

FOCAL POINT



Newsletter for the

Milwaukee Astronomical Society

November 1989

From The Editors

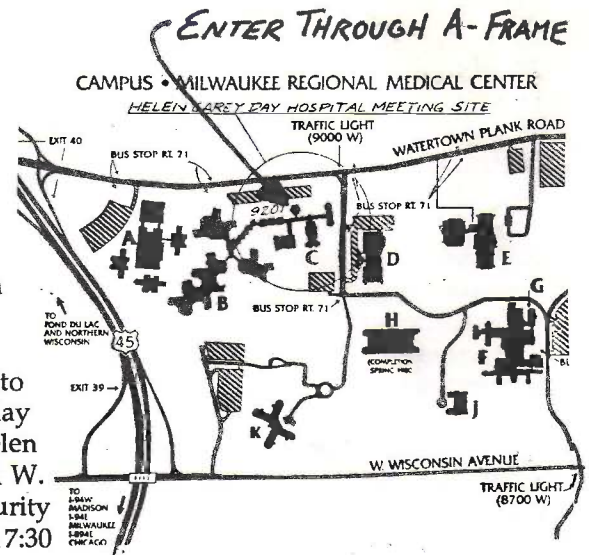
The November issue of the Focal Point is dedicated to two couples who have served MAS with distinction and dedication for many years. We thank Leroy and Florence Simandl and James and Elaine Toeller for all their efforts in the service of MAS.

- Matthew McNeeley & Tom Gill

November Program-Meeting

Dr. Larry Browning, MAS member and member of the Marquette University Physics department, will be the presenter at this month's meeting. His talk will focus on the excitement generated and the information gleaned from the recent Voyager Mission to Neptune. Dr. Browning's will lecture and present a video on this startlingly beautiful planet.

All members and guests are invited to attend. The meeting is held on Friday November 17, 8:00 pm at the Helen Carey Day Hospital Building, 9201 W. Watertown Plank Road. For security reasons, the entrance is open from 7:30 to 8:15pm ONLY. Hope to see you there.



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Calendar of Events

November 13	Board Meeting at Dr. Richard Wiesen's House Full Beaver Moon
November 17	Program-Meeting Leonids Meteor Shower (peak 15/hr)
November 24	Deadline for Focal Point
November 28	New Moon
December 6	First Wednesday Meeting at the Observatory

Annual Banquet:

A Tribute and A Martian Chronicle

The Brittany Room of the Boulevard Inn was again the scene for this year's annual banquet. Following cocktails and the usual fine dinner, two distinguished members were recognized for their years of service. On behalf of it's members, the MAS Board bestowed plaques of appreciation to Leroy Simandl for completing 20 years of service as Focal Point Editor (to be presented at a future meeting since Leroy was unable to attend) and James Toeller for his many endeavors including that of former Treasurer for the past ten years.

The guest speaker for the evening was Dr. Donald Parker, coordinator for the A.L.P.O. Mars Watch for 1988. With humor and knowledge, Dr. Parker stressed that the planet Mars has intrigued viewers from the ancients to the astronauts. While the ancients viewed this ruddy planet as a symbol of war and carnage, today's amateur astronomer is more content to observe polar ice caps, clouds and dust storms. The latter are critical as they present danger to any visiting space craft, while the former show potential for life sustenance. These phenomena are monitored closely and the data is useful when considering future Earth flight to Mars.

Telescope Cloning Class

Once again, MAS member Peter Smitka is offering to conduct a telescope cloning (making) class. Here is an excellent opportunity to build and own a quality 6" or 8" telescope. Cost of the scope is approximately \$350 for the 6 inch and \$500 for the eight inch.

If interested please call Peter Smitka at 546-4546. The class is limited to 10 people and is scheduled to begin in January if enough members are interested.

Program Director Needed

With the movement of Matthew McNeeley to the Focal Point, there is now an opening as Program Director. The responsibility of the Director is to secure guest speakers for the September to May monthly meetings. Also, the Director coordinates the Annual Fall Banquet and the Spring Field Trip.

It is a position in which you can have a positive input on the society. If you are interested, please call President Richard Wiesen at 781-4786.

Help Choose Lunar Base Location

Ed Cordes, ANASA/USRA Lecturer & Instructional Specialist, needs input in selecting a location for a future lunar base he is designing as part of a government contract through the UWM Center for Architecture and Urban Planning Research. Call him at 771-8113 or 229-6165 if you would like to get involved.

Leave the Pantyhose Home--Again!

Dorothy Kube's article "Don't Pack the Pantyhose"—appeared in a past issue and was her account of the Southern Cross Astronomical Society's Winter Star Party held each year in the Florida Keys. It's that time of the year again!

Here's a chance to observe from a 24.4 degree latitude and enjoy Eta Carina, the Coal Sack, the Southern Cross, Jewel Box Cluster, Omega Cenauri and many other wonders not observable from our northern location.

If you are interested in more information, contact Dorothy or Jim Kube.

Kudos Corner

This past summer has been busy for several of our members because a record number of Messier Certificates have been awarded this fall. On behalf of the entire MAS membership I'd like to congratulate the following people on earning their Messier Certificates! Honorary Certificates include the new Messier pin (number shows objects required).

