


FOCAL POINT



The Newsletter of the Milwaukee Astronomical Society

March - April 2001

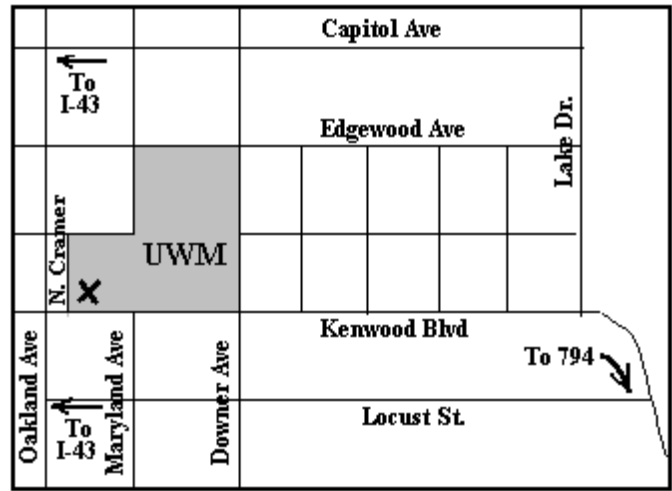
We meet at UWM Kenwood Campus on Friday, Mar 16, and Apr.20, 2001, 8:00PM, Room 133, of the Physics Building

Program Chairman Tom Pelnar has invited back Professor **Jim Lattis from the UW Madison at the March 16th meeting to discuss some historical aspects of Astronomy**. Jim previously focused on Madisons's Space Place. Some of the historical aspects of Astronomy history such Gallileo and his contemporaries are specialties of Jim's.

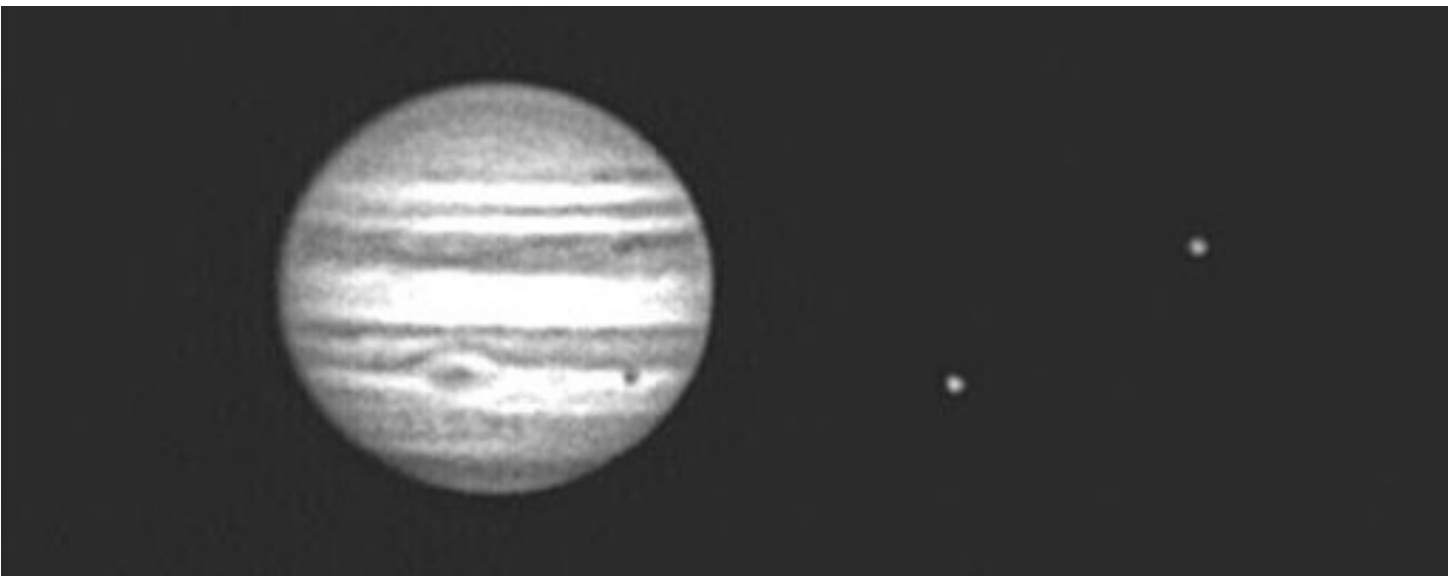
Professor Linda Sparke of the UW Madison's Astronomy Dept will talk about dark or missing matter at the April 20th meeting. Over 90% of the universe is speculated as missing. No one knows what or where is ..but there are some postulations.

Directions to the UWM meeting site are shown in the adjacent map.

