

The Newsletter of the Milwaukee Astronomical Society

December 1998

Taking Aim

An extensive renovation and upgrade of the MAS Observatory facilities has been under way for the last year or so and it's been interesting to watch it unfold.

In it's past history, the MAS observatory has been renown for providing facilities for serious amateur observation of various celestial phenomena. If you have any doubts, take a look at the extensive files detailing VSO observations etc. that are in the back of the Quonset hut. In time, with encroaching civilization and light pollution, there has been a malaise in the quantity of serious (contribute -to -science) observational activity. Fortunately, the development and availability of new technology, such as CCD imaging provide a means for living with some light pollution and extending the useful life of a site such as our observatory into the next decade or so.

Anyway, enough vision and renewed enthusiasm has been shown to undertake a wholesale upgrade and digitizing of the three observatory units (as well as Portascopes), not to mention the replacement of of our antiquated meeting hall.

The standard for the three observatories is that , after renovation, fully serious observational work can be done with greater ease and precision. Additionally, these same upgraded scopes can be used for bringing newcomers to the art of amateur astronomy with greater ease.

I await these developments with great anticipation!

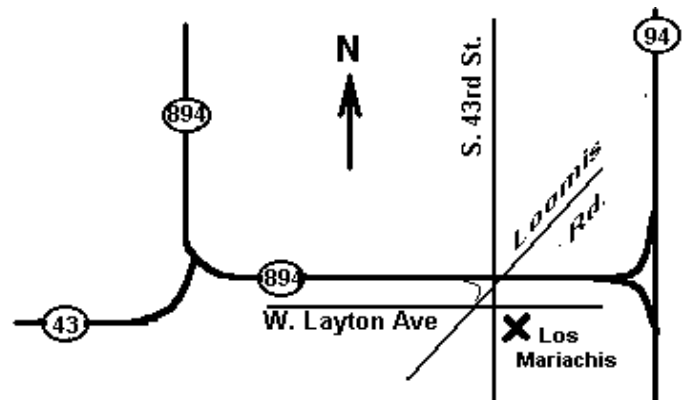
Editor

Sad Sequel to February Eclipse Trip

. Recent news reports that the ship that was taken by some MAS members to see the eclipse last February, the Fantome, has been lost at sea! It had just dropped off about 100 passengers in Belize (Central America) and headed north in a vain attempt to avoid Hurricane Mitch. Well, Mitch went farther north than anticipated and sunk the ship. The search was just called off after a week of searching. All 31 of the crew were lost. This was the same crew that was so wonderful to the MAS members during their trip. I thought that those members that went on the trip would like to know this and to save those photos as they will be the last time we will ever see those people!

Lee Keith, MAS Vice President

Seasons Greetings
From The
Milwaukee Astronomical
Society



MAS Holiday Party, Dec. 18th, 6:00PM,

At Los Mariachis

Compadres, Muchachos, Senoras, Senioritas.....join us for an evening of fellowship and good food at the reknown Mexican restaurant Los Mariachis, located at 4305 W. Layton Avenue (see above map). A room has been set aside for us so we can swap some more yarns & enjoy the highly rated cuisine as a nice break in the holiday hubbub. This is the same place we had our holiday gathering last year. Based on the memories of the good turnout & good food & fun, we decided to come back again.

By the way, Los Mariachis is primarily a reasonable cost Mexican restaurant but they do have a short American menu for those who prefer less seasoned foods. They also were very flexible on billing individuals, couples etc. rather than the proverbial one big bill. Casual dress is typical.

Please Note that this gathering takes the place of our regular monthly meeting for December.

Other December Events

First Wednesday meeting, Dec. 2 @ 7:30 PM

Discuss forthcoming observing events, Question & answer, Real time observing, weather permitting.

First Saturday Nite Meeting, Dec.

5. Scott Jamieson's open house for members interested in becoming familiar with the various observatory scopes. From dusk til?

