


FOCAL POINT



Issued by the
MILWAUKEE ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY

- : JANUARY, 1987 : -

CALENDAR:

- Wed., Jan. 14 - Full Wolf Moon.
- Fri., Jan. 16 - January Program-Meeting, 7:30 P.M. PLEASE SEE JAN. PROGRAM-MEETING ARTICLE.
- Mon., Jan. 19 - Board meeting. (Dr. R. Wiesen).
- Mon., Feb. 2 - Groundhog Day.
- Wed., Feb. 4 - February FOCAL POINT deadline.
- Wed., Feb. 4 - First Wednesday at the observatory.
- Fri., Feb. 13 - Full Snow Moon.
- Saturdays - Observatory maintenance and improvement. Help wanted. Call 475-9418 or 258-5626.
- Sat. Nights - Members night at the observatory. See keyholder list on page 3.

JANUARY PROGRAM-MEETING: MAS members and guests will enjoy an unusual planetarium show. Planetarium Director (and MAS member) Gary Sampson will show us what night skies look like "down under" in his presentation entitled "The Southern Hemisphere Skies." The theater seats about 60 persons.

Please be prompt as the program must be finished by 9 P.M. A short business meeting will follow in one of the school's classrooms.

WHEN: Friday, January 16, 7:30 P.M.
WHERE: Wauwatosa West High School, 11400 W. Center St. The suggested entry route is North Av. to 114th St., then north. Enter the school through the southwest door. Remember, 7:30 P.M.!

OBSERVATORY NEWS: The following grazing occultations will be observed in the next six months. All of these events will occur on weekends so we hope for a good turnout (weather permitting).

<u>DATE</u>	<u>TIME</u>	<u>MAG</u>	<u>MOON</u>
Feb. 14-15 Sun. morning	5:48 am	4.7	97%
May 1-2 Fri. night	8:59 pm	8.3	15%
Jun. 13-14 Sat. night	12:24 am	5.0	91%

This year marks the beginning of a series of lunar occultations of the Pleiades (M 45). Predictions for the individual star occultations is at the observatory or can be obtained from Gerry Samolyk. The events of Mar. 5-6 and Sep. 12-13 are the most favorable. A group effort at the observatory is planned.

First Wednesday nights will continue at the observatory throughout the winter. Everyone is welcome, especially new members. If you have questions, want advice, want to work on a project, or just want to chit-chat, come on out! Call first if the weather is bad.

Keep the washroom and darkroom doors closed to avoid wasted electric heat! When securing telescopes, aim the dome slits due north to avoid snow entry. Make sure the parking lot chain padlock keyholes face down to prevent water entry and freezing.

A telephone answering device has been installed. Call Directory Assistance for the observatory phone number if you have no FOCAL POINT handy.

BECOME A MEMBER OF THE METEOR CLUB! (By Dr. Richard Wiesen, excerpted from an article appearing in the Nov. 1986 REFLECTOR).

In order to encourage this activity, (meteor observing) the Astronomical League has set up the 'Meteor Club', organized along the same lines as the Messier Club or the Herschel Club, and, like these, it emphasizes visual observing involving a minimum of equipment. Individuals or, preferably, small groups of observers who abide by the rules to follow have only to send their reports to David Levy and he will contact, for those who qualify, the Awards Committee Chairman, Bill Scurlock, to send each observer and the group leader an official Meteor Club Certificate which will be only recognized by the League and publicized in the REFLECTOR.

RULES TO QUALIFY FOR THE METEOR CLUB

RULE 1. Observe as a group or individually one or more meteor showers totalling at least six observing hours, for each group member. It will be the responsibility of each group leader to send in the properly filled in forms shown in the OBSERVE Manual and as further explained below, to the ALPO Meteor recorder who, as mentioned is David Levy. His address is Rt. 7, Box 414, Tucson, AZ 85747.

RULE 2. The ALPO recorder will contact the League Award Chairman, Bill Scurlock, Rt. 3, Box 5, Maysville, MO 64469, with the names and addresses of those who qualify and he will, in turn, send a Meteor Club Certificate to each participant. Mr. Scurlock will also notify the editor of the REFLECTOR with names to go in the next publication. If the meteor observing group belongs to a local Astronomy Society, they are encouraged to announce the names of the recipients at their next regular meeting.

RULE 3. Any individual who receives six such certificates should send back copies of these to Mr. Scurlock, who will then prepare an Honorary Certificate signed by the president of the Astronomical League. This will be returned to the awardee and duly announced at the next convention of the League.

The OBSERVE METEORS Manual can be obtained from ASTRONOMICAL LEAGUE SALES, Four Klopfer Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15209. I believe the price is \$6.05 including postage and handling. This manual describes meteor observing anywhere from simple organized meteor watching with the unaided eye to highly involved instrumented observing using spectroscopes and radio receivers. All of this information from the simplest to the most involved has the potential of being scientifically useful.

