


FOCAL POINT



The Newsletter of the Milwaukee Astronomical Society November-December 2000

President's Message

The new roll-off shed for the 18 inch Wiesen scope is almost finished thanks to some very hard working members! This shed is 12x12 with relatively low walls to provide a good view in all directions so that this wonderful telescope (Built by one of our long-term members - David Kreige of Obsession Instruments) can see most of the sky. We expect to dedicate this facility at the November meeting. This telescope and the 10 inch Newtonian on the German mount in C shed will be available to all club members who purchase a yard and observatory key (total \$8) and receive the basic training necessary to use and care for the facility. If you're interested, please contact me, Carlos Garces or Gerry Samolyk to schedule a training session.

I must admit that I am quite proud of the response from the membership to these improved facilities and hope that more members will take advantage of them. Your board of directors, officers and many members have provided the manpower to put together the latest additions.

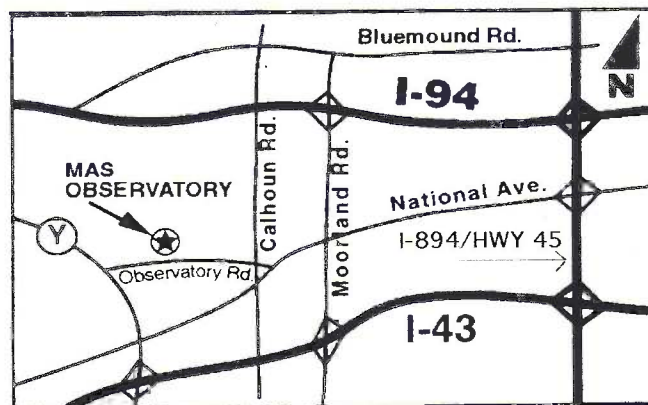
Our goal has been to provide to the membership, facilities that can be used by all levels of interest and capabilities. The 18 inch and 6 inch Dobsonians that will be in D shed are the easiest scopes to use for casual star-hopping and the view through the 18 is tremendous, especially on objects like M42 and the star clusters M13 and M2.

The German mounted 10-inch in C shed is perfect for learning how to use electronic setting circles and is quite good for the planetary and M-object observations. The clock drive will keep them in the field of view for long periods of time, allowing careful study. (Don't forget that both Jupiter and Saturn are moving into the evening sky and are just beautiful!)

The 12.5 inch scopes in A and B domes are now being used for both visual and imaging work and the drives will be improved this winter to improve tracking to imaging standards. Most of the current imaging is done on these scopes. To look at some of the results of this work, check out our web page, which is being very well managed by member Bob Manske. (Thanks BOB!) These scopes are available to the general membership on Saturday nights or other nights that Key holders are present.

The largest scope on the hill is the 25-inch Cassegrain.

Continued on Page 2, column 1



Regular MAS monthly meeting is on Friday November 17th, 8:00 PM at MAS.

Program Chairman Tom Pelnar has scheduled **Ron Ondrejka, the Imaging Specialist for Apollo 17 and the Viking Mission to Mars.** Ron will describe and illustrate his work on these programs in considerable detail. This is another one of those programs that the whole family can enjoy....so family members, do show up for a good talk.

The MAS Board will meet at 7:00 PM prior to the regular meeting. It behooves all Board members to be there...on time!

Interested members are always welcome.

MAS Holiday Party, Dec. 8th, 6:30PM, At Los Mariachis

Compadres, Muchachos, Senoras, Senoritas.....join us for an evening of fellowship and good food at the renown Mexican restaurant Los Mariachis, located at 4305 W. Layton Avenue (see map on page 3). 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 two years ago. 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.

This is a casual, order and pay your own freight, set-up. With a group this big, remember to toss in an extra %20 for tax and tip towards the unified bill.

Presidents Message Continued from Page 1

This scope is also being used by more people because it has great light gathering power and is computer controlled. Some training is definitely required but I was reminded of how much fun it is to hop from object to object via computer when a group of 4 members viewed a large number of objects in one short evening. I recently obtained the same capability for myself with the purchase of a 10-inch LX 200 for my own observatory. It is great fun and on several occasions I have viewed over 30 objects in a normal evening, without the frustration of spending a long time finding each one manually.

