


# FOCAL POINT



Issued by the

*Milwaukee Astronomical Society*

November 1987

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## Ancient Astronomers

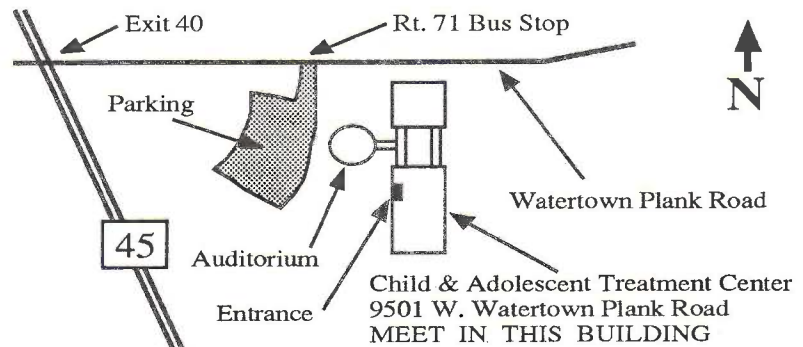
Observers of the sky today with all of their sophisticated electronic and optical equipment are, perhaps, no more awed and fascinated by what they see than were the ancient or primitive observers who, ages ago, noted the celestial motions with crude instruments and unaided eyes.

Evidence of astronomical observation by North and South American Indians abounds. This month's meeting will highlight Mr. David Weier of the Madison Astronomical Society, who, in his talk "*Archaeoastronomy - the Wisconsin Connection*," will tell about Wisconsin Indians and their observations and reactions to the night sky.

**WHEN:** Friday, November 20, at 8:00 P.M.

**WHERE:** The Child and Adolescent Treatment Center (CATC) auditorium.  
9501 W. Watertown Plank Road., Wauwatosa.

The site may be reached by Rt. 71 bus. There is ample, free, lighted parking. Guests are welcome.



## Calendar of Events

- Friday, November 20 - Indian Summer Ends..
- Friday, November 20 - November Program-Meeting.
- Wednesday, November 25 - "Focal Point" deadline.
- Thursday, November 26 - Happy Thanksgiving Day!
- Wednesday, December 2 - First Wednesday 7:30 P.M.  
at the observatory.
- Saturday, December 5 - Full Hunting Moon..
- Saturdays - Observatory maintenance and improvements. Help wanted.  
Call 475-9418 or 258-5626.
- Saturday Nights - Member's night at the  
observatory. See keyholder list.

## New Members

Please welcome new members David Kriege of Lake Mills and Paul Zobel, son Lucas, and daughters Debbie and Sadie of Franklin.

All will be introduced at the November general meeting.

## Meteor Showers

**Leonids** - November 16.

Peak at 5 A.M. Rate of 5-20 per hour.

**Andromedids** - November 25-27.

Peak at 10 P.M. Rate of 10 per hour.

Look south for both showers.

## Dues News

**TIME IS SHORT!!** If you have not yet paid your 1987-'88 dues please do so soon! Treasurer Jim Toeller must submit our membership list to "Sky & Telescope" magazine so that all paid up members will receive their copies without interruption.

Make your check payable to the *Milwaukee Astronomical Society* and send it to:

Jim Toeller  
407 W. Mall Road  
Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53217  
(352-7144)

## In Memoriam

The *Milwaukee Astronomical Society* offers its sympathies to the family of James Biwerski. James, who was an MAS member since 1985, passed away October 30.

## Meeting Changes

Future board meetings will take place on the **second** Monday of the month. The time will remain at 7:30 P.M. at a site agreed upon by the board members.

## For Sale

Edmund Astroscan reflector telescope. Gourd-shaped, very portable. Includes strap, stand, and eyepiece. Valued at \$300, asking \$175 or offer. Please call Steve Chavez at 289-9080. Leave message and phone number.

## Advertise!

MAS members may advertise in the "Focal Point" if an astronomical item is for sale or needed. There is no charge.

Send your article(s) or ad(s) to:

LeRoy Simandl  
4201 W. Highland Blvd.  
Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53208  
(933-3052)

## Open House Resumé

Things could have been better if we had a planetarium. With but one or two good nights, the public turnout was small, averaging about 150 persons per night to enjoy our hospitality.

Thanks to the visitors who came out, and to the members who served them.

