



Issued by the

Milwaukee Astronomical Society

January 1988

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January Program Meeting - Astro Videos

An interesting and informative program will be presented at the general meeting. We will meet in the the CATC auditorium and then switch to another room to view some special video tapes. The tapes are; "Northern Lights", an informative presentation about the aurora borealis in Alaska; "Death of a Star", the PBS Nova program detailing the biggest supernova event of the last couple of centuries, Supernova 1987a.

WHEN: Friday, January 15, 8:00 P.M.
 WHERE: Child & Adolescent Treatment Center (CATC)
 9501 W. Watertown Plank Road, Wauwatosa
 The site may be reached by the RT 71 bus.
 There is ample, well lit, free parking.
 Guests are welcome.

Observatory News

Activity is more or less in cold storage owing to the time of the year. Programs listed in the "Calendar of Events" might have to be cancelled or held in abeyance until another time because of inclement weather, extreme cold, or difficult access to our facilities, especially the parking lot. Call the observatory (542-9071) or the directors (475-9418 or 258-5626) before battling the drifts to get there. And once again, please keep the washroom and darkroom doors closed to conserve power. Check everything before leaving the grounds.

Incidentally, some of the finest viewing will be possible during the coming cold, clear nights. Bundle up since the domes are unheated! The auditorium and office can be heated, so turn the furnace down before securing and leaving the "A" building.

New Member

Charles McDonald of Waukesha was introduced and welcomed at the December general meeting.

Meteor Showers

The month of January does not provide the meteor enthusiast with much in the way of entertainment.

Quadrantids - January 4-5. Peak at 4 AM. 40-150 per hour. Look north.

Delta Cancrids - January 16. Peak about Midnight. 4 per hour. Look directly overhead.

Coma-Berenicids - January 18. Peak at 4 AM. 1 per hour. Look overhead.

Calendar of Events

- Monday, January 11 - Board Meeting at 7:30 P.M.
 - Friday, January 15 - January Program-Meeting.
 - Wednesday, January 27 - "Focal Point" Deadline.**
 - Tuesday, February 2 - Full Snow Moon
 - Tuesday, February 2 - Groundhog Day. A shadow means 6 more weeks of winter.
 - Wednesday, February 3 - First Wednesday, 7:30 PM at the observatory.
 - Saturdays - Observatory maintenance and improvements. Help wanted. Call 475-9418 or 258-5626.
 - Saturday Nights - Member's night at the observatory.
- Please read the "Observatory News" article.

Any Suggestions?

In lieu of a March Program-Meeting, how would you like a field trip? Present plans are for a trip to Chicago's Adler Planetarium with optional trips to the Museum of Science and Industry, The Shedd Aquarium, or the Field Museum of Natural History.

This trip will be similar to the one many of us enjoyed last year. And it will allow an opportunity to visit the places we didn't have time for.

Other suggestions include Yerke's observatory and sites near Madison. If anyone has some other suggestion(s) of some other nearby place(s) of a general scientific nature, please let Dan Koehler know very soon.

New "Reflector" Editor

M. Barlow Pepin has now taken the helm as editor of the "Reflector," the excellent, official quarterly newsletter of the Astronomical League.

All members of M.A.S. receive the "Reflector" as a membership benefit.

Please send any newsworthy astronomically related items to;

M. Barlow Pepin
P.O. Box 295

Lake Helen, Florida 32744.

The "Reflector" is published in February, May, August, and November.

For Sale

Official M.A.S. coffee cups. They're well made, adorned with the Society logo, and commemorate our fiftieth anniversary. And they hold enough to get you goin' in the morning. Priced at \$4.00 each.

Also available are some large posters to help you find your way around the night sky at \$3.00 each, and two giant Milky Way posters at \$9.00 each. Please call Dan Koehler at 662-2987.

Season's Greetings

Ed Halbach, a founder member of the M.A.S. and our longest long-time member, wishes all of us season's greetings.

"Milwaukee Skies"

"Milwaukee Skies" is the title of an astronomy course of interest to the general public to be offered by the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Center for Continuing Engineering Education. The course will run for 5 Thursdays, from 7 to 9 P.M., beginning February 18, 1988. Classes will be held at the Manfred Olson Planetarium, 1902 E. Kenwood Blvd. (Kenwood & Cramer.) Adult registration is \$50, \$25 for each teenager from the adult's immediate family. It is recommended G-rated family fare.

With our planet as a springboard, your awe and curiosity about the universe will be whetted as you are introduced to topics covering aided and unaided eye viewing techniques, astrophotography, our solar system, stars, galaxies, "Big Bang", exotic stuff near the edge of the universe, even the pros and cons of extraterrestrial life. Telescopes will be provided for viewing or you may bring your own.

John G. Harmon, the Director of Manfred Olson Planetarium will be your instructor. For complete information and registration, please write to:

Non-Credit Registration Office

UW-Milwaukee

929 North 6th Street

Milwaukee, Wisc. 53203

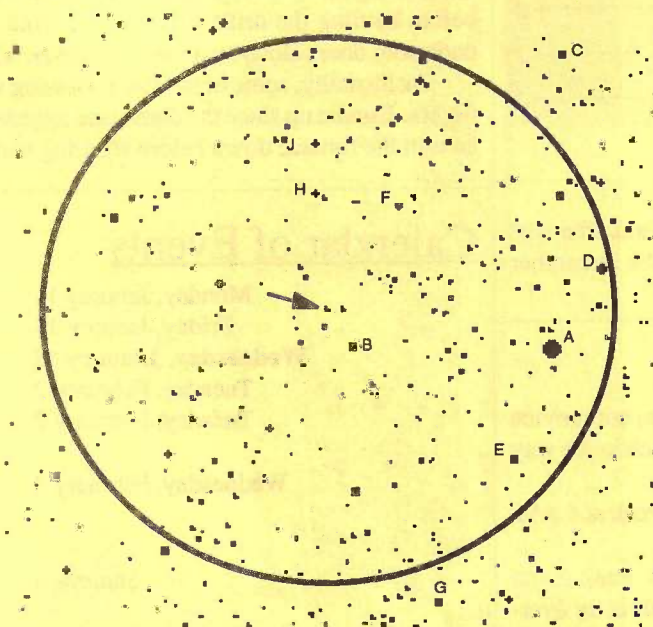
or phone (414) 227-3122. The program name and number is "Milwaukee Skies" - #8757.

