



**Sailing the Fantome** to the eclipse center line:

About a dozen MAS members spent the last week of February sailing around the Caribbean on the Windjammer schooner, the Fantome. During the week, we visited 4 different islands. Among other things, we toured the islands; relaxed on beaches; shopped and did some diving/snorkeling. Some of the most memorable activities were Carnival on St. Barts and the Rain Forest hike on St. Kitts.

Astronomically, we saw the Large Magellanic Cloud and Canopus shortly after sunset and those willing to stay up late, or get up early were treated to a view of Alpha Centauri; the Southern Cross and the Jewel Box. Of course, the total solar eclipse on Thursday was the main event for the 120 passengers and the 30 or so crew.

The day began with a light overcast, but by mid morning the clouds dissipated and the anticipation grew. We had sailed to center line by 11:00 a.m. and then just floated there for several hours. A binocular survey showed at least 40 other ships in the area, mostly smaller yachts and a few of the really large cruise ships. As the initial partial phase advanced, our attention was turned to the island of Montserrat about 12-14 miles away.

Since 1995, continuous volcanic activity on the island has destroyed the capital city and the airport and displaced most of the residents. Only about 1000 people still live on the southern tip. The volcano on Montserrat was again venting steam and ash, a common occurrence. Solar filters were removed from binoculars and all eyes focused on the mountain. Even from this distance, it was possible to see the subtle difference between the steam cloud and the ash. Captain Casey kept us up wind from the island so the ash would not interfere with the eclipse viewing.

As totality neared, we all enjoyed a champagne toast and everyone's full attention was back on the Sun and the Moon. Venus was visible in the southwest sky at least 30 minutes before totality. We had a beautiful diamond ring at second contact; the chromosphere was very evident and a very small prominence was seen at about 1:00. There were equatorial coronal streamer at 5:00 and 7:00 and another at about 12:00.

*Continued on page two, column 1*

**April MAS Events**

We meet once again at the UWM Kenwood Campus on Friday, April 17th at 8:00 PM. Our featured speaker will be Robert Naeye, an Associate Editor of Astronomy magazine. Robert has spoken to MAS on a couple of other occasions; the most recent being a comprehensive summary of the latest Hubble findings. For this meeting **Robert will review the latest Galileo Mission results.** The Galileo probe took over six years to reach the vicinity of Jupiter (December, 1995), release an atmospheric probe and conduct close fly-by investigation of several of the Jovian moons. A map of the meeting site is shown below.

The general meeting will be preceded by the MAS board meeting at 7:00 PM. All Board members are requested to attend. All interested members are welcome to attend as well.

*Next MAS meeting, Friday  
April 17, 1998 @ 8:00PM  
Room 133, Physics Bldg  
UWM Kenwood Campus  
(Corner of E. Kenwood &  
N. Cramer St.)*

**First Wednesday Meeting, April 1** at 7:30PM. An open forum meeting conducted by Observatory Director Gerry Samolyk at the MAS observatory & discussing forthcoming observing events, question & answer sessions etc. Gerry may also have some commentary and/or photos on his recent Eclipse trip.

**First Saturday Observatory Night, April 4**  
Vice President Scott Jamieson hosts a "hands on" session on the use of observatory scopes, observing techniques, etc. Sessions start after nightfall for two to three hours.

**Open House, April 24, 7:00 PM** See Page 2

### *Sailing The Fantome Continued*

Small streamers were also seen extending from the poles. Jupiter and Mercury were observed on the outer edges of the corona and some of the brighter stars were visible.

We were treated to another spectacular and long diamond ring at third contact. No one could believe that three and one half minutes could be over so quickly. With totality over, not much attention was paid to the latter partial phase of the eclipse, but some of us did watch for and observed the fourth contact.

Montserrat continued its show throughout the afternoon and we got even better views as the captain brought us around the island and to within only a few miles. With binoculars, we could see steam rising from cracks near the top of the mountain, trunks of trees devoid of leaves and what was left of the capital city of Plymouth. Pyroclastic ash flows had covered most of the buildings, but some could still be seen, partially buried in the ash and mud. As destructive as this volcano has been, it was nonetheless, beautiful and awe inspiring in the same way as the eclipse which we had all just witnessed.

