

President's Message

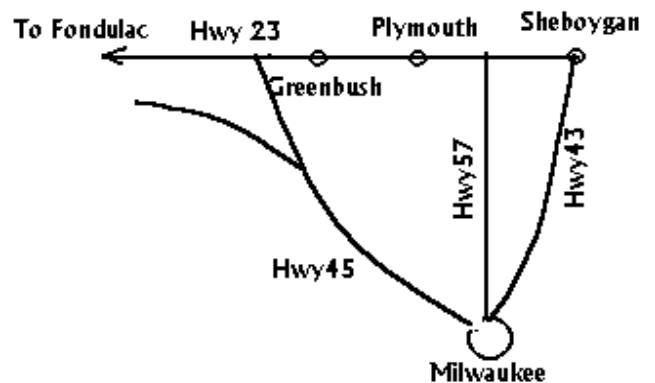
Renovation expands; Main Hall to be replaced.

The plans for the new building have continued to progress with the reviewing of conceptual plans. The new building will replace the Quonset hut and include the main meeting hall, a larger warm-up / charts room and a larger library. As many of you know, the increasing size, and therefore weight, of our wonderful collection was more than the old floor could stand and it was necessary to move it to Z-building. In our last board meeting I solicited opinions on this project and was delighted to discover that all of the members present were enthusiastic. This will be the largest expenditure by our club in many years but well worth it. I therefore asked for volunteers to serve on a construction committee and appointed Vern Hoag as chairman. This committee met the following week and settled on the general layout and dimensions. Drawings are being prepared now and will be completed in the next two months with the goal of going through the city approval process this winter and starting the project in the spring. My sincere thanks to the people that have offered their effort and support for this exciting project.

I have discovered that one of the dangers of asking for opinions is that people will tell you! I actually do appreciate this and have come to the conclusion that one of the major issues to many of our members is the poor access to our facilities by the regular members. Saturdays are not always clear or convenient. Yard keys are available but this only gives access to the grounds and power, not any telescopes. This was also brought up at the board meeting and the decision was made to rebuild the D-scope (The 8 inch equatorial between A and B scope) and construct a new roll-off roof observatory that would enclose that scope and one other and be fully useable year round. We should get the scope up to speed by early November but it will be spring before any construction can begin. This observatory will be accessible to anyone purchasing a yard key for a nominal amount sufficient to cover maintenance. Additional access to other scopes will be considered, but please remember that the entire observatory complex is being maintained and improved by a small but growing group of people, so anyone wishing to be a full key-holder will be required to contribute time to it's support. Volunteers are appreciated. Stay tuned!

Scott Jamieson, President, MAS

MAS Fall Campout, Oct. 16, 17th



Are you ready for a campout that features fine telescopes, shared observing of the nite skies, good fellowship, daytime hiking in the North Kettle Moraine State Park under the fall skies...and just plain fun? Then this is it! The club has reserved campsites at the Green Bush site of the above park and location so all you need is a State Park sticker and drive on in. If your camping days are over, consider driving up for an evening (its about an hours drive) or a nearby Motel.

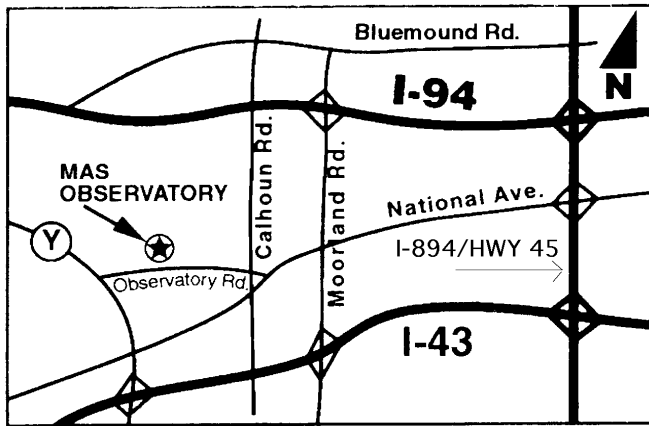
Last years campout was very successful, thanks to our erstwhile event leader, Dan Yanko. Once again some of the club's scopes ,including the 18" Weisen (Obsession) memorial scope will be on hand but feel free to bring your own as well. If possible, let Dan Yanko (453-3382) know your camping out....but do come!

MAS October Meeting , October 23rd at 8:00 PM - See Map next page.

Please note that the normal 3rd friday nite monthly meeting has been replaced by the Fall Campout for this month only!

