

FOCAL POINT



Issued by the
MILWAUKEE ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY

- : DECEMBER, 1986 : -

CALENDAR:

- Tue., Dec. 16 - Full Cold Moon.
- Fri., Dec. 19 - December Program-Meeting - 8 P.M., at CATC.
- Sun., Dec. 21 - BRRRR! Winter begins, 10:02 P.M. CST.
- Thu., Dec. 25 - Merry Christmas!
- Fri., Dec. 26 - Daylight begins to lengthen.
- Wed., Dec. 31 - January FOCAL POINT deadline.
- Thu., Jan. 1 - Happy New Year to all!
- Wed., Jan. 7 - First Wednesday meeting at the observatory - 7:30 P.M.
All welcome, especially new members.

Board Meeting - at General Meeting.

Saturdays - Observatory maintenance and improvement. Help wanted.
Call 475-9418 or 258-5626.

Sat. Nights - Members Night at the observatory. See keyholder list
on last page.

DECEMBER PROGRAM-MEETING: This month, Dr. Leonard Parker will introduce his audience to an exciting and relatively new area of research. His talk "Quantum Effects in Cosmology" will discuss such topics as the inflationary model of the universe, and particle creation by strong gravitational fields near black holes and in the very early universe.

Dr. Parker is a professor of Physics at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. Please plan to meet him

WHEN: Friday, December 19, 8 P.M.

WHERE: The Child and Adolescent Treatment Center (CATC)
Auditorium, 9501 W. Watertown Plank Rd., Wauwatosa.
The Rt. 71 bus stops nearby. There is ample free,
well-lit, parking.

THIS IS AN EARLY ANNOUNCEMENT about the January program/meeting. Members will meet on Friday, January 16, 1987 at Wauwatosa West High School at 7:30 P.M. for a planetarium show entitled "The Southern Hemisphere Skies". Planetarium Director (and MAS member) Gary Sampson will show us what the night skies look like from "down under". Please be prompt as we must finish the program by 9:00 P.M. A short business meeting will follow in one of the school's classrooms. The theater seats about 60. The high school is located at 11400 W. Center.

THE MAS IS "ON THE MOVE"--Here is something to look forward to after a long Wisconsin winter! An all day spring "field trip" to Chicago's Adler Planetarium is in the planning stages. The trip will take place on a Saturday in March or April in 1987. Most details are pending, but the MAS will charter buses for members and their families to travel as a group to the world famous planetarium, Field Museum of Natural History, Shedd Aquarium, or possibly the Museum of Science and Industry. Possible dates include March 14, 21, or 28 or April 4 and 11. The buses would probably leave from the College Ave. "Park-Ride" lot on the south side about 8-8:30 A.M. and return by 7-7:30 P.M. An individual fee would be payable in advance for transportation and tickets. About 40 MAS members attending the November meeting expressed interest in participating, so we expect a very good response for the trip. Since time will be limited while we are in Chicago, I would appreciate suggestions from anyone planning to go with us as to which of the three "optional" stops (Field Museum, Aquarium, or Science/Industry) they would most like to see after the Adler. We should be able to accommodate up to two additional visits for the group as a whole. I expect that all plans will be finalized by February 15. Watch future issues of The Focal Point for more information. The field trip will substitute for the March or April meeting at the CATC.

THE NORTH CENTRAL REGION OF THE ASTRONOMICAL LEAGUE (NCRAL), of which the MAS is a member Society, will hold its annual convention on Saturday, April 25. The event is sponsored by the Racine Astronomical Society, and will take place at Case High School (Hwy. 20 on the west side of Racine). The one day meeting involves astronomical paper sessions, displays, and a business meeting. A banquet with a main speaker will be held in the evening at the Sheraton Hotel, next door to the school. The Modine-Benstead Observatory, owned and operated by the RAS, will be open for inspection and viewing on both Friday and Saturday evenings. Registration and information will be available after Jan. 1, 1987 by writing Ms. Elsie Howard, 1505 Windsor Way #3, Racine 53406, and at the January and February MAS membership meetings.

WOULD YOU LIKE SOME "HANDS ON" EXPERIENCE studying real meteorites? Dan Koehler is planning a Saturday trip this spring to Wm. Rainey Harper College in Palatine, IL, for anyone interested in learning more about the chemistry and mineralogy of meteorites. We will be instructed by Dr. Paul Sipiera, Director of Meteorite Research at the college. We should be able to handle some of Dr. Sipiera's specimens, examine meteorite "thin sections" through petrographic microscopes, see how these sections are made, and learn some polishing and etching techniques. This is a truly rare opportunity to get close to some real astronomically oriented research. The exact details are under study, and will be announced by March. There is a limit of 10 people, and we already have 4 going. Call Dan at 662-2987 if you want to be included.

PLANNING TO BUILD OR REBUILD A TELESCOPE? First call Peter Smitka at 546-4546. Pete is planning a telescope making class beginning at the end of January or early February. Emphasis will be on portability, quick set up, and price.

You can either start from scratch or rebuild, redesign, or remodel what you have. There will be no charge for the classes. Cost to you will depend upon the scope of your project or materials. There will be a discount on certain supplies.

Call Pete now so he can complete plans for this worthwhile activity.

