

FOCAL POINT



Issued by the

MILWAUKEE ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY

- : MAY 1984 : -

COMING EVENTS:

- Sat., May 5 - National Astronomy Day.
- Fri., May 11 - May Election Meeting.
- Mon., May 14 - Penumbral eclipse of the Moon.
- Mon., May 14 - Full Flower Moon.
- Wed., May 16 - ALCON '84 Committee meeting.
- Fri., May 25 - Board meeting, 7:30 P.M. at the observatory.
- Wed., May 30 - Annular eclipse of the Sun.
- Wed., Jun. 6 - First Wednesday, 7:30 P.M. All welcome.
- Wed., Jun. 6 - June Focal Point deadline.
- Sun., Jun. 24 - MAS annual picnic.
- Saturdays - Observatory clean-up, fix-up.
- Sat. nights - Members Night at the observatory.

MAY ELECTION MEETING: This is one of the most important of our monthly meetings and there should be a good turnout. MAS Officers and three Board Members must be elected. They may be re-elected or replaced by nominees, volunteers, or consenting recommended members.

Directors serve three-year terms with a two-term limit. Officers serve for one year with unlimited re-election.

The present Board has done an exemplary job in directing the MAS through an eventful year. The new Board will no doubt see the completion of the 26" telescope and major improvements in our facilities.

WHEN - Friday, May 11, 8 P.M.

WHERE - The UW-Milwaukee, Physics Bldg., corner of Kenwood and Cramer, room 133. Guests welcome. NOTE THAT THE MAY MEETING WILL OCCUR ON THE SECOND FRIDAY OF THE MONTH.

ALCON '84: In an encouraging report, Chairman Dan Koehler said that 65 registrations (one hundred people) have been received. Dan also remarked that there will be a flea market where astronomical items may be bought, sold, or swapped. This will be held on the Saturday afternoon following the convention.

The registration fees will increase July 1 and on the opening day of the convention so please sign up now at the lower rates. Dan and the committee will need a lot of help during this big event, especially at the registration desk and at the nightly Star Parties. For the latter he'll need car parkers, guides, and 'scope attendants. Sign-up sheets are available at the meetings or call Dan or Eileen at 662-2987 or 541-3999 respectively and tell them what you'd like to do and when.

ALCON '84 committee members will meet Wed., May 16, 7:30 P.M. at the Carroll College Union.

THE OPEN HOUSE PROGRAM is an important service the Milwaukee Astronomical Society annually offers to the public. Thousands of people have visited us and enjoyed our hospitality. Many have become members, some remaining for many years.

Once again our New Berlin facilities will be hosting several Open Houses beginning Saturday, May 5, which is celebrated country-wide as National Astronomy Day.

Members who want to volunteer as guides, 'scope attendants, and car parkers may sign up at the May meeting or call any MAS officer. We can expect large crowds on clear nights especially since Mars, Jupiter, and Saturn will be prominent this summer.

MAY SKY SHOWS:

Both the Sun and Moon will star in celestial events this month.

There will be a penumbral eclipse of the Moon during the evening of May 14-15 starting at 9:42 P.M., max. at 11:40 P.M., and ending at 1:38 A.M., all times CDT. While there'll be little to see except some darkening at the southern limb, viewers will get an idea of what a penumbral eclipse is like, and the Moon will be in conjunction with Saturn and brilliant Mars.

There will be an annular eclipse of the Sun during the morning of May 30. The Moon will nearly blot out the Sun--it will be surrounded by a bright ring.

In the United States, the Moon's shadow will cut just northwest of New Orleans, cross Atlanta, Petersburg, Virginia, and exit the USA by crossing over Chesapeake Bay. Milwaukeeans will see a partial eclipse starting at approximately 10:10 A.M. CDT. The November, 1983 Sky and Telescope, P. 400, gives complete eclipse details. WARNING: DO NOT OBSERVE WITHOUT ADEQUATE EYE PROTECTION. BETTER USE INDIRECT VIEWING METHODS. SEE S & T, PAGE 403.

A FAVORABLE OPPOSITION WILL SOON OCCUR as Mars and Earth align with the Sun. At 6 A.M. on May 19, only $49\frac{1}{2}$ million miles will separate the two planets, resulting in a large, radiant Martian disc. According to Mr. Roger Gordon of the Lehigh Valley Amateur Astronomical Society, Allentown, Pa., it takes many nights of patient observing to train the eye to see significant Martian surface details. Using 60X-80X per inch for refractors or 500X-600X for 6'-12' reflectors should be adequate, seeing conditions permitting.

OBSERVATORY NEWS: What your Society now needs more than anything else is help in getting the New Berlin facilities shipshape. Many guests will arrive from near and far to attend ALCON '84. We expect most or all of them to visit the observatory.

