



Issued by the

Milwaukee Astronomical Society

March 1989

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March Program-Meeting

Mars drew a great deal of attention last year because its conjunction with Earth was the most favorable since 1956. This will not happen again until 2035! Furthermore, the time of year and Mars' high position also were ideal.

The March program "1988-'89 MAS Mars Roundup" will spotlight MAS members John Asztalos, Paul Borchardt, Lee Keith, and Dan Koehler. Each speaker will give his impression of the Red Planet with a short talk and visual aids.

Come and enjoy a pleasant evening. Guests are welcome.

WHEN? Friday, March 17, 8:00pm.

WHERE? The Helen Carey Day Hospital Building
 9201 W. Watertown Plank Rd.

Enter through the red-orange doors at the A-frame entrance and turn right to the auditorium. The entrance will be open only from 7:30pm to 8:15pm for security reasons.

"Northern Lights"

The North Central Region quarterly newsletter, received by all MAS members as a membership benefit, will soon publish its April edition.

The deadline for the next issue is April 1. Editor Ray Wendt is always looking for unusual newsy astronomical items, book reports, or accounts of some events. Send them to Mr. Wendt at 4834 N. 70th Street, Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53218.

Subscriptions are \$2.50 per year for four quarterly issues.

Calendar of Events

- Sunday, March 12 - Mars and Jupiter close.
- Monday, March 13 - Board meeting at 7:30 pm.
- Friday, March 17 - March Program-Meeting and Focal Point deadline.
- Monday, March 20 - Spring begins at 9:28 am.
- Wednesday, March 22 - Full Sap Moon
- Sunday, April 2 - Daylight Saving time begins at 2:00 am. Set clocks ahead 1 hour.
- Wednesday, April 5 - First Wednesday at the observatory, 7:30 pm, weather allowing. All members and their guests welcome.
- Fri./Sat., April 7/8 - Ast. from Illinois Conference at Champaign-Urbana, Illinois.
- Saturday, April 15 - Moon very close to Regulus.
- Saturday, April 29 - NCRAL Convention at Rockford, Illinois.
- Saturdays - Observatory maintenance and improvements. Help wanted. Call 547-3400.
- Saturday Nights - Member's night at the observatory.

For Sale

A like-new Meade 10" 2120 LX3 Schmidt-Cassegrain reflecting telescope. Includes wedge, tripod, multi-coated optics group, 8x50 illuminated view finder, and quartz electronic drive system. \$1500 or best offer.

Please call George Schimmel at 771-5903 (home) or 278-8500 (office).

Wanted

A used 12" Meade-type telescope with mount. Please call Jeffrey Moll at 691-2408 (Pewaukee).

Conference Preview

The Astronomy Society at the University of Illinois will be hosting the Astronomy from Illinois Conference on the campus of the University of Illinois in Champaign-Urbana.

The conference, to be held Friday and Saturday, April 7 and 8, 1989, will feature Dr. Clyde Tombaugh who discovered planet Pluto in 1930. He will discuss the methods and equipment used in his search for the elusive object. Pluto will be observed.

The conference will also feature amateur and professional papers, tours, observing through the 12-inch refractor, a flea market, and other good things usually offered at this type of event.

Complete information and registration forms can be obtained by writing to Astronomical Society, 349 Astronomy Building, 1011 Springfield Avenue, Urbana, Illinois 61801. You may call Mike Svek at (217) 367-4574, or Ed Murphy at (217) 344-3825.

Your Focal Point editor has a packet copy. Call 933-3052 if you need immediate information.

Champaign-Urbana is approximately 225 miles south of Milwaukee.

May Election Preview

Society board members and officers govern the society and determine how its funds are used.

The annual election of Society officers and board members will take place at the May Program-Election meeting, Friday, May 19.

There will be four board vacancies and an election for officers.

Board members serve three-year terms. All MAS members in good standing are eligible. Vacancies are filled by elected volunteers, nominees, or recommended consenting volunteers.

Please call President Richard Wiesen at 781-4757 if you'd like your name on the slate.

"The Spring Sky"

That is the title of an astronomy course being offered to the general public by the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Center for Continuing Engineering Education. It begins March 28, 1989 and runs for 5 Tuesdays from 7:00 to 9:00 pm.