## Greenbush Fall Camp-out Event by Dick Wiesen

Dates: October 23 - 25, 1987

Location: LAT 43.75° LONG 88.108° (60 miles North of city)

All member of the MAS that planned to attend were told to bring plenty of dry hardwood for the camp fire and they complied. I was the first to arrive at the campsite at 15:30 CDT on Friday. The temperature was 35 degrees F and it was cloudy. I built a camp fire and pitched my one person tent, and assembled the White Whale. I then covered the scope with a huge plastic bag and anchored the bag in place with shock cords.

John Asztalos got there about 17:00 CDT. As usual, he brought his collection of stereo tapes which provides background "astronomy music" for our camp-out observing sessions. A new member, Hank Bell, and his son were the next to arrive. Paul Borchardt, his daughter Jessica, and Ed Nelson arrived in the next car. At about 19:00 CDT, Judy and Steve Pope and their children Tom and Annie pulled in. Ray Wendt arrived at 22:00 CDT.

We spent the evening and early morning warmed by heated discussions, the hot camp fire, and Yukon Jack. About 03:00 CDT, a wet heavy snow with huge flakes began to fall, and the last of the talkers retired to their sleeping bags. By 07:00 CDT, 2" of snow had fallen, but it was tapering off. So ended the night of October 23 - 24. Lots of talk but no action. The weather forecast for the night of October 24 - 25 was very promising for clear skies.

On Saturday, we were joined by Bob Gibson, Peter Smitka, Nolan Zadra, Lee Keith, Mike Wolkomir and his son Dan. During the day all the snow melted and the tents dried. It began to clear about 17:00 CDT. Attendance: 18 hardy souls.

At 18:30 CDT it clouded over again. We hoped the clouds would clear by 19:30 CDT so that we could capture Comet Levy, but they didn't. Levy would have been easy to locate since it was passing within a degree of Beta Caput Serpens.

The clouds cleared out by 20:15 CDT and the first thing we caught was Comet Bradfield. It was about 10 degrees above the horizon near M-10 in Ophiuchus and an easy object for 7x50 binoculars. The dust tail was about 2 degrees long and the ion tail was about 1/4th as long. Coma was fairly concentrated. Even Halley did not look as good from this latitude.

Spent the early evening with Jupiter and the old familiar sights. The Crab nebula was especially nice. The North American nebula was a naked eye object. The Helix and Dumbbell were really enhanced with the O-3 filter.

About 23:00 CDT, we detected a glow on the northern horizon and it was growing stronger. Sure enough we were to have a "light show." Not much color, but lots of multiple spikes of light, like search lights pointing to the zenith. The show gradually subsided, but Paul Borchardt got some photos of it. I don't remember what film he was using.

By 01:00, the temperature had fallen to the mid-twenties F. and frost was shutting down most of the scopes. Pete Smitka's 17.5" has a heated secondary, so we used his scope to bag the Horsehead at about 03:00 CST without a filter. Only used the one eyepiece, the 12mm Nagler. The Beta line filter was held between the eyepiece and the eye because we did not have a 2" Beta. Not a fair test, but it did not help when used in that fashion. I will see if the filter helps from the observatory the next chance I get, since the Horsehead is usually invisible from there due to light pollution.

Hope to see you at the next Astro-camp-out.

## Observatory News

Work on winterizing the buildings is continuing. A painting party will meet at the observatory the morning of Saturday, November 14, to paint the interior of the auditorium. It shouldn't take long with a good turnout. Bring brushes, rollers, rags, etc. We'll furnish the paint.

Please note! Keep the washroom doors closed. Doors left open will cause the heaters to run continuously, resulting in an astronomical electric bill. One toilet has been lost owing to freezing.

Volunteers for work parties should call Gerry Samolyk at 475-9418 or John Asztalos at 258-5626. Bring equipment and tools you might need for the task you choose.

Observatory tours and special activities will be deferred until March. A Special Activities Scheduler to replace Nick Nichols is needed.

## "Northern Lights"

"Northern Lights", the North Central Region Astronomical League newsletter, will soon issue the December edition. MAS member Ray Wendt is editor and publisher.

Members are invited to submit short, general astronomical articles such as book reports, personal observations, procedures, or a few words about a past, current or future event.

