

The Newsletter of the Milwaukee Astronomical Society

March 2000

Presidents Message

I have enjoyed immensely, watching the progress on C-Shed and the 10 inch Newtonian inside. The shed is now functional but still needs refinement so that it can be used easily. It was used for the first time the evening of the recent total lunar eclipse and was great. The floor was dry even with all the snow outside and we had the 10 inch Newtonian and Carlos Garces's 10 inch Meade Schmidt Cassegrain set up inside. There was still plenty of room to move around and the roof did offer us some protection from the mild North wind. (It was -3 degrees by the time we packed up!) My sincere appreciation to all those who participated in the project!

We did discover that the mount, which hadn't been used for over ten years, seized up from a combination of old grease and the cold. It has since been disassembled and cleaned and will be aligned to the pole in the next couple of weeks. The digital setting circles have been installed and work well. The setup is a little complicated for a mount that is not perfectly aligned but should be very easy when it is. All you have to do is point the scope to a known star and tell the display unit which one it is. On a recent very foggy night I tried this out and actually found Sirius! (No snide remarks, please!)

We expect to have the telescope fully functional in time for the Messier hunt on April 1. This is not really a contest but an opportunity to enjoy a whole night chasing faint fuzzy objects for fun and education. We now have four 4X4 foot concrete observing pads so that members planning to bring their own scopes can have a stable platform. Others are free to use one of the 10 inch Porta-scopes. To avoid looking to dumb myself, I will be manning the 10 inch in C-shed and will use the digital setting circles to find any objects people are having trouble locating and at the same time showing whoever is interested how to use the scope and observatory. .

See Presidents Message, Page3, Col.1

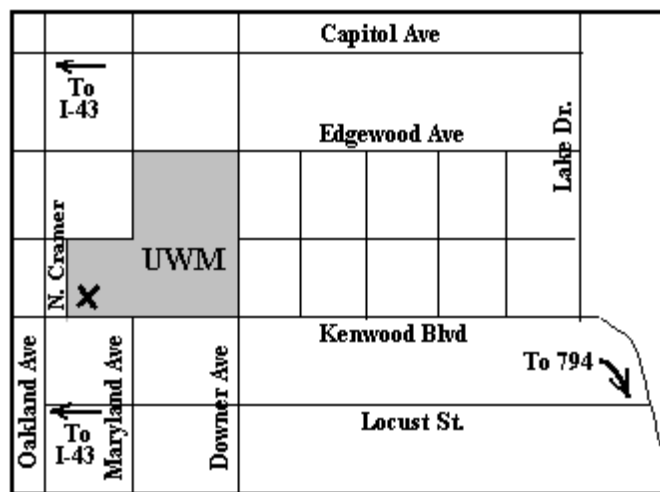
We meet at UWM, Fri. Mar. 17 @ 8:00PM

A snow storm canceled our February meeting so we're going to try again. We meet at our winter meeting site, the Kenwood Campus of the Univ. of Wisconsin, Room 133 (on the first floor) of the Physics building, located on the corner of Kenwood Blvd and N. Cramer St. - see inset map.

Our featured speaker will be **MAS member, Dan Koehler, whose talk "Three Men and an Observatory"** will review the colorful history of Yerkes Observatory from its beginnings to date. Dan is the advertising manager of Astronomy magazine. He has served on many of his weekends as a volunteer at Yerkes open houses. In turn, this gave him an unusual opportunity to develop the above subject.

Additionally, Gerry Samolyk will show time sequenced photos of the January Lunar eclipse, and recent CCD images with the ST9

A MAS Board meeting will precede the above regular membership meeting at 7:00 PM. Since the February meeting was snowed out, all Directors are urged to make an effort to be there.



MAS Election on May 19, 2000

Nominations for President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer and 3 Board Directors are open for nomination. Please make your nominations to the Nominating Committee prior to the election process.

Welcome New Members

MAS welcomes new members, Mr. & Mrs. Daniel Gemoll of New Berlin. Please attend our future meetings and let us know you're there. MAS members, make sure you welcome these new members.

Lee's Page

Summer Observer Training for Teens

Hey teen MAS members and their parents! Don't know where to start in Astronomy? What equipment is at our Observatory? What observing programs are available? Well! You've come to the right place! The MAS has recognized a need to service our younger members and so wants to sponsor a pair of seminars in "Amateur Astronomy for Teens" at the Observatory sometime in June and August while students are not in school. We would like to gauge interest in this topic so if you would like to attend, please call Lee Keith at 425-2331 to register or give your ideas as to what should be covered.

