

FOCAL POINT



Issued by the
MILWAUKEE ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY

- : DECEMBER 1984 : -

NEW MEETING SITE

LAST CALL FOR DUES!

HAPPY HOLIDAYS!

CALENDAR:

Sat., Dec. 15 - MAS Amateur Ast. Series #4.
Fri., Dec. 21 - General Program-Meeting. Note New Site.
Fri., Dec. 21 - Board Meeting, follows the general meeting.
Tue., Dec. 25 - Merry Christmas!
Tue., Jan. 1 - Happy New Year!
Wed., Jan. 2 - January Focal Point deadline.
Sat., Jan. 5 - MAS Amateur Ast. Series #5.
Sat., Jan. 12 - MAS Amateur Ast. Series #6.
Saturdays - Observatory maintenance and improvement.
Sat. Nights - Members night at the observatory.

DECEMBER PROGRAM-MEETING: "To suppose that Earth is the only populated world in infinite space is as absurd as to believe that in an entire field sown with millet, only one grain will grow." This statement was made by Metrodorus of Chios in the fourth century B.C.!

Recent awesome advances in high-tech, electronics, and miniaturization are opening more and larger doors to research in many fields, one being the search for extraterrestrial intelligent life.

The notion that we may or may not be alone is highly controversial and NASA is setting out on a fifteen year project to try to find out.

The next Program-Meeting will feature two color films on the possibility of extraterrestrial life:

"LIFE ON EARTH AND THE MIND OF MAN" is an edited version of a Boston University symposium to explore the implication of possible existence of extraterrestrial life.

"WHO'S OUT THERE?" is narrated by Orson Welles and takes us through science fiction to science fact.

What do you think? Make up your mind by viewing these films Friday, December 21, 8 P.M., at the Children's Adolescent Treatment Center (CATC), 9501 W. Watertown Plank Road, Wauwatosa. Enter the second building, turn left, walk down the corridor about half way, turn left into the auditorium. The guard will direct you. Comments about the new site are welcomed by Pres. Peter Smitka.

IN MEMORIUM: The Milwaukee Astronomical Society belatedly extends its sympathy and condolences to the family of Gordon McPherson who was laid to rest in September.

Mr. McPherson was a long-time member of the Society, having joined in 1975.

LAST CALL FOR DUES: Unfortunately, anyone who has not submitted his/her MAS dues in the near future will be dropped from the MAS roster!

Hopefully the list of MAS observing programs featured in last month's Focal Point inspired many or all of our members to renew or further their interests in the many fascinating facets of the world's oldest science, astronomy.

If you decide to stay with the MAS for another exciting year, please RUSH your dues now to our very patient Treasurer, Jim Toeller.

There's a handy dues form on the last page of this issue.

OUR NEWEST MEMBER is Paul Barina of Milwaukee. He will be introduced at the next General Program-Meeting.

LEE KEITH IS ELATED by the large enrollment in his observational astronomy class. Entitled "The MAS Amateur Astronomer's Series," the classes are in session Saturday nights at the observatory, starting at 7:30 P.M., cloudy or clear. All MAS members are welcome free of charge. Subjects remaining are:

<u>Title</u>	<u>Date</u>
All the Extras: Telescope Accessories	12/15/84
Reading the Celestial Roadmap	1/5/85
The Small, The Faint & The Diffuse: Locating Celestial Objects	1/12/85

AN OPINION: The November Focal Point published a rather comprehensive list of observing programs for the average amateur. Buried in the list was planet observing which could include the Moon.

As editor of the Focal Point, I receive newsletters from other Astronomical Societies. One is "The Observer," the official publication of the Lehigh Valley Amateur Astronomical Society to which Rodger Gordon is a prolific contributor of many erudite articles.

In the latest edition of the Observer, Mr. Gordon noted that while deep sky observing is becoming very popular owing to the availability of large 'scopes by the amateur, the amateur should not ignore our own solar system nor cuss out the full Moon, but instead of spending most of our observing time searching for objects millions of light-years away, devote more time studying the many marvelous objects right in our own "backyard."

Good point, Mr. Gordon.

Who has fired more imagination: Star Wars and E.T., or Jules Verne and Edgar Rice Burroughs?

GENERAL OBSERVATORY NEWS: The driveway has been sealed. Pull the cable off after opening to prevent driveway damage. Don't leave the washroom or darkroom doors open. This could cause the electric heaters to run our bill sky-high. The "A" scope is rewired, the "C" scope is installed. Thanks to Paul Borchardt for donating a 2" adapter for the Erfle eyepiece.

26" TELESCOPE UPDATE: Upstairs wall framing is complete. Roof flashing and caulking nearing completion. Next goal is to complete the electrical wiring. 'Scope tracks quite well but needs some adjusting and balancing. **WARNING!** Do not use the telescope unless someone in charge is present.

FIRST WEDNESDAY MEETINGS will be discontinued until further notice.

OBSERVATORY RENAMING CONTEST: The contest to rename our New Berlin MAS facilities has been terminated owing to general lack of interest. The grounds and buildings will continue to be called "The Milwaukee Astronomical Society."

But thanks to the few that did suggest names.

FOR SALE: University Optics 2" 55 mm Plossl eyepiece with rubber eyeshield. Like new. (Sells for \$79.50 new). Asking \$50.00.
Call Aris Penikis, 354-9708.

FOR SALE: A few copies of ALCON '84 minutes and proceedings at \$4.00 a copy. Also a number of small and large ALCON '84 T-shirts, yellow with black lettering. Good material. \$4.00 each.

FOR SALE: You may order Astronomy at \$12/year, Telescope Making at \$6/year (4 issues), Deep Sky, Odyssey (for children), and Observer's (Canadian) Handbooks at \$6 through the MAS (352-7144). Could be good Christmas gifts.

METEOR SHOWER PEAK DATE, TIME, AND VIEWING DIR. MOON AGE PEAK RATE/HR.

Geminids	Thu., Dec. 13, 1 A.M., South	21d	50-80
Ursids	Sat., Dec. 22, 4 A.M., North	New	10-15
Quadrantids	Fri., Jan. 4, 4 A.M., North	13d	40-150

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 from 5 to 10 meteors per hour.

A BARIUM LAUNCH from a rocket is tentatively planned on December 25 at 6 A.M. This can be seen with the naked eye if you know where to look. You will see a rapidly expanding fuzzy ball. We hope the media will give details.

THE MINUTES GO SLOW but the days go fast! The holidays are nearing and the MAS Officers and Board Members extend seasons greetings to all MAS members and their families.

Happy holidays to everyone who reads this message. Peace!

MEMBER'S NIGHT KEYHOLDERS:

Dec. 15	J. Pfannerstill	475-6494	Jan. 5	P. Smitka	785-0926
22	T. Schmidtkunz	276-9675	12	V. Tangney	327-7976
29	G. Samolyk	475-9418	19	H. Auchter	542-2158

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 WOLF MOON SUNDAY, JANUARY 6 : -

JANUARY FOCAL POINT DEADLINE - WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 2, 1985