Certificate (70)

Lana Silke
Dr. Michael Wolkomir

Honorary (107)

Dorothy Kube
Jim Kube
Sally Waraczynski

As a reminder to observers, the MAS offers the Messier Club Observers Handbook or the new Burnham Club Observers Handbook. Send a 8.5" X 11" SASE with \$1 postage to Lee Keith, MAS Observing Clubs Coordinator, 1239 B E. Randolph Ct., Milwaukee, WI 53212. They contain a wealth of information on observing techniques and hints, as well as detailed maps to find the more elusive objects. Best of all, they're FREE!

New Members

The following new members were recently announced by the MAS Board.

Philip M. Edwards and family:
Linda, Scott and Adam
- *Hales Corners*

Patrick Philipp - *Wauwatosa*

Keith Powers - *Greenfield*

The Society extends a big welcome!

And the newest of the new...

Lindsay Marie Zedra, born to Diantha and Nolan Zedra. 8 lb., 8 oz. on October 23rd, 1989. Nolan noted that Jupiter was near the zenith at the big moment, a similar planetary configuration as when his first child, Andrew was born.

Library News

In the News Notes section of the October issue of SKY & TELESCOPE, we read about the peculiar spiral galaxy NGC 3067 and a possible material link with quasar 3C232. With incredibly good timing, the library now offers: Quasars, Redshifts, and Controversies by Halton C. Arp, 1987.

Based on over two decades of observations, Arp has concluded that the redshifting exhibited in quasar spectra does not reflect cosmological distance. Rather, he maintains that the evidence suggests quasars (and other objects) have been violently ejected from the relatively nearby galaxies with which they are closely aligned.

The view currently in favor is that quasars are indeed very far away and may represent the earliest galaxies just turning on. Gravitational lensing and pure chance explain the apparent associations with low-redshift galaxies according to conventional wisdom.

Much more work remains to be done on this cosmological puzzle. What this book points out, in its own biased way, is that politics often prevent unbiased research.

Dan Koehler has donated a slide series depicting the August 16, 1989 lunar eclipse. Also added recently to the MAS "History Section" are a few mementoes of the August campout, eclipse night and an Open House.

- Sally Waraczynski

December Grazing Occultations

After a few years of little activity we have the opportunity to observe three lunar grazing occultations next month. We plan a cable expedition for the following events.

On Monday evening, Dec. 4th, the 7.0 magnitude star 37 AQR will graze the limb so it will be observable in a relatively small (4") telescope. The cable will be laid on Hwy. V in Kenosha county and we will be joined by Chicago area observers. Let me know if you need information on this graze as soon as possible since it will occur before the December meeting.

A more challenging graze will occur on Monday morning, December 11. The 4.0 magnitude star is 28 TAU, a member of the M-45 star cluster. This bright star will look faint against the 97% sunlit Moon even though the cusp angle is 8 degrees into the dark limb. At least a 6" scope will be needed to see this one and the highest magnification possible will help separate the star from the Moon. We will set up near North Lake.

Our last December graze is of the 6.3 magnitude star SAO 118825 in Leo. We'll set up on Tuesday morning, December 19th north of Union Grove. The Moon will be 55% lit but with a cusp angle of over 15 degrees there should be no problem seeing this one.

All of the portable telescopes at the observatory are available for use at these expeditions.

-Gerry Samolyk



MAS INFORMATION

MAS OFFICERS

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MAS Observations Summary September 1988- August 1989 (part 2)

Part one appeared in the October issue of the Focal Point.

Asteroids - The following observers made attempts to record occultations of stars by asteroids. No positive results were obtained last year. L. Keith - 1; G. Smolyk - 1; S. Waraczynski.

A close encounter of 4 Vesta with SAO185928 was observed. Using the MAS filar micrometer, 16 measurements by Samolyk were made to record the event. The time and distance of the close approach will be calculated for this data.

Mars - As the year began, Mars was near opposition. One MAS observer, J. Pfannerstill was credited with the co-discovery of a new linear surface feature named Valahalla. He also submitted 7 drawings and 6 photos to A.L.P.O. Many others made visual and photographic observations but I have not received any reports.

Jupiter - T. Ross continues this observations and last year reported 55 meridian timings of atmospheric features and one satellite eclipse timing. Included with these observations are a number of strip sketches of Jupiter.

Saturn - On the morning of July 3rd, 1989, the MAS observed a rare occultation of 28 SGR by Saturn. The event was recorded on video tape by G. Cieslak with assistance from Ross, Smolyk, V. Tangney, Sally and Ken Waraczynski. This contains 58 timings of contacts with the rings and atmosphere. Others are still reducing their observations.

Variable Stars - Two observers reported 291 observations of variables, primarily for the Hipparcos satellite program. C. Hesseltine (13) and G. Samolyk (278). Samolyk observed 171 minima of Eclipsing Binary stars and 8 maxima of RR LYR stars. A total of 2956 observations were made in the effort.

- Gerry Samolyk.

Saturday Nite Keyholders

November 11	Gerry Samolyk 475-9418
November 18	Tom Schmidt-kunz 784-0253
November 25	Peter Smitka 785-0926
December 2	Virgil Tangney 327-7976
December 9	Jim Toeller 352-7144
December 16	Richard Wiesen 781-4786
December 23	John Aztatlos 774-5418
December 30	Paul Borchardt 781-0169

Reminder--Dues are Due!