This capability is ideal for club scopes because it lowers the frustration level and, coupled with a good CCD camera, makes finding and photographing those faint fuzzies very easy. This is the next logical step for our clubs capability and your board has approved purchase of a 10 inch Lx200 and another ST9 camera. This system will be in a flip-top observatory that uses the aluminum top of the old satellite shed. After opening, it will be completely controlled from the lower floor of the Z-building. The computer will contain the sky atlas and camera software and should make imaging on a cold, dark winter's night a real pleasure. Another of the interesting capabilities is the free software available now to use the LX200 to track and image satellites. I have seen images of the Mir and International Space Station taken with a similar system that clearly showed the shuttle docked at the station!

We will soon be preparing a new guide to the MAS observatories that will explain all of the capabilities of these instruments and how to learn how to use each one as a person gets more experience. When finished near the end of the year, it will be distributed to all members and I hope inspire more of you out there to get involved in using the equipment and experience that the MAS represents. I have talked about equipment mainly but don't forget all of the years of experience in the people that are active in the club. A beginner can become an experienced observer much more quickly when surrounded by experienced people.

Finally, I must comment on a subject that is less pleasant but is important. We recently had a case of attempted arson on Z-dome. The damage was not large because the building didn't actually catch fire. The police have a suspect and it was not really directed towards anyone. This does point out the need for vigilance when you're on the hill. If it is not a Saturday or open house, it is a good idea to leave the chain up, but not locked to discourage the visitors that don't belong there. (Sometimes teenagers think it's a good place to park.) If you want to visit the observatory and there are cars in the parking lot, don't take the chain being up as being unfriendly, we are just protecting our members and facility. Release the chain and drive on in. (Don't forget to dim your lights!) Then replace the chain. That's all for now. Clear Skies!!!

Scott Jamieson, MAS President

In Memory of Bill Koenig

Bill Koenig, a former member of MAS, passed away on October 18th of this year. Bill was active at MAS during the Ed Halbach era. He served on the Board, participated in various observing activities including VSO, and helped to set up one of the early national conventions of the Astronomical League at the old Schroeder Hotel in downtown Milwaukee. There are still some old timers around that remember Bill well. Our condolences to the family of Bill Koenig.

Library News

We have 9 Kalmbach Astronomy 2001 calendars left for \$7.00 each...usually \$12.95. Pick up at next meeting.

1. Astronomy for Dummies: Your Complete Guide to Understanding the Universe. A reference for the rest of us!- by Stephen P. Maran-1999. Perhaps this is an unfortunate title, but this book has been called "the best" for any beginner in astronomy; no math equations and simple to understand; a book in a series of beginner starts.

AFD is introductory text, a survey of the universe for the (how to begin?) amateur. From around the solar system to other stars and galaxies, strange objects like black holes, unknown matters like dark matter comprise the essence of this text, but with an untraditional flavor and format. Widely illustrated, complete with photos, maps, tables, diagrams, and cartoons, AFD will give a fresh look at the universe to even experienced skywatchers and armchairers.

2. A Dictionary of Astronomy: Oxford- by Ian Ridpath - 1997. To an extent, this is a complete reference for astronomical definitions, including astrophysical and historical descriptions and data. If you have a question, consult Oxford.

3. Cambridge Guide to Stars and Planets - Patrick Moore & Wil Tirion- 1997. If you do not find the answer in Oxford, consult Cambridge. But this guide is a more traditional astronomy primer than AFD. Again, through the solar system and galaxies, but focused on our home galaxy, the Milky Way. All 88 star groups are represented by myths, maps to stars of and objects of interest.

The above trio shows insight and understanding from many angles in Astronomy...traditional to novel to upbeat.

Scott Laskowski, MAS Librarian-Historian

New Member Welcome

The following new members are welcomed to the club:

Mark Bauernfeind, DeForest WI.

Sam Barta and family, Waukesha, WI.

Garth Hall, New Berlin, WI

Dr. James Lattis, Madison, WI.

