



# Focal Point



May, 2013

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## May 31<sup>st</sup> Election Meeting

The next General Membership Meeting of the MAS will be held on Friday, **May 31<sup>st</sup>, 8:00 PM at The MAS Observatory, New Berlin**. We would like to emphasize that this will be a Business Meeting, **at least 20 members needs to be present to have quorum**. We hope that many of you can make it. We are going to elect a new President (since Henry Gerner's resignation in December the position is vacant), Treasurer, Observatory Director (Gerry Samolyk is not running for another term) and

two new Directors to the Board. Henry's unexpired Director term should be also filled. Two Board Members are eligible and willing to run for a new term. The new Board of Directors will elect the Officers, and the new President will nominate the Chairs and other Staff Members.

The program of the meeting will be a presentation given by Scott Jamieson entitled **Narrow Band Imaging - How it works and how practical would it be for use on the MAS 25 inch telescope**.

## Next Public Night on June 7<sup>th</sup>

Thanks to those members who participated in the work-parties clean Observatories await visitors of the 2013 Public Night season. The first event was held on May 10<sup>th</sup> at 7:30PM. The topic of the night was the Inner Planets. Even though the weather was terrible we did have two cars with visitors attend. A couple of our newer members also showed up. Unfortunately there was no observing, but Lee Keith gave a great presentation about Mercury, Venus, Earth, and Mars. He started his talk with an interesting demonstration of an inexpensive (\$199) CCD camera and free imaging software. You may wish to contact Lee for more details, because this combination of camera &

software is something that anyone can try.

2013 Public Observing Nights	
May 10, 19:30	Inner Planets Lee Keith
June 7, 18:00	Our Energetic Sun Brian Ganiere
August 9, 19:30	Meteor Showers Celeste Keith
September 6, 19:30	Deep Sky Objects Tamas Kriska
September 27, 19:30	Constellation Culture Sue Timlin
October 11, 19:30	The Moon Neil Simmons

## Treasurer's Report

I will not be able to make the last board meeting and elections on May 31<sup>st</sup>. I will present a final report to be read at that meeting. Other than that, I would like to end my term as treasurer with a few notes.

Nearly three years ago we were struggling with a rapidly deflating membership roster and had very little income. I was glad that we managed to cut costs, but I was more pleased to see how the Society has found a way of generating revenue by doing astronomy. The parking donations from our public observing nights have been a financial boon to this organization, and donations from group tours adds one or two hundred more dollars to our coffers. We have found a way to "sell" astronomy! I would like to thank those who are willing to step away from the limelight of the public nights to come down to the parking lot and collect money. If every one who shows up to help out were to avoid the limelight for one evening a year, I think we should be able to provide for ourselves indefinitely with all of us sharing in the fun. As usual for many organizations such as ours a few people do the majority of the work. My thanks go to them.

Monetary donations from individuals have also been a boon to this organization. One individual in particular has paid for the speaker honorariums for the last several years. I thank you. Those who donate a little extra when renewing their membership help ease the running of this Society. Last year you donated nearly \$200 to the general fund. This is in addition to the money you add to the Endowment Fund and the Albrecht Fund for moving the observatory. There are also those who donate old but usable tools and equipment, telescope parts and their expertise to keep this Society maintained and functioning. I thank you.

As I have stated previously to the board through email, as of May 31<sup>st</sup> I will no longer provide the services of treasurer for the Society. I will be willing to help the new treasurer settle in. The board should at least find some one to control the checkbook and pay the reoccurring bills and make sure that important forms from the state and IRS are filed yearly. IRS Form 990-N was filed electronically and accepted by the IRS on 2 April. Please note that failure to file this form three years in a row will result in an immediate cancellation of our federal tax-exempt status, which exempts us not only from sales taxes but also property taxes. Fortunately, this form takes about 10 minutes to fill out.

