

# FOCAL POINT



Newsletter for the

*Milwaukee Astronomical Society*

Jan. 1992

## From The Editor

As we open the New Year we look forward to a year of astronomical opportunity. From star parties to picnic, from open houses to program meetings we can once again participate in a wide range of MAS-sponsored events. And one event that ranks high on the MAS agenda is this year's hosted NCRAL Convention during the weekend of April 24-25. The NCRAL Committee is working diligently to put together a program that not only celebrates NCRAL and its worthy goals, but also that commemorates and generates pride in this, our own Society's, 60th year.

Soon registration materials will be sent to you. We invite, indeed encourage, your attendance at this April's NCRAL Convention—the focal point of this year's activities.

-Matthew McNeely

## Program/Meeting

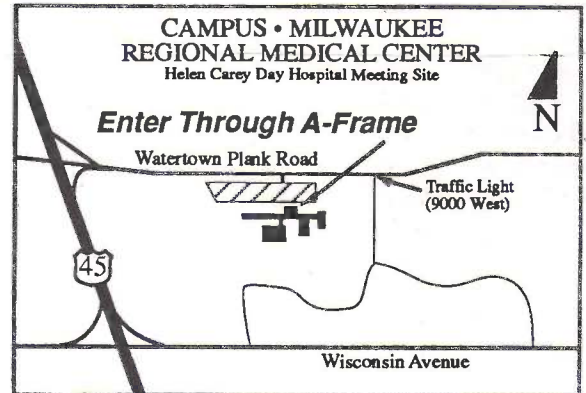
This month we will explore the ancient age of astronomical discovery through the knowledgeable and entertaining presentation of Ms. Liba Taub, historian and lecturer from the Adler Planetarium of Chicago.

Ms. Taub is widely respected as an authoritative and effective speaker on early astronomy. Her topic titled The History of Astronomy will explore the early study

and speculation about our universe and how ancient astronomers gradually built the foundation of today's modern astronomy. This is a program all members can enjoy and learn from. Don't miss it!

Meeting starts at 8:00 pm, doors open from 7:30 to 8:15 pm only.

-Thomas Renner, Program Chairman



Note: The ongoing series on the NCRAL Convention will resume with next month's *Focal Point*.

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## Calendar of Events

January 13, Monday .....	MAS Board Meeting 7:30pm at Richard Wiesen's house
January 17, Friday .....	8:00 pm Program-Meeting
January 19, Sunday .....	Full Moon
January 24, Friday .....	Deadline for next <u>Focal Point</u>
February 5, Wednesday .....	First Wednesday Meeting 7:30 at the Observatory
February 10, Monday .....	MAS Board Meeting 7:30pm at Paul Borchard's house
February 21, Friday .....	8:00 pm Program-Meeting
Saturday Nights—Member night at Observatory—Call key holder	

## Library News

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While the Sun and the Moon were "ringing" in the New Year in spectacular fashion off the California coast, a few of our library resources joined in the festivities with new or updated appearances.

One of the definitive texts in astronomy, Exploration of the Universe by George O. Abell is now in its 6th edition. David Morrison of the NASA Ames Research Center and Sidney Wolff, Director of the National Optical Astronomy Observatories, have updated and revitalized this most reliable source of information.

Richard Berry has produced 5 new diskettes to supplement his Introduction to Astronomical Image Processing, and they are already on our bookshelf waiting to work for you. And, in the slide file, Neptune's fascinating moon Triton has taken its place in the updated Worlds in Comparison set.

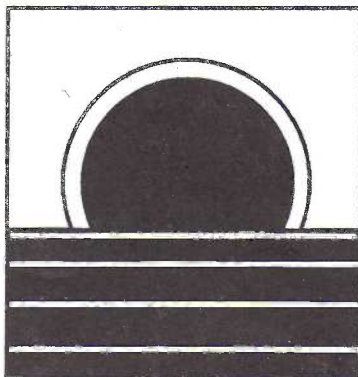
HELP! Beginning a new year often is interwoven with taking stock of the old, and our stock of *Telescope Making* and *Deep Sky* magazines has a few gaps. Since these magazines have ceased publication, we are particularly anxious to complete the library's resource collection. If you have duplicates or would be willing to donate any of the following issues, please contact the librarian.

*Telescope Making*: # 3, 6, 9, 15-27

*Deep Sky*: Vol. 1, No. 2 through Vol. 4, No. 1

SECOND CALL: Teachers and Youth Leaders. Juvenile literature about space exploration will be available at the January meeting. The only thing we charge you with is to put these books to good use.

