



The Newsletter of the Milwaukee Astronomical Society

May 2000

C Scope Dedication

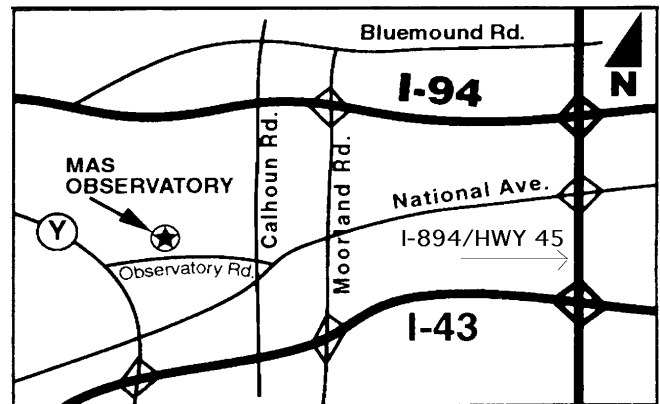
Sometime during or after the regular meeting, our new observing facility, C Scope, will be formally dedicated. If weather permits, a live demo of how easy it is to use this digitized scope to find thousands of deep space objects, various types of stars, etc..will be done.

The MAS board has recognized for a long time, that opening the observatories on Saturday night was not always convenient for many members. Yet because of the complexity of A, B, and Z scopes, with expensive imaging accessories, attachments, dome drives, scope slewing, etc as well as keeping facilities secure, it was felt that the presence of a trained keyholder was required. Hence, the Saturday night concept was created. To further increase members access to the observatory grounds (for personal telescope use), a gate key can be purchased for three dollars by any member in good standing. This allows any member to open the gate cable, park his vehicle, and haul his scope to the top of the hill and do astronomical observing any hour of the day or night.

The gate key provides better grounds access (to every member) but the Saturday nite approach for the fixed observatories had some drawbacks.For example, the probability of having good seeing on one night out of every seven when coupled with the variability of midwest weather patterns, lunar phases, and seeing conditions, is not great. Hence, the Board decided on adding the C Scope that can be available to all members at any time.

Any member can take a short training session on Cscope and its digitized finder capabilities, and purchase a C shed only key for five dollars. When combined with a separately purchased gate key, every member will have access to a superb, 10 inch, F6 , clock driven, equatorial mount, instrument grade, telescope on any day, at any hour.

Its an offer thats hard to refuse!



We meet May 19, 8:00 PM at MAS Observatory

(location shown on the map above).The Primary focus of this meeting will be the election of three Board of Directors and, subsequently the Officers.

Additionally, the C Scope will be formally dedicated with a demonstration of its locating and object acquisition capabilities (weather permitting).

No formal board meeting is planned prior to the meeting, since the board ,with the newly elected three members will meet separately during the regular member meeting to elect the new officers from the list of nominated candidates.

MAS Annual Picnic Will be July 22nd

Mark your calendars and don't miss this one. Last year, threatening weather during the early part of the day, kept a lot of attendees away.They not only missed the good fellowship that followed, but also an outstanding horde of astronomy door prizes that had been donated for the occasion. One unfortunate member went home for dinner with some company and then rushed back. He got back just in time to find the prizes gone. His name had been drawn twice,but alas, you have to be at the drawing! Don't miss it!!

May 6th is First Saturday Night

Scott Jamieson will be on site to address any observing questions, demonstrate the club's facilities etc.. Might be a good time to get checked out on the new C Scope!

MAS Election on May 19, 2000
Nominations for President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer and 3 Board Directors are open for nomination. Please make your nominations to the Nominating Committee prior to the election

The Next issue of Focal Point will be the Mid-Summer Issue (typically mailed in the last week of June)

Starry Night 2000- Member Report

Tom and Joan Pelnar of New Berlin combine the love of astronomy with the enthusiasm and organizational energy of schoolteachers. The result this April was Starry Night 2000, planned as a two night, one day observing and educational examination of our heavens.

The Pelnars hosted the event in Westfield Wisconsin, a small community about one hour north of Madison. Indefatigable work with community leaders ignited that small town spirit for which Wisconsin is known. Sponsors included the Wild Goose Pub and Grill, Virch's True Value Hardware, the Westfield Chamber of Commerce, and the Westfield Library. What kind of work has to occur to put on an event like this? Approvals and permits are only the end result of a long process that educates, involves, and finally motivates the city and county leaders to take a chance and try something new. The Marquette County fairgrounds opened its facility, including restrooms, an auditorium, storage shed for equipment, parking lot, and other facilities. Equally important, the county turned off the lights in the parking lot and surrounding areas, and fairgrounds managers identified other important electrical and building systems. You have really sold them when they turn over the keys and you don't even pay county taxes! The library donated a common room, power for telescopes and a perfect solar observational spot, right in the middle of the sidewalk approach to the main doors.

