

# FOCAL



# POINT

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MILWAUKEE ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY

SPECIAL CONVENTION ISSUE

JULY, 1984

by Daniel L. Koehler, Chairman, ALCON '84

WHAT IS ALCON '84?? ALCON '84 is the 38th national convention of the Astronomical League, an organization composed of amateur astronomical societies and clubs like the Milwaukee Astronomical Society. ALCON, short for Astronomical League Convention, is held each year in a different city where a large, well established member club is located. The convention dates are August 1-4, 1984, and it will be held at Carroll College in Waukesha. The League currently has approximately 175 member societies representing over 8900 amateur astronomers around the U.S. and in some foreign countries. The MAS has hosted two other national conventions, in 1948 and 1965, for the League.

In 1982, the MAS Board of Directors petitioned the governing Council of the Astronomical League to request that the 1984 national convention be held in the Milwaukee area. The request was approved in May, 1983. Work on the details and planning of the convention was begun almost immediately. Fourteen months may seem like a lot of time to plan a convention but the time goes by very quickly and much work needed to be done in a very short amount of time!! Not only was there a great deal of work with convention details but the MAS Observatory in New Berlin, Wisconsin needed a good deal of "sprucing up" before it would be presentable to a large audience of scrutinizing amateur astronomers. And, of course, the Board felt that the 65-cm telescope should be near completion at the time of the national convention gathering. ALCON would be the perfect event at which to show off our newest telescope!!

After a lot of hard work, self sacrifice, faith, and devotion the stage is nearly set. The 65-cm telescope, while not complete, will be ready for some limited viewing by the opening of the convention. The instrument is simply glorious!! Its designers and creators have truly done themselves

proud. The new telescope is sure to be the envy of each convention attendee!! The Observatory itself has undergone an extensive clean-up and fix-up campaign. If you haven't seen the place lately you may not recognize it. The "A" and "B" domes and buildings have been painted, completely, inside and out! The "B" scope has just been re-assembled after an extensive renovation. The office and meeting hall areas have been painted and cleaned. Many projects that were shelved due to lack of interest or time in past years are now finished, and the entire observatory has been through a miraculous transformation.

As for the convention itself, the eighteen members of the ALCON '84 committee have worked through the fall, winter, and spring this past year contacting potential speakers and workshop leaders, making decisions about the many aspects and details of the convention, and in general planning a most educational and exciting time for all. I think we have succeeded. ALCON '84 promises to be a most informative and enjoyable convention for all who attend, and I'm not just saying that because I'm the chairman!! I truly believe it!!

As of Sunday, 22 July, 312 amateur astronomers from all over the United States have registered to attend ALCON '84. I fully expect the attendance to reach my prediction of 400 before the end of the convention on Saturday, 4 August. Those registered will hear talks by four invited speakers and attend 8 workshops given by "expert" amateurs on topics like computers in amateur astronomy, photoelectric photometry, astrophotography, telescope making, and amateur observing techniques. Conventioneers will also listen to 25 paper presentations on topics just too numerous to mention. I feel the range of topics and quality of papers submitted to this convention are the best the League has seen in years!! I think everyone will be amazed at the talent and ingenuity contained within the membership of the League. I always knew there was a lot of talent in the amateur societies which make up the League and this convention should prove it. Anyone attending ALCON '84 will be welcome to take a special tour of Yerkes Observatory in Williams Bay, Wisconsin and travel to downtown Milwaukee to visit Astronomy Magazine. Non-astronomers should especially like trips to the Milwaukee County Zoo, Pabst Brewery, Mitchell Park Domes, Milwaukee Public Museum, and Downtown Shopping, which are planned each day. There will also be a lot of displays to browse through such as the astrophotography, astro-art, and telescope making competition entries, displays by the "co-participating" groups at the convention like the National Deep Sky Observing Society, the Association of Lunar and Planetary Observers, and the International Amateur and Professional Photoelectric Photometers. Other displays will be set-up and staffed by different committees and groups within the Astronomical League like the League Book Service, the Reflector Newsletter, the League Sales Office, and others.

Astromedia Publishing Corp. of Milwaukee, publishers of Astronomy, Odessey, Telescope Making, and Deep Sky magazines is sponsoring Astromart '84, a separate convention of astronomy product retailers and dealers at Carroll College from August 1-4 also. Fifteen vendors will pack a large room in the lower level of the ALCON '84 meeting hall to display a wide range of astronomical products and equipment, all for your scrutiny and ready for purchase. Sounds like a dream come true, right?? All that good stuff in one spot where you can look it over and then buy whatever you need. It's just like having an astronomical department store in your own backyard!! The organizers of the Astromart gathering have done a super job and we are very grateful for their help.

On Saturday afternoon a special astronomical flea market will be held where amateurs can sell or swap used but useful equipment, supplies, and materials. The convention will conclude with a banquet, program, and awards ceremony on Saturday evening, 4 August. Let's not forget the nightly star parties at the MAS Observatory. We're likely to see some interesting home-made telescopes, and get involved in some interesting discussions about observations past out there. The people-to-people, or actually amatuer-to amateur, contact that one makes at an astronomical convention is probably the most rewarding part of the whole event. I guarantee you'll meet some of the most interesting people at ALCON, hear some thought-provoking talks and presentations, see alot of fascinating displays and equipment, and experience amateur astronomy at its best. That's why the convention theme is "Astronomy--The Amateur Science". Please, don't miss it.

