



The Newsletter of the Milwaukee Astronomical Society

November 1997

October Campout was a Great Success!!

The MAS Campout/Star Party (Oct. 3rd & 4th) at the Kettle Moraine Greenbush group campsite was a very successful event with a turnout of over 20 participants between Friday and Saturday. There were at least a dozen tents on one site and another dozen telescopes set up on the adjoining site. Paul Borchardt brought the Doc Weissen 18" Obsession Telescope as well as his superb 12" Portaball. Dan Yanko brought one of the clubs 10" portascopes that he and his friend Al Babiak used to find some Messier objects. All we needed were clear skies.....and Wow!!...what a clear and warm evening we had on Friday night. It was 70 degrees at 11PM with one of the darkest skies the writer has seen in a long time.

The planets Jupiter and Saturn were at their finest. We moved on to the the Trifid (M20) Nebula, the Lagoon (M8) Nebula, and the Ring (M57) Nebula in the constellation Lyra. The only bobble in this lovely night was the wind occasionally causing some tracking problems.....but there was nary a drop of dew in the entire State of Wisconsin this eve! Rather than attempt to list all the attendees (and undoubtedly miss someone) at this great weekend event, we list the unique...Celeste Keith (Daughter of Lee And Karen) took the youngest stargazer award. Representing the non human species Brian Ganieres dog guarded the premises....but stargazing skills are unknown

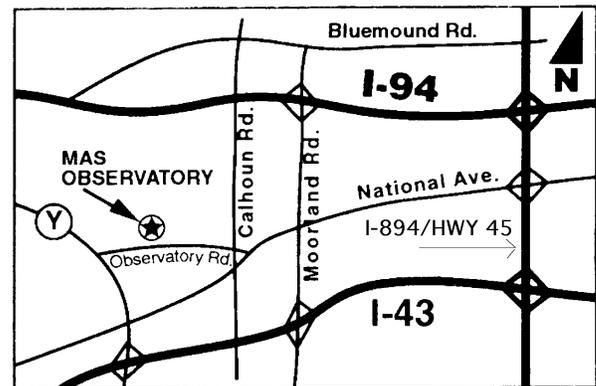
Saturday was a great day to hike amongst the fall colors with super hiking trails in the Kettle Moraine. The night, while cooler, was again superb viewing with the biggest turnout this eve. The Milky Way was aglow and Andromeda galaxy was superb. Again, the chase was on and another raft of deep sky objects were pursued with zeal into the wee morning hours. capping off a grand weekend.

Thanks to all who came. Spread the word how much fun this was and we'll do it again next Spring - Dan Yanko

Ed's Note: In a separate call, Paul Borchardt expressed his appreciation of Dan Yanko's help in making this campout a success.

MAS stays with League

After considerable discussion and debate, the MAS board voted (10 to 2) to retain the society's membership in the Astronomical League, with the consensus being that national representation of the collective societies is needed .



Next Meeting Fri. Nov. 21, 1997

The Regular membership meeting will be at the Observatory (see above map) on Nov.21st at 8:00PM. Our speaker will again be Robert Naeye, Associate Editor of Astronomy Magazine. Robert gave excellent talk to us in October with a very comprehensive summary of the Hubble Space telescope findings. This time he will give us an **update on extra solar planet work and will also discuss the very latest Hubble photos** and their implications. This is the last formal meeting of the year so you have one more chance for an excellent talk and astronomy fellowship.

The Board meeting will precede the general membership meeting at 7:00 pm. Board member attendance is requested and all other interested parties are welcome.

For future reference, the December meeting is an informal holiday get together usually at a food /pub type establishment (time & place to be published in the Dec. issue of FP). Also starting in January 1998 (thru April) we will be trying UWM as a trial meeting site (see From the Observatory Director ,Page 2).

Other November Events

November 5 -First Wednesday Meeting 7:30PM

Held at the observatory. Gerry Samolyk emphasizes this is an open forum meeting. Bring your questions & requests along . Want to learn how to use A or B scope? Having trouble using a finder? Whats a Lunar graze & where does the data go?... etc. Gerry will try to address all queries.

From the Observatory Director

The following are excerpted reports/actions made by Gerry Samolyk , Observatory Director, at the Oct. 17 board meeting.

