

FOCAL POINT



Newsletter for the

Milwaukee Astronomical Society

March 1993

From The Editor

Spring starts this month! Another mild winter behind us and hopefully, the ever present clouds as well. This column features several reminders:

Several openings exist for MAS Board members. If you're interested, contact me or any board member to find out what goes on and how happy we would be to have your input to the future directions of the MAS. Elections are in May.

The MAS Spring Banquet is set for Friday, April 23th. If you plan to attend, please get your reservations (was in Feb *Focal Point*) in to Tom Renner soon, no later than April 19th.

There is still time to do the Star Watch for the International Dark Sky Association. See the Jan. *Focal Point* for details.

-Tom Gill

Program/Meeting

Our speaker for this month's Program/Meeting is none other than our very own **John Briggs**. John's talk is titled "Recollections of Mt. Wilson" about the time when he was a staff astronomer there.

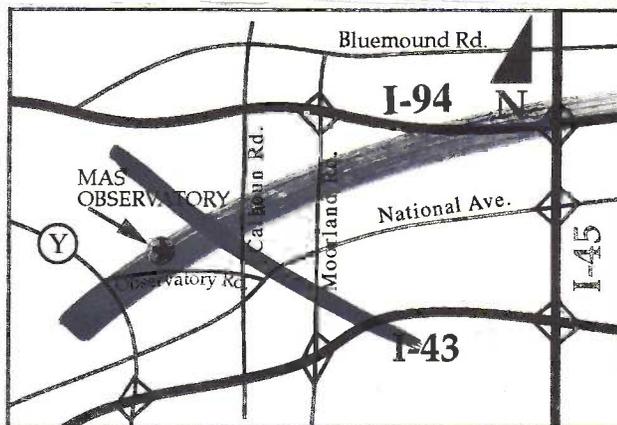
John is a member of the MAS and we are fortunate to have him in our neck of the woods. John has talked to our society several times in the last few years and has always proven to be a very entertaining and enlightening speaker.

This would be a great meeting to bring your friends to! Doors open at 7:30pm, meeting starts at 8:00pm. Hope to see you there!

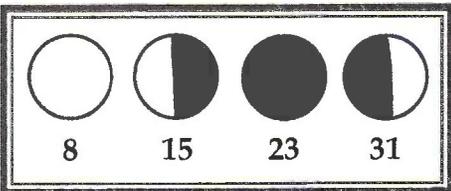
-Tom Renner

MAP WRONG-Meet at CATC

P.S. John will talk at the Wehr Astronomy Club on March 16 titled "As Low as You Can Go-Astronomy at the South Pole." Call 425-8550 for details.



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Calendar of Events	
March 19, Friday	8:00 pm Program-Meeting
March 26, Friday	Deadline for next <i>Focal Point</i>
March 31, Wed.....	Graze
April 7, Wednesday	First Wednesday Meeting 7:30 at the Observatory
April 12, Monday.....	MAS Board Meeting 7:30pm at the Observatory
April 23, Friday.....	Annual Banquet No Program/Meeting in April
<i>Saturday Nights—Member night at Observatory—Call key holder</i>	

Library News

Few among us have yet to look at the Moon or Jupiter or a bright comet through a backyard-size telescope. In his book *Seeing the Solar System*, Fred Schaff challenges all of us from beginner to veteran observer to take another look – to go beyond the cursory glance – to really observe what is there and to understand how those images evolve and change before our eyes. Do you know why the color of the eclipsed Moon can vary so greatly? Why might it be better to observe a comet at lower magnification? What rare sights might we expect to see in 1995-96 when the rings of Saturn are presented edge-on to our view?

Like all good teachers, Schaff begins each section with guides on what to look for and closes with questions that lead to reexamination or further systematic study. Tables of pertinent planetary data through the year 2000 and a list of additional reading are appended.

In the book I just mentioned, Schaff recommends making your observations with as many different telescopes and eyepieces as possible. What better opportunity to take this advice than at a campout or star party? Many such events are scheduled throughout the year and are usually advertised in this newsletter. To give you an idea of just how different some telescopes can be, Sally Jo Michalko's photographs of the 1992 Astrofest collection are now in a scrapbook at the observatory.

The 1993 MAS Library Catalog will be available at the March meeting. Thanks again to Tom Renner for printing this valuable reference.

–Sally Waraczynski

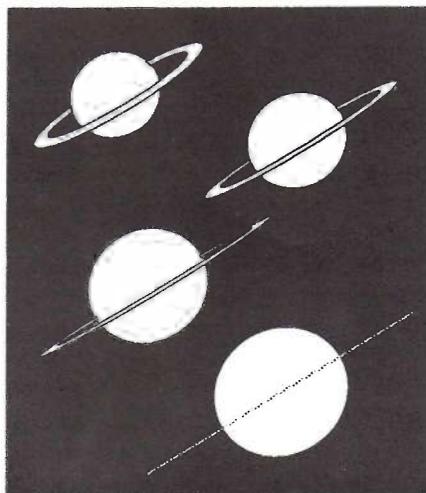
Date Change For Wildcat Mountain Campout

The dates for the summer campout at Wildcat Mountain State Park were incorrectly listed in the 1993 MAS Calendar. The correct dates are July 15-19, 1993 (Thursday through Monday). More details as we get closer but we wanted to let you know ASAP for planning your personal calendars.