As the sun began to sink in the west, some of us took up a position on the bridge to try for a glimpse of a green flash. A few of us had seen one the previous day, could we make it 2 in a row? While not as spectacular as the previous day, we did observe a green glow as the sun disappeared. What a spectacular day! The following evening, the bridge again attracted those trying to spot the green flash. Could we make it 3 in a row? Yes, a nice little green spot flashed into view once again. Now, the challenge was to be the first to sight the young moon. It wasn't long before it was spotted as a thin line, almost parallel to the horizon. As the sky grew darker, Mars also became visible and earth shine on the Moons night side was obvious. Another beautiful sight!

Overall, this vacation was the best we have ever had - relaxing; warm; informal; comfortable and full of adventure. Even without the eclipse, we would recommend this type of cruise to everyone.

-----Karen Wesener

### **Board & Membership Doings**

\* Dan Yanko reports that the treasury cash on hand currently stands at \$8943.81. This does not include Gifts and Memorials which a separate fund overseen by the finance committee.

\*Z Scope digital upgrade has restarted with the onset of warmer weather. Tim Huff and Brian Garness are refining the software for pointing and tracking of the scope

\*Sally Jo Michalko has volunteered to be a candidate for Board member. Currently, four Board positions are up for re-election.

\*Dan Yanko has volunteered to be picnic chairman, currently scheduled for July 18

\*The following new members were brought up by Membership Chairperson Julie Frey and approved.

**Bruce Twomey David Weier Carl Hahn  
Chris Slack Laura Dierbeck**

**Welcome to MAS and please join us at future meetings!**

### **MAS 1998 Open House Schedule**

The MAS Open House schedule for 1998 has been set! Hopefully we will have more clear nights than the 3 we had last year and it won't snow on the April date! Open house dates are the following Fridays:

- Apr 24 Hunt the Youngest Moon
- May 1 What Do Amateur Astronomers Do?
- May 8 Big Dipper Legends
- May 29 Can You See Pluto?
- Aug 7 Perseid Meteor Shower
- Sept 11 See the Planets Uranus & Neptune
- Sept 25 Skylore of the Constellations
- Oct 9 Giant Planet Jupiter

We need people to give short 15 minute talks on each of the Open House topics. These talks should be aimed at the grade school level and need not require a lot of expertise. They can be fun and rewarding. If you would like to give a talk at an of the Open Houses, call Lee Keith at 425-2331.

*Ed's Note: Dust those telescopes off or come out and man one of the many of the club's porta-scopes/ observatories. This is a fun way to educate the public (especially the young) about this universe of ours. Last year, we had the delightful dilemma, on a couple of open house nites, of taxing the club's observatory facilities with crowds in excess of 450 people on a given evening. It's a great way to get your feet wet and getting involved in the club. We not only need speakers and scope help, but also people to run the parking lot, direct people, man the information desks in the club hall etc.*

**Library News** Recent library acquisitions include:

**Pluto And Charon: Ice Worlds on the Ragged Edge of the Solar System**, Alan Stern And Jacqueline Mitton-1998. There was little known about Planet X after Pluto's discovery by Clyde Tombaugh in 1930. Then Charon, its large moon's existence was affirmed in 1978. Using mutual occultations of this double planet system during the first shallow graze in 1985, central events of 1987-88, and the final grazes of 1991, observers first accurately mapped the Pluto- Charon systems physical properties: size, mass, and surface albedo features.

New data confirms or always leads to new theories about the evolution of our solar system; in this case, the ice dwarfs at its edge. Until new data from the HST ora "Pluto Express" mission by NASA, the MAS library is "up to date" on our farthest neighbors of the Sun's family.

**The Art and Science of CCD Astronomy**, Edited by David Rutledge-1997. A charge coupled device electronically enhances any telescopes sensitivity by at least 10x a photographs ability to record light. In all cases, lunar, planetary,, deep sky, or serious data gathering can be enhanced by skillful data acquisition and processing. Pretty pictures of planetary objects or deep sky, serious work, discoveries of comets, variables, supernovae, and thier magnitudes can add a database that may be valuable tp astrophysicists in the future. In any case, we are all interested in the possibilitites that CCDs provide for the future of amateur astronomers, for our enjoyment, for any reason!

*Scott Laskowski, MAS Lbrarian, 421-3517*

## FROM THE PRESIDENT:

Is the MAS Fun for You?

When I joined the MAS for the second time in 1983, there was a lot happening. The national convention of the Astronomical League was held at Carroll College in Waukesha, there were 3 well attended campouts throughout the year, and a popular summer picnic at the MAS Observatory (with lots of door prizes!) There were several people that gladly handled the many activities of the Society and the members had lots of fun in the process. Many people actually did a lot of observing as the number of Messier and Herschel Club awards will attest. I had loads of fun and have wonderful memories of the period.

