

MAS Member Guide

Preface

This guide is for the members of the Milwaukee Astronomical Society (MAS) and especially the newer members. Here we will provide information about the club: the Focal Point newsletter, the website, history, location, basic information, meetings, organizational structure, Member's Night, and the MAS newsgroup.



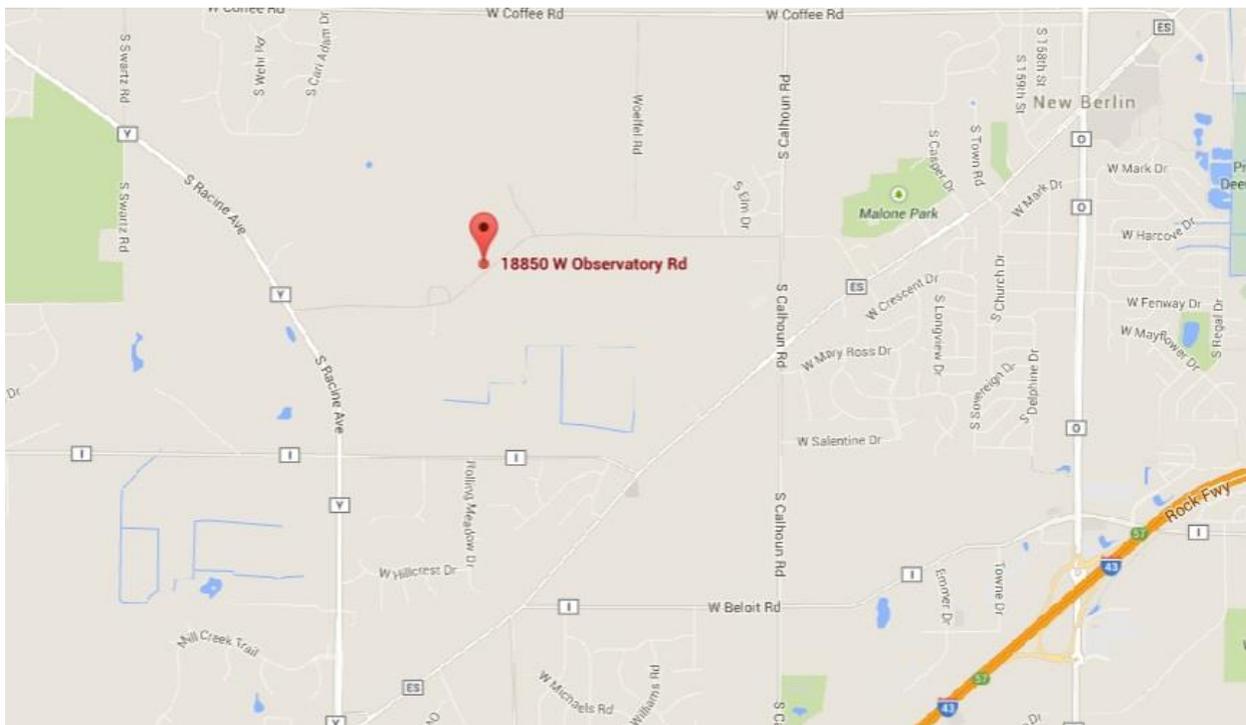
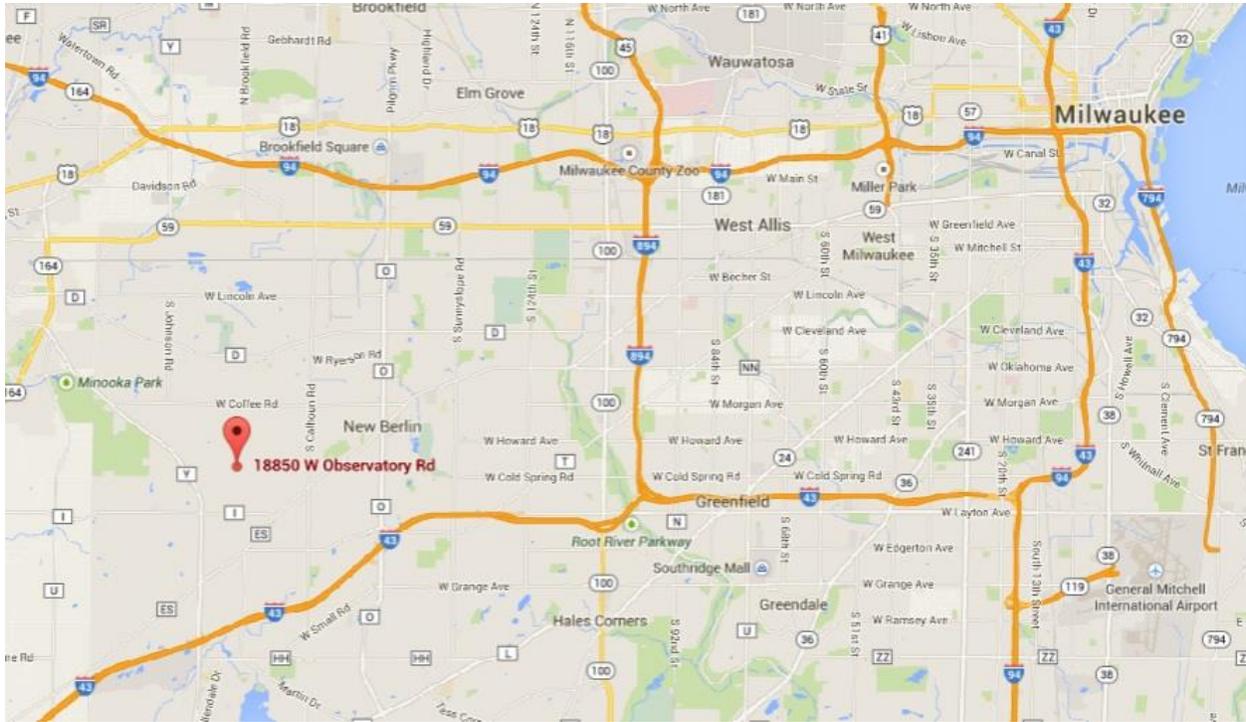
This member guide should be read in conjunction with the Observatory Manual. You can find that on our website at: www.milwaukeeastro.org/Documents/Observatory_Manual.pdf