THE ALCON '84 COMMITTEE IS: Dan Koehler, Chairman; Eileen Korenic, Vice-Chairwoman; Mary Ann Tangney, Secretary, and Workshops; Jim Toeller, Treasurer, A/V Equipment, and Paper Sessions; Bill and Lois Konig, Information and Registration; Frank Roldan, A/V Equipment, Paper Sessions, and Star-Parties; Sharon Mason, Typist and Convention Proceedings; Brian Ganiere, Publicity (among other responsibilities); Leroy Simandl, Focal Point editor and ALCON '84 news-reporter(among other responsibilities); Virgil Tangney, Workshops and Papers, Tom Renner, Workshop Leader and Astromart '84 Liason; John Wiesen, Artwork, Astro-art and Astrophotography Contests, and Workshop Leader; Richard L. Wiesen, Astrophotography Contest, Workshop Leader; Bob and Carol Stachowicz, Transportation and Tours; Jim Schweder and Jeff Kirk, Workshop Leaders and Star Party Assistants. Many of these people also worked quite hard on the Observatory "renovation" project this spring and summer, and continued to care for other responsibilities involving the MAS. WE SHOULD ALL BE PROUD OF THIS GROUP OF INDIVIDUALS FOR THEY HAVE DONE A TRULY EXQUISITE JOB OF PREPARING FOR ALCON '84!! THANK YOU ONE AND ALL. A HEFTY VOTE OF THANKS GO TO EVERYONE WHO WORKED ON THE 65-cm TELESCOPE PROJECT AND THE OBSERVATORY IN PREPARATION FOR THE CONVENTION. THANK YOU ALL!!

FOLLOWING IS A QUICK OUTLINE OF ALCON '84 EVENTS:

WEDNESDAY 1 AUGUST: 9:00 am - 9:45 am, Covention opening ceremonies; 9:45 am - 11:00 am, Invited speaker, Donald Parker, M.D. "The Amateur Planetary Observer in the Space Age: Why, What, and How"; 11:00 am - 11:45 am, Paper Session I; 11:45 am - 12:45 pm, Lunch; 1:00 pm - 3:00 pm, Invited Speaker, William J. Kaufmann, III, Ph.D., "Black Holes, Quasars, and Active Galaxies"; 3:00 pm - 5:30 pm, Paper Session II; 5:30 pm - 6:30 pm, Cookout and Mixer at Carroll College; 7:30 pm, Group Photo at the Observatory; 8:00 pm - 12:00 am, Star Party at the Observatory.

THURSDAY 2 AUGUST: 9:00 am - 10:30 am, Workshop by the National Deep Sky Observing Society; 10:30 am - 11:45 am, Paper Session III; 11:45 am - 12:45 pm, Lunch; 1:00 pm - 2:30 pm, Invited Speaker, Doug Hall, Ph.D., "Serious Research by Amateurs With Photoelectric Photometry"; 3:00 pm - 5:30 pm, Paper Session IV (ALPO papers); 5:15 pm - 6:15 pm, Dinner; 6:30 pm - 8:00 pm, Workshops, "Amateur Photoelectric Photometry" and "Computer Astronomy for the Amateur" (to run simultaneously); 8:30 pm - 12:00 am, Star Party at the Observatory.

FRIDAY 3 AUGUST: 9:00 am - 10:30 am, Workshop, "An Experimental Large Aperature Mirror"; 10:30 - 11:00 am, Paper Session V; 11:00 am - 11:45 am, Lunch; 11:45 am - 5:00 pm, Tour of Yerkes Observatory; 6:30 pm - 8:00 pm, Workshops, "Astrophotography--Where Its Going" and "Your Computer as an Astronomical Tool" (to run simultaneously); 8:00 pm - 1:00 am, Tour and Star Party at the Racine Astronomical Society Observatory; 8:30 pm - 12:00 am, Star Party at the MAS Observatory.

SATURDAY 4 AUGUST: 9:00 am - 10:30 am, Workshops, "Telescope Making" and "The Assoc. of Lunar and Planetary Observers" (to run simultaneously); 10:30 am - 11:45 am, Paper Session VI; 11:45 am - 12:45 pm, Lunch; 12:30 pm - 2:00 pm, Workshop, "Computer Astronomy for the Amateur"; 12:45 pm - 2:30 pm, Paper Session VII; 1:00 pm - 5:00, Flea Market; 2:30 pm - 5:00 pm, Business Meetings, 6:00 pm - 9:30 pm, Banquet and Program, Invited Speaker, Stephen Edberg, "Comet Halley--A Glowing Opportunity for Amateur Astronomers"; 9:30 pm, Convention ends. 10:00 pm - ???, Star Party, MAS Observatory.

The registration desk will open at 7:30 am on Wednesday, and 9:00 am each of the other three days. ASTROMART '84 will run from 9:00 am to 5:30 pm daily.

Registration fees are \$19 per individual and \$23 per family, or \$8 and \$10 for a one day registration only. Call me at 662-2987 if you have questions. SEE YOU THERE!!