Boy, have things changed! I can't remember the last time I awarded an observing award, or went to a chili dump. The summer picnics have been dropped due to lack of attendance. Campouts have endured a similar fate and are down to once a year (in Fall). The last convention of the Astronomical League which was held in Racine, was poorly attended by MAS members. We are not having an annual banquet this spring because no one would volunteer to find a location. We have had a hard time finding timely replacements for officers and other positions. I had to work as interim treasurer twice because a volunteer could not be found for several months. The MAS did not have a secretary or Focal Point editor for several months two summers ago due to lack of help. We are still looking for a Program Chairperson after almost 2 years!! The meetings are better attended, but still only 20% of members attend the monthly membership meetings on a good night. Last year, I gave the talks during most of the 8 Open Houses at the Observatory. Even your Board of Directors are guilty; several of the meetings this past year did not have a quorum!

I have to admit that for me, the MAS has become more work than fun. It is not because I am too busy, but because most of my time is spent begging people to get involved and do some very simple tasks. Because people don't volunteer, the MAS has fewer and fewer activities to allow us to meet and have fun. Is this what you want??

*Continued, next column*

*From the Prez Continued*

The MAS is only as good as the people that do things. If you don't show up or participate, the entire Society suffers. Is this condition temporary or characteristic of society in general? Members, please ask yourself if this should continue. As I bow out as your President, I worry about the future of the MAS. Will it become a small exclusive clique of hard core observers or will it be an all inclusive large group of astronomy enthusiasts who want to mix fun and observing?

*Lee Keith, President MAS.*

### Desert Sky Stargazing

I had dragged my 10" home built scope down to Tucson and was determined to try it out in the middle of the Arizona desert. The TAAA have star gazing gatherings for their members at a remote site called the Empire ranch which is about 40 miles SE of Tucson and 3500 to 4000 feet in elevation. What a sky! All the constellations were out like beacons with Leo the Lion riding high in the sky (& sitting atop a bunch of clusters). The double cluster between Cassiopeia and Perseus were easily found. The nebulas of Orion were conspicuous. In my bumbling way, I easily found about 20 Messier objects against this vivid constellation frame (I apologize Lee, for not logging them towards a Messier certificate).

It's amazing what a weak eyed observer can find when the seeing is superb! *-Editor*

### For Sale

6" (155mm) F7 AstroPhysics Refractor and Mount

Details are:

\* 155mm , f7 Starfire EDF Triplet Apochromat with 2.7" Focuser and carrying case

\* 900 German Equatorial Mount with Quartz microcontroller & mounted encoders

\* 6.5 " mounting rings      \* 18" Flat mounting plate

\* 48" portable Pier      \*18lb Stainless counterweight

-No star Diagonal or eyepieces

-Delivered in April 1997 and used several times

- will sell the above for \$8700.00

- If interested, Contact Harold Biller @ 352-1554

**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**

Editor Rudy Poklar 786-8931  
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rudypokr@execpc.com  
Distribution Margaret Warner

**Future MAS Events**

**April 17** Monthly meeting at UWM  
**May 16** Election of Officers , Meet at MAS  
Observatory  
**April 24; May 1, 8, 29; Aug 7; Sept 11, 25; Oct. 9** are our open house (Public Star Parties) dates.  
See Page 2 inside for details.

**Saturday Keyholders**

**February**

**April**

4\* Wanda Burner 646-8229  
11 Paul Borchardt 781-0169  
18 Greg Cieslak 529-0548  
25 Brian Ganiere 961-8745

**May**

2\* Chris Hesseltine 482-4515  
9 Vern Hoag 548-9130  
16 Tim Hoff 662-2987  
23 Scott Jamieson 896-0119  
30 Lee Keith 425-2331

*\*First Saturday Observatory nite meetings will be held in parallel with standard Observatory operations*

**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

**MAS Observatory** 542-9071

*Ed's note: To verify First Wednesday Meeting (in inclement weather), call observatory after 7:00PM on first Wednesday date .If you get a recorded message, no one is present, and probably no meeting.*

**The Milwaukee Astronomical Society**  
12905 W. Crawford Drive  
New Berlin, WI 53151

**CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED**

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U.S. Postage  
**PAID**  
Permit # 4775  
Milwaukee, WI.

**\* MEET AT UWM, FRI., APRIL 17, 8:00PM  
REVIEW OF GALILEO MISSION RESULTS**

**\*1st OF 8 MAS OPEN HOUSES  
FRI., APRIL 24, 7:00PM**