Y2k MAS Open House Schedule

The Open House Schedule has been set. Due to popular request, there will be only 6 this year, three in the spring and 3 in the summer/fall with preference given to first quarter moons and avoiding full moons. Remember that all open houses start at 8:00pm at the observatory and I am always looking for people to give a short 15 min at a 6th grade level talk on the topic of the night below. Call 425-2331 to volunteer.

April 14	Constellation Myths
May 12	Moon Craters
May 26	Mecurial Mercury

Aug 11	Perseid Meteors
Sept 8	Summer Milky Way
Oct 6	See Uranus & Neptune

Telescope Building Class may be offered

The MAS is trying to get our teenaged members to be more involved in Society activities. In that vein, I would like to know what interest there is in putting together a telescope making class. It would be held this summer at the observatory. There would be 2 telescope sizes, 4/1/4 inch and 6 inch Dobsonians at \$263 and \$424 respectively. This would be a great parent/child project and you get to paint or decorate your scope in any way you wish!

Since there are some arrangements and logistics to be done, I need to know if anyone wants to make a telescope. If you would like more information or would like to register for the class, please call Lee Keith at 425-2331 before April 1 and sooner if possible. If there is not enough interest, we will not have the class.

Waukesha Planetarium Lecture Series

I got an announcement from the Horowitz Planetarium in Waukesha concerning their upcoming planetarium show schedule for the Spring and would like to pass the info on to MAS members. The next program is called "The Explorers" and will be presented on Wednesdays April 5, 12 and 26th at 7:00 PM. The program description is as follows:

Modern astronomy knowledge is based on the collective accomplishments of past astronomers. This new NASA program presented by the Bishop Planetarium investigates the brilliant lives and times of ancient astronomers, then relates

Continued next Column

Planetarium Schedule continued

early astronomy breakthroughs to those of today.

Reservations are required at (262) 970-1083 and are free to the public. The planetarium is just a few blocks west of Carroll College in Waukesha. More info can also be on the Internet (www.waukesha.k12.wi.us).

Get Your Feet Wet...Try For a Messier Certificate

The MAS sponsors many observing activities through the Astronomical League, a confederation of astronomical societies across the country. Upon completion of the observing

requirements, members will receive a numbered certificate and in many cases, a lapel pin.

Observing activities include the Messier, Herschel Binocular, Deep Sky, Double Star and Lunar Certificates, among

many others! The Messier Club is a set of 107 of the best deep-sky objects the sky, which is the most popular way for amateur astronomers to learn the sky. The Herschel Club requires you to observe 400 much more challenging objects and the Double Star Club consists of 100 of the very best double and multiple stars that can be seen with the smallest of telescopes. Since these observing clubs are designed to help observers learn the sky and how to use their telescopes, **NO DIGITAL SETTING CIRCLES OR COMPUTER LOCATING DEVICES ARE**

ALLOWED! To help you in this quest for fame, the MAS has observing club flyers available for the Messier, Binocular Messier, Deep Sky Binocular, Double Star and Lunar clubs. Just send an 8.5 by 11 in. envelope with enough postage for 4 ounces (99 cents) OR a floppy disk for the info on all the observing clubs to: Lee Keith, MAS Observing Clubs Coordinator, 8150 Legend Dr., Franklin, WI 53132-9623 or call 425-2331 for more information any observing club.

UW- Waukesha Astronomy Course

Learn all about the science of Astronomy and what's happening in the sky from a non-credit course entitled ADVENTURES IN ASTRONOMY offered through by UW-Waukesha. Topics include: earth centered astronomy including moon, sun & stars; the solar system, structure of our home galaxy, nebulae, star clusters, other galaxies, galactic clusters, quasars, and the ultimate fate of the universe.

Special activities include telling time with the Big Dipper and observing sessions at the MAS observatory. Students will also receive astronomical software for the IBM PC. The classes run 7 Monday evenings from March 6th through April. For more information or to enroll, call Don Bracco at UW-Waukesha at 521-5460.

