



MESSIER MARATHON SOCIAL APRIL 17

This year the MAS is planning a social get together to foster camaraderie amongst members and allow us to do some observing together and get started on that Messier Certificate. The date is April 17 at 5:00 PM to ??, rain or shine. This event will be held in lieu of our regular April membership meeting.

For those who may not be familiar with the Messier Club, it is a program sponsored by the Astronomical League to foster observing and learning about the sky and one's telescope. The Messier Club awards a handsome pin and a regular certificate for observing 70 Messier objects and an honorary certificate for observing all 107 objects. These objects are the

best showpieces in the sky so it is a good way for a beginner with a small telescope to survey a wide variety of celestial sights and learn how to find your way around the sky in the process. A binocular version of the Messier club awards a pin & certificate after only 50 objects!

There will be information available on the Messier Certificates and other Astronomical League observing programs including a Lunar Certificate at this event. There will also be experienced observers available to help you with using your telescope or using one at the observatory.

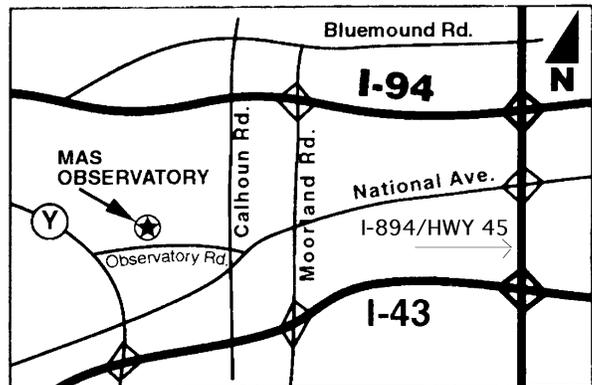
In addition to the observing, we want this to be a social event, too. So we are asking anyone who comes to bring a dish to pass around and share. While there is power at the observatory, the electrical system is old so we want to discourage lots of dependance on power. We will have hot drinks and soda available as well as eating utensils.

If the skies are not clear, bring a favorite card or board game to pass some time and meet the other members of the MAS.

Come one, come all and lets make this get together a fun time!

No Regular MAS Meeting in April
 The regular MAS monthly meeting is canceled this month in order to give priority to the Messier hunt on Saturday, May 17th (see article elsewhere). **However, a very brief Board meeting will be held at 7:00PM preceding the nights activities.**

MAS May Election Notice
 The offices of President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer are up for annual election. Additionally four board seats are up for election (two year terms). If you have any desire to run for one of these -positions, please contact Scott Jamieson or any officer or board member. The election will be at the MAS observatory, May 21st, 8:00PM



1999 Open House Schedule

Here's the Open House schedule that I didn't bring to the meeting:

April 23	Constellation Myths
April 30	Moon Illusions
May 7	Spring Galaxies
May 14	Mars Looms Large
Aug 13	Perseid Meteor Shower
Aug 27	See the Center of the Galaxy
*Sept 24	What's a Globular Cluster?
Oct 1	How to Buy A Telescope

I plan on bringing open house announcements to the March meeting, so people should come to pick up announcements to pass out. We will have open houses despite the new building construction. If the weather is bad, we will have no program and we'll have to wing it!

Lee Keith

leekeith1@juno.com

Voice: (414) 425-2331

Some Astronomy Websites

Some of our members have been asking me for a list of web sites for active observers. Here are a few of the ones I use often.

<http://www.aavso.org> - AAVSO, Latest information on variable stars. Contains alert notices and news flashes on novae, dwarf novae, and special requests.

<http://www.sky.net/~robinson/iotandx.htm> - IOTA Index, Information on lunar and asteroid occultations. This is a good place to check for last minute shift information on occultations.

<http://www.lpl.arizona.edu/alpo> - ALPO, Site for lunar and planetary observers. Keep up to date on what we can observe within our solar system.

<http://www.madisonastro.org> - Madison Astronomical Society, contains information on local observing projects. Often these are joint projects with the MAS. Contains links to the above sites.

Gerry Samolyk, Observatory Director

Fall Campout On Oct. 8 & 9 at Greenbush

Once again, MAS Board has approved a Fall Campout at the Greenbush site in the north Kettle Moraine. The club will again rent two group sites and individual members will only need a State park sticker to access the grounds. Mark your calendars. More details will follow as the event time approaches.