For Sale

6-inch f/12 Super Planetary Starfire Astro Physics Refractor. The ultimate 'scope for lunar/planetary observing or astrophotography. 2.7" Astro Physics focuser, German Equatorial mount with dual axis drives and hand controller, 2 stainless steel counterweights, quick release 6.5" hexagonal mounting rings, 60" pier, dual axis drive corrector, 8 x 50 Astro Physics finder with illuminated reticle, a carrying cases for the tube assembly and accessories.

All used very little and in excellent condition. Retail \$6000, asking \$3800. You pick up. Dave Kriege, 414-648-8284 home, 414-648-2328 work.



MAS Computer Section Meeting

For the increasing number of people that have access to powerful PC's, a new MAS activity section is for you. The purpose would be to talk about and use the newest in astronomical software for the IBM PC and Apple Macintosh worlds.

The next meeting will be at the home of Lee Keith, 8150 S. Legend Dr., Franklin on Sunday March 21 at 7:30 pm. There will be a demo of some "home grown" software for scheduling observations of any objects, including variable stars as well as discussions and demos of IBM PC software in the MAS Software Library. Call 425-2331 for directions or more information.

–Lee Keith

MAS To Go "On Tour"!

In addition to our regular Open House schedule with which we reach hundreds of people each summer, I would like to try to extend the "Universal Tour" theme of the 1992 NCRAL convention by bringing the telescopes of the MAS closer to the public by showing them the Universe in local parks. I have received permission from the Franklin Parks Commission to hold a star party at Lion's Legend Park at Loomis & Drexel Ave. in Franklin. The date is up to us, but I'd like to suggest Wednesday, April 28th at 8:00pm before our summer activities start and while it still gets dark at a reasonable hour. Call Lee Keith for more information. Other parks, anyone?

–Lee Keith

CUB Receipts = \$ For MAS

If you shop at CUB food stores, be sure to keep your receipts for the MAS. We receive 1% of the tape total for turned in receipts. You can drop them off at the Observatory. There is a box in the back office of the Quonset Hut. Or, bring them to a meeting, I will collect them there. Don't be afraid to ask your friends, relatives and neighbors to save their receipts for you also. If you have any questions about this program, call Karen Wesener at 425-2331

–Karen Wesener

Remember That Sunny Day A While Back?

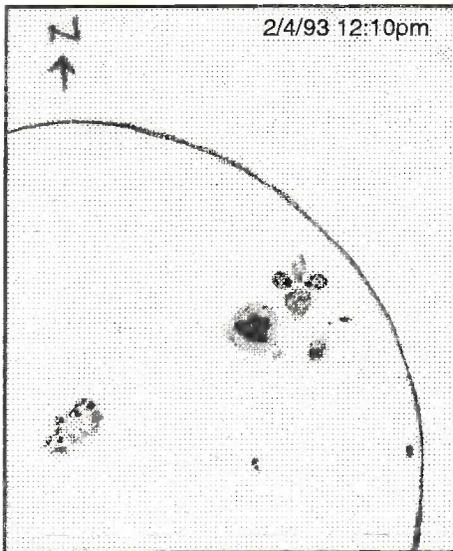
On Feb. 4, 1993, I got a call from Tim Burrus..."Get outside," he said "check out the Sun!"

I work out of my home so it's convenient to grab my 80mm refractor and take a quick peek whenever the sun makes one of it's rare (lately) appearances. The Sun is a great target because: 1) it's really easy to find—no chart required!; 2) it satisfies the urgent need I have to use my telescopes for astronomical observing (Remember—the sun is a *star.*); and 3) the Sun's disk presents ever-changing images.

Using a 4" glass solar filter that I picked up for \$10 at Astrofest, I take a quick look right through my kitchen window (at 16X) and if there are spots, step outside for more in-depth observations. Right now I observe and sketch just for fun, but I'm aware of several organizations who collect solar observations. In addition to sunspots, I've often glimpsed faculae near the edges of the sun's disk. Seeing often limits magnification to low powers, but I have used up to 150X at times. The drawing above was made from views at various powers—(16-75) and the largest spot was visible *naked eye!*

Check out the MAS Library for some good books on the Sun or just go out and take a look! Use caution with direct (filtered) or projected observations.

