



## From The Editor

### Focal Point Staff Changes:

After 4 years of editing and distributing the *Focal Point*, the team of Matthew McNeely and Tom Gill is handing over the reins to two others who will continue the duties of creating our newsletter and seeing that it ends up in your mailbox.

Kudos and welcome to Ernie Mastroianni who is taking over as *Focal Point* editor and to Charlotte Nelson who will be in charge of Production. Volunteer efforts built this society and has kept it going strong for 61 years. Speaking on the behalf of the membership, we wish you the best of luck in your new positions.

—Tom Gill & Matthew McNeely

## MAS Christmas Gathering

There will be no Program/Meeting for December. Instead, all MAS members are invited to gather at Giuseppe's, on the corner of HYW 100 and Bluemound, on December 10, 1993. The MAS board will hold a very brief meeting followed by a Christmas gathering for all. There is ample lighted parking and we have

**MAS Christmas Social**  
**December 10, 7pm - ?**  
**Giuseppe's-Hwy 100 & Bluemound**

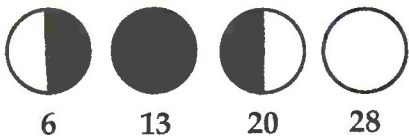
an area reserved for our group. We will start the evening with socializing at 7:00 pm and we can buy pizza until 8:30 pm. At 9:15 pm, live music (of the 50's, 60's, 70's and 80's will be played). Come on out and share some Christmas cheer with MAS members!

## Richard Wiesen Memorial 'Scope Ordered

The MAS board recently made and passed a motion to order an 18-inch f/4.5 Obsession telescope which will be dedicated as the Richard Wiesen Memorial Telescope. Delivery is expected in spring with an official dedication planned for Astronomy Day, 1994. Watch the *Focal Point* for details.

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## Calendar of Events

- Dec 10, Friday ..... **MAS Christmas Social**
- Dec 22, Wednesday.....**Deadline for next *Focal Point***
- Jan 5, Wednesday..... **First Wednesday Meeting**  
7:30 at the Observatory
- Jan 9, Monday ..... **MAS Board Meeting**  
location To Be Announced
- Jan 21, Friday ..... **8:00 pm Program-Meeting**  
new winter Location To Be Announced

*Saturday Nights—Member night at Observatory—Call key holder*



## Library News

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The Magellan Project may well be one of the last planetary missions to require an assembly of scientists and engineers at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory. The Evening Star: Venus Observed, by Henry S. F. Cooper, 1993, captures the drama as the team experiences loss of contact with the spacecraft, not once but several times. Cooper describes in some detail the mental gymnastics of the computer specialists as they work to regain control.

When the data begin to pour in and the "noodles" or image strips are ready for scrutiny, we hear the early interpretations from what sounds like opposing camps—geologists vs geophysicists. The major differences of opinion seem to lie with the preconceived theories of comparative planetology and whether they are being borne out by what is observed. Cooper does a good job of describing the coronae, pancakes, chasms, etc. as each type of feature on the planet is assigned to a team for more intensive study. We learn, too, about the female nomenclature of the land forms and how such detailed radar mapping is accomplished.

A secondary theme is the difficulty of getting funding for these major planetary missions. In fact, the book closes with uncertainty on whether the budget will permit the aerobraking maneuver and subsequent orbits to get vital gravitational measurements. For an illustrated "flyby" of the planet, please see Sky & Telescope, August 1993 or our slide set "Venus Unveiled"; this book is the story behind the scenes.

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At Astrofest, Dan Koehler was able to sell many of our duplicate magazines to Knollwood Books. As a result, \$75 has gone into the library budget for the year. Our thanks to Dan, too, for pursuing with patience and diligence an autograph for one of our historical volumes. W. W. Morgan signed the accompanying booklet for our copy of the Revised M-K Spectral Atlas in October—the 50th anniversary of the original publications.

We are happy to report that several missing slides reported last year have been returned. B 47 (Comet West by Gerry Samolyk) and E 89 (Canis Major - copy from Frank Roldan) are still out there somewhere, so please check your home carousels again. Also, this reminder: books signed out this summer should be returned by now.

Somehow we have acquired a slide of the Sagittarius-Scorpius area from an Edmund Scientific set. Call the librarian if you are missing this item.

—Sally Waraczynski

## Weekly Calendar Offered

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Club discount available on a new product, the **1994 Astronomy & Space Exploration weekly calendar**. 120 pages, 5 books in one: 52 week calendar, space history almanac, full-color astronomy and space photo album, daily Moon phase calendar, and handy night sky guide. As featured recently in an ad in Sky & Telescope magazine.