Note: there will be no 1st Wed. or 1st Sat. Meetings during Jan., Feb., or March, 1999.

MAS October Campout Report

.Continued from a previous newsletter. A group of itinerate amateur and not so amateur astronomers, following a trail of blood (the Autumn colors) from the "great bear" (Ursa Major) having been shot in the chest with an arrow from the bow of the robin, (Micmac Indian legend) descended upon the group camp site in the northern kettle moraine near Greenbush, WI.

Son Jeff and I arrived at the camp grounds late Friday afternoon. What a lovely day to start a star party. Warm air, partially cloudy sky, an inviting campfire and the company of friendly people sharing a similar experience. After introductions all around (there were astronomers from other clubs and destinations we hadn't met), we set up camp and had a bowl of Jeff's famous super "hot" chili for supper. We were anxious to set up our telescope before it became too dark.

Now came the moment we had all been waiting for – darkness (except for the camper across the way with his white lantern lit.) But, it didn't bother us too much. What did bother us were the patchy clouds that had us moving from object to object, from east to west and from north to south as quickly as a new "sucker hole" would open up. We did manage some interesting views of Jupiter, Saturn, the "ring" and the usual collection of easily found "M" and "H" objects.

Around 1:30 A.M., the clouds became too fickle for our taste so we adjourned to the warmth of the campfire where the real mysteries of the universe are hypothesized, anyway. To hear Paul Borchardt version of the creation of the universe was truly awe-inspiring. Some sitting around the circle of fire found the "creation of the universe according to Borchardt" too freighting to listen to any longer and retired around 3:00A.M. The rest of us, being stone deaf by that time, retired around 4:30A.M.

The sometimes-heavy rain during the night seemed to promise a warm and sunny Saturday. Unfortunately it was wishful thinking. So, after listening to the weather forecast on Scott Jamieson's weather radio it was determined we would not be allowed another night of viewing.

After a late breakfast, we tore down, packed up, said arrivederci to Greenbush. We decided as a group to visit the wonderful Parnell observation tower and view the autumn pallet where the 360-degree vista is spectacular. Scott Jamieson, using his hand held GPS device, determined our location to be precisely somewhere in North America.

We once again said our good-byes to our now "old " friends in the Parnell tower parking lot - I think we may have picked up a couple of new members for MAS in the process. Jeff and I continued to drive through the Northern Kettle Moraine to take a last long look at one of our favorite places in Wisconsin that will have to serve us till next year.

Continued next column

Campout Continued

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Again, for those who missed the outing, please try to join us next year. Take it from me, you don't have to know anything about astronomy to have a great time. And, to our fearless leader, planner, promoter and man about town, Dan Yanko, "we missed you!"

Mike Marinelle, MAS Member

Bit and Pieces

* The Re-aluminized 25" Mirror for the refurbished Z Scope has been brought back from the Coating laboratory in Chicago and is being reinstalled into its Scope assembly. If some of the mount compensation schemes can be made to work properly, first light should not be far away.

* Treasurer Dan Yanko reports that several hundred dollars have been received as Memorial Gifts in memory of Jim Toeller. It is memorials like this that have built up the clubs Endowment & projects fund that have allowed us to undertake projects like the Observatory renovation program.a nice way to remember (and be remembered) with a living memorial.

* Both Scott Jamieson & Gerry Samolyk announced that first Wednesday and First Saturday Meetings are canceled for the months of Jan. Feb. and Mar. 1999 primarily because of site accessibility and expected inclement weather. These have been low attendance work sessions in the past

For Sale

DYNAMAX 8 TELESCOPE (Criterion Scientific Instruments). Includes: 8.3 - 21 mm zoom lens; Porro lens; Barlow lens; special optical coating; 4 mm ortho lens; field tripod; carrying cases for telescope & tripod. Set up and used twice. Technical specs avail. \$1000 Contact Richard Farrell 1-414-473-6101