—Tom Gill



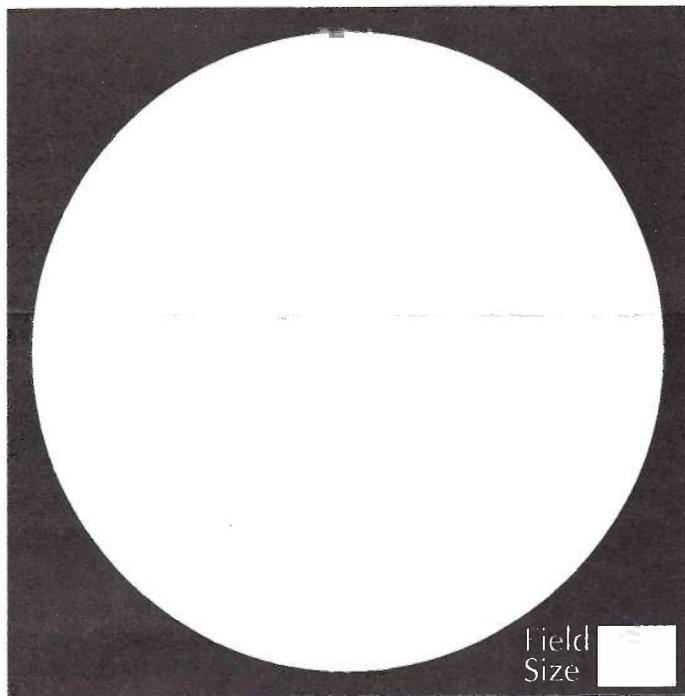
Saturday Night Keyholders

Mar 6	Chris Hesseltine	482-4515
13	Lee Keith	425-2331
20	Dan Koehler	662-2987
27	Jim Kube	453-8858
Apr 3	John Pfannerstill	475-6494
10	Frank Roldan	608-787-1730
17	Terry Ross	784-2093
24	Tom Schmidtkunz	352-1674

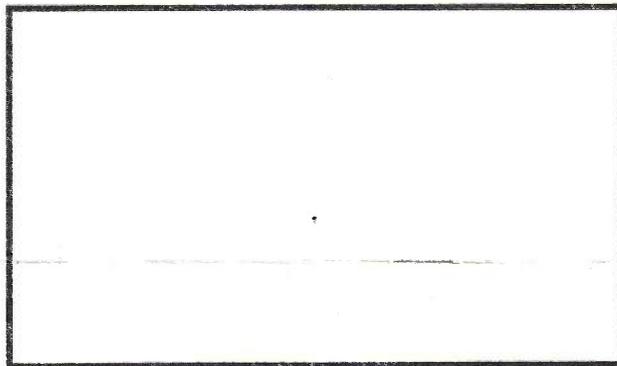
Observing Log Card

With Spring galaxy season just around the corner, you may find the card below useful for recording your observations. If you wish to have some made, take this page to a printing/copy service (such as Kinkos) and have them copy or print it onto a stiff paper. Do it "2-up" on an 8 1/2" x 11" to keep the cost down.

Happy hunting!



Constellation _____ Object _____



Location Chart

Date _____ Time _____ (UTC/Std/DS)
 Transp. _____ Steadiness _____ Temp _____
 Telescope _____ E.P./Mag. _____
 Filters/Other _____

Notes:

Observing Club Reminders

As a reminder to observers, the MAS offers, for Deep Sky observing, the Messier Club Observer's Handbook, or for double stars, the Burnham Club Observer's Handbook, if you send an 8.5" x 11" SASE with (4) 29 cent stamps to: Lee Keith, MAS Observing Clubs Coordinator, 8150 S. Legend Dr., Franklin, WI 53132-9623. They contain a wealth of information on observing techniques and hints, as well as detailed maps to find the more elusive objects. Best of all, they're FREE!

There is also a Binocular Messier Certificate for observing 50 or more Messier objects with just binoculars. After observing and recording the objects in the list, you will receive a certificate from the Astronomical League. In addition, there are the Herschel 400 and the new Herschel 800 programs for viewing some the famous astronomer's deep-sky discoveries.

-Lee Keith

Darker Skies in Oak Creek!

This article appeared in Thursday's Milwaukee Sentinel. Nice to see that sometimes things relating to lighting do change for the better. If you live in this area and feel up to it—or if you just want to celebrate a slightly darker sky in a time of ever-increasing sky brightness—write the city of Oak Creek's Common Council a note and tell them of your appreciation and of the other benefits of their decision.

OAK CREEK

Street light test may save \$5,000

The Oak Creek Common Council Tuesday voted, 4-3, to turn off more than 500 lights on five major city streets for at least the next six months.

By turning off 42% of the lights on portions of Drexel and Rawson avenues, Puetz and Ryan roads and about half the lights on a six-mile stretch of Howell Avenue, officials estimate the city will save a minimum of \$5,000.

Since October, the city has turned off about half the lights on a one-mile stretch of Howell between Puetz and Ryan.

MAS INFORMATION

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