The calendar retails for \$12.95, but is available to club members for \$8.00 ea. (as long as we order three copies per order). If there is interest, I will make a group order on December 15, 1993 so these SHOULD be here by Christmas (sorry I can't guarantee it). If you want one, get me a check to be included in this order. You must pick up your copy at my house or at an MAS meeting. Tom Gill 1391 N. 72nd St., Wauwatosa, WI 53213. 476-6986. Hurry, quantities are limited.

## Don't throw out those old Magazines!

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Buried under lots of old S&T and Astronomy magazines? Consider donating them to the MAS to be given out to young astronomers at next year's Open Houses. Either drop them off at the Observatory or bring them to a meeting and give them to Lee Keith, just don't throw them out!

## Update Your Astronomy Magazine Collection

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If anyone wishes to complete their Astronomy magazine collection at no charge, contact Lee Keith at 425-2331 for any issue(s) since 1974. All remaining issues will be given out at future Open Houses.

## Upcoming Astronomy Classes

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The Perfect Gift! Cure that Cabin Fever!

There are several classes for adults & children being offered through UW-Waukesha at the MAS Observatory. For adults there is Adventures in Astronomy where students learn how the sky works and how we found out what we know about the Universe. Everything from naked eye astronomy to black hole and the expanding Universe are covered. Dates are in March and April 1994. For both adults and kids is Viewing the May 10 Solar Eclipse Safely where you will learn about how eclipses occur and how to observe them without endangering your eyesight. Be prepared for a dark May 10, 1994 when the Sun will be over 90% covered from Milwaukee!

The date of the class is May 7, 1994. Lastly, for kids only is Plane or UFO, Venus as an Evening Star, where we will investigate why there are evening (and morning) stars, see the recent pictures sent back by the Magellan spacecraft. If it is clear, we will observe the planets Venus, Jupiter, and the Moon through the large MAS telescopes. Date is May 16, 1994. For more specific information or to register, call Don Bracco at UW-Waukesha at 521-5460. Join us for the fun!

—Lee Keith



## Upon Seeing Saturn Again

At the Passover table, a book called the Hagadah is read out loud in portions by each person old enough to read. The Hagadah reminds us to celebrate the escape from slavery to freedom as if we this very day were freed. Though I am forty-seven, it was only about 10 years ago that I really tried to experience the feeling of being a slave freed today. And I found I was not grateful enough for my opportunities. If I had to answer to even my great-grandmother, let alone my ancient ancestors, I would be ashamed at how I take care of myself and at my cowardice and laziness in seizing my own life.

A few weeks ago I got to see Saturn again through a telescope as I did twenty-eight years before. And the astronomer who was operating the telescope was very considerate. Even though he was obviously busy with some charts and numbers he needed for a project he was working on that night, he stopped to listen to my novice comments and questions. When I excitedly said something about being lucky to be alive when there are telescopes and asked if Galileo was the first to see Saturn through a telescope in the 1600's, he answered "yes, it was Galileo in 1610 but his telescopes were never as good as the one you just looked through." Right then, I got that same rush of feeling that I felt 10 years before at the Passover table. That night I dreamed of Saturn. I went jogging and wrote poems in my head to Saturn and starlight and to all the electrons and positrons and neutrinos in all the fields touching Saturn-touching me-touching you.

I wish to thank the members of the MAS: Karen and Lee, Gerry, Tim and a few whose names I don't remember. Members have let me look through telescopes and answered my burning questions from my reading. I am very grateful to have knowledgeable people to patiently answer my questions. I want to feel worthy to see what Galileo never got to see. Writing and submitting this thank-you is my way of making a start. Thank you again.

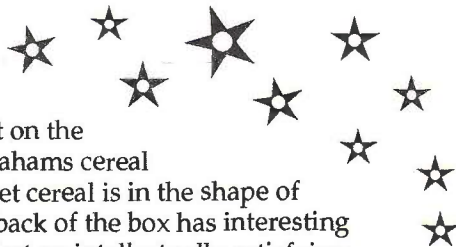
-Pamela Roper

*(ed. note: Pamela is a new member and that makes her submission doubly appreciated-welcome to the club and thank YOU for sharing your thoughts!)*

## Some Stars Are Good Enough to Eat

Member Pamela Roper "discovered" some new stars, and not only do they come in a handy carrying box, you can eat them as well!