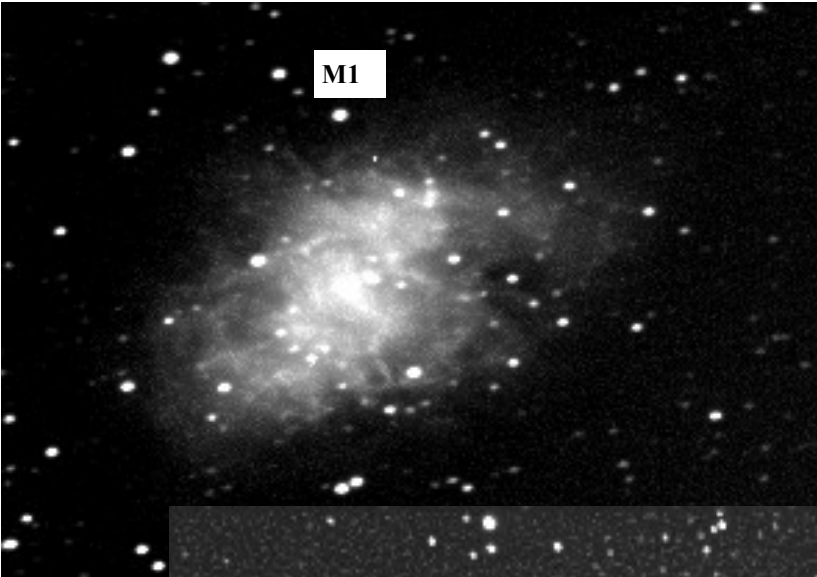
Some more recent CCD Images

On the page to the right (page 3), are some CCD images lifted from the Hard Disk files of various active observers including Samolyk , Hoag, & Jamieson recently taken with our 12" A Scope and the recently aquired Santa Barbara ST6B CCD Imager from our Observatory site.

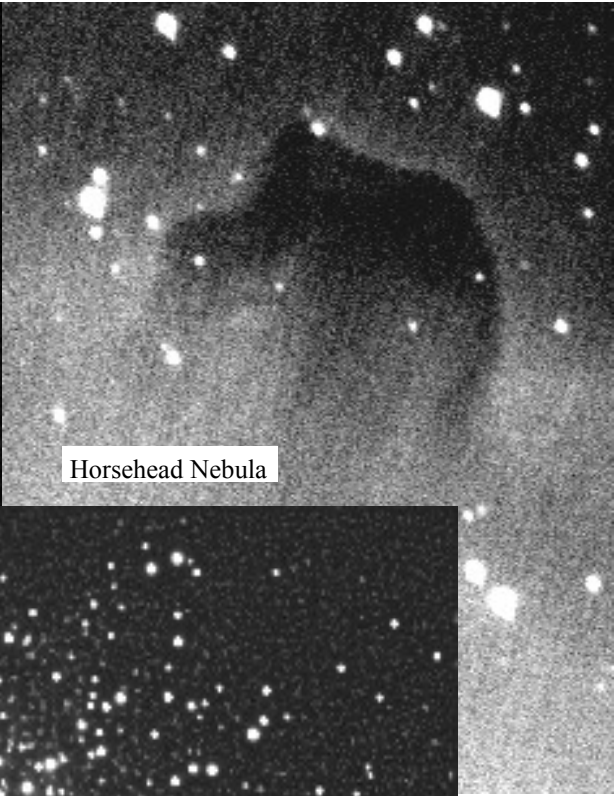
Most neophyte observers rapidly discover that this kind of deep sky object detail just isn't there when they look thru the eyepiece of a 12" Newtonian. It would take long photograhic film exposures with some real time tracking correction thru an adjacent attached tracking scope (but with some image degradation due to encroaching light pollution).

Not so with our new imager which accomplished each photo in a matter of minutes and compensated for background light pollution in the process.