-Sally Waracznski



## Observing Clubs

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Winter is a good time (as are all seasons) to join an Observing Club. The MAS offers two helpful guides: for deep sky observing, the Messier Club Observer's Handbook or for double stars, Burnham Club Observer's Handbook.

Just sent an 8.5" x 11" SASE with \$1 postage affixed to: Lee Keith, MAS Observing Clubs Coordinator, 8150 S, Legend Dr., Franklin, WI 53132. They contain a wealth of information, hints and detailed maps to help find the more elusive objects. And best of all, they're FREE!

After observing and recording the objects in the list, you will receive a certificate from the Astronomical League.

## Video Project Volunteers Needed

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An often discussed project on the MAS Board "wish list" has been a video about our club, its activities, equipment, people, etc. If you have interest in becoming involved in such a project, please contact Outreach Committee Chairperson Wanda Berner at 691-2320 or any board member. We especially need someone with access to equipment and the expertise to help film and edit the project.

## Member's Photos Featured on Channel 6

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Scott Laskowski made the Big Time when photographs he took of the July 11, 1991 eclipse were featured on Channel 6 News last December during Vince Condella's 6 pm weather report. Congratulations Scott!

*There is a lot of things that members can do to keep the MAS and astronomy ingeneral in the public's mind. If you get any brainstorm, contact either editor or Wanda Berner, Outreach Committee Chair.*

## A Closer Look: The Observatory Committee

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*Periodically, we take a closer look at the many and varied aspects of the MAS with the idea of creating a booklet containing all of them in the future. This month's installment was provided by Jim Kube.*

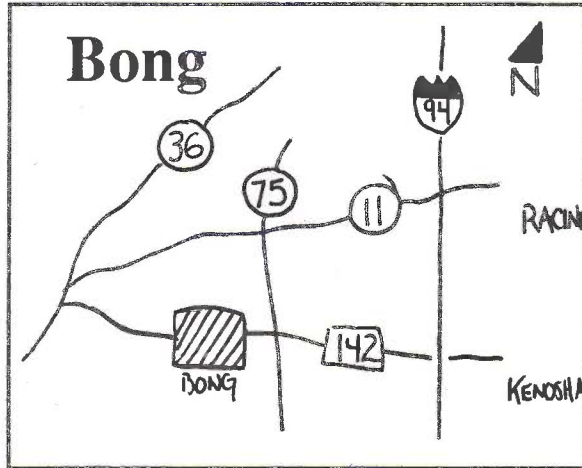
The Observatory Committee is an information gathering committee which harvests information from the MAS members and reacts to their suggestions. Based on their input, solicitations are sent to businesses and foundations requesting donations or assistance. The motors for 'Z' Dome were donated because of the committee's efforts and letter writing campaigns.

The returned MAS questionnaire responses will be used to help determine what is immediately required and what should be mapped out for the future. If you want to get involved in this worthwhile effort, contact Jim Kube at 453-8858

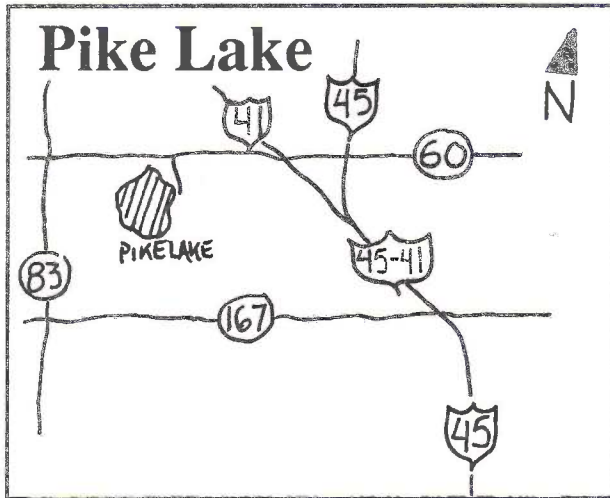
-Jim Kube

## Two Parties: Cross Country Ski & Stargazing

A lot of astronomers do considerably less observing during the winter months. Maybe one reason is because there are fewer star parties and organized observing sessions. Well, here's your chance to get out under the stars and share your knowledge and experience with others. Two area clubs are involved in Ski & Stars events and All MAS members are invited to attend.



Dick Buege of the Wehr Astronomical Society invites us to attend their Candlelight Cross-country Ski at Bong Recreation area, located in Northwestern Kenosha County, Saturday, February 1, 1992 starting at 6:30 pm. If you bring a telescope you will get in for free. Contact Jim Kube for more info: 453-8858.



Last year, several MAS members attended the Pike Lake event and were treated to excellent skies, great weather and a fantastic time! In the event of another snowless February, hiking will replace skiing.