Also, this guide is updated from time to time. The most up to date version can be found on our website at: www.milwaukeeastro.org/Documents/Member_Guide.pdf

Last Updated: 09/01/2023

Location

The Milwaukee Astronomical Society Observatory which is the heart of our organization is located at 18850 W Observatory Road in New Berlin. At the time of dedication the path to the observatory was a dirt road for the most part and it was named later (date unknown) for our observatory.



The location was selected because it was on a hilltop, remote enough to offer very dark skies, yet not too far away to be inaccessible. Over the years, however, our site has suffered because of the encroaching development.



Aerial view of our observatory and property.

To learn more about our observatory we have a companion document called the Observatory Manual. https://milwaukeeastro.org/Documents/Observatory_Manual.pdf

Focal Point

The Focal Point is the newsletter of the Milwaukee Astronomical Society. It dates back to 1983. Before that, the newsletter was called the Double Dome because of the two domed observatories (Armfield and Buckstaff) on the grounds. After the Z Dome was built it necessitated a name change.



MILWAUKEE ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY

FOCAL POINT

August, 2017

Next Meeting on September 11th

The Milwaukee Astronomical Society will hold its next meeting on **Monday, September 11th, from 7 PM at the Observatory**. This is going to be a combined Board/Membership Meeting.

During the first hour organizational and Observatory related issues will be discussed. During the second hour members will share their experiences of the solar eclipse of August 21st. The single shot image to the left was taken by Derek Rickert at St. Francois State Park, MO. Find more pictures of the eclipse on pages 3-4.

As always, the Observatory is open on Saturday nights, and also when it is posted on the Google Group.

Inside this

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Traditionally, the Focal Point has been the lifeblood of the club being the central repository of information and ongoing updates as to the activities of the club. It is often published monthly, but depending on the activity may only be every other month. We are extremely proud of our newsletter and feel it is one of the finest of any astronomy club. The newsletter is distributed to the membership via email and also published on the club website where you can also find and search newsletters going back to 1958. We also have newsletters from 1935-1938. For some unknown reason, there was no newsletter published between 1939 and 1958.

If you're looking for meeting times and places and the contact information for the Saturday member's night at the observatory, you can find it here.

Website

The website of the club is www.milwaukeeastro.org. Along with the Focal Point newsletter, it is the place to get current information, announcements, and activities. It is also the repository of club information and documents such as this one.