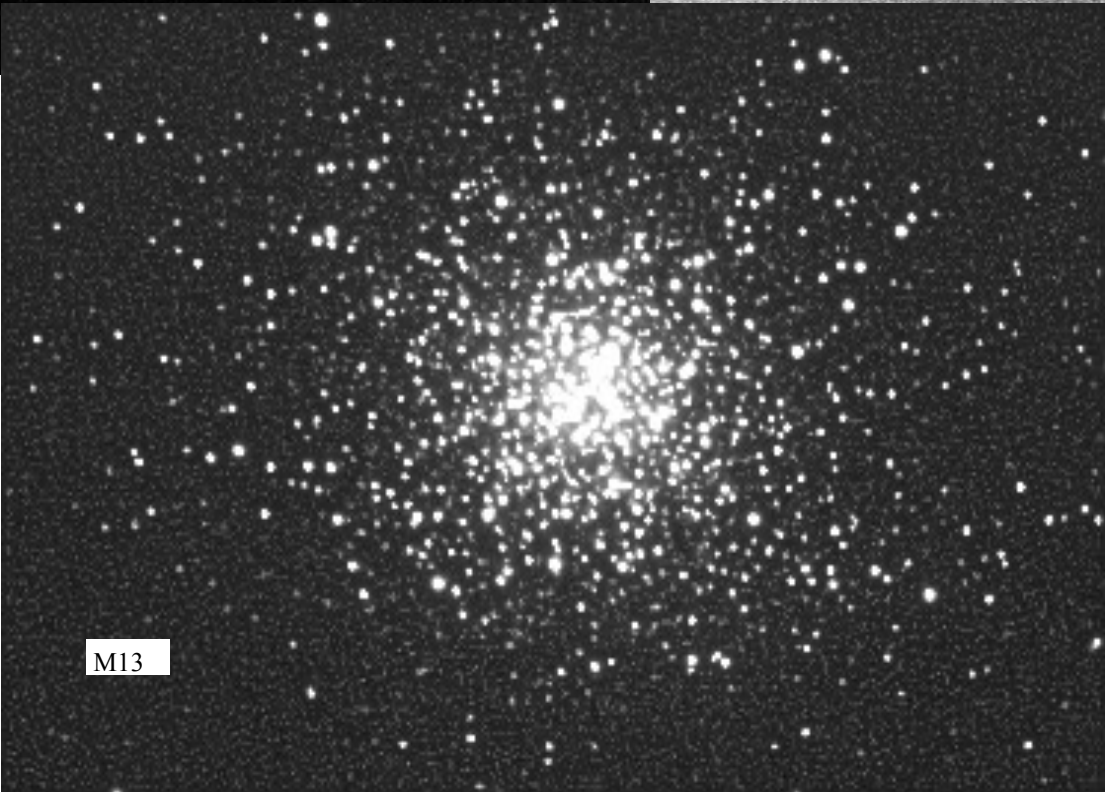
Gotta come out and get checked out with the new stuff guys.....hate to see ya left behind!



