



Focal Point



December, 2012

Inside this issue:

The Winter Program	1
The Year 2012	1
Treasurer's Report	2
Meeting Minutes	2
Observatory News	2
MAS Christmas	3
In the News	4
Adopt a Scope	5
Officers/Staff	5
Keyholders	5

The Winter Program of the MAS

There is no General Membership Meeting in December.

The January, February, March and April Meetings will be held at UWM, Physics building Room 133 at 8:00 PM. The room is one of the larger lecture halls near the planetarium. A great thank you goes to Jean Creighton, the Director of the

Manfred Olsen Planetarium for helping us secure the hall. The program of the meetings will be announced in the Newsletter.

The Observatory will be open during the winter, please call the Keyholders or follow the Google Group for availability on Saturday nights.

The Year 2012

Another busy year behind us. The spring, as usual, started with a huge work party to spruce up the Observatory for the Public Nights. In April the 10" Newtonian of the Albrecht Observatory was replaced with a second 18" Obsession telescope. The mirror of the 18" Obsession in the Wiesen Observatory was cleaned. The go to function of the Zemlock scope was reestablished. After a long struggle the 12" LX 200 is communicating with the computer and the camera, and ready to use for astrophotography. Many thanks to Scott Jamieson for his dedicated work with all the Observatory maintenance.

Our outdated website has been modernized. Efforts of Neil Simmons and Russell Chabot's sister for designing and putting it into work are highly acknowledged.

In May we held our annual business meeting and elected two new members, Rob Burgess and Mike

Smiley to the Board of Directors. In August Russell Chabot was appointed as Assistant Observatory Director. A record number of seventeen new members joined the MAS in 2012.

During the year we organized 6 Public Nights with great success, especially on June 5th when over 500 visitors came to see the Venus Transit. Many members participated on the annual star party at the Yerkes Observatory that MAS hosted for summer students. A visit of Girl Scouts was accommodated. On the General Membership Meetings 6 guest speakers delivered interesting presentations on diverse topics. We enjoyed a Summer Picnic in August, and closed the year with our annual Christmas Party.

The Focal Point Newsletter will keep the Membership updated on the MAS events and programs.

We wish Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year all of you and your families.

Treasurer's Report

The expenditures in October consisted of the WE Energies bill of \$75.22. The incomes from membership renewal fees and parking donations totaled \$202.00.

Our checking balance as of 14th November is \$7,349.43. We have \$1,814.09 in funds that are unencumbered.

Albrecht fund as of 31st October is \$8,21.04.

Respectfully Submitted,
Neil Simmons, Treasurer

Observatory News

The MAS has been struggling for a long time to find a computer that was compatible with the parallel port of the ST9 camera we use on the 12" LX 200 scope. In addition, the computer



must have a working serial port to operate the telescope interface. Since a proper computer could not be found, Scott Jamieson moved the computer that controlled the Z scope, and connected to the 12" LX 200. Now the scope works very well. To be able to operate the Z scope, Scott donated a computer having a parallel port but lacking a serial port - which is not required to control the Z scope.

Thank you Scott!

Membership Meeting Minutes

Held on November 16th at MAS Observatory, New Berlin.

The meeting was called to order at 8:03 PM by Vice President, Brian Ganiere.

Minutes of the October General Meeting were read and approved.

The **Treasurer's Report** was given by Treasurer, Neil Simmons. Copy attached.

There was no **Observatory Director's Report**.

Follow up:

The drive of the Z scope is now working.

Scott Jamieson bought and installed a new focuser on the B scope, mirror was not moved. The old focuser was put back on the A scope.

During the winter doors of restrooms and dark room must be kept closed. In the Z dome the observatory door should be closed, the office door open, breaks off.

There was no **Correspondence**.

There was no **Old Business**.

New Business - New members introduced themselves.

There was no **Announcement**.

The Program: Douglas Arion, Professor at the Department of Physics and Astronomy at the Carthage College gave a presentation about **Planetary Nebulae**.



The meeting was adjourned at 9:15 PM

Respectfully Submitted,
Agnes Keszler, Secretary

Christmas Party 2012



On December 7th, 2012 the MAS hosted its annual Holiday Party at the Observatory. Members and families enjoyed pizza-soda-beer-cookies and shared stories during the evening.



Photos courtesy of Dennis Roscoe.

In the Astronomical News

Jupiter: Turmoil from Below, Battering from Above

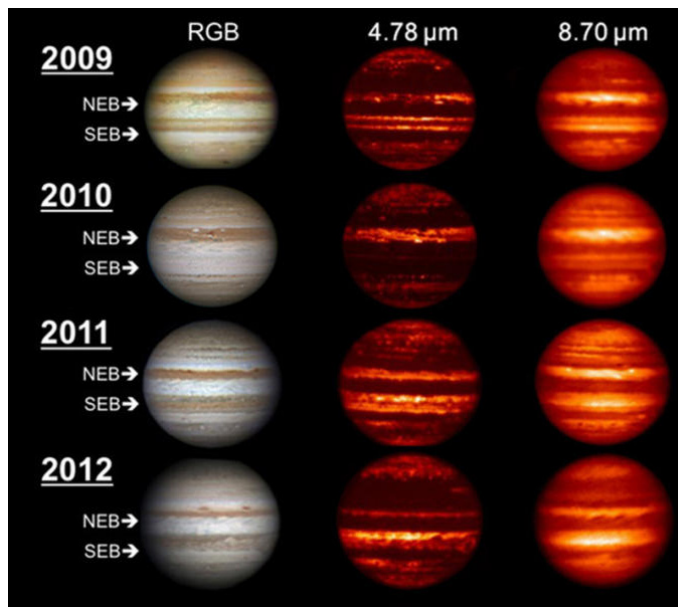
Jupiter, the mythical god of sky and thunder, would certainly be pleased at all the changes afoot at his namesake planet. As the planet gets peppered continually with small space rocks, wide belts of the atmosphere are changing color, hotspots are vanishing and reappearing, and clouds are gathering over one part of Jupiter, while dissipating over another. The results were presented by Glenn Orton, a senior research scientist at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory, Pasadena, Calif., at the American Astronomical Society's Division for Planetary Sciences Meeting in Reno, Nevada.