As a member of the club, you should be aware the home page of the site is not geared toward our membership. It is the public face of our club so the information there is aimed at visitors and hopefully new members. If you're a member of the club, your "home" page on the website can be found at: www.milwaukeeastro.org/members.asp You can enter this URL directly, but from any website page you can "click" on the "Members" on the top banner.



The screenshot shows a web browser window with the URL <https://www.milwaukeeastro.org/members.asp>. The page features a header with the Milwaukee Astronomical Society logo and a navigation menu with options: Home, About, Join, Members (highlighted with a yellow circle), Observatory, Showcase, and Beginners. Below the navigation is a large banner image of the observatory buildings. The main content area is titled "Milwaukee Astronomical Society Members Page" and includes a sub-header: "The MAS Member's page is a private page geared toward the information most of interest to the membership plus private content." The page is divided into three columns: "Meetings", "Events / Announcements", and "Focal Point Newsletter".

Meetings

General Meeting Our next General Meeting will be on February 20th at the [Observatory](#) at 8PM. The Board meets at 7PM.

First Wednesday Meeting
March 1st, 7:00PM at the observatory. Topics: TBD

Imaging Interest Group
March 8th at 7:00PM via Zoom.

Events / Announcements

Open House Schedule We have established the schedule for 2023. Our first event will be on May 12th. As always, we need help from our membership.

Renew Your Membership!
It's that time the year to renew your MAS Membership.
[Click here](#) to go to the renewal page.

[Click here](#) to check whether you are on the list of members who have already renewed.

Focal Point Newsletter

[December/January Focal Point](#)
[October/November Focal Point](#)
[September Focal Point](#)
[August Focal Point](#)
[July Focal Point](#)
[June Focal Point](#)
[May Focal Point](#)
[April Focal Point](#)
[March Focal Point](#)
[February Focal Point](#)

Note this is a "private" page that can only be viewed by our members and you have to be logged in. You'll find logging on instructions in the next section.

The top boxes always contain the latest information about the upcoming meetings, events, and announcements. And there is a link to the most recent Focal Point newsletters.

Calendars for 2022

Member's Page

Observing Info

Showcase

MAS Events Calendar

MAS Documents

Presentations/Workshop

Processing Files

MAS History

Awards

MAS Appare

New MAS Members

Renew Membership

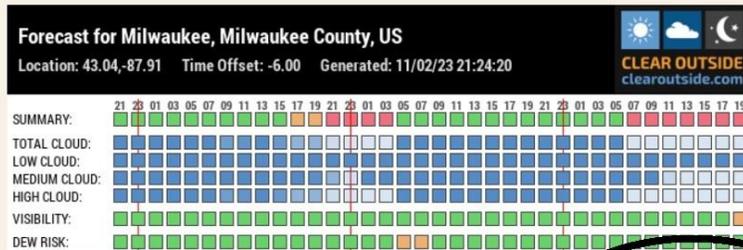
AL Membership

Donate to MAS

<< Jan Feb Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sep Oct Nov Dec >>

September 2022

Date	Day	Event	Keyholder
Sep 3	Sat		Jeff Kraehnke 414-333-4656
Sep 7	Wed	Event: 7:30PM - First Wednesday How To Meeting at the Observatory	
Sep 10	Sat		Matt Ryno 414-248-1455
Sep 14	Wed	Event: Imaging Interest Group Meeting at 7:00PM - Via Zoom.	
Sep 16	Fri	Public Night: 6:30PM - 9:30PM - Note: we need help for this event from our members!	
Sep 17	Sat		Lee Keith 414-425-2331
Sep 19	Mon	Board Meeting: 7:00PM - At the Observatory Membership Meeting: 8:00PM - At the Observatory	
Sep 24	Sat		Matt Ryno 414-248-1455



Showcase

What's New

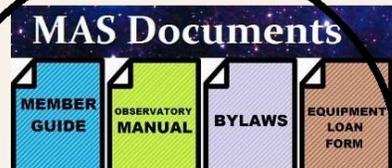
Solar
Lunar
Planets
Globular
Open

Nebulae
Galaxies
Planetary
Comets
Wide Field
Other



Sky Chart

Solar Activity
Artificial Satellites
Meteor Showers
Dark Observing Sites



Member Guide
Observatory Manual
Saturday Members Night
MAS Events Calendar
Articles of Organization
Equipment Loan Form

FAQ Variables Articles History Stargazing ObsInfo Misc Site Map

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Toward the bottom of the Members Page you will find a left banner with links we deem most of interest to the membership and of course these can change over time. For example, the document you are reading can be found under "MAS Documents." You can also find it at the bottom right where you can directly go to individual documents.

