

FOCAL POINT



Milwaukee Astronomical Society

Issued by

September 1989

Saturn and 28SGR by Gerry Samolyk

Despite heavy ground fog on the morning of July 3, a large number of observers were on hand to see Saturn occult the 5.4 mag star 28SGR. They were rewarded with the unique sight of a star blinking in and out as it passed through the ring system.

A CCD camera was used on the Zemlock reflector to videotape the event. This tape has been shown at open house nights this summer. A copy of this tape has been sent to the Lunar and Planetary Lab for analysis.

Many observers made a tape recording of their visual observations. As of this writing, I have only received two transcripts from these tapes. I would like to get these observations together soon so a report can be made of this event.

Upcoming Grazing Occultations by Gerry Samolyk

Our next chance to observe a star graze at the limb of the Moon will be on Saturday night, October 21, at 7h 24m U.T. We plan a cable expedition to a site near North Lake for this event.

The star is 6.8mag and the Moon is 42% sunlit, but the cusp angle is near 0 so only the second part of this event will be seen. Anyone who would like to participate should attend the October 4, First Wednesday meeting at the observatory.

There are three more graze expeditions planned for December. More information will appear in next month's newsletter.

AstroFest

September 8, 9, 10. Sponsored by the Chicago Astronomical Society at Camp Shaw-Waw-Nee-See, 60 miles south of Chicago. Those who prefer to eat meals with the MAS group should call Frank Roldan (423-0210) or Jim Toeller (352-7144). For more AstroFest info write; AstroFest, PO Box 596C, Kinney Park, Illinois 60477.

HST Launch Delayed (Again) from American Astronomical Society Newsletter, June 1989

Although NASA has yet to make a formal announcement, the launch of the Hubble Space Telescope will be delayed until sometime next spring. Setbacks in refurbishing the shuttle Columbia, combined with the immovable launch window required by the Galileo mission to Jupiter, have thrown a monkey wrench into NASA's shuttle schedule. The Department of Defense's insistence upon flying two shuttle missions before the end of the year seems to have forced NASA to use the shuttle Atlantis, which is needed for the HST launch, for a defense payload instead. The HST launch will apparently slip to March or April of 1990. Current unofficial estimates of the cost to NASA for delaying HST put it in the neighborhood of six dollars per second.

Mark Your Calendar

The MAS Annual Dinner will take place at the Boulevard Inn at Sherman and Lisbon in Milwaukee. The date is Friday, October 20.

Guest speaker Dr. Donald Parker, author and Association of Lunar and Planetary Observers (ALPO) Mars recorder, will tell us about new changes seen during the 1988 Mars close encounter with Earth.

An insert in next month's "Focal Point" will give full details.

Another Greenbush Campout

Another Greenbush campout is planned for Friday through Saturday, September 29-31 at Greenbush Kettle Moraine Campsite #6. Treat yourself to a dark star-studded, moonless sky.

Bring your tent, telescope, warm clothes, and firewood. Please call John Asztalos at 774-5418 a week ahead if you're going. Campers must pay \$3.50 plus \$2/day/person.

September Program-Meeting

The first general meeting of the MAS new year will take place Friday, September 22 at the observatory. The program will include short talks by several Society members.

All members and guests are invited. If you haven't seen the MAS facilities for some time, come out and look around.

WHEN: Friday, September 22 at 8:00pm.

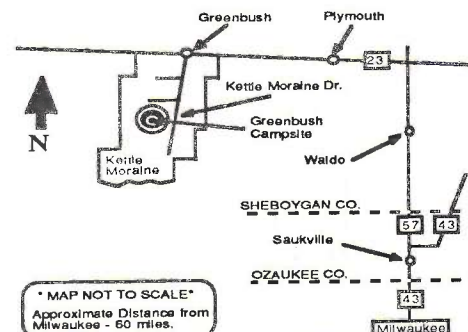
WHERE: The MAS Observatory
18850 W. Observatory Road
New Berlin, one mile west of
Calhoun Road (KX) on
Observatory Road. Call 542-9071
if you're lost.

OH, NO! Not Again!

Yes! The MAS Annual Picnic was rained out again for the third year in a row. If the farmers in the area need rain, they ask us to run a picnic.

Anyway, we all moved indoors and made the best of it. The undaunted cooked their goodies under umbrellas and later came inside to see if they won one of the many fine prizes generously donated by a dozen dealers and producers of useful astronomical products. Just about everyone won something. The pinata for the kids went over big.

Thanks to Tom Gills, Matt McNeeley, and Dr. Harry Whelan for doing the thousand and one details and to those who brought dishes of food for all to share and enjoy. We'll try again next year.



Open House 1989

Three programs remain: September 15 (Telescopes), September 29 (The Milky Way), October 13 (Double Stars).