The Association of Lunar and Planetary Observers is a major receiving agency for this kind of information, especially the visual reports. David Levy, a co-author of this manual, is the meteor recorder for ALPO at the present time.

Dr. Wiesen (781-4757), is the Meteor Club chairman for the Milwaukee Astronomical Society.

MEMBERS INTERESTED IN JOINING THE METEOR CLUB might want some "hands on" meteor study. MAS pres. Dan Koehler is organizing a Saturday trip this Feb. or March to Wm. Rainey Harper College in Palatine, IL for this purpose. The instructor will be Dr. Paul Sipiara, Dir. of Meteorite Research at the college. The class will accept 4 more members. Call Dan at 662-2987 now if you want to go or for more information.

PARENTS AND TEENAGERS CAN SHARE in an unusual general interest astronomy course being offered by UWMilwaukee.

If you are curious at all about the many fantastic celestial bodies near and far, that are scattered throughout a seemingly endless universe, register for this course. You'll learn how to observe with your equipment or UWM 'scopes and how to photograph. You'll get acquainted with far-out topics like the "Big Bang" and the search for E.T.: The planetarium will be a great teaching aid.

The name of the course is "THE WINTER SKY." The fee is \$45 for adults, \$23 for each teenager from the adult's immediate family. It begins Jan. 29, and runs for 5 weeks from 6-8 P.M. at the UWM Manfred Olson Planetarium, 1902 E. Kenwood Blvd. Call 224-4196 for full details.

PROSPECTIVE TELESCOPE BUILDERS should call Peter Smitka now at ~~546-4546~~ for details. He'd like to get a class started by the end of January.

A site for the class is needed. The observatory auditorium may be used if no other place is available.

MEMBERS NIGHT KEYHOLDERS:

Jan. 10 - G. Samolyk	475-9418	Feb. 7 - W. Tuerck	782-2844
17 - T. Schmidtkunz	784-0253	14 - Dr. R. Wiesen	781-4757
24 - P. Smitka	785-0926	21 - J. Asztalos	258-5626
31 - V. Tangney	327-7976		

PLEASE: Observe the Focal Point deadline usually listed in the calendar on page one and at the end of the newsletter. Articles received after that date may not be included in the following edition.

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	

MEMBER'S GUIDELINES FOR "MEMBER'S NIGHTS" AT THE OBSERVATORY

The following are guidelines for members concerning the operation of the Observatory on Saturday nights ("Member's Nights"). Please read, understand, and observe these guidelines. Keep them in a handy place for future reference.

1. Members are highly encouraged to use the facilities at the MAS Observatory ("the Observatory") on Member's Nights (most all Saturday evenings throughout the year) during the entire calendar year. Such use is a right of membership with the MAS.
2. Members wishing to use the Observatory on a particular Saturday evening WILL CONTACT THE KEYHOLDER BY TELEPHONE NO LATER THAN THE FRIDAY BEFORE THE 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 in the week as possible. The keyholder schedule (i.e. the people who are "on duty" at the Observatory for each Saturday evening of the month) is published in *The Facial Point*.
3. Members making appointments in advance to use Observatory equipment through the keyholder on duty that evening WILL HAVE PRIORITY OVER THOSE WHO DO NOT.
4. Members are asked to KEEP APPOINTMENTS AND NOT BURDEN KEYHOLDERS WITH MULTIPLE PHONE CALLS once an appointment has been made. If a member must cancel, he/she should do so as early in the week as possible, and at least prior to 6:00 p.m. of the evening of the appointment.
5. If a member is unable to contact the keyholder after several attempts during the week before the Member's Night, he/she should call Jim Toeller (352-7144), leave the message and ask for further instructions.
6. Members failing the above process should at least CALL THE OBSERVATORY (542-9071) BEFORE TRAVELING THERE on a Member's Night to make sure it is staffed that evening. MEMBERS MAY NOT ASSUME THE OBSERVATORY WILL BE STAFFED ON A MEMBER'S NIGHT, ESPECIALLY IF THE KEYHOLDER HAS NOT BEEN NOTIFIED BY PHONE IN ADVANCE. Members who do not call the keyholder or Observatory in advance of arrival do so at their own risk.

7. Members using the MAS Observatory on Member's Nights will follow the instruction and directives of the keyholder while on the observing grounds, and leave the Observatory in good order when finished. NOTE: ANY KEYHOLDER WHO IS AT THE OBSERVATORY AND WHO IS NOT THE SCHEDULED KEYHOLDER FOR THAT EVENING, MAY CLOSE THE OBSERVATORY AND LEAVE WHEN HE/SHE WISHES IF THE SCHEDULED KEYHOLDER IS ABSENT. All non-keyholding members must then also leave the Observatory if the scheduled keyholder is not present.

8. Members may schedule additional observing sessions outside of Member's Night dates with a keyholder at mutually agreeable times. Equipment usage by general members is subject to availability on nights other than Member's Nights.