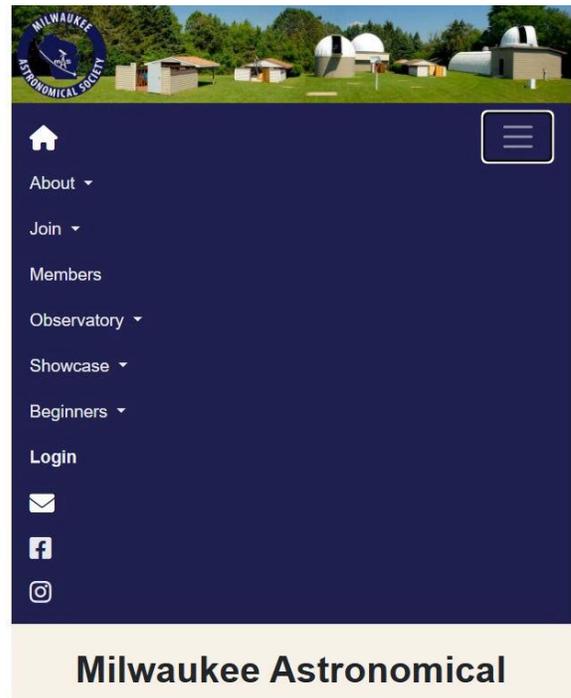
You will also find a copy of the MAS calendar of events for any given month. By default, the current month will be shown, but you may select past or future months as well. You will find more information on the column marked "Keyholder" later in this document.

Logging In

You can sign on from any page on the website.



On a larger screen (like a desktop, laptop, or tablet) at the right of the top menu bar you simply click/tap on **Login**.



On a cellphone you'll see the above views. At the top of every page on the website to the right you'll see the 3 vertical lines which is the icon for a menu. Tap on that and you'll see the screen at the right. Then two-thirds down at the left you then tap on the **Login**.

You'll then see the screen at the right. Your email that you have registered with the MAS is your user id. Your password must be at least 6 characters. If it's the first time you're logging on, near the bottom click/tap on the **First Time Users – To set your password**. A temporary password will be emailed to you. Typically users will want to change that password, but you are free to use the one given. At the bottom you see the **Change Password**. Then hit Submit and you'll see your profile:

A screenshot of the login page for the Milwaukee Astronomical Society. The title is "Milwaukee Astronomical Society - Login". It has a "Sign In" section with an "Email:" label and a text input field containing the placeholder "Enter your Email address *". Below that is a "Password:" label and a text input field containing the placeholder "Enter your Password". There is a checkbox labeled "Show Password" and a blue "Submit" button. At the bottom, there are three links: "First Time Users - To set your password.", "Change Password", and "Forgot Password".

Welcome, Joe Sample

Your Email: joesample@email.com

If you need your email changed, please contact the [Membership Director](#).

If any of the information below needs updating, correct the necessary fields and hit the Save Profile button.

Title:	First Name:	Last Name:
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text" value="Joe"/>	<input type="text" value="Sample"/>

Address:

City:	State:	Zip Code:	Phone:
<input type="text" value="Anytown"/>	<input type="text" value="US"/>	<input type="text" value="99999"/>	<input type="text" value="999-999-9999"/>

Email - Family Member 2:

First Name 2:	Last Name 2:
<input type="text" value="Jill"/>	<input type="text" value="Sample"/>

Email - Family Member 3:

First Name 3:	Last Name 3:
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

Email - Family Member 4:

	Last Name 4:
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

Google Group:	Focal Point:	AstroPhotography:
<input type="text" value="All Email"/>	<input type="text" value="Yes"/>	<input type="text" value="Yes"/>

Hit the Save Profile button to write the changes.

[Save Profile](#)

Other Database Fields *

Member Type: R	Family Membership: F	Imager Code:
Member Since: 2019/5	Board Member: N	Expiration Date: 12/31/2023

Change Password

Logoff

* These fields are set by automated or manual processes.

Member Type: R = Regular, S = Student/Youth, N = Non-Resident, F = Founder, H = Honorary

Member Since: YYYY/MM when you joined the MAS

Family Membership: F = Family, N = Individual

Board Member: Y/N - Y means on the Board or an Officer.