Eds Note:

Lee Keith, our Vice President, fed me so many pertinent inputs in the last month that I thought I'd put them together and dub it Lee's page. Lee teaches the above Course at UW Waukesha with hands on training at our Observatory. Lastly, Lee is the club coordinator for obtaining a Messier Certificate. The Messier article is reprinted because March is a great month for finding most of the Messier Objects- See March S&T magazine for details.

Presidents Message Continued

We plan on having an informal dedication of the scope and shed during the regular meeting of the club in May.

This brings me to another subject. The elections for the three positions on the board of directors and for the club officers will also take place at the May meeting. I am delighted to say that several people have expressed an interest in running but the nominations are still open so let Gerry Samolyk or myself know if you're interested in running. (Phone numbers are on the back page) The board meets once a month and it is important to attend. For all but the summer months, the board meeting takes place before the regular club meetings so it doesn't require an extra trip.

Finally, I plan on resuming my First Saturday meetings in May (The Messier hunt is on the first Sat. in April). The purpose is to help beginners with any questions about Astronomy and telescopes, and will probably concentrate on demonstrating the C-scope so that as many people as possible get trained to use this instrument on their own.

Scott Jamieson, MAS President

Library News

AAVSO: Observed Minima Timings of Eclipsing Binaries #5, October 1999. The American Association of Variable Star Observers offers a unique chance for amateurs to contribute valuable scientific data, for use by professionals, or anyone, to analyze and study star systems and their dynamics. These resources are located in the vertical file at the MAS Observatory.- Donated by Gerry Samolyk, MAS Observatory Director.

Gerry noted that 10 of the 46 observers that contributed data to this variable star reference are, or were MAS members.

Scott Laskowski, MAS Librarian

Eds Note: It is hoped in future issues, we can at least outline some of the elements of variable star observing in hopes of whetting some amateur appetites. If enough interest shows up ,I'm sure hands on demos can be arranged .

.Messier Hunt at MAS, April 1

The club is promoting an informal Messier Hunt night on Saturday nite, April 1. The club calls it impromptu because of the vagaries of Wisconsin weather at this time of year have a way of shortcutting the best laid plans. If the Messier certificate article on page 2 whets your appetite, heres a chance to get a running start. At this time of year its theoretically possible to find most of the 110 Messier objects by going from dusk to dawn. A lot of clubs run marathons to see who can log the most objects in one night. Our hunt is one step back from this approach.....its more like learning how to walk before you run.

Bring your own scopes or come out and use one of the clubs Portascopes and start finding your way around the sky. Help should be on hand to help out on finding various objects (see Presidents Message). Once you get the knack of it though, you'll have to hone your area search skills.

The March issue of Sky and Telescope magazine has an excellnt article on looking for Messier objects and lists the objects, in order of appearance, starting at dusk and going through til dawn. It also flags out whether the difficulty in finding them.See the article on Messier Marathon in the March Sky & Telescope magazine p119 for tips and a list of objects in chronological order..

First Saturday Night Tutoring sessions resume

Scott Jamieson will be present on site every first Saturday nite of the month starting on April 1.Scott is usually there at nightfall and is available for familiarization training on any of the observatory scopes, "how to" sessions, or try to answer your astronomy questions. These first saturday sessions will continue into the fall until weather slows things up. The April 1 session will probably be Messier object oriented (see above article). Since the Observatory Director is the keyholder for that nite, you get two for the price of one.

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 1 Messier Hunt
 May 19 Election of Officers and three Board members

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

4	Scott Laskowski	414-421-3517
11	Rudy Poklar	262-786-8931
18	Jill Roberts	262-427-4495
25	Terry Ross	262-784-1674

April

1	Gerry Samolyk	414-529-9051
8	Tom Schmidtkunz	414-352-1674
15	Neil Simmons	414-889-2039
22	Chris Weber	262-789-7128
29	Dan Yanko	414-453-3382

May

6	Wanda Burner	262-646-8229
13	Paul Borchardt	262-781-0169
20	Tim Burrus	262-783-6572
27	Brian Ganiere	414-961-8745

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

MAS Observatory 542-9071

The Milwaukee Astronomical Society

2933 N.68th Street
 Milwaukee, WI. 53210-1208

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****We meet at 8:00PM, UWM Kenwood Campus on Friday, Mar.17, 2000
 - Featured speaker will be Dan Koehler on the History of Yerkes Observatory.***

**** Messier Hunt at MAS April 1***