Revised 01/87 dlk

HERE IS AN UPDATE ON THE ADLER PLANETARIUM FIELD TRIP!! Members attending the December MAS general meeting selected Saturday March 28, 1987 as the best date to plan the MAS Spring Field Trip to Chicago's Adler Planetarium and "museum area". Buses will leave at 8:05 a.m. sharp from the College Ave. "Park-Ride" lot near the airport, and return there by 7:30 p.m. Approximate costs will be \$7.00 per person for transportation by coach bus, and \$2.50 per person for planetarium tickets (a private show for our group only will take place at 12:00 noon. The show is entitled "You in the Universe"). Lunch will be "on your own"--either "brown bag it" or eat in the planetarium restaurant. Food and bottled or canned beverages (including alcohol) are allowed on the bus. The MAS will not provide any food or beverages on the bus.

Field trip participants will have the option to also tour the Field Museum of Natural History in the afternoon (\$2.00 per adult, \$1.00 per child (6-17), \$1.00 for students, \$4.00 for families (parents and children under 18), \$.50 for Seniors (65 and over) Note: Teachers are FREE). Other tour options after the Adler tour include the Shedd Aquarium and Museum of Science and Industry. Bus transportation will be provided for all the alternate tours after 1:30 p.m. The Field Museum has a MacDonald's Restaurant. More information will be available on the optional tours in February.

You may advance register for the trip by calling Dan at 662-2987, or signing up at the January membership meeting. No money is required until late February or early March. Payment forms will appear in the February *Focal Point*. We do however need to know how many are planning to go, so the appropriate number of buses can be reserved. This is the purpose of the "advance registration" process. By signing up early, you are GUARANTEED a spot on one of the buses!! After two buses are filled, a waiting list will be used until enough people sign up for the third bus. We have invited the Wehr and the Neville Museum (Green Bay) Astronomical Societies to participate with us to help fill the buses and to expand the group experience. Comments and questions should be directed to Dan Koehler, 662-2987. More details will be available in February. The trip is open to all MAS members, their families, and friends.

MESSIER & HERSCHEL CLUB ANNOUNCEMENTS

OBSERVER'S HANDBOOK: The MAS has a *Messier Club Observer's Handbook* available FREE by sending a 8.5" by 11" SASE with 66 cents postage to: Lee Keith 1239B E. Randolph Ct., Milwaukee 53212. It contains numerous observing tips: dark adaptation, selecting an observing site, what magnification to use, and more! Other sections include 4 different methods to find those elusive Messier objects, and what to record about each object to get the coveted Messier Certificate! Lastly, there are finder charts for many objects and a sample observing log. Who could ask for more?!?!?!

Don't forget that when you complete the 107 object Messier list, you can begin on the challenging 400 object Herschel object list. If you complete it, you will be among a small group of observers (30) nationwide to complete such a feat!

MAS OBSERVER'S TUTORING SERVICE: Especially for new members, beginning or novice observers! An experienced member of the MAS will meet you either at the observatory or *come to your home* and show you anything you need to know about your telescope and observing Messier objects! Appointments can be made by calling Lee at 961-8752 (evenings) the day before you wish someone to come out; confirmation will be made the next day. Don't forget that the *Amateur Astronomer's Series* classes on telescopes and observing will be offered this spring; watch for class schedule! Not bad for \$30 dues, huh?

THE BEST HERSCHEL OBJECTS -- WINTER GROUP: Dress warmly and observe these objects to "warm you up" for your Herschel Club membership!

NGC#	R.A	Dec.	Seeing	Description
869	02h 15m	+56 55'	Good	Very rich & compact cluster with dozens of bright members. Beautiful! [Double Cluster]
1023	02h 37m	+38 52'	Good	Bright & highly elongated with very bright nucleus. With averted vision, halo extends for >10 arcminutes! Nice!
2024	05h 39m	-01 52'	Good	If zeta placed out of field, EASY to see. Just like photos. Large, round, with irregular edges, mottling and dark rift through center. EASY!
2251	06h 32m	+08 24'	Good	Flattened arrangement of fairly bright stars. Very unusual!
2266	06h 41m	+27 02'	Good	Beautiful triangular cluster of many dim stars with a bright star at one apex. Fully resolved.
2301	06h 49m	+00 31'	Good	Very nice grouping of bright stars in a line crossed by a line of dim stars, like a "T". Easily seen in finder.
2324	07h 00m	+01 08'	V.Good	Many faint resolved stars in round mass next to "Y" shaped grouping of equally bright stars. Nice!
2362	07h 17m	-24 52'	V.Good	Very pretty triangular grouping of equally bright dim stars around tau. Very pretty!
2392	07h 25m	+21 01'	V.Good	Central star very bright with direct vision. Planetary seen easily with averted (vision). Nebula "ghostly" with detail suspected. 127x
2403	07h 32m	+65 43'	V.Good	Large, bright elongated nebula with star at center, above & below edge.
2479	07h 54m	-17 35'	V.Good	Large round group of faint stars. Good contrast with field.

FEBRUARY FOCAL POINT DEADLINE - WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 4.