The course, in general, includes topics covering telescopes and other astronomical instruments, the solar system, the heavens through the naked eye, new discoveries, stars, galaxies, "Big Bang", astrophotography, and several theories.

The well qualified instructor is John Harmon, director of the Manfred Olson Planetarium. The classroom is the planetarium at 1902 E. Kenwood Blvd. The fee is \$55 for adults, \$30 for each teenager from the adult's immediate family. One CEU is awarded for completion.

For full details and a registration form, write the Non-Credit Registration Office - UW/Milwaukee, 929 North Sixth Street, Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53203. or call 227-3122. The program number is 8757.

Library News by Sally Waraczynski

Why is the MAS Double Star Club named for S. W. Burnham? How does beer figure in the careers of William Herschel and several other astronomers? What telescope was so long, the observer had to telephone instructions to the controller on the other end? Did Syrtis Major once have a "twin" formation on Mars? **"The Astronomical Scrapbook: Skywatchers, Pioneers and Seekers in Astronomy"** is a compilation of articles by the late Joseph Ashbrook which were published in Sky & Telescope magazine over a period of 23 years. Ashbrook's research uncovered fascinating bits of history and biographical material on the great, near-great, and "invisible" astronomers of the past and how they influenced the science for better or, sometimes, worse!

"On the Moon with Apollo 16: A Guidebook to the Descartes Region" by Gene Simmons (NASA, 1972) has been donated by LeRoy Simandl. This manual was intended to be studied beforehand and used in conjunction with television coverage of the mission. It describes in detail the geography of the landing site and routes for the Lunar Rover excursions; the equipment; and the science experiments to be conducted on the lunar surface and from orbit. No matter that the days of Apollo are long over; there is a great deal of background information here for the space buff, lunar observer, and anyone wondering how scientists gather information from remote sources.

April Occultations by Gerry Samolyk

On Saturday evening April 8, the Moon will make another passage through the Pleiades (M45) star cluster. This will be the only favorable event of this type in 1989. The first contact will occur with the Sun 8 degrees below the horizon and will continue until the 12% sunlit moon is only 7 degrees up (about 10:30 CDT).

This passage will take place in the Northern part of the cluster and will include stars from 4.2 - 11.5 mag. The Earthshine may make it difficult to time the fainter stars so observers with large telescopes are encouraged to bring them for this event.

On the following Thursday, April 13, a graze of SAO 80354 will occur on the North limb of the 61% sunlit moon, 16 degrees off the cusp on the dark limb. The star is a 6.8 - 8.3 double. We will concentrate on the 6.8 component but observers are encouraged to record contacts of the 8.3 if possible.

More information on both of these events will be available at the First Wednesday meeting on April 5 at the Observatory.

FIGHT LIGHT POLLUTION - Use candles!

1991 Eclipse Chasers

1991 Eclipse Chasers must act NOW to join the expedition to view the 6 minute 56 second total eclipse of the Sun on July 11, 1991! Act as soon as you receive this notice.

The expedition will observe from La Paz, Mexico on the Baja Peninsula from a reserved 3 acre site. There is a 90%+ chance for clear skies. The cost for MAS members is estimated at \$1100 to \$1175 per person which includes coach airfare from Chicago to La Paz and back, four nights at a fine hotel, six meals, and transport to and from the eclipse site.

For full details and reservation availability, call Dr. Richard Wiesen at 781-4757.

Keyholders

Mar 11	Terry Ross	784-2093
Mar 18	Gerry Samolyk	475-9418
Mar 25	Tom Schmidtkunz	784-0253
Apr 1	Peter Smitka	785-0926
Apr 8	Virgil Tangney	327-7976
Apr 15	Jim Toeller	352-7144
Apr 22	Richard Wiesen	781-4757
Apr 29	John Asztalos	547-3400
May 6	Frank Roldan	423-0210

Please!

Your Focal Point editors would appreciate receiving your items by deadline time, which is the same date as the Program-Meeting (the third Friday of the month). Please include who, what, when, where, why, and how with your article(s).

Trying to contact people for information can be difficult.

Thank you.

Observatory News

Gerry Samolyk is back with us! He will continue as observatory Director, and John Asztalos will act as assistant director. Many thanks to Paul Borchardt for helping out during Gerry's absence.