Expiration Date: When your membership expires.

Imager Code: Your imager / processor code for the MAS Showcase. Currently assigned by the webmaster.

Your profile shows you the information we have for you. The fields that are fillable are available for you to edit / update. The other information is not available to edit. If you have any question about the information and feel anything's wrong, contact the Membership Director.

Please note that you can change your delivery of our Google Group emails, but keep in mind this is a manual process for us so it can take a day or two for it to be updated. The Focal Point delivery is simply a yes/no. If you don't want to receive a copy of it emailed, it's always available from the website.

The sample profile we're showing is for someone with a Family membership. It differs from an Individual in that it has entry spaces for up to 3 additional family members where they can have their own login.

One important field you cannot change yourself is your email address because that's the index key into the Membership Database. You will need to contact either the Webmaster or the Membership Director.

Meetings

There are monthly meetings of the MAS Board throughout the year. The general membership meetings occur monthly from September through May, almost always on Friday night at 8:00PM. On those nights the board meets at 7:00PM. The general membership may attend the board portion of the meetings, but have no voting privileges.

The general membership meetings are divided into two sections: (1) official business of the club including reading of the minutes, announcements, and any votes, and (2) an astronomical presentation by a guest speaker or by someone from the club. The social part of the meeting occurs after the presentation.

The meetings are held in the Quonset at the Observatory throughout the year, unless the observatory is inaccessible because of heavy snow.

Often we do not have a formal December meeting, but, instead, a Holiday Christmas Party is held at the observatory. In the summer (normally in July) we hold a picnic on the observatory grounds.

To find exact time and location of the meetings, refer to either the Focal Point or the website.

Organization

The organization structure of the club is similar to many other clubs. We are non-profit 509(a) (2) corporation. The club has a President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer who are elected yearly for one-year terms by the MAS board of directors. Members of the board are elected by the membership and have 3-year terms. The Observatory Director is elected by the board for a 3 year term.

We have three active committees: Membership headed by the Membership Director, the Observatory generally headed by the Observatory Director, and the Open House which establishes and runs the open house events. Committees can be formed as necessary, but it's entirely a function of the participation of the membership.

Full information on our organization can be found in our Bylaws. You may find them in the Documents section of the Members Page or directly at the following URL:

www.milwaukeeastro.org/documents/bylaws.pdf

But this is strictly the “formal” organization. It cannot be stressed enough that the real club is its members and what they make of the organization.

MAS Newsgroup

As a member of the MAS, you may participate in the MAS Newsgroup which runs as a Google Group called "milwaukeeastro." Though participation is optional, we highly encourage our members to at least subscribe so you can read the messages. Many announcements are made there including last minute announcements about meetings and events.

To join the MAS Newsgroup you can send an email to the administrators of the group at the address: newsgroup@milwaukeeastro.org. Alternatively, you can also do this through your user profile on the website.

During the yearly renewal process, there is a section that also allows you to sign up or sign out of the Google Group.

There are currently 4 levels in the group: All Email, No Email, Abridged, and Digest. Note these are dictated by Google.

All Email - You get an email for every message sent to the group. This is the default.

No Email - You will get no messages delivered to your mailbox. However, you can as a member look up posted messages if you create a Google Group ID with your email address.

Abridged - You receive updates as a single email summary of new activity -- including messages from users and administrators -- per day. While you can see the sender, subject and a brief summary with abridged emails, to see the full content you would have to logon with a Google Group ID or change the delivery mode to All Email or Digest.

Digest - This allows the full content of up to 25 messages in a single email per day and you will see all of the content including all texts and images from the group. If it happens that there are more than 25 new messages in a single day, you will receive multiple digests.

If you want to change your delivery of these messages, there are two methods. The first is through your profile which can be accessed from the Profile Icon in the top menu bar. The other method is to email your request to: newsgroup@milwaukeeastro.org. In either method it's a manual process and a administrator will need to perform this action by logging into our Google Group and making the requested change.

If you wish to send a message to everyone in the MAS Google Group, use the following email address:

milwaukeeastro@googlegroups.com

Note: this email may only be used if you are in the Google Group. So it won't work if you give it out or even try using one of your own alternate emails if you have any. The email must be the one registered with the MAS.