MAS picnic scheduled for Sat. July 17th

A budget of \$400 was approved to feed the ravenous appetites at our annual picnic on the above date. Last year saw an excellent picnic turnout so again mark your calendars.

Messier Club certificate awarded

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This is to announce that member Bruce Brinkerhoff has earned an honorary Messier Club Certificate and exclusive pin for observing all 107 Messier objects! He accomplished this great feat in just 1 year with his 9 1/4" Celestron SCT. He said that he has digital setting circles but doesn't use them much at all and not at all for the Messier objects. (They are not allowed) Congratulations to Bruce for all his efforts!

Lee Keith, Messier Club Representative

Messier Hunt planned at MAS, April 17

Many clubs will run a Messier Marathon in the March/April time frame where the object is to find as many of the 107 deep space Messier objects as possible in one night. The person with the most logged and verified objects at the end of a long evening wins the trophy!

But that's not what we're planning. We're calling it a hunt because we want you, the newcomer and old timer to observing, to come out and discover the technique by pointing a scope to a locale in a given constellation where the object should be located, then walking the scope around in a defined manner until the object in question pops into view. It's not uncommon for new observers to spend a half hour or more finding one object in question. It is hoped that we will have enough more experienced amateurs on hand to assist others in their quest for these elusive objects. Once you get the hang of it, there is nothing to keep you from swinging the scope off the object, refind it by yourself and log it towards your Messier certificate!

Bring your own scope or use one of the club's 10 portascopes to pursue this route to local fame. The ambient light pollution at the MAS site reduces the number of stars visible to the naked eye, so if you succeed in finding objects here you'll undoubtedly turn into an ace when you get to a dark night site on your own.

There is also some talk of a Chili dump to sustain the energy levels of the participants but that's not cast in concrete. If not, the club will provide some snacks to sustain us thru a long evening. Watch the April issue of Focal Point for more details.

This is intended to be a fun night and no one is going to laugh at you as you wander around the night sky in search of elusive objects. It's intended to be a learning experience for all. This night is also intended for MAS members to get their feet wet and experience the excitement of the discovery!

If you want a head start, contact Lee Keith for your Messier observing kit at 425-2331.

By the way, This Saturday Nite hunt will replace the April club meeting which would have been held on April 16th.

April Evening Skies

The Abrams Planetarium chart reprinted on Page 3 might not be too far off from what is easily visible (naked eye) from our somewhat light polluted sight on hunt night. More detailed charts are in Astronomy and Sky and Telescope. Also charts showing locus of Messier objects in various constellations should be available on hunt nite.

MAS Officers/ Staff

President	Scott Jamieson	896-0119
Vice President	Lee Keith	425-2331
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	Rudy Poklar, Editor	786-8931

Future MAS Events

April 17 (Saturday) Messier Hunt At MAS (no April 16th meeting).
 MAS Open House: APR 23,30; May 7, 14; Aug 13, 27; Sep 24; Oct 1 (see article inside).

MAS Membership is open to all with an interest in Astronomy and expanding their knowledge of the Universe. Yearly Membership Dues are: Individual \$28/yr; Family \$32; Non-resident (individual \$18, Family \$22); Student (under 18) \$12. **For more information, contact Membership Chairperson Julie Frey, 11040 W. Meinecke Avenue, Milwaukee WI.**

Focal Point Publishing Guidelines

Focal Point Newsletter is published monthly from Sept through May with a Mid-summer issue in July. Articles, Announcements, Graphics, Photos, Swap/Sale Ads etc should be submitted at least 10 days prior to the first of the month (of the desired issue). Article inputs are preferred via E-Mail, or diskette in a text or Word compatible format, if possible. Submit FP inputs to:

MAS Focal Point c/o Rudy Poklar
 12905 W. Crawford Drive

Saturday Keyholders**March**

6	Terry Ross	784-2093
13	Gerry Samolyk	529-9051
20	Tom Schmidtkunz	352-1674
27	Ken Waraczynski	321-0918

April

3	Dan Yanko	453-3382
10	Wanda Burner	646-8229
17	Paul Borchardt	781-0169
24	Brian Ganiere	961-8745

* If members want to be assured of observatory access on a given Saturday nite, they should call the keyholder ahead of time.

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

Visit our MAS Website:

<http://members.aol.com/masmemb/index.html>

The Milwaukee Astronomical Society

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** We meet at UWM Kenwood Campus on Mar. 19th, 8:00 PM
 -Dr. Kyle Cudworth, U. of Chicago will speak on Globular Clusters*