Previous balance as of March 14, 2013 **\$5,721.02**

**Expenditures:** \$666.96, **Credits:** \$267.80

Current balance as of April 19, 2013 **\$5,316.86, Cash \$20.00**

Current money available for discretionary spending (excluding cash): \$2,176.18

**Albrecht Fund (for Moving the Observatory)** Money Market balance as of Feb 31, 2013 \$8,215.32

**Endowment Fund** Investco portfolio \$7,258.25. Change in market value (+ 518.83)

Protective Life Annuity \$85,146.93. Gain / Loss (+1,080.09)

Respectfully Submitted,  
Neil Simmons, Treasurer

## Meeting Minutes

**Held** on April 19<sup>st</sup> at the UWM, Milwaukee. The meeting was called to order at 8:00 PM by Vice President, Brian Ganiere.

**Minutes** of the March 15<sup>th</sup> General Meeting, was read and approved.

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

**Observatory Director's Report** - Work parties will be organized to get the Observatory prepared for the Public Nights.

The Board approved buying two (1.25" and 2") moon filters.

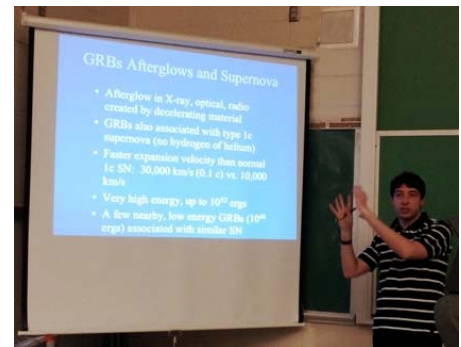
**Old Business** - The Board decided to individually print Public Night flyers and distribute them. The flyers are available in the MAS website on the last page of the April issue of the Focal Point.

There was no **New Business** -

**Announcement** - Russell will announce the work parties on the Google group.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:31PM

**The Program** Brian Morsony, a postdoctoral fellow at the Department of Astronomy at UW-Madison gave a talk entitled



Gamma-Ray Burst and other transients.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Agnes Keszler, Secretary

## In the Astronomical News

### A Bright Flash in the (Lunar) Night

Over the past eight years, the observers assigned to NASA's Meteoroid Environment Office have looked at a lot of boring video of the Moon. But every week or so they record a tiny, brief flash caused by a space rock slamming into the lunar nightside.

On March 17, 2013, a 4<sup>th</sup>-magnitude flash briefly interrupted the lunar night along the southern margin of Mare Imbrium. North is toward right, and the small dark crater near the upper limb is Grimaldi. One of the MEO's 14-inch telescopes sited near the Marshall Space Flight Center in Alabama recorded an unexpectedly bright flare. The second-long flash peaked at about 4<sup>th</sup> magnitude, meaning it could have been picked up by eye had anyone gazed upon the Moon's fat waxing crescent at that moment.

The flare remained undiscovered for more than a month until Ron Suggs went through the night's observations. "It jumped right out at me, it was so bright," he notes in a NASA announcement issued last week.

Over an 8-year span, observers with NASA's Meteoroid Environment Office used 14-inch telescopes to record nearly 300 impacts on the Moon.

Ordinarily, gauging the impactor's size solely from the flash's intensity and duration involves considerable guesswork. The burst of light isn't created from frictional heating, as happens when meteoroids enter Earth's atmosphere, but instead because even small objects deliver enough kinetic energy to momentarily superheat the lunar rubble where they strike.

On March 17, 2013, an all-sky camera in Yarker, Ontario, captured a bright fireball about 3 hours after NASA observers recorded an especially bright impact on the Moon.

Luckily, five bright fireballs were captured that same night by all-sky cameras operated at two sites in Georgia by the MEO and in southeastern Canada by researchers at the University of Western Ontario. Calculations suggest that all of those objects were traveling together in highly eccentric orbits that stretched to the inner asteroid belt (with a semimajor axis of 2.25 astronomical units), and that they arrived at 57,000 miles per hour (25.6 km per second).