The energy that Tom and Joan displayed also extended to their content and organization in the event. Wall displays of our planets and moons, solar system, galaxy, and universe; a 10 inch Celestron Schmidt Cassegrain; other telescopes and binoculars; a solar observatory; a presentation on science fact and fiction; and Milky Way and Mars bars were just a few of the contributions the Pelnars made. Gerry Stroud gave an extensive overview of America's history in space, supported by his impressive rocket and spacecraft model collection. Bill Jollie offered a slide presentation of the mythology, composition, structure, and exploration of Jupiter and Saturn.

Alas, the contributions of other astronomers from the Madison and Milwaukee societies were stranded in the snowdrifts of a typical (and typically poorly timed) Wisconsin spring snowstorm. The roads on Friday, April 7 were impassable by afternoon, and overcast skies, blowing snow and wind-chill combined with the heavy snowfall to force cancellation of Friday evening's program. The program elements noted above were offered at the library on Saturday April 8, National Astronomy Day, to a small group of twelve or so, who were surprised that any of us had made it north to Westfield! Saturday's clear skies offered excellent morning and afternoon views of sunspots, faculae, and hints of granulation across the solar disk through the Pelnar's solar observing system.

Word of the revived event spread, and Saturday evening's program drew a larger audience of 30 or so: a substantial

continued next column

portion of the town's population. The skies cooperated until 10:00PM. Before the clouds rolled in the group got early evening views of Jupiter and its satellites, Saturn, and Mars through an Astro-Physics Star 12ED. Despite their proximity to the horizon, the setting gas giants showed enough stability at 146 power to demonstrate Jupiter's belts and zones, with the Cassini division in Saturn plainly visible. The night observing run also included several deep sky objects. M31 (the Andromeda Galaxy) and M32 were captured in their final spring descent to the west. Open Clusters M52 and M45 (the Pleiades), M42 and 43 (the Orion Nebulae), M1 (the Crab Nebula), M35, and Galaxies M96, M81, and M82 were acquired to provide an overview of the magnificent and varied jewels that yield to even casual night observation. The evening group especially seemed to enjoy the trapezium and tendrils of nebulosity within the Orion Nebula at 85 power. A slice of the new moon on its way to first quarter burned through the gathering clouds as a finale.

Determination, the Pelnar's energy, Gerry Stroud's commitment and the town of Westfield's enthusiasm kept this inaugural event alive in the teeth of an unseasonable blizzard. With clear dark skies, excellent fairgrounds, easy access, friendly hotel and restaurant proprietors, and curious, polite children and adults, Westfield exhibits all the ingredients to support an astronomy event of the highest order. Let's hope that Starry Night 2000 is the start of an annual event – perhaps organized around the weekend of National Astronomy Day – and that the town and the Pelnars cooperate next year to host version 2001.

Bill Jollie, Member MAS

Remaining Open House Schedule

The April 12th Open house had a surprising turnout of visitors (approximately 80). Two full lecture sessions were given an excellent presentation by member Karen Wesener on Constellation myths. It was good to have Karen's talks available since the "seeing" was marginal at times.. Two things were evident; we need more old Astronomy and Sky & Telescope magazines (See separate article)for handing out. It would have been nice to have a few more members (with their or our Portascopes) on site. There was adequate help on hand but another 50 or so attendees would have tested the staff. The is a public education program. It's also the program that has brought us a fair number of new members. The following is a list of the remaining MAS Open Houses.

May 12	Moon Craters
May 26	Mercurial Mercury
Aug 11	Perseid Meteors
Sept 8	Summer Milky Way
Oct 6	See Uranus & Neptune

Bits and Pieces

* The April Board meeting was not held (lacking a quorum by one). In the future, consideration will be given to avoiding a major religious (and for many, a holiday) event when it overlaps with our "third Friday of the month" meeting schedule.

*B Scope Polar axis has been realigned. Previous alignment was within 20 arc minutes. It's now on the order of one arc minute. This should allow much longer CCD exposure times, either as direct exposures or in the "Track and Accumulate" mode.

*A motorized "Fine Slew" has been added to B scope to facilitate it's use.

* Additions in process for the interior of C Scope shed include:

-an 8 foot long, fixed, formica covered, desk on the back wall.

- A 3' wide x 4' high x 18" deep computer cabinet on the back wall.

-Two triangular shelves (one on each side of the entry) to hold user's charts, eyepieces, etc.

HELP! WE NEED THOSE MAGAZINES!!!