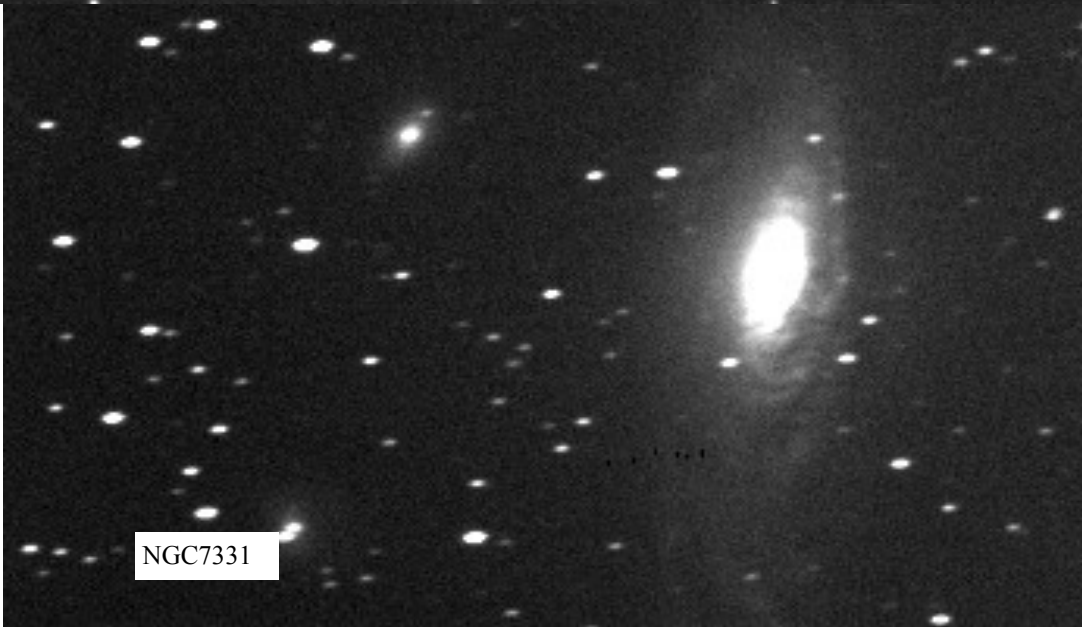
M1



Horsehead Nebula



M13



NGC7331

MAS Officers/ Staff

President	Scott Jamieson	896-0119
Vice President	Lee Keith	425-2331
Treasurer	Dan Yanko	453-3382
Secretary	Margaret Warner	327-7427
Observatory Director	Gerry Samolyk	529-9051
Assistant Observatory Director	Paul Borchardt	781-0169
Focal Point	Rudy Poklar, Editor	786-8931

Future MAS Events

Watch the January 1999 issue for the winter months MAS meeting site (Jan. Feb. Mar.)

MAS Membership is open to all with an interest in Astronomy and expanding their knowledge of the Universe. Yearly Membership Dues are: Individual \$28/yr; Family \$32; Non-resident (individual \$18, Family \$22); Student (under 18) \$12. **For more information, contact Membership Chairperson Julie Frey, 11040 W. Meinecke Avenue, Milwaukee WI.**

Focal Point Publishing Guidelines

Focal Point Newsletter is published monthly from Sept through May with a Mid-summer issue in July. Articles, Announcements, Graphics, Photos, Swap/Sale Ads etc should be submitted at least 10 days prior to the first of the month (of the desired issue). Article inputs are preferred via E-Mail, or diskette in a text or Word compatible format, if possible. Submit FP inputs to:

MAS Focal Point c/o Rudy Poklar
12905 W. Crawford Drive

Saturday Keyholders

December

5*	Dan Yanko	453-3382
12	Wanda Burner	646-8229
17	Paul Borchardt	781-0169
26	Brian Ganiere	961-8745

January

2	Chris Hesseltine	482-4515
9	Vern Hoag	548-9130
16	Tim Hoff	662-2212
23	Scott Jamieson	896-0119
30	Lee Keith	425-2331

**First Saturday Observatory nite meetings will be held in parallel with standard Observatory operations. If members want to be assured of observatory access on a given Saturday nite, they should call the keyholder ahead of time.*

Loaner Telescopes (available to members for local use)

Scott Jamieson (Waukesha)	896-0119	4"	f / 1.5
refractor			
Lee Keith (Franklin)	425-2331	8"	Dob reflector
Rich Stearle (Greenfield)	543-7479	8"	Dob reflector

Visit our MAS Website:

<http://members.aol.com/masmemb/index.html>

The Milwaukee Astronomical Society

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Milwaukee, WI. 53210-1208

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** Holiday Get Together at Los Mariachis, Dec. 18th*