AN INVITATION! Sr. Josanna Wilson invites MAS members to attend a Physics Club meeting in the Olsen Planetarium at the UWM Physics Bldg. Dr. John Harmon will talk about planetarium use.

The date is Monday, Dec. 15, the time, 8 P.M. The Physics Bldg. is located at the Corner of Kenwood and Cramer.

A TREAT FOR EVERYONE! Watch Mars draw closer to Jupiter until the red planet passes the yellowish giant within a moon diameter (half a degree). The closest approach will be on the 18th. Look southeast in the early evening. No instruments needed.

NEW MEMBER Dennis Schulkers of Franklin will be introduced at the December meeting.

ASTROFEST 1986 ADDENDUM: Last month's FOCAL POINT failed to mention that MAS member Harvey Herman received one of three awards presented for achievement in astrophotography at Astrofest '86. Harvey displayed a black-and-white enlargement of the prominent lunar crater Clavius, which he took from his Mequon home. The picture won the best of show in the category of lunar and planetary photographs.

ED HALBACH, one of the original founders of the MAS in 1933, stopped in at the November meeting and exchanged pleasantries.

He is as busy as ever. His only complaint is he can't find enough time to get everything done.

Ed is as enthused about astronomy now as the first day he looked up at the sky, judging from his plans, thousands of personal observations of variables, and his love for astronomy.

LIBRARIAN NAMED--MAS historian Sally Waraczynski was named to the additional post of observatory librarian in November, replacing John Wiesen who left Milwaukee in July. Sally will be assisted by June Regis, a recent new member in establishing a modern facility on the first floor of the 26-inch telescope building. Sally would appreciate member suggestions concerning new titles or other materials they would like to see on the library shelves. Once it is placed in operation (most likely in the second half of 1987), nearly all the library's materials will be available for short-term loan to members.

WHAT'S A LIBRARY WITHOUT BOOKS?--Most of the current titles found in the MAS Library are dated, and some are downright useless!! While Sally and June will "restock" it with new selections from "The Astronomy Book Club" and other sources, you can help too!! If you love astronomy, as all of us do, consider donating a book, pamphlet, article, paper, or any other useful astronomical items (charts, posters, globes, etc.) to our new library! Have you seen a good article concerning astronomy in a science or news magazine lately (other than in Sky and Telescope or Astronomy)? If so, send it on to Sally Waraczynski (3725 S. 71st, Milw. 53220) for inclusion in the library's new "vertical files" department. Many articles appear in Time, Newsweek, Scientific American, Science News, and others, which we may not all see or read. Members who donate any of these items will be helping to build a great storehouse of information for the benefit of everyone in the Society! Donations could also be made in memory of a friend or relative who loved astronomy.

HELP WANTED: Program Chairman Matt McNeeley would like suggestions or names of speakers for our monthly programs.

Call Matt at 354-5347.

OBSERVATORY NEWS: Completion of various tasks will continue, and the New Berlin facilities will be open for Members Nights, tours, or other worthwhile events, weather permitting. The MAS never hibernates.

Special events next year will include occultations of the Pleiades by the moon in March and September, and grazing occultations of stars by the moon in Feb., May, and June, the latter on weekends.

To conserve heat and power, be sure to keep the doors to the washrooms and photo lab tightly closed when not in use and especially before leaving the premises. Failure to do this can run up astronomical electric bills.

HANDBOOKS NOW AVAILABLE: Members who have ordered 1987 Observer's (Canadian) Handbooks may pick them up at the December meeting or at Treas. Jim Toeller's home.

First call 352-7144, preferably in the evening.

BEST WISHES TO EVERYONE from the officers and board members of the Milwaukee Astronomical Society for the coming holiday season and next year, and thanks again to everyone who helped the Society in some way this year.

MEMBERS NIGHT KEYHOLDERS:

Dec. 13 - A. Penikis	354-9708	Jan. 3 - T. Ross	784-2093
20 - J. Pfannerstill	475-6494	10 - G. Samolyk	475-9418
27 - F. Roldan	423-0210	17 - T. Schmidtkunz	784-0253

Members wishing to use the observatory on a particular Saturday evening WILL CONTACT THE KEYHOLDER BY TELEPHONE NO LATER THAN THE FRIDAY BEFORE THAT SATURDAY EVENING, to schedule observing or instruction time. The member should inform the keyholder of his/her intentions and equipment requirements at that time to avoid conflicts of usage. Members should contact the keyholder as early as possible.

Please note: Only the Members Night keyholder is responsible for his/her night. Other keyholders present at Members Night when the designated keyholder is absent are not in charge and may close the building(s) and leave when they wish.

DIRECTORY:

Pres. - D. Koehler, 662-2987	V. P. - Dr. R. Wiesen, 781-4757
Sec. - Ms. K. Wesener, 961-8752	Treas. - J. Toeller, 352-7144
Obs. Dir. - G. Samolyk, 475-9418	Asst. Obs. Dir. - J. Asztalos, 258-5626
Special Obs. Activities Scheduler - N. Nichols, 542-2055	
FOCAL POINT Ed. - L. Simandl, 933-3052	Program Chair - M. McNeeley, 354-5347
MAS Observatory - 18850 W. Observatory Rd., New Berlin	- 542-9071

JANUARY FOCAL POINT DEADLINE - WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 31.