Observatory Director, Gerry Samolyk, will discuss the Sept 12th Aldebaron Graze trip down south , the results obtained and the associated events. There was a Wisconsin group participating in this multi-state event...join us!

The MAS Board will meet just prior (7:00 PM) to above general meeting.



Madison Invites MAS to Star Party, Oct 24th

The Madison Astronomical Society cordially invites the members of the Milwaukee Astronomical Society to a star party at the Madison Society's observatory, the Yanna Research Station, on the evening of Saturday, Oct 24, 1998.

We have a 17" Newtonian Dobsonian, a 12" LX 200 with goto capability, and an 11" Schmidt-Cassegrain in permanent buildings. We have just taken our 16" Cassegrain out of service for building repairs. We also have 6 concrete pads for observers to set up private telescopes, with electrical to the pads. There is ample area on the rest of the grounds for more telescopes.

To get to the observatory from the Milwaukee Observatory, take I 43 to Darien, then Hwy 14 to Evansville. Proceed through Evansville on Main St to North 4th St which is on the west side of town. North 4th St. is Highway C. Follow Highway C west out of Evansville about 6 miles to the Madison observatory. Note that when you reach the intersection with Highway T a north-south road, 2 1/2 miles west of Evansville, that C follows it south for about a 1000 feet before heading out west again. Stay on C. Three miles later you will reach a 4-way stop when C crosses E. One tenth of a mile west of that intersection is Kelly Rd. Turn right (north) on Kelly, go about 1/4 mile and the observatory will be on your left (west).

We hope to see you all there.

Bob Manske, Madison Astronomical Society President

Eds Note. Bob supplied a bit map download of a drawn map as well, but for some reason this editor had problems with the down load. There should be maps available at our Oct. 23rd meeting. There will undoubtedly be MAS people who want to car pool as well and that should be a good time for those arrangements to be made.

MAS has had close ties with Madison in the past...heres an opportunity to renew acquaintances again.

On Aug. 21-23 I had the pleasure of attending one of the best star parties I've ever been to. Upon reflection I wondered why I liked it so much as the weather was not the best. Friday night was very clear but rather dewy. Saturday was a total

washout with rain all day and even a tornado watch that night! I think the main attraction was that they tried so hard to do a good job and put on an enjoyable party.

By "they" I mean the organizers, of course. The event was sponsored by the Chippewa Valley Astronomical Society, and was held at the Beaver Creek Reserve in Fall Creek, WI, which is about 10 miles east of Eau Claire. The Reserve is a very nice facility which includes the Hobbs Observatory, several cabins, a main lodge, and even a nature center across the road. The observatory building is one to covet. It contains two domes, a large central meeting room and several smaller rooms. Out in front is a football field sized observing area where the scopes were set up and camping was allowed around the perimeter. The fee was \$30 for the weekend per person (I'm not sure if there was a special family rate) which included the camping and all meals!

Friday dinner you were on your own but midnight snacks were served in the main room of the observatory on both nights. Breakfast on Sat. & Sun. and dinner on Sat. was served in the main lodge. The site is somewhat bothered by skyglow from Eau Claire to the west but has very dark skies in the other 3 directions. I set up close to the trees on the west side of the field so I wasn't really bothered by it at all. They had a little over 100 people show up and it wasn't too crowded, although I feel that's about the limit for comfort. With the bad weather Saturday a lot of people left early but that night we still had fun in the observatory main room talking, snacking, and watching a video by John Dobson on how to make a telescope. The observing on Friday had moments of very good seeing where those with big scopes were doing Jupiter and Saturn at 400x to 700x! I've never seen so much detail on Jupiter before! It was my first night out with my 15" Tectron Dob and I was quite pleased with it. Only trouble is I was so busy playing with it that I didn't take the time to compare it to other similar scopes like I wanted to. I guess that'll have to wait for another star party. All in all I have to give this one a good recommendation. It's about a 4 hour drive but it was worth it IMHO. I even won a door prize! Give it a try next year if you're looking to do some observing on the August new-moon weekend. I'm sure I will again.

Bob Kempka, MAS Member

Astrofest 98

I recently fulfilled a life long ambition. I attended my first starparty – I attended Astrofest 1998.

In doing so, I answered two important questions that must have troubled amateur astronomers since Copernicus tripped over his robe. Have you ever asked yourself, what do astronomers do during the day? And, do real astronomers wear white socks?