Thanks to Nick Nichols for plowing snow from the parking lots.

When that old guy and his sidekick Frosty finally decide to leave, work will again resume. The patrol camera needs some work and the A-dome needs flashing for starters.

Some cleaning should be done, since tours will be offered on two Fridays of March, April, and May. Tours for youngsters should be accompanied by one adult per five children. A nominal charge is made for tours. Call Dan Koehler for details (662-2987). Volunteers to assist at these tours are welcome.

Wanted - Your Stamp of Approval!

Paul A. Vanden Bout, director of the National Radio Astronomy Observatory, is leading an attempt to encourage the U.S. Postal Service to issue a stamp in honor of the Very Large Array radio telescope. It is hoped that you will agree that such an astronomically orientated U. S. commemorative postage stamp is long overdue. The last such stamp was issued in 1948 to commemorate the Mt. Palomar 200-inch telescope.

An important part of the effort is to convince the Citizens Stamp Advisory Committee that a broad base of support exists for a VLA commemorative stamp.

Your help would be appreciated. If you support the effort, please send a letter of endorsement directly to:

Citizens Stamp Advisory Committee
Stamp Information Branch
475 L'Enfant Plaza
Washington, DC 20260

Directory

President	Dr. Richard Wiesen	781-4757
Vice President	Mathew McNeeley	354-5347
Secretary	Ms. Karen Wesener	961-8752
Treasurer	Dan Koehler	662-2987
Observatory Director	Gerry Samolyk	475-9418
Assist. Observatory Director	John Asztalos	547-3400
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	4201 W. Highland Blvd. Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53208	
MAS Observatory	18850 W. Observatory Road	542-9071
	New Berlin, Wisconsin	



Orion Nebula

JOIN US
FOR THE MILWAUKEE ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY
1989 SPRING FIELD TRIP!

- What:** Tour the UW-Madison Astronomy Image Processing Center, historic Washburn Observatory, and the Space Science Laboratory. Optional trip to the Wisconsin State Capitol Building in the afternoon. Other tours possible if time and interest permits. Sorry, a tour of Pine Bluff Observatory is not possible.
- When:** Saturday, April 22, 1989. Buses will leave from the Watertown Plank Road "Park and Ride" lot west of Highway 45 in Wauwatosa at 8:05 a.m. and from the Goerkes Corners "Park and Ride" lot at I-94 and Bluemound Road between Waukesha and Brookfield at 8:25 a.m. SHARP!!
- Meals:** On your own after 1:00 p.m. on campus or along Madison's famed State Street.
- Cost:** \$12.00 per person, includes transportation and tour fees. The Capitol tour is free. Reservations and payment must be received by April 10, 1989.
- Itinerary:** We should arrive in Madison between 10:00 and 10:30 a.m. Our group will be divided into three groups that will alternately rotate among the three tour sights. Campus touring will be completed between 1:00 and 1:30 p.m. A bus will transport those interested to the Capitol for a tour between 3:00 and 4:00 p.m. You may meet the bus on campus for the return trip to Milwaukee at about 3:45 p.m., or at the Capitol at 4:00 p.m. If you do not wish to attend the Capitol tour, you are free to roam the campus or State Street areas. We should arrive in Milwaukee around 6:00 p.m. Exact details will be explained the day of the trip.

Questions?: Contact Matt McNeeley (evenings at 354-5347) for more information.

NOTE: SPACE IS LIMITED SO ACT FAST!

CLIP AND RETURN THE FORM BELOW BEFORE APRIL 10, 1989

I wish to reserve space(s) for the 1989 MAS Spring Field Trip for the following:

Member's Name: _____

Names of family members and/or friends joining the trip: _____

Your Telephone Number: _____ - _____

Number of Reservations _____ x \$12.00/person = \$ _____ enclosed.

Number of participants attending the Wisconsin State Capitol tour: _____

I/We wish to meet the bus in Milwaukee at (check one):

_____ Watertown Plank Rd _____ Goerkes Corners

Make checks payable to The Milwaukee Astronomical Society. No return receipt will be mailed.

Mail before April 10, 1989 to:

Matt McNeeley, 8200 North Cedarburg Road, Brown Deer, WI 53209.