***Z Scope Progress** Gerry reported that phase 1 of the Z scope renovation is essentially done . This involved the installation of stepper drive motors on both axes (with associated electronics in a downstairs enclosure) and a paddle controller providing digital slew of both axes at selected speeds. Phase 2 is underway with optical encoders installed on both axes with the angle readout and display under development.

***1998 Meeting Site Change.** Gerry had proposed, and the board approved, of moving the club's monthly meetings, during the months of Jan. thru April (1998) to the UWM Physics Dept lecture hall as a trial balloon.. This hall is adjacent to the UWM Planetarium, which also happens to have shows on Friday nites, and may be more conducive to staff, student and Planetarium attendees participation in our club. The lecture hall also provides a nicer forum (and projection equipments) for the type of Astronomy talks our society has been known to hold.

***Project Pluto Software**

Project Pluto is a star chart/catalogue that is slated to become the resident data base in the Z scope computer. Several members have requested info on purchasing copies for their own use. Proj. Pluto's most recent ad is on page 116 of the Nov. issue of Sky and Telescope. For those who do not receive S&T, you can contact Project Pluto as follows:

Bill Gray, Project Pluto

168 Ridge Road

Bowdoinham ME 04008

Phone: (207) 666-5750 Fax: (207) 666-5886

(800) 777-5886 Internet: pluto@projectpluto.com

Library News

1. Yerkes Observatory: 1892-1950, The Birth, Near Death, and Resurrection of a Scientific Institution, Donald e. Osterbrock-1997. Even grand scientific ventures need to be directed by people, sometimes misdirected by politics, but hopefully become integral to scientific discovery as Yerkes Observatory has been to the history of Astronomy. (signed by the author for the MAS library).

2. Astrophotography II: Featuring the Techniques of the European Amateur, Patrick Martinez-1987. An advanced amateur astrophotography how-to manual that contains detailed tables and diagrams, (donated by Lee Keith)

3. Moons and Planets, (2nd edition), William K. Hartmann-1983. Though advanced for most readers, this is a definitive study of stellar system formation and evolution, (donated by Lee Keith).

4. Gems of Hubble, Jacqueline Mitton & Stephen P. Maran -1996. A small paperback shows some of HST's most beautiful photos with short, non-technical descriptions, from the solar system to the known edges of the universe.

5. Pale Blue Dot: A vision of the Human Future in Space, Carl Sagan-1994. Called a sequel to "Cosmos", Sagan again seeks to captivate, and enlighten a general audience concerning the future well-being of humanity.

Scott Laskowski- MAS Librarian

Wither Thou Goest?

There has been quite an influx of new members into the MAS in recent years, some joining straight out of a Star Party, aspiring to be "amateur astronomers". The good news is that there are no formal qualifications. The other side of the coin is that to get any significant enjoyment and satisfaction from this hobby, **you** have to work at it. If your brand new to this hobby, the first tool you'll need are the eyes in your head. Get out there on dark nights (or find dark sites) and learn the constellation structure (and its seasonal variations). until the night sky is an old friend. You can augment this process with star charts, planetariums, memory aids like the summer triad of stars etc Graduating to a pair of good binoculars, you can start to pick out more stars and groupings of stars that form galaxies, clusters and nebulas of past star cataclysms. About here a good 6" or 8" telescope (and learning to use it well) comes into play. Some pursue certificate(s) which requires observing many deep space objects, all with out the aid of setting circles (i.e. knowing the locus of these objects within the constellation frame and observing them). Many do parts or all of this without a certificate in mind. Hopefully your observing and recording skills become honed. Others focus there primary attention on observing planetary phenomena.

Somewhere around here comes a fork in the road. Some are satisfied to simply be **students of the universe** embellishing their knowledge of planets and objects in the night sky that they have learned to find. Many of these types are the "**Johnny Appleseeds**" that like to educate the public about this universe of ours (at Star parties etc.). For some, time constraints or desire, curtail doing any more.