Christopher Limbach and family

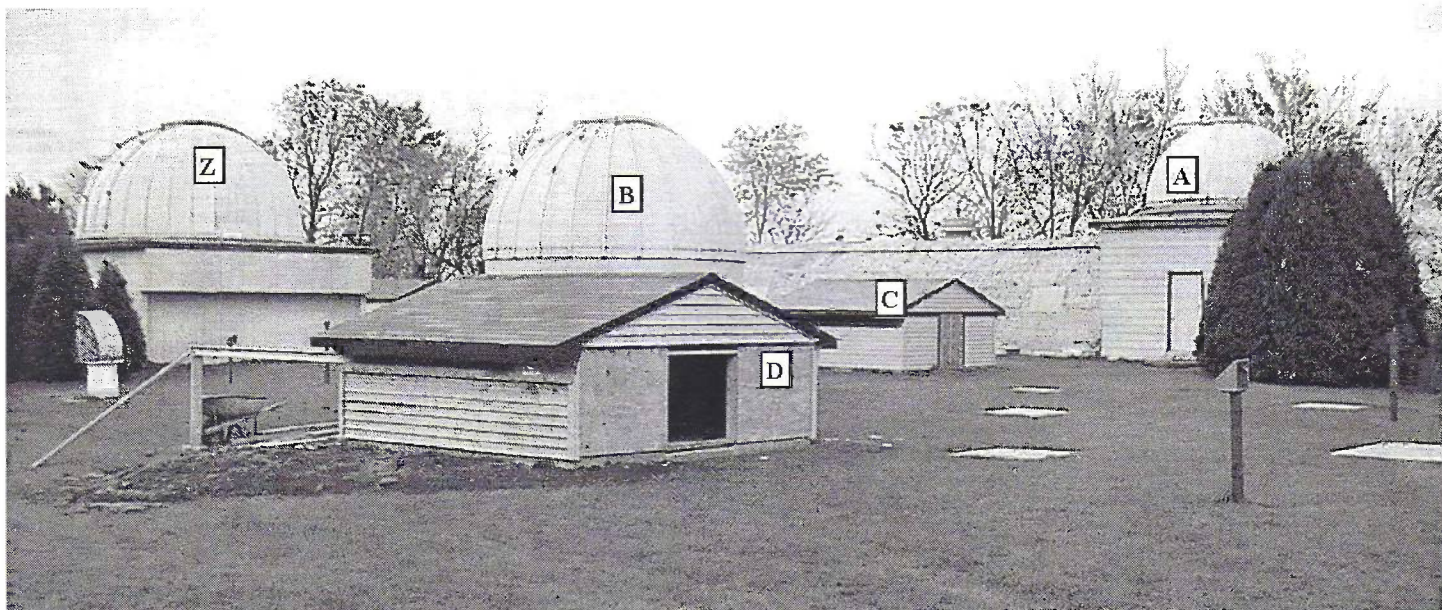
Steven Ozimek and family, Milwaukee WI.

James Prink and family

Robert Richter, Johnsburg, IL.

Please feel free to join us at our meetings and events shown herein. If you so inclined, learn to use our fixed observatories via the Saturday nite program. Access to observatory grounds on other nights can be done by purchase of a yard key from the Observatory Director, Gerry Samolyk. Older members, please help the newcomers feel at home.

Carlos Garces, New Member Chairman



One of the finest Amateur Astronomy fixed Observatory collections- MAS's own hilltop site. In the foreground, is the new "D" rolloff roof under construction which will shortly house the 18" Obsession Dobsonian. The C rolloff has a 10", F5, equatorial mount with digital readouts. A and B scopes are both 12" newtonians on German equatorial mounts and used extensively for CCD imaging. Z scope house a fork mounted (equatorial) 25" Cassegrain, computer driven, "Go To" scope. Also shown in front of the rolloff roof units are cement pads where any of the Club's ten 10", F5 portable scopes can be brought out and set on...or members can haul their own scopes.doesn't get much better!

Bits and Pieces

The following are some of the significant items from the October 20th Board meeting.

* The Board approved the Purchase of a 10" Meade LX200 computerized "Go to" telescope and ST9 CCD camera to be used for dedicated imaging, remotely from Z building- See Presidents message.