Orton and colleagues have been taking images and maps of Jupiter at infrared wavelengths from 2009 to 2012 and comparing them with high-quality visible images from the increasingly active amateur astronomy community. Following the fading and return of a prominent brown-colored belt just south of the equator, called the South Equatorial Belt, from 2009 to 2011, the team studied a similar fading and darkening that occurred at a band just north of the equator, known as the North Equatorial Belt. This belt grew whiter in 2011 to an extent not seen in more than a century. In March of this year, that northern band started to darken again.

The team obtained new data from NASA's Infrared Telescope Facility and the Subaru Telescope on Mauna Kea that matched up that activity with infrared observations. Those data showed a simultaneous thickening of the deeper cloud decks, but not necessarily the upper cloud deck, unlike the South Equatorial

Belt, where both levels of clouds thickened and then cleared up. The infrared data also resolved brown, elongated features in the whitened area called "brown barges" as distinct features and revealed them to be regions clearer of clouds and probably characterized by downwelling, dry air.

The team was also looking out for a series of blue-gray features along the southern edge of the North Equatorial Belt. Those features appear to be the clearest and driest regions on the planet and show up as apparent hotspots in the infrared view, because they reveal the radiation emerging from a very deep layer of Jupiter's atmosphere. (NASA's Galileo spacecraft sent a probe into one of these hotspots in 1995.) Those hotspots disappeared from 2010 to 2011, but had reestablished themselves by June of this year, coincident with the whitening and re-darkening of the North Equatorial Belt.



Images in the visible-light and infrared parts of the spectrum highlight the massive changes roiling the atmosphere of Jupiter. (Credit: NASA/IRTF/JPL-Caltech/NAOJ/A. Wesley/A. Kazemoto)

While Jupiter's own atmosphere has been churning through change, a number of objects have hurtled into Jupiter's atmosphere, creating fireballs visible to amateur Jupiter watchers on Earth. Three of these objects -- probably less than 45 feet (15 meters) in diameter -- have been observed since 2010. The latest of these hit Jupiter on Sept. 10, 2012, although Orton and colleagues' infrared investigations of these events showed this one did not cause lasting changes in the atmosphere, unlike those in 1994 or 2009.

by Science Daily

Adopt a Telescope Program - Signup Sheet

	Adoptee	Scope	Location
1	Sue Timlin	18" F/4.5 Obsession	Wiesen Observatory
2	Neil Simmons	12.5" F/7.4 Buckstaff	B Dome
3	Russell Chabot	12.5" F/9 Halbach	A Dome (Armfield)
4	Dan Yanko	18" F/4.5 Obsession (Kyle Baron)	Albrecht Observatory
5	Tamas Kriska	25" F/15 Zemlock	Z Dome
6	Henry Gerner	12" LX 200	Tagney Observatory
7	Jeffrey Fillian	14" Z-Two scope	Ray Zit Observatory
8	Kevin & John McCarthy	10" LX 200	Jim Toeller Observatory

At Your Service

Officers / Staff

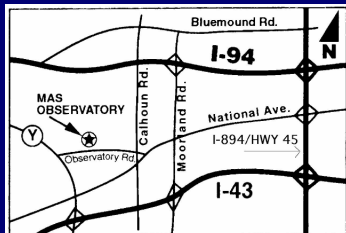
President	Henry Gerner	414-774-9194
Vice President	Brian Ganiere	414-961-8745
Treasurer	Neil Simmons	262-889-2039
Secretary	Agnes Keszler	414-475-6267
Observatory Director	Gerry Samolyk	414-529-9051
Asst. Observatory Director	Russell Chabot	414-881-3822
Newsletter Editor	Tamas Kriska	414-475-6267
Webmaster	Robert Burgess	920-559-7472

Board of Directors

Robert Burgess	920-559-7472
Russell Chabot	414-881-3822
Henry Gerner	414-774-9194
Chris Hesseltine	414--379-5744
Al Hovey	414-529-1878
Agnes Keszler	414-475-6267
Tamas Kriska	414-475-6267
Neil Simmons	262-889-2039
Michael Smiley	262-825-3981
Sue Timlin	414-460-4886
Dan Yanko	262-255-3482

December/January Key Holders

12/22	Tom Schmidtkunz	414-352-1674
12/29	Neil Simmons	262-889-2039
1/5	Dan Yanko	262-255-3482
1/12	Paul Borchardt	262-781-0169
1/19	Russell Chabot	414-881-3822



MAS Observatory

18850 Observatory Rd
New Berlin, WI

www.milwaukeeastro.org