Others are the "**tinkerers**". They like to build better telescopes, improve on photography, build and improve on CCD imaging systems , photometric measurement devices, adapt modern digital computers as tools to enhance observing . A good example of this , in part, is the quartet of members who are in process of digitizing the Z scope. When they achieve their goals, Z scope will be easier to use as well as a more powerful observing tool. The tinkerers are always looking for a way to improve and apply new technology to Astronomy.

Still others use observing skills to become **data gatherers and analyzers** contributing to the rapidly developing knowledge data base of our universe. In the advent of Hubble space scope and giant mirrors, there is still need for amateur inputs. These big machines with professional astronomers are heavily scheduled but in very specific and focused fields of study. One area that is supported by amateurs, for example, is variable star observation. There are thousands of variable stars (of various types) that amateurs faithfully record their magnitude variations as a function of time. These observations do add to the knowledge base of our universe. Similarly grazes and occultations add to knowledge of our solar system (and some stellar data) refining orbital parameters and shapes of planets and asteroids. An example of this type of amateur is our own observatory director with thousands of logged observations. There are many other facets of amateur observing and data acquisition just as interesting but not even touched on here.

continued on next page

Wither Thou Goest contnd

So..... Where do you fit in?... are you a student of the universe, a Johnny Applesseed, a tinkerer, or a data gatherer and analyzer? The message here is that there is room for all, and for all, there is always room to explore new directions in this hobby of ours. -Editor

Editors Note: The editor makes no pretense at being an experienced astronomy observer(as yet).....but the above editorial reflects his observations of the MAS scene.

Membership News

Fall Renewal

As of October 24th, there are 118 renewals out of the 146 renewal forms mailed out in August. That's terrific! We reached the above 80% mark by the October membership meeting. If you haven't renewed yet, this is your last chance!

New Members

Please welcome the following new members:

Bob Manske of Waunakee, WI

Ronald Buyan of Greenfield, WI

Timothy Burrus of Brookfield, WI

Richard Rhode of West Allis, WI

Phil & Lynn Brown of New Berlin, WI

David DiJulio of Menomonee Falls, WI

Al White of New Berlin, WI

New members are encouraged to attend our meetings to learn more about the society and its facilities

RASCs and Ottewell Calendars

Dan Yanko sent bulk orders for both books (15 Ottewells and a little over 20 RASCs) early in October. Members who ordered one or both books, but did not request it be mailed, will be notified upon arrival of the order.

New Item—RASC Wall Calendar

The RASC publishers sent me a complimentary copy of the 1997 RASC wall calendar, which features beautiful photos and daily moon and sunrise/sunset data. For a minimum order of 10, the calendars are \$8.00 each. Interested? Then email masmemb@aol.com or call 456.0864. If there are at least 10 requests, we will place the order in November. The sample copy of the calendar is on the desk in the rear part of the Quonset building. Payment will be upon pickup.

Membership Cards

Membership Cards are not currently being mailed out (with the Focal Point) as renewals are received because of postal requirements for equal weights of bulk mail pieces. In the interim, membership cards are available for pickup on the table at the rear of the Observatory meeting hall (near the log book). **Cautionary note to members using the observatory site at night:** New Berlin Police do run random checks of the grounds to discourage break ins. Make sure you have a current membership card (on your person) to avoid any misunderstandings.

Julie Frey- Memmbership

Late News

The custom software has been written and successfully tested to translate the Z scope opto-angle readouts and display RA & Dec. angles on the resident computer screen.

ALCOR Corner

Aside from Membership Chairperson, I am also an ALCOR. I am the official MAS correspondent with the Astronomical League. The duties consist of supplying our MAS membership mailing list for the *Reflector*, conveying any MAS concerns and queries, and to advise members (thru Focal Point) of coming AL events. With the MAS reaffirmation of membership in AL, I will keep you posted on these forthcoming events.

Julie Frey- ALCOR

Astrophotography Shareware (MAS Library)for IBM- PC's

Quick! you are at the MAS observatory. You have some Tech Pan 2415 film in your 35mm camera and you wish to take some photos of the planet Jupiter using "A" scope. You are using the club's camera adapter with a 9.7mm f.l. Meade Super Plossl eyepiece for positive projection. What exposure should you use??

For you old timers out there, I know you are thinking about such things as eff. focal length, projection magnification, planetary brightness ratios, projection distances, and other things necessary to calculate an exposure time! Whew....! What if you don't know a principal plane from a hole in the ground; you just want a picture of Jupiter, Well Astrophoto is just the software for you!