William Cooke, who manages the NASA effort believes that the fireballs and the flash in Mare Imbrium were related. So, armed with a

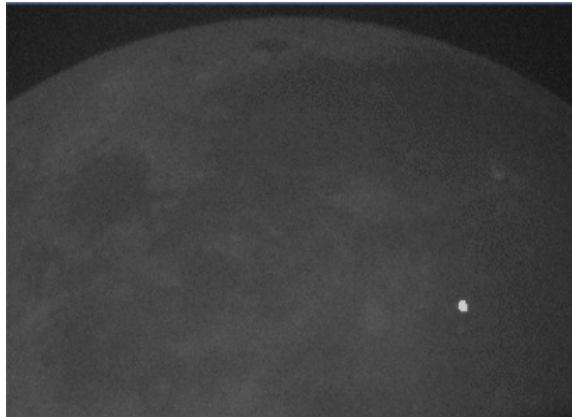
rough orbit and some basic physics ( $E = \frac{1}{2}mv^2$ ), he calculates that the lunar impactor must have been about the size of a beach ball, 30 to 40 cm across, and that its collision delivered the explosive equivalent of 5 tons of TNT.

Something of that size and mass, hitting that fast, should gouge out a crater 20 feet (6 m) across or even larger. That's big enough to turn up in high-resolution images

taken by NASA's Lunar Reconnaissance Orbiter. "We are certainly looking forward to checking out the March 17<sup>th</sup> event," says Mark Robinson (Arizona State university), principal investigator for LRO's camera. "In that target area there is about 80% preexisting coverage, so it looks possible."

Meanwhile, Cooke thinks the cluster that stroked on March 17<sup>th</sup> might be related to a little-known meteor shower called the Eta Virginids (or Northern March Virginids). "We'll be keeping an eye out for signs of a repeat performance next year," he says.

by Kelly Beatty  
Sky & Telescope Magazine



*On March 17th, a space rock slammed into the Moon's Mare Imbrium and created a brief 4th-magnitude flash (the brightest by far recorded to date) that could have been seen by the unaided eye.*

## Adopt a Telescope Program - Signup Sheet

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

### At Your Service

#### Officers / Staff

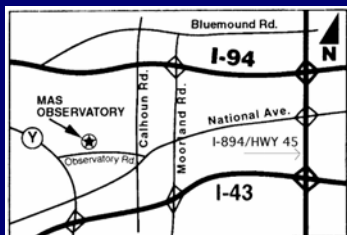
President	Vacant	
Vice President	Brian Ganiere	414-961-8745
Treasurer	Neil Simmons	262-889-2039
Secretary	Agnes Keszler	414-581-7031
Observatory Director	Gerry Samolyk	414-529-9051
Asst. Observatory Director	Russell Chabot	414-881-3822
Newsletter Editor	Tamas Kriska	414-581-3623
Webmaster	Robert Burgess	920-559-7472

#### Board of Directors

Robert Burgess	920-559-7472
Russell Chabot	414-881-3822
Vacant	
Chris Hesseltine	414-379-5744
Al Hovey	414-529-1878
Agnes Keszler	414-581-7031
Tamas Kriska	414-581-3623
Neil Simmons	262-889-2039
Michael Smiley	262-825-3981
Sue Timlin	414-460-4886
Dan Yanko	262-255-3482

#### June/July Key Holders

6/1	Lee Keith	414-425-2331
6/8	Tamas Kriska	414-581-3623
6/15	Scott Laskowski	414-421-3517
6/22	Tom Schmidtkunz	414-352-1674
6/29	Neil Simmons	262-889-2039
7/6	Dan Yanko	262-255-3482



#### MAS Observatory

18850 Observatory Rd  
New Berlin, WI

[www.milwaukeeastro.org](http://www.milwaukeeastro.org)