Leaving Milwaukee at 5:30 A.M., son Jeff and I arrived at Camp Shaw-Waw-Nas-See, the 4-H camp and Astrofest site near Kankakee, Illinois around 10:30 A.M. What took us so long, you ask? Well, after missing the Hwy. 57 off ramp, we unwittingly proceeded east on Hwy. 294 until we saw a sign welcoming us to Indiana. Wisely judging we had gone too far east, not having synchronized our watch with Greenwich, nor having John Harrison aboard, we held a hurried conference and decided to visit daughter Jacqueline in Hammond, IN (seeing we were already there).

Following the map that the Astrofest organizers provided, and ignoring the typographical errors, we finally arrived at the campgrounds, set up Camp and proceeded to discover the wonderful world of Amateur Astronomy. And what a wonderful world it is indeed. Because this was all new and exciting to us, we couldn't get enough rubbernecking. We saw an unbelievable array of telescopes and viewing equipment as well as some very interesting astronomy camping accommodations. The things people think up and build and the things that money can buy is truly remarkable. We saw old friends and made new ones. We talked smart with all of the vendors and even bought some missing pieces for our telescope. There was one vendor there that I had been communicating with on the Internet for over a year but had never met, if I had known that he was going to be there, I would have asked him to bring some things I wanted.

So what do the old "Pro's" do all day long? They did some of the same things that we did and a lot more as well. There was a fossil filled stream to explore and nature trails to hike or bike. There were all day astronomy seminars and light a pollution workshop. There was equipment to set up and "AstroDogs" to eat. There would even have been time for a nap except it was too hot. Then, after an Astrofest provided a "cook it yourself" or the "dine out" dinner, but before dark there was an awards ceremony for the winners of the many contests available. There were awards for the best homemade telescope, the best mount and accessories, the best old instrument, the best restoration of a homemade or commercial instrument. There was an astrophoto contest with some, if you'll excuse the no pun intended, out of this world photography that would knock you socks off, (white or otherwise). There was even an art contest for the children, who presented some interesting ideas of how they perceived the universe.

Then came the night. The sky around Camp Shaw-Waw-Nas-See was good but not that good and we had the moon to contend with as well. Jeff and I did manage to spot

Astro 98 Continued

3

a few good objects and had fun with our newly acquired eyepieces.

We spent a lot of time looking through other peoples' instruments as well (And here is where the white socks or in our case white tennis shoes comes in). As we walked around the darkened field, all you could see was our white tennis shoes. They stood out like a meteorite shower. In fact they seemed to look iridescent like some of the shoes the kids wear today, probably not a good choice for a future star party. One thing we did notice that surprised us was how few "die hard astronomers" there were. We were so full of adrenaline that we could have gone all night but alas, found few takers.

So, in answering two questions we discovered what so many of our astronomy friends already knew. With so many wonderful things to do and see, if you haven't experienced a star party, you don't know what you're missing. For us it is an event worth repeating. We were told attendance was down this year. The place is usually packed. Well, we couldn't have been happier, it was just right for us.

Mike Marinelle, MAS Member

Did a Light Bulb Turn On?

If you read the two previous articles by Bob Kempka and Mike Marinelli, a light bulb might turn on. They both are very enthusiastic about what a Star Party/Campout can offer. Many have undoubtedly said, "I really ought to give it a try". These two members did, and obviously enjoyed it.

Central to both articles is the enjoyment of shared observing thru a variety of scopes and the shared fellowship that comes with it **A good place to find that feature is our own MAS Campout on October 16, 17th at Greenbush** because the shared observing thru a variety of scopes is definitely there.

If you've thought about a starparty/ campout, do give this one a try!

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

Oct. 16, 17 MAS Greenbush StarParty/Campout
Oct. 23 MAS Monthly Meeting, 8:00PM
Oct. 24, Star Party at Madison

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

October

3* Lee Keith 425-2331
 10 Dan Koehler 662-2987
 17 Jim Kube 453-8858
 24 Scott Laskowski 421-3517
 31 Rudy Poklar 786-8931

November

7* Terry Ross 784-2093
 14 Gerry Samolyk 529-9051
 21 Tom Schmidtunz 352-1674
 28 Ken Waraczynski 321-0918

**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

2933 N.68th Street
 Milwaukee, WI. 53210-1208

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***MAS CAMPOUT AT GREENBUSH, OCT, 16, 17TH**
***OBSERVATORY HALL TO BE REPLACED**
***MONTHLY MEETING ON OCT. 23RD**
***MADISON STAR PARTY, OCT. 24TH**