* Carlos Garces presented and gained approval for 4 new applicants.- see new member welcome, page 2.

* Board decided to find a new holiday party site different from last years- see page 1.

* Some 2" eyepieces will be acquired in the near future to permit wider field of view, especially with our larger scopes.

* Membership Renewal Chairman will send a second postcard renewal application to the few non-respondents on the assumption the applications were misplaced or lost. However, those not responding to the second application (within 2 weeks) will be dropped from the membership rolls.

For Sale

* 80 mm Lumicon Super finder/Portable telescope with Diagonal.- \$135. Slo-motion adapter for above-\$20.

* 13mm & 19mm Televue plossl eyepieces, \$35 each or \$65 for both.

* 2" / 1 1/4" Meade newtonian focuser- \$20

Contact **Tom Schmidt**, 414-352-1674

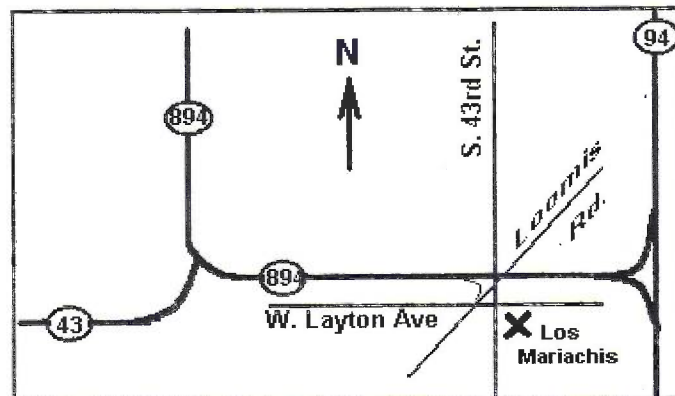
Messier Certificate Awarded

At the October 20th meeting, MAS Member **Lana Silke** was presented a full Messier certificate by Vice President Lee Keith for locating and logging all 110 Messier objects with out the aid of setting circles. This certificate is under the auspices of the Astronomical League and is locally administered by Lee Keith.

Lana has frequently participated in our open houses with her 12" Portaball Scope, assuring visitors a chance to see deep space objects as well as planetary and Lunar fare. Way to go Lana!

Email Addresses

Lee Keith is still looking for more member Email addresses. Just Email a short note to leekeith1@juno.com Members are assured this is for internal use only, and that no junk mail will show up in your mailbox.



Map to Los Mariachis, see page 1

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

Sept. 8, Oct 6 MAS Open houses
: MAS Membership Renewal Time
November 17, monthly meeting at MAS, 8:00 PM
Dec. 8th, Holiday Party at Los Mariachis at 6:30 PM

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, 16430 Melody Drive, New Berlin, WI. 53151. Phone 262-786-2623.

Focal Point Publishing Guidelines
Focal Point Newsletter is published bi-monthly (Sep Nov Jan Mar 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
New Berlin, WI. 53151

Saturday Keyholders

November

4	Chris Hesseltine	414-482-4515
11	Vern Hoag	262-548-9130
18	Tim Hoff	262-662-2212
25	Scott Jamieson	262-896-0119

December

2	Lee Keith	414-425-2331
9	Dan Koehler	262-662-2987
16	Scott Laskowski	414-421-3517
23	Rudy Poklar	262-786-8931
30	Jill Roberts	262-427-4495

January

6	Terry Ross	262-784-2093
13	Gerry Samolyk	414-529-9051
20	Tom Schmidtkunz	414-352-1674
27	Neil Simmons	262-889-2039

Loaner Telescopes (available to members for local use)

Lee Keith (Franklin) 414-425-2331 8" Dob reflector
Scott Jamieson (Waukesha) 262-896-0119 8" Dob reflector

MAS Observatory 262-542-9071

MAS Web Page: www.milwaukeeastro.org
New and timely, Check it out

The Milwaukee Astronomical Society

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**Ron Ondrejka Discusses Imaging the Apollo 17 and Viking Mars Mission at MAS, Nov. 17th, 8:00 PM*

**MAS Holiday Party at Los Mariachis, Friday Dec. 8th, 6:30 PM*