Saturday Member's Night

A significant benefit of membership is our Saturday Member's Night. Though our observatory is technically open every night of the year, your access is limited unless you are a keyholder. But on Saturday evenings the observatory is specifically opened by one of the full keyholders for the exclusive use of the non-keyholders of the club.

On a rotating basis, our full key holders are assigned these Saturday nights and they will be your host. It's their responsibility to open the observatory and offer member in attendance on the proper use of the telescopes and be able to answer questions about our hobby.

All the Saturday hosts currently know how to operate the following equipment:

- A-dome/A-scope.
- B-dome/B-scope.
- The 10-inch GOTO LX-200 in the Z2/E-Shed roll off.
- The two 18" Obsession Dobsonian Telescopes.
- Solar Scope.
- eVscope

Many of our Saturday hosts know substantially more than the operation of this equipment, but at a minimum, you can expect your host to be able to help you operate any of the above equipment.

Hosts will communicate to the members through the Google group what time the Observatory will be open, weather conditions to expect, and the Moon phase. Look for this posting as early as Friday evening and no later than early Saturday afternoon. Hosts will also post their email address and phone number so you can contact them directly.

A host will be at the observatory on every Saturday, clear or cloudy. On clear nights the host can be expected to be at the Observatory all evening, but on cloudy nights the host will only be on site for about an hour after sunset unless members show up for training. If you would like to come out to the Observatory later than these times you will need to communicate either by phone or email with the evenings host as to what your needs are. It is also a great help to the host if you let them know approximately when you're planning on coming out that evening.

Telescope, Camera, and Accessories Purchase Advice

One fantastic benefit to MAS membership is the opportunity to get purchasing advice from our members who are experienced amateur astronomers. This is especially great for those considering buying a telescope. We generally discourage our members from going out and buying a telescope right away because we can help. These purchase considerations will probably be overwhelming as there seem to be so many choices at so many different prices. This is normal! We have members who will be happy to offer advice, and especially they will ask you critical questions of what you plan to specifically use the equipment for.

Access to these members can happen at all MAS events, especially our meetings and the Saturday Night Member's night. But you can also get advice by participation in our MAS Newsgroup.

Finally, another great resource is our extensive observatory. We have a lot of equipment that you can use which will also help you in your purchasing decisions¹

Understanding The Universe

Making useful scientific contributions has been a part of the MAS from its origins. From direct research to gathering data for professional astronomers doing research. We have been doing variable stars for the American Association of Variable Star Observers (AAVSO) from the outset. And through the years we've done satellite observing, lunar and asteroid occultations, and lunar grazing occultations.

Why would you want to do scientifically useful observations? Almost everyone who gives this a try does it for very honorable intentions: they want to make the contribution and think they are willing to put in the work. But no one really continues this type of work if they don't find it fun! After all, this is our hobby. No one really knows ahead of time if they're going to get great satisfaction without trying it first.

And through the years the MAS has had many members that have found this fun. In fact, our club can boast of more amateur astronomy awards for doing scientific work than any organization in the United States.

MAS – The Social Club

One of the best reasons for being a member is that above all else we are a social club! We have a variety of activities. We have our monthly meetings, our Saturday Member's Night observing, ad hoc observing sessions at the observatory as announced on our Google Group, our Open House nights, monthly First Wednesday How To get togethers at the observatory, a yearly Christmas party held in the Quonset, and a yearly Summer picnic at the observatory. Usually we have a summer campout. Also, we do have one or two work parties at the observatory.



MAS – Open House Nights

During the late Spring to early Fall, the MAS hosts 5-7 Open House Nights. It is our main public outreach activity.



The schedule for the year's Open Houses can always be found on our website. We always begin while it is still daylight to offer our visitors the chance to tour the facilities. Then there is a presentation in the Quonset given by one of our members. (We are always looking for members to give a presentation!)



Then when darkness comes (assuming clear enough weather) we then have viewing through our telescopes and through telescopes brought by our members. We also point out sights in the sky (bright stars, constellations, asterisms, etc.) and answer any questions of our visitors. We will remain open while there are visitors still interested in viewing. Many of our new members have attended an Open House before joining.

How You Can Help

We are always looking for volunteers for the Open Houses, especially when we have clear weather. You do not have to be an expert in astronomy. We simply need members who are happy to answer questions and/or show visitors "stuff" in the telescopes. We encourage our members to bring out their own scopes. It doesn't need to be a large scope! In fact, it's great to show people that even a small telescope can show some amazing sights.