sun. That distant sphere of glowing gas has been, to us fragile creatures, warmth and light and life itself. It has, we now know, been the center of everything we've known. No wonder we've assumed it was divine. Which makes news just coming out of the University of Texas at Austin—soon to be reported in *The Astrophysical Journal*—particularly monumental. Our familiar star, it turns out, is not unique. Our sun has a sibling—a sister-star that almost certainly originated from the same cloud of gas and dust as our own shining orb.

That sibling? A star with the deceptively dull name of HD 162826. Said star is 15 percent more massive than our sun, and located 110 light-years away from us (in the constellation Hercules, which is, appropriately, un-dully named). We can't see the sun's sister unaided, but even a set of low-power binoculars reveals HD 162826 to human eyes. It's situated near the bright star of Vega.

The discovery was made by team of researchers. Using a combination of chemical analysis (high-resolution spectroscopy) and information about the stars' orbits, the team created a list of solar-sibling candidates that included 30 stars. Using information provided by telescopes at both the McDonald Observatory in Texas and the Las Campanas

Observatory in Chile, they narrowed the field. In the end, there was one that matched our sun.

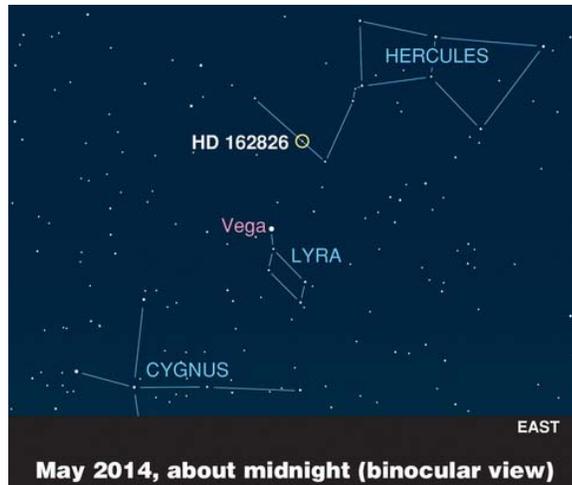
It was a lucky coincidence that HD 162826 emerged as our sun's sibling. As it turns out, HD 162826 has, for the past 15 years, been a subject of study by the McDonald Observatory Planet Search team. Studies conducted by that team, together with calculations provided by the University of New South Wales, mean that we already know a little bit about our sibling-sun's solar system. It doesn't seem to have any "hot Jupiters". It also doesn't seem to have an analog to Jupiter itself.

It may, though, have other, terrestrial planets. And there is a chance that those planets could harbor life. In their earliest days within their birth cluster, he explains, collisions could have knocked chunks off of planets,

and these fragments could have travelled between solar systems, and perhaps even may have been responsible for bringing primitive life to Earth. So it could be argued, that solar siblings are key candidates in the search for extraterrestrial life.

There are lots of candidates. HD 162826 may be the first solar sibling we know of, but it is not alone in that. The idea is that the Sun was born in a cluster with a thousand or a hundred thousand stars. And that cluster, which formed more than 4.5 billion years ago, has long ago broken up, with member stars situating themselves into their own orbits around the galactic center—which in turn scattered them across the Milky Way as it exists today. A few, like HD 162826, are still nearby,, others are much farther afield.

by Megan Garber  
The Atlantic



## Adopt a Telescope Program - Signup Sheet

	<b>Adoptee</b>	<b>Scope</b>	<b>Location</b>
<b>1</b>	Sue Timlin	18" F/4.5 Obsession	Wiesen Observatory
<b>2</b>	Neil Simmons	12.5" F/7.4 Buckstaff	B Dome
<b>3</b>	Russell Chabot	12.5" F/9 Halbach	A Dome (Armfield)
<b>4</b>	Dan Yanko	18" F/4.5 Obsession (Kyle Baron)	Albrecht Observatory
<b>5</b>	Tamas Kriska	25" F/3.4 Zemlock	Z Dome
<b>6</b>	Henry Gerner	12" LX 200	Tangney Observatory
<b>7</b>	Jeffrey Fillian	14" Z-Two scope	Ray Zit Observatory
<b>8</b>	<b>Vacant</b>	<b>10" LX 200</b>	<b>Jim Toeller Observatory</b>

### At Your Service

#### Officers / Staff

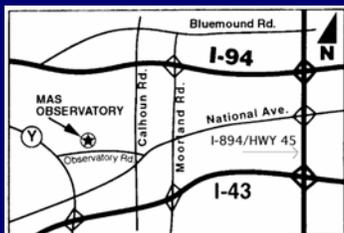
President	Scott Jamieson	262-592-3049
Vice President	Brian Ganiere	414-961-8745
Treasurer	Russell Chabot	414-881-3822
Secretary	Agnes Keszler	414-581-7031
Observatory Director	Gene Hanson	262-354-0138
Asst. Observatory Director	Jill Roberts	414-587-9422
Newsletter Editor	Tamas Kriska	414-581-3623
Webmaster	Robert Burgess	920-559-7472

#### Board of Directors

Robert Burgess	920-559-7472
Russell Chabot	414-881-3822
John Hammetter	414-519-1958
Gene Hanson	262-354-0138
Lee Keith	414-425-2331
Agnes Keszler	414-581-7031
Tamas Kriska	414-581-3623
Neil Simmons	262-889-2039
Michael Smiley	262-825-3981
Sue Timlin	414-460-4886
Dan Yanko	262-255-3482

#### May/June Key Holders

5/17	Tim Hoff	262-662-2212
5/24	Lee Keith	414-425-2331
5/31	Henry Gerner	414-774-9194
6/7	Tom Schmidtkunz	414-352-1674
6/14	Mike Smiley	262-825-3981
6/21	Tom Schmidtkunz	414-352-1674



#### MAS Observatory

18850 Observatory Rd  
New Berlin, WI

[www.milwaukeeastro.org](http://www.milwaukeeastro.org)