

Focal Point



November and December 2008

Milwaukee Astronomical Society

Letter from the President

Well winter will soon be upon us and the MAS is starting to get geared up for next year's celebration of astronomy. The board is in the planning stages but we definitely need help. So I am appealing for help from you, the members of the MAS! I have a number of categories that we could use assistance with.



Observatory Tours

We receive a number of requests for tours of the observatory. Most of our tours are for scout groups since both the girl and boy scouts have awards for astronomy. Most tours are

conducted during the week and usually take place in the early evening between the hours of 7:00 and 10:00PM. Senior members of the society will conduct the tours since they are familiar with the equipment. But do not let that discourage you from helping. We always need help with welcoming the attendees, answering general astronomy questions and crowd control for larger groups. Also, it is a very good way to get acquainted with the observatory and other members. A few weeks ago a tour was conducted for a group of brownie scouts and their families. Total attendance was over 60 people! We had terrific views of Jupiter and the moon, a lot of fun was had by all. If you are interested in helping with a tour please send me an email at maspresident@milwaukeeastro.org I'll add your name to a mailing list and when I get a tour request I will contact you to see if you are available. It really is a fun and rewarding experience.

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The New Riding Lawnmower

Most of you are aware of our old John Deer riding lawnmower that needed expensive repairs in August. After a couple months of debate we decided to purchase a new 46" Cub Cadet lawnmower. The old lawnmower which was 20 years old has definitely served its time up on the hill.

The lawn did need one more cutting before the cold of winter sets in. I have cut the grass with the new riding lawnmower and it runs great. I have trimmed around the domes to clean that up a bit and we should be all set for another great year in 2009!

If anyone is interested in seeing the new lawnmower, just ask me or one of the Board members to take a look.

Jill Roberts

Lawn Maintenance

Librarian

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New Members Coordination

Bob Manske chairs our membership committee and is doing a terrific job. But recruiting new members, tracking our existing members and keeping communication flowing between them is a daunting task for one person. So if you would like to help Bob out with this important task then shoot him an email at newmemberdirector@milwaukeeastro.org and offer your services.

Scheduling Speakers for General Meetings

Ray Albarelli chairs our program committee. The program chair is the person who schedules our speakers for the general meetings. Many times we have professional astronomers, or graduate students come to a meeting to talk about their research. But many times we have our own members talk about their interests, or astronomy related trips they have taken. So if you have a topic that you think our members would like to hear about, or know someone who you think will be an informative speaker then please contact Ray at programdirector@milwaukeeastro.org with the suggestion.

Public Outreach Events

With the International Year of Astronomy next year the MAS is planning a more of public outreach activities than we have had during the past.

- We would like to schedule more **Public Observing Nights** at the observatory than we have had in the past and really need the assistance of the members to help host those events. Details will be provided once the dates have been set.
- We are planning an Astronomy Lecture Series at the New Berlin Public Library. These lectures will be presented by members of the MAS, should be geared for the general public, and last from 45-60 minutes. Weather permitting; we would conduct a public observing session after the meeting. If you would like to do a presentation or help with the observing session afterwards, then please contact me maspresident@milwaukeeastro.org or Jill Roberts (Boardmbr1@milwaukeeastro.org)

- A major cornerstone project of the International Year of Astronomy is the **100 Hours of Astronomy** (<http://www.100hoursofastronomy.org>). This is a WORLDWIDE event and will take place from April 2-5 when the moon is between 1st quarter and gibbous phase. Again the MAS is in the planning stages of this event but no coordinator has been assigned. If you would like to help with this activity or even coordinate it, the please send an email to either me (maspresident@milwaukeeastro.org) or Becca Setzer (vicepresident@milwaukeeastro.org).
- One final public outreach activity is to host some public observing events in more of the state and county parks in the Waukesha area. These would be in addition to our public observing nights at the observatory. It will be a way to bring astronomy out to the public. I am coordinating this effort and I will need help. If you have location suggestions, want to join in the planning, or just want to come out with your telescope please email me (maspresident@milwaukeeastro.org).

Publicity

Of course with all the events we are trying to accomplish, none of them would be effective without publicity. In order for the MAS to succeed with all of these public programs, we need to revamp our entire strategy. If you have any contacts with the media including radio, television, newspapers, and websites and enjoy working on press releases and publicity then the MAS can REALLY use your help. Our Vice President Rebecca Setzer (vicepresident@milwaukeeastro.org) and board member Al Hovey (Boardmbr8@milwaukeeastro.org) are the primary contacts for MAS publicity.