Pamela was shopping at the Outpost on the east side and came across Galaxy Grahams cereal made by Erewhon. The slightly sweet cereal is in the shape of stars with holes and as a bonus, the back of the box has interesting astronomy facts to help make breakfast an intellectually satisfying meal. Pamela said the company has been around a long time and makes a good product. They may be available in other stores as well. She also discovered that Sentry stores had some nice star-shaped cookies.



## Saturday Night Keyholders

Dec 11	Dan Koehler	662-2987
18	Jim Kube	453-8858
25	Gerry Samolyk	529-9051
Jan 1	Terry Ross	784-2093
8	Tom Schmidtkunz	352-1674
15	John Pfannerstill	475-6494

## For Sale

MAS Astrophotographers Special-(A) 2" Lumicon low profile, non rotating helical focuser. Adapter plate included bolts right to "A" or "B" scope bolt circle and allows prime focus photography. Current new price from Lumicon is \$142, will sell for \$45. (B) 2.4x, 1 1/4" Vernonscope Barlow lens, \$30 (C) Vivitar 200mm lens, f/3.5, with screw mount. Optically in good shape. Also w25 red and 80A blue, 67mm filters for above. All for \$25 (filters alone worth more). Call John Asztalos at 1-303-674-6237 eves. and weekends.

## Keep on Shopping!

From your grocery shopping comes funds for library materials. The MAS receives 1% of the cash register receipts from ALL CUB food stores & from 3 selected Pick 'N Saves: at Tri-City, 6312 S. 27th St., 68th & State, 124th & Capitol. If you shop at any of these stores, please save the receipts for us (you must ask for the "We Care" sticker at PNS). Bring the receipts to meetings, drop them in the deposit box in the Observatory or mail them to Karen Wesener, 8150 Legend Dr., Franklin, WI 53132-9623. Ask friends, relatives and neighbors to save them also. To those of you already participating - Thank You!



## Meteorite Seminar a Success

M.A.S. members Pamela Roper, Marty Brunet, Scott Laskowski, Wanda Berner, Tim Burrus, and Dan Koehler spent the afternoon of Saturday, November 13 learning about meteorites from Dr. Paul Siperia. Paul is professor of geology and planetary studies at William Rainey Harper College in Palatine, IL. The meteorite workshop was held at the Planetary Studies Foundation Science Center, near the Harper College campus. The group learned about the three major classifications of meteorites, their characteristics, and the importance each plays in the study of our solar system's evolution.

By viewing photographic slides of whole meteorites, micrographic thin sections, and physical specimens, the workshop participants could better grasp the difference in the various subcategories of meteorites, especially the chondrites. This major group of meteorites holds many of the secrets about the early history of our solar system. Particularly mysterious and interesting are the infamous carbonaceous chondrites which are believed to have formed from the "carbon rings" of novae. Many of the carbonaceous chondrites possess at least some water and organic molecules, and 47 such compounds have been discovered in these meteorites. It is also believed that most of the members of this class come from comets.

According to Paul, the sub-grouping of meteorites commonly called "SNC's" and widely reported to be Mars rocks are instead really terrestrial in origin. The gases found in these meteorites are very close to the current composition of the Martian atmosphere. Paul is skeptical of the Mars rock assumption however since he doesn't believe that Mars' atmosphere has maintained the exact same composition over the past 700 million to 1.3 billion years, the measured age of the specimens in question. He thinks these stones are a form of volcanic rock that was blasted into space from a meteoric impact and then recaptured by earth's gravity to give the appearance of extraterrestrial origins. He also discussed ten individual achondrite meteorites (nine of them found in Antarctica) that are now widely believed to be moon rocks. Unlike the SNC controversy, this conclusion is based on comparison with actual lunar specimens returned by the Apollo astronauts. Paul said that he would only believe that SNC's are Mars rocks when, and only when, real Mars rocks are collected and returned to earth!

Note: For those members who wish to correspond with Alan Dyer (former MAS member and editor of *Astronomy Magazine*), he sent his new address to us:

Post Office Box 1436, Stn. M  
Calgary, Alberta, Canada  
T2P 2L6  
Telephone: 403-734-3155

Alan has a new job, producing planetarium programs at the Calgary Science Centre.

## MAS INFORMATION

### MAS Officers

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Vice President	Tim Burrus 783-6572
Secretary	Dorothy Kube 453-8858
Treasurer	Marty Brunet 544-1342
Obs. Director	Gerry Samolyk 529-9051
Ast. Obs. Director	Paul Borchardt 781-0169
Librarian	Sally Waraczynski 321-0918
Assist. Librarian	Mary Ann Tangey 327-7976
Program Dir.	Tim Burrus 783-6572

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