Is A Reoccurring Nova In Your Future? By Jim Kube

Now that the stars and constellations south of Orion are visible in the southern sky, you might want to look for reoccurring Nova T-Pyxis, 9 hours 2.6 minutes Right Ascension and -32 degrees 11 minutes Declination. It is about 4 degrees East-Northeast from Alpha Pyxis.

Five maxima have been recorded for the star; in 1890, 1907, 1944, and 1966. Will 1988, in winter or spring, be the next maxima? The star is normally an object of 14 magnitude and rises to a 6.5 or 7 magnitude over a four to six month period.

If the Nova does not appear in 1988, look for it again in 1989 because the period between maximas seems to be getting longer. When you do see Nova T-Pyxis you will be witnessing one of the phenomenons of the night sky caused when two stars are orbiting and transferring material between each other. The star that is getting the extra material suddenly flares and gives off an enormous amount of energy in the visual and non-visual wave lengths. The distance to this wonderful object is well over 10,000 light years. The Nova you will see happened over 10,000 years ago



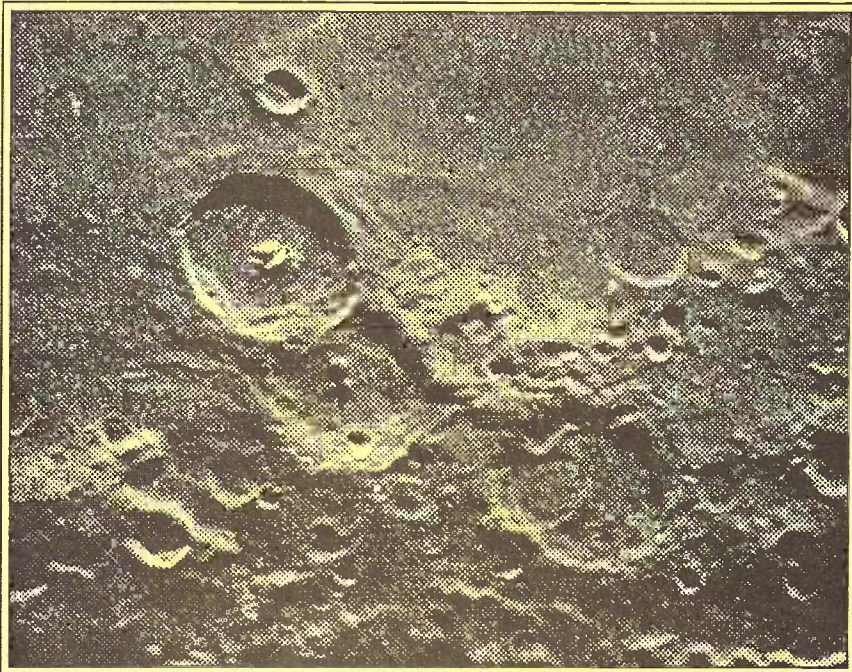
Comparison Magnitudes

- A = 6.9
- B = 8.0
- C = 8.7
- D = 9.0
- E = 9.2
- F = 9.3
- G = 9.5
- H = 9.9
- J = 10.1

" B" is very red.

Arrow points to
Nova T-Pyxis.

Drawing taken from Burnham's Celestial Handbook
pages 1521 to 1524.



Lunar Photo

This photo features a portion of the moon that is popular with astronomers. The three craters are (from left to right) Theophilus, Cyrillus, and Catherina. They are located on the lower edge of Mare Nectaris

Advertise!

MAS members may advertise in the "Focal Point" if an astronomical item is for sale or needed. There is no charge.

Send your article(s) or ad(s) to:

LeRoy Simandl

4201 W. Highland Blvd.

Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53208

(933-3052)

Keyholders

| | | |
|----------|-----------------|----------|
| Jan. 9 | N. Nichols | 542-2055 |
| Jan. 16 | A. Penikis | 354-9708 |
| Jan. 23 | J. Pfannerstill | 475-6494 |
| Jan. 30 | F. Roldan | 423-0210 |
| Feb. 6 | T. Ross | 784-2093 |
| Feb. 13 | G. Samolyk | 475-9418 |
| Feb. 20. | T. Schmidtkunz | 784-0253 |

Directory

| | | |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------------|----------|
| President | Dan Koehler | 662-2987 |
| Vice President | Dr. R. Wiesen | 781-4757 |
| Secretary | Ms. K. Wesener | 961-8752 |
| Treasurer | J. Toeller | 352-7144 |
| Observatory Director | G. Samolyk | 475-9418 |
| Assistant Observatory Director | J. Asztalos | 258-5626 |
| Librarian | Mrs. S. Waraczynski | 312-0918 |
| Assistant Librarian | Mrs. J. Regis | 962-0896 |
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 Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53208

MAS Observatory 18850 W. Observatory Rd.
 New Berlin, Wisconsin
 542-9071

* This space available *

We have **LOTS** of extra space in the "Focal Point". If you have an interesting article or photograph, we would like to put them in the newsletter. Please send them in and help fill our pages.