I know we all have busy lives. But the MAS is not an organization for a select few members but for all of us. Please, get involved. Just a few short hours a month will help this organization significantly. Remember, not only are the general meetings open to the members but the board meetings as well. And please continue to check the website (www.milwaukeeastro.org) for the latest news and updates. Please contact me with any ideas or suggestions you may have at maspresident@milwaukeeastro.org

Clear Skies!

Steve

MAS Fall Camp Out

The Milwaukee Astronomical Society fall camp out was at Dan and Helen Yanko's farm in Rib Lake Wisconsin on September 26 & 27, 2008. The ride up was sunny with the landscape a blaze of autumn colors. We arrived Friday afternoon and set up our scopes. The atv ride to Gertsberger's Pines was awesome and it was so cool to photograph an eagle in one of the towering pines as well as a deer in the hay-field. The atv ride with Jill and Becca around the farm was a blast that was exhilarating and terrifying at the same time. (Just kidding of course) Hey, I did come back alive!!!

We hiked in the field among the rolling hay bales. We dined on Mann's pizzas for dinner and then did some observing. The skies were very dark and transparent. The views through Jeff's 22 inch scope were just great! It clouded up around 1:00am and rained at 1:30am.

On Saturday some of the group hiked among the 200 year old pine trees at Gertsberger's Pines. Dan, Al and Jill took a bike ride to Wood Lake campground about four miles away among the rolling hills. That was a nice bike ride on the country roads. The afternoon was cloudy but there were clear skies on the western horizon giving us hope that the skies would clear up for an evening of observing. The group went to the Camp 28 restaurant for dinner and Zondlo's Tavern for beverages since the skies were cloudy. We came home to the farmhouse and had a campfire in the fireplace in the garage. There was a lot of laughter and revelry to end the evening. We had a lot of fun and great camaraderie among friends at the MAS fall camp out at the Yanko Farm in Rib Lake. A great time was had by all.

Dan Yanko



Saturday Night Key Holder

On Saturday nights the MAS opens its New Berlin facilities to all its members. If interested in using an observatory on the following nights, the following key holders will be on hand. Please contact them in advance to ensure access.

November

1	Vern Hoag	262-548-9130
8	Tim Hoff	262-662-2212
15	Kip Hoffman	920-980-0670
22	Scott Jamieson	262-896-0119
29	Lee Kieth	414-425-2331

December

6	Scott Laskowski	414-421-3517
13	Bob Manske	608-849-5287
20	Jill Roberts	414-587-9422
27	Terry Ross	262-784-2093

January

3	Tom Schmidtkunz	414-352-1674
10	Becca Setzer	262-707-7478
17	Gerry Samolyk	414-529-9051
24	Neil Simmons	262-889-2039
31	Dan Yanko	262-255-3482

MAS Membership is open to anyone interested in enriching their knowledge of Astronomy and related topics.

Yearly Membership Dues:

Student (under 18)	\$13		
Resident (Milwaukee and adjacent counties resident)		Non-resident	
Individual	\$36	Individual	\$23
Family	\$42	Family	\$27

Members can get subscriptions to *Sky & Telescope* (©) and *Astronomy* (©) at a club discount.

For more information contact:

Bob Manske, 404 Prospect Road, Waunakee WI 53597
Phone: (608) 849-5287
Email: manske@tds.net

November 21, 2008 8:00pm

Steve Diesso is scheduled to speak about his trip to the Kitt Peak National Observatory.

Board Meeting 7:00pm

December 5, 2008



Annual MAS Holiday Party

Details to follow



MAS Officers / Staff

President:

Steve Diesso (262) 641-0331

Vice President:

Rebecca Setzer (262) 707-7478

Treasurer:

Brian Ganiere (414) 961-8745

Secretary:

Henry Gerner (414) 774-9194

Observatory Dir:

Gerry Samolyk (414) 529-9051

Newsletter Ed:

Rebecca Setzer (262) 707-7478

MAS Observatory:

NOW WORKING (262) 542-9071

Loaner Telescopes

These telescopes are available to members for local use.

Scott Jamieson (Waukesha)

(262) 896-0119 8"

Paul Borchardt (MAS site)

(262) 781-0169 6" & 8"