## MAS Clothing

Sweatshirts and Jackets are available from member Tom Gill. Sweats are white ink on royal blue and jackets are white on either royal or navy. Call Tom @ 476-6986 days or eves, to place your order.

Sweat Shirts	\$10.00
Nylon Jacket	\$27.00
Quilted Jacket	\$33.00

## Looking Ahead Saturday Nite Keyholders

For your convenience, this list of keyholders will help your advance planning. To assure that the keyholder will be on duty, we ask that you call the keyholder by 6:00 pm the Friday before. If you do not know how to use the equipment, the keyholder will assist you. (First Wednesdays are also an opportunity time).

Jan. 4	Wanda Berner	646-8229
Jan. 11	Marty Brunet	544-1342
Jan. 18	Greg Cieslak	529-0548
Jan. 25	Brian Ganiere	961-8745
Feb. 1	Chris Hasseltine	482-4515
Feb. 8	Lee Keith	425-2331
Feb. 15	Dan Koehler	662-2987
Feb. 22	Jim Kube	453-8858
Feb. 29	John Pfannerstill	475-6494
Mar. 7	Frank Roldan	608-787-1730
Mar. 14	Terry Ross	784-2093
Mar. 21	Gerry Samolyk	529-9051
Mar. 28	Tom Schmidtkunz	784-0253
Apr. 4	Peter Smitka	785-0926
Apr. 11	Virgil Tagney	327-7976
Apr. 18	Jim Toeller	352-7144
Apr. 25	Ken Waracznski	321-0918
May 2	Richard Wiesen	781-4757
May 9	Wanda Berner	646-8229
May 16	Paul Borchardt	781-0169
May 23	Marty Brunet	544-1342
May 30	Greg Cieslak	529-0548
June 6	Brian Ganiere	961-8745
June 13	Chris Hasseltine	482-4515
June 20	Lee Keith	425-2331
June 27	Dan Koehler	662-2987

## Starry Messenger Airs on Local Cable Channel

A new half-hour show for people who love astronomy, the "Starry Messenger," is currently running on Viacom South Cable TV. The show airs on Wednesdays at 7:00 pm on Channel 11B starting in January 1992.

The show is produced by that Star Stud(ed) Galactic Pole, **Jim Kube** who will interview notable experts on astronomy and related topics. Jim adds this program as another feather in his cap—he is still a co-producer of the 'Star Struck' portion of the currently airing Wehr Astronomical Society's "The Sky Tonight."

The January, February and March Programs have all been taped and will feature **Alan Dyer**, associate editor of *Astronomy* magazine. Alan has the perfect job for someone who loves astronomy and enjoys "the chase" of finding elusive deep sky objects—he writes 'hands on' articles about telescope products and accessories. A tough job, but someone has to do it!

Alan is the guest "starry messenger" on three consecutive half-hour programs and offers his professional opinion on the different telescopes and accessories available to amateur astronomers. Future shows may feature other MAS members as guests.

Jim also expressed his gratitude toward members of the audience who attended the first taping sessions. Their questions asked of Alan were challenging and their patience was appreciated—by the time technical difficulties were resolved everyone was almost "burning the midnight oil"—but then that's Show Biz!

The half-hour length was chosen to make the show attractive to other cable networks and the TV School Network. Jim explained why there are now two astronomy TV shows on Cable, his "Starry Messenger" and "The Sky Tonight" produced by Dave Biene:

The Starry Messenger is structured to appeal to the more advanced amateur and is therefore different in scope; the shows share the same crew and are taped on the same night; they can share segments; two astronomy shows each week on different days with different subjects results in a one-two knock-out punch scored for astronomy buffs!

And last but not least, Jim extends a big "O" to Bob Bialecki who edits both programs, for without his efforts, he and Dave would be just another couple of pretty faces! And to Dorothy Kube, for without her graphics, the Starry Messenger would be but a whisper, she is his Alpha and Amega!

## For Sale

**Telescope:** Sky Designs 18-inch Dobsonian with 32mm wide field eyepiece and Telrad finder. Used just 3 times. Bought for \$3000.00, sell for \$2000.00. Call Steve Tuma @ 608-752-8366.

**Equatorial Mount:** On tripod with slow motion controls. \$90. Call Tom Gill days or eves at 476-6986.



## MAS INFORMATION

### MAS OFFICERS

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453-8858

Treasurer Dan Koehler  
662-2987

Obs. Director Gerry Samolyk  
529-9051

Ast. Obs. Director Paul Borchardt  
781-0169

Librarian Mrs. Sally Waraczynski  
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Assist. Librarian Mrs. June Regis  
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