

FOCAL



POINT

Issued by the

MILWAUKEE ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY

- : DECEMBER 1983 : -

CALENDAR:

- * Fri., Dec. 16 - December Program-Meeting.
- Fri., Dec. 23 - Board of Directors Meeting, 7:30 P.M.
- Sun., Dec. 25 - Merry Christmas!
- Sun., Jan. 1 - Happy New Year!
- * Thur., Jan. 12 - 26" Telescope Meeting.
- * Sat. Nights - Member's nights at the observatory.
- * Please read on for details.

DECEMBER PROGRAM-MEETING: Dr. Robert Bless, Professor of astronomy at UW-Madison, returns once again to present another of his interesting and informative talks. This time he will tell about the giant 2.4 meter Space Telescope that will be launched from a space shuttle in 1985.

Designed as a self-contained astronomical observatory, this very exacting device will be capable of viewing and gathering data from the extremely distant objects that dot the clear skies of outer space.

Plan to hear Dr. Bless, Friday, December 16, at 8 P.M., room 133, at the UW-Milwaukee Physics Bldg., corner of Kenwood and Cramer.

Should inclement weather delay Dr. Bless's flight to Milwaukee and cause him to cancel his presentation, Program Chairwoman Eileen Korenic will arrange a substitute program.

WE'RE NOT DOING NOTHING! Assistant Observatory Director John Asztalos notes that a total of 5,644 variable star events were observed between January, 1982 and October, 1983. This is in addition to Open House Programs, construction of the 26" telescope, grazing occultation expeditions, and viewing of other objects in and out of our galaxy.

26" TELESCOPE MEETING: The 26" Telescope committee will meet Thursday, January 12, 7:30 P.M., at the home of MAS President Peter Smitka, 15000 Cleveland Av., New Berlin (785-0926).

Anyone else interested in its completion is cordially invited.

Appeals for help have been answered! More parts have been completed. Drafters are needed to make drawings and sketches so more components can be made. Some members have offered use of machine tools to qualified operators for part production.

Maybe the 26" 'Scope could be at least useable, even if not completed, in time for ALCON '84!

DID YOU SEE IT? Space shuttle Columbia passed over Milwaukee Friday evening, December 2, at 5:15 P.M. CST. Its flight direction was from northwest to southeast.

Columbia appeared as bright as morning star Venus and its speed and brightness provided a spectacular sight as it flew by about 10°-15° west of overhead.

DID YOU NOTICE the ALCON '84 eye-catching announcement on the last page of the November '83 Reflector?

MEET NEW MEMBERS Alan Lijewski, Milwaukee; Ed Meyers and wife Pat, Brown Deer; Gary Sampson, Waukesha; James Schweder, Waukesha; and David Street, Boulder, Colorado.

The MAS welcomes each and all of you! Meet some of the other members at the next General-Program Meeting.

FOR SALE: 4½" telescope with tripod, and 18mm Kellner and 8mm Edmund RKE eyepieces. Priced at \$130.00. Please call Don at 545-2313.

FOR SALE: Eyepieces: Meade 9mm ortho and 40mm wide angle Celestron- \$13.50 each or both for \$25.00. Telephoto lens: B.K. Myers 135mm f1.8, great for starclouds, nebulae, and the Milky Way - \$95.00. Offered by Tom Schmidtkunz, 1100 W. Wells, Apt. 1703, Milwaukee 53233, 276-9675 or 271-3011 X1656.

A PENUMBRAL LUNAR ECLIPSE will be visible on Monday, December 19. Mid-eclipse will occur at 7:49 P.M. Central Standard Time on the 19th.

Though not the most exciting celestial spectacle, it might be worth watching to see what a penumbral lunar eclipse looks like.

Please see page 539 of your Dec., 1983, Sky & Telescope for details.

<u>METEOR SHOWERS:</u>	<u>PEAK DATE & TIME</u>	<u>MOON AGE</u>	<u>PEAK RATE/HR</u>
Geminids	Tues., Dec. 13 2 a.m.	9d	55
Quadrantids	Wed., Jan. 4	1d	100

Best viewing is between midnight and dawn. Peak rate may occur a day or two before or after maximum. On any normal night, an observer should see between 5 and 10 meteors per hour.

METEORS USEFUL FOR COMMUNICATION?! The November, 1983 issue of Popular Science (page 89) reports that work is in progress for using meteor bursts for communication transmission!

The report states that tiny meteors are constantly plunging through the earth's atmosphere, ionizing the air in their vicinity when they burn. Though this condition lasts but a short time, the trails can reflect high-frequency radio signals effectively up to 1250 miles. Under the right conditions, communications can be transmitted without using a high-cost, complicated satellite. One application would be acquiring weather data from unmanned remote weather stations in Alaska.

Amazing!

HAPPY HOLIDAYS TO EVERYONE who reads this message!

The Officers and Board Members wish one and all many pleasant moments during the forthcoming holiday season.

MEMBER'S NIGHT KEYHOLDERS:

Dec. 10	R. Berry	442-4267	Dec. 31	C. Hesselstine	482-4515
17	W. Collins	255-4169	Jan. 7	P. Murn	464-1539
24	G. Hall	786-8579	14	J. Pfannerstill	475-6494
			21	F. Roldan	344-2354

Saturday night is member's night at the observatory. All members are invited to come out to observe, learn how to use the equipment available, or just chat. Call the keyholder the Fri. before his night - cancel Sat. if necessary. Keyholder should report anyway. He will also oversee tours during the week ending with his assigned night. Mr. J. Toeller (352-7144) will act on requests.

- : FULL COLD MOON MONDAY, DECEMBER 19 : -

DIRECTORY:

President - Peter Smitka - 785-0926
Vice President & Program Chairwoman - Eileen Korenic - 541-3999
Secretary - Brian Ganiere - 425-1384
Treasurer - James Toeller - 352-7144
Observatory Director - Gerry Samolyk - 258-5626
Asst. Obs. Director - John Asztalos - 258-5626
ALCON '84 Chairpersons-Eileen Korenic (541-3999), Dan Koehler (662-2987)
FOCAL POINT Editor - LeRoy Simandl - 933-3052
MAS Observatory - 18850 W. Observatory Rd., New Berlin - 542-9071

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