No new projects will be started. Most of what can't be picked up will be painted. What can be picked up will be put in its proper place or discarded. If it walks we will smile and offer help. The tasks will concentrate on maintenance, housekeeping, and cosmetics. None are complicated.

Schedules are being prepared. Teams will be formed. Expect a phone call. Keyholders will be expected to oversee individual projects. How many hours can you pledge?

And please bring equipment. Mechanics, bring tools; painters, bring brushes, scrapers, thinner, rags; housekeepers, bring brooms, buckets, soap, rags, vacuums; groundskeepers, bring shovels, grass trimmers. Men, bring the ladies.

Work parties will meet every Saturday morning at 10. Leave when you like. Can we do the job in 13 Saturdays?

THE MESSIER CLUB By Brian Cieslak, MAS IHW Coordinator

Are you interested in learning your way around the evening sky and observing deep sky objects like galaxies, star clusters, and nebulas? Then the MESSIER CLUB is for you!

The MESSIER CLUB is an observing program sponsored by the Astronomical League which is getting novice astronomers outdoors searching the dark skies for the objects found in Messier's Catalog. Upon observing 70 of the 107 objects in the Messier catalog you can receive an impressive certificate to add to your collection of achievements. You can also earn an Honorary Citation for observing all 107 objects.

What you really gain from the MESSIER CLUB is the experience of being part of an observing program. Using your telescope to search out objects and then recording your observations in a log so others can study your data or you can refer to your observations at a later date.

Your observing log must contain the following data in order to qualify for a MESSIER CLUB Certificate:

- 1) Type and size of telescope including power used for each observation.
- 2) Seeing conditions; which is the magnitude of the faintest star visible with the naked eye.
- 3) Your log should also contain notes on how the object looked to you, i.e. shape of the object, color, number of stars, etc.

Once you have observed 70 or more objects your log must be verified by the local society's MESSIER CLUB official. At MAS that's Brian Cieslak. He will then send a request for your certificate from the League.

If you have your own telescope you can make all your observations in your own backyard if you want, but if you don't have a telescope you are welcome to use any of the scopes at the observatory. Saturday Nights are member nights at the observatory which gives you priority over the keyholders as far as using the equipment. The observatory staff will be there to help you out and answer questions. You can also come out during the week too, but keyholders have priority over the equipment. Since we have two 12.5" and a dozen 10" scopes we have never had an equipment shortage. Just call the observatory to be sure its open.

If you want to know more about the MESSIER CLUB and use of the observatory come out to the next observatory meeting. We'll have a sample certificate for you to look at as well as sample log sheets. If it's clear out we can break out the telescopes and get started toward our MESSIER CLUB certificates.

26" TELESCOPE Committee Members will meet Sat. mornings during the work parties.

NEW MEMBERS: The Milwaukee Astronomical Society is proud to present Daniel Hebecker, of Greenfield and Steven Johnson of Milwaukee.

Both will be introduced at the May meeting.

FIRST WEDNESDAY meetings offer a good opportunity for all members to learn about instrument operation, observing techniques, and participation in new observing programs. Perhaps you'd like to use our library.

FOR SALE: Celestron 8 off-axis guider body - \$25; Canon FX camera body, \$15; Canon adapter ring, \$8. Please call Herb Renner at 1-628-3301, (Colgate, Wis.).

LIGHT POLLUTION: Committee Leader John Asztalos needs more members to help in his effort to reduce light pollution. True, some lights are necessary, but the problem can be significantly reduced by contacting surrounding community leaders and neighboring homeowners to explain the merits of newer, less expensive types of lighting and the advantages of shielding.

"NORTHERN LIGHTS" will soon publish its second issue of 1984. Regarded as the official North Central Region Astronomical League newsletter, Northern Lights is published four times a year at the low price of \$2.50 for an annual subscription. News from midwest NCRAL Societies is printed along with select interesting, often unusual, astronomical articles.

Subscription price is \$2.50 for four editions, postpaid. Please remit to Mr. James Fox, 14601 55th St. S., Afton, Minnesota, 55001.

Mr. Fox needs astronomical articles. If you've done or read something that might be of interest to another observer, send it to Mr. Fox even if you are not a subscriber.

MEMBER'S NIGHT KEYHOLDERS:

May 5	F. Roldan	344-2354	June 2	V. Tangney	327-7976
12	T. Schmidtkunz	276-9675	9	H. Auchter	542-2158
19	G. Samolyk	475-9418	16	J. Asztalos	258-5626
26	P. Smitka	785-0926			

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.

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 - 475-9418

Asst. Obs. Director - John Asztalos - 258-5626

ALCON '84 Chairpersons - Dan Koehler (662-2987), Eileen Korenic (541-3999)

FOCAL POINT Editor - LeRoy Simandl - 933-3052

MAS Observatory - 18850 W. Observatory Rd., New Berlin - 542-9071

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