Donate those old unneeded back issues of Astronomy or Sky & Telescope magazines to the MAS to give out at Open Houses. They will be put to good use inspiring the next generation of astronomers. Please be sure that they are 5 years old or less. Just leave them at the Observatory with a note that they are to be given away or call Lee Keith at 414-425-2331.

BUILD A REAL TELESCOPE!

Ever thought of buying yourself or your child a telescope? Didn't know what to buy? Afraid of the high cost? Well, here's your chance to build a real telescope yourself! Students will be instructed on the assembly, care and use of their telescope as well as receive PC software applicable to your telescope and observing the Moon and planets.

There are two telescope choices. First is a 4 1/4" diameter Dobsonian reflecting telescope, which is 50" tall and weighs only 16 lb., the other is a 6" diameter Dobsonian which weighs only 24 lb. and is 57" tall. Both include a 10mm eyepiece, have Teflon bearings and are made of high quality birch plywood. The 4 1/4" scope has received excellent reviews in Astronomy magazine and a Canadian astronomical magazine.

These telescopes are suitable for a beginning older child (12 or above) or adult. **THESE ARE NOT TOY TELESCOPES!** While of modest size, they are easily capable of showing nearly every crater on the Moon, phases of Venus, polar caps of Mars, 4 moons and cloud bands of Jupiter, the rings of Saturn, hundreds of star clusters and nebulae, comets, asteroids and many other celestial sights. (Note that the 6" scope collects twice as much light as the 4.25" but is physically only a little larger.)

Please call Don Bracco at UW-Waukesha Office of Continuing Education at 262-521-5460 for more information.

Observers Corner

On Wed. morning May 17th, if you have nothing better to do at 2:30 AM, you can watch asteroid 382 Dodona pass near SAO 210027 in Sagittarius. The occultation path is shown in the accompanying GIF (not included here) chart as passing over Cuba, Yucatan, and central Mexico. At this angle, a slight shift northward would move the path much closer to Wisconsin.

The shadow path should be on the ground between 0734 and 0804 UT (0234 to 0304 CDT). The star is a nice, bright 7.2 mag object, so it shouldn't be hard to find, even in Sgr. There is a small Delphinus-like asterism just 2/3 degrees northwest of the target star. The asteroid is mag 12.9. Along the occultation path the star will apparently dim by 5.7 magnitudes for a maximum duration of 13.5 seconds. The nearly full Moon is 51 degrees away so it should not interfere with your observation.

For timing the event, tape recorder and short wave receiver capable of picking up the WWV time signal at 2.5, 5, 10, 15, or 20 MHz will do. Videos are encouraged.

If you get in an observation, take the next day off from work, with pay, without sick leave or vacation. Tell the boss that I approved it and it will be OK! Seriously, I hope somebody gets a shot at it.

Finder charts are attached (see Ed's Note below). After unzipping them, just click on the individual files and your browser will read and display them automatically.

Bob Manske, MAS

Eds Note:

The images take up four pages and are not shown here. They include the ground track plus three Guide 7.0 star charts to help locate the asteroid. However, if you are interested, contact Bob Manske at this email address : manske@madison.tds.net. for transmittal of the images.

MAS Officers/ Staff

President	Scott Jamieson	262-896-0119
Vice President	Lee Keith	414-425-2331
Treasurer	Dan Yanko	414-453-3382
Secretary	Margaret Warner	414-327-7427
Observatory Director	Gerry Samolyk	414-529-9051
Assistant Observatory Director	Paul Borchardt	262-781-0169
Focal Point	Rudy Poklar, Editor	262-786-8931

Future MAS Events

- April 1 Messier Hunt
- May 19 Election of Officers and three Board members
- July 22 MAS Picnic at the observatory

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 Chairman, Carlos Garces,

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

May		
6	Wanda Burner	262-646-8229
13	Paul Borchardt	262-781-0169
20	Tim Burrus	262-783-6572
27	Brian Ganiere	414-961-8745
June		
3	Brian Garness	262-538-3888
10	Chris Hesseltine	414-482-4515
17	Vern Hoag	262-548-9130
24	Tim Hoff	262-662-2987
July		
1	Scott Jamieson	262-896-0119
8	Lee Kieth	414-425-2331
15	Dan Koehler	262-662-2987
22	Scott Laskowski	414-421-3517
29	Rudy Poklar	262-786-8931

** If members want to be assured of observatory access on a given Saturday nite, they should call the keyholder ahead of time.*

MAS Observatory 542-9071

The Milwaukee Astronomical Society

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

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

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 Milwaukee, WI.

****We meet at 8:00 PM, at the MAS Observatory on Friday May 19th at 8:00 PM
 -Election of Officers
 -Dedication of C Scope Observatory
 *Mas Open houses on May 12 & May 26***