All Open Houses take place at the MAS observatory (see location in September Program-Meeting article). They start at 8:00pm. The general public is invited. A \$2.00 donation for parking will be appreciated. Bring a sweater or jacket and insect repellent for your comfort.

We still need volunteer help for crowd control, guiding, traffic, and 'scope operation. Usually there's barely enough help. Call on the Open House night to see if there is enough. The turnout of visitors varies considerably depending on the sky condition and weather.

What Do You Think?

The Milwaukee Astronomical Society has the opportunity to host the sixtieth anniversary Regional Astronomical League Convention. It will be held in the spring of 1992 and will be chaired by MAS Treasurer Dan Koehler.

Whether we host the Convention or not depends upon the will of the general MAS membership.

More information will appear in a future "Focal Point."

Comet Brorsen-Metcalf

Comet Brorsen-Metcalf is so far the best predicted comet for this year. It may brighten to naked-eye visibility of mag +4.5 by the end of September. The mag +7 object can be seen now in Perseus high in the predawn sky. Use binoculars.

See your July 1989, and August 1989, "Sky & Telescope" magazine, page 108 and 182 respectively for extensive articles with all the details.

Comet Brorsen-Metcalf was last seen in 1919, 70 years ago.

Key Holders

Sept	2	Paul Borchardt	781-0169
	9	Greg Cieslak	744-5703
	16	Brian Ganiere	272-4649
	23	Chris Hesseltine	482-4515
	30	Dan Koehler	662-2987
Oct	7	Lee Keith	961-8752
	14	Nick Nichols	628-4059
	21	John Pfannerstill	475-6494
	28	Frank Roldan	423-0210
Nov	4	Terry Ross	784-2093

Calendar of Events

- Wednesday, Sept 6 ----- First Wednesday meeting at the observatory at 7:30pm.
Everyone is welcome.
- September 8-10 ----- Astrofest.
- Saturday, Sept 9 ----- Moon, Uranus, and Saturn in close proximity.
- Friday, Sept 15 ----- Full Harvest Moon.
- Monday, Sept 18 ----- Board meeting at 7:30pm.
- Friday, Sept 22 ----- Fall begins at 8:20pm CDT.
- Friday, Sept 22 ----- September Program-Meeting, AT THE OBSERVATORY, 8:00pm.
- Wednesday, Oct 4 ----- First Wednesday meeting at the observatory at 7:30pm.
Everyone is welcome.
- Saturday, Oct 14 ----- Full Hunter's Moon.
- Monday, Oct 16 ----- Board meeting at 7:30pm.
- Friday, Oct 20 ----- Annual Dinner at the Boulevard Inn.
- Saturdays ----- Observatory maintenance and improvements. Help wanted.
Call Gerry Samolyk at 475-9418, John Asztalos at 774-5418, or observatory at 542-9071.
- Saturday Nights ----- Members night at the observatory.

Loaner Scopes

Two 8" Dobsonian "APOLLO" telescopes are available to MAS members for general use away from the observatory. They will accept either 1.25" or 2" eyepieces. One scope is located on the north side of Milwaukee and the other on the south side of Milwaukee.

No deposit is required, but an agreement to cover loss or damage must be signed. The loan is from 14-31 days with an extension period.

(North Side Location)

Matt McNeeley
8200 N. Cedarburg Road
Brown Deer, Wisconsin
Phone 354-5347

(South Side Location)

Richard Sterle
8115 W. Waterford Avenue
Greenfield, Wisconsin
Phone 543-7459

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MAS Observatory
18850 W. Observatory Road
New Berlin, WI
542-9071

Meteors

Draconids - October 9. Peak at 10:00pm CDT. Rate of 10/hr. Look northwest.

Library News

by Sally Waraczynski

September... a time to begin, again. Newcomers, especially, are encouraged to come out to the observatory to have a look at one of the benefits of your membership in the society - our ever-growing library. You may peruse the references or borrow books or audio-visual materials during the first Wednesday gatherings, on Saturday members' nights, or by appointment with the librarian.

This season's harvest of resources is off to a good start with:

Observing Variable Stars: a Guide for the Beginner - David H. Levy, 1989

Stars and star systems fluctuate in light output for a variety of reasons and to varying degrees. All this is described in the long awaited "how to" book, and this alone makes the reading worthwhile.

Astrophotography for the Amateur - Michael Covington, 1985.

** Potential Astronomy Book Club members, please note: The library acquired this book as a gift when Robert Bialecki let us sponsor his membership in A.B.C.

Good news for Open House speakers and Traveling Astronomy shows: Over 100 35mm slides have been purchased. We have also added many individual slides from the Hansen Planetarium catalog with an emphasis on galaxies and the moon. Be sure to check the Slide Index for a complete listing of the latest arrivals.