Mail your articles to:  
Ray Wendt  
4834 N. 70th St.  
Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53218

## Sweatshirts Are Here!

If you've ordered an MAS sweatshirt before October 11, you may pick it up at the First Wednesday meeting, at the November Program-Meeting, or at the home of Treasurer, Jim Toeller (please call him at 352-7144 first).

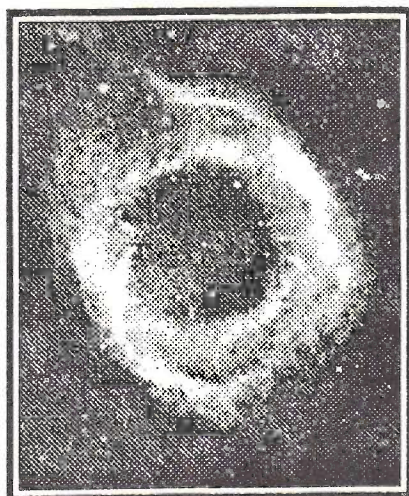
Sweatshirts are still available in sizes Small through X-Large. They are long-sleeved, blue in color and have the *Milwaukee Astronomical Society* logo silk screened in front. Price is \$10.00, order from Jim Toeller.

## Photographs!

The picture below is my first attempt to include, in the "Focal Point", an actual photograph that has been digitized and computer processed. The photograph is of the Helix Nebula, NGC 7293.

If this photograph "survives" the transition from film image to computer image, and reproduces well enough, there will be more photos in future issues.

*Steven S. Reich*



## Cold Weather Observing Tips by Donald Gallian

Dress properly. You must keep your head warm with a wool hat or a hooded jacket or parka. Your body loses almost half of the heat it generates if your head is uncovered.

Regular shoes or boots are not warm enough. The best protection is a pair of "moon boots." Second best is a pair of boots with felt liners, but these are somewhat heavier.

Heavy mittens are the warmest, but you will not be able to change eyepieces or make small adjustments. Gloves offer dexterity, but they are not as warm.

Do not be fooled by warmer weather. Carry a warm hat and coat just in case the temperature drops. This also applies in summer.

Practice finding objects with your telescope at home if you plan to observe elsewhere. Make a list of everything you plan on taking. Don't leave a tripod leg at home.

Dew caps are **MANDATORY** for refractors or Schmidt-Cassegrain telescopes. You can make them. They should extend at least one tube diameter. A dew cap also prevents dew formation on the diagonal in a Newtonian. A car window defroster that runs on 12 volts from a car cigarette lighter will keep optics clear.

## Library News by Sally Waraczynski

President Dan Koehler loaded his wagon with duplicate magazines to sell at Astrofest and came home with over \$100 for his efforts. With this windfall, the library will purchase a *Uranometria 2000.0, Vol. I* and two *Mag. 6 Star Atlases*. The latter will become standard equipment with the Apollo telescopes as they go out on loan.

Dr. James Schwade who led the MAS meteorite hunting expedition in September, has given us a copy of the late Harvey H. Nininger's *Find a Falling Star*. The author recounts his sleuthing success in finding and retrieving meteorites.

At the October dinner meeting, Richard Berry, Editor-In-Chief of "Astronomy" magazine and fellow MAS member, presented the Society with an autographed copy of his *Discover the Stars*. Here is a well designed introductory guide to observing, which includes the appropriate skylore with the monthly all-sky charts and targets for further study with the more detailed constellation charts. Rounding out the presentation are a discussion of telescopes, the various types of celestial objects, and where to find more information. This soft-cover book would make an excellent reference book for budding astronomers of all ages.

## Members Night Keyholders

Nov. 14	J. Asztalos	258-5626	Dec. 5	W. Collins	255-4169
Nov. 21	H. Auchter	542-2158	Dec. 12	G. Hall	786-8579
Nov. 28	P. Borchardt	781-0169	Dec. 19	D. Harris	964-1428

## Directory

President .....	Dan Koehler .....	662-2987
Vice President .....	Dr. R. Wiesen .....	781-4757
Secretary .....	Ms. K. Wesener .....	961-8752
Treasurer .....	J. Toeller .....	352-7144
Observatory Director .....	G. Samolyk .....	475-9418
Assistant Observatory Director .....	J. Asztalos .....	258-5626
Librarian .....	Mrs. S. Waraczynski .....	312-0918
Assistant Librarian .....	Mrs. J. Regis .....	962-0896
Program Chairman .....	M. McNeeley .....	354-5347
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