You simply enter the specs of the telescope you will use into the telescope list, which includes dozens of previously entered popular commercial telescopes. Next, you choose your Meade eyepiece from the eyepiece list (you can add your own eyepiece here, too!). Next, choose the projection method you will use (positive projection), pick the Planet Jupiter from a list of celestial objects), pick the film from the film list. You can specify if you are using a Barlow or filter. Look at the bottom of the of the screen and you will see all the particulars of this setup: effective focal ratio and focal length, image size and a small scale model of your 35mm frame with the image of Jupiter...to scale...on the film!! It even shows how much sky the entire frame covers on the sky! Oh yeah, it tells you the exposure, too! You'll need to keep the shutter open for 2 seconds.

This software is available under the file name ASTPHOTO.zip.

MAS Computer Group Rating: * * * * (out of 5)

Call **Lee Keith** at 425-2331 for more information

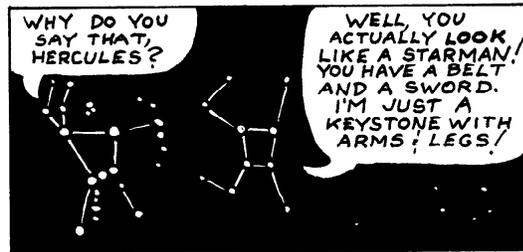
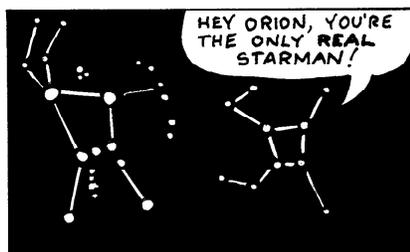
Editor's note: The ed has noticed a fellow novice using up a roll of film by a trial and error process (on A Scope) to capture Jupiter on film, and was contemplating doing the same until he received Lee's above review...maybe I'll get the software first!

Loaner Telescopes (available to members for local use)

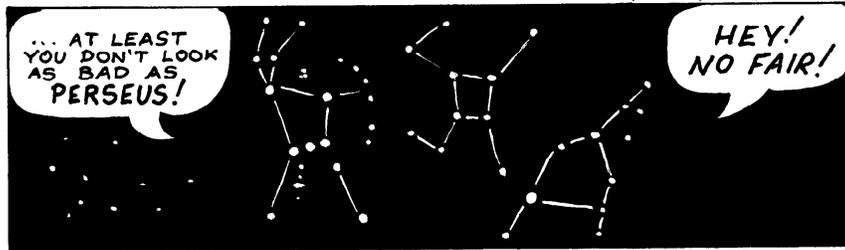
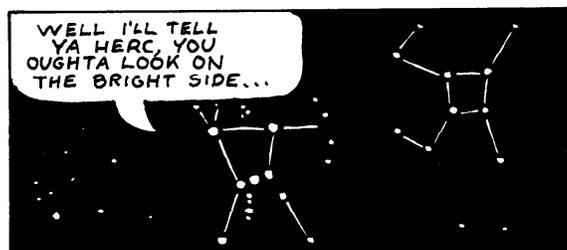
Scott Jamieson (Waukesha) 896-0119 4" f/15 refractor

Lee Keith (Franklin) 425-2331 8" Dob reflector

Rich Stearle (Greenfield) 543-7479 8" Dob reflector



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MAS Officers/ Staff

President	Lee Keith	425-2331
Vice President	Scott Jamieson	896-0119
Treasurer	Dan Yanko	453-3382
Secretary	Margaret Warner	327-7427
Observatory Director	Gerry Samolyk	529-9051
Assistant Observatory Director	Paul Borchardt	781-0169

Focal Point

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	Email: rudp70855@aol.com	

Keyholders

November

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8	Gerry Samolyk	529-9051
15	Ken Waraczynski	321-0918
22	Dan Yanko	453-3382
29	Wanda Burner	646-8229

December

6	Paul Borchardt	781-0169
13	Greg Cieslak	529-0548
20	Brian Ganiere	961-8745
27	Chris Hesseltine	482-4515

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