Lastly, our **Board meetings are held at 7:00 PM, preceding each of the above regular meetings.** All Board



Election of Officers and four board members will be held at our regular MAS meeting (at the Observatory) on May 18, 2001. Anyone interested in running for office should let the nominating committee



Shown above is a black and white version of a recent 3 color image of Jupiter and two of its moons taken by Gerry Samolyk. The image was taken with the ST9 CCD imager Jan. 29th using our computer driven, refurbished 25" Z scope. The moon furthest to the right is Io and the other is Europa. Note that the shadow of Europa is transiting the surface of Jupiter (see black dot, lower right quadrant). Some image quality has been lost with the editor's graphic transformations from color. To appreciate this image in three color, go to the MAS web site at www.milwaukeeastro.org and view under "showcase"

Local Chandra Telescope Presentation

The Milwaukee Section of the American Society of Mechanical Engineers (ASME) is proud to offer a **technical presentation by Mr. Jon M. Kriegel on "The Chandra X-Ray Observatory" on Wednesday, April 11, 2001.**

Since this satellite telescope was launched in July, 1999 it has been used to study the X-ray properties of distant galaxies, neutron stars, black holes, quasars, and other high energy X-ray sources.

Mr. Kriegel was part of the design team at Eastman Kodak Company where the telescope was designed, fabricated, and assembled. This presentation will cover the technological advances made in creating perfect reflective surfaces, establishing strain-free mounts for 450 pound mirrors, and the assembly process of multi-story components in Class 100 clean room conditions.

The presentation will be held at the Tanner-Paul Banquet Hall, 6922 W. Orchard Street, West Allis, WI. Social to start at 6:30 with the presentation at 7:30. A nominal charge (\$2 for students, \$5 general admission) will be made at the door to cover refreshments. Pre-registration is suggested to help plan seating and refreshments.

This presentation is part of the ASME's Distinguished Lecture Series. Please contact Ron Perez at 414.229.6543 or by e-mail at perez@uwm.edu for additional information. Additional information will also be available on-line at <http://www.asme.org/sections/milwaukee>.

You may also contact me at the above e-mail address or at 262.549.2753 for information.

*Robert Stachowicz
Vice-Chairman
ASME Milwaukee Section*

Wisconsin Observers Weekend, June 15-17

Subject: Wisconsin Observers Weekend

From: Terry Becker <tlb@vbe.com>

WOW 2001 has been set for June 15-17 visit our web site for the latest information <http://www.new-star.org/>

Attendance will be limited to 80 in 2001 because we only have four group sites this year.

Attendance for WOW2000 was 92. Exceptional clear skies friday night. clouds saturday night. light rain sunday morning.

Lee Keith recommends this event as very worthwhile. Early registration is recommended because of very limited campsites this year.

MAS Messier Hunt on March 24

We will have our **annual Messier hunt at the Observatory on Saturday night, Mar. 24.** This is a informal , learn to find Messier objects in the night sky and is a fun night for beginners, intermediates, et al . With the new C and D scope observatories plus 10 portascopes there should be facilities for all. If you can't find it, someone should be able to help.

If its cloudy this night ,we'll try again on March 31.

Bits and Pieces

The following items of import were discussed and or acted upon at the February 16th MAS Board meeting.

* Treasurer Dan Yanko the club currently has operating fund of \$14,680 in two accounts .This is exclusive of the Endowment funds.

*A second Santa Barbara (SBIG) ST-9 is on order for the remotely operated (from Z scope lower level) 10" Meade LX-200, programmable "go to" scope. CCD delivery is expected later this month. The LX-200 will be acquired later this year.

* \$900 was approved to purchase a second RGB filter for the new ST-9. Both the new CCD, filter and LX-200 will be dedicated assets to the remotely operated site.

* The new 800 mhz computer with a CD writer is now installed in Z dome. The CD will be used as a master file for all on site imaging.

* Paul Borchardt fabricated a three hole cover for the input end of B-Scope to allow for more precise focusing with the CCD.

* A new 6" Meade dobsonian was donated to the club. It was decided to make this a loaner scope. It will kept in D roll off roof observatory when not on loan. Member must first contact Paul Borchardt before removing this scope from our site.

*A committee will be formed to review eyepiece needs for all the club's fixed telescopes to optimize the visual observing capabilities. A recommendation to purchase additional eyepieces will be made to the Board.

*A 50mm Finder has been added to the 18" Obsession scope (F4.5) as an alternate to the Telrad finder.

*The annual MAS Campout at Greenbush in the Kettle Moraine State park-north, will be held on the weekend of Sept. 21, 22.

* A tentative list for six 2001 MAS Open House dates was submitted but needs further review.

Welcome New Members

MAS welcomes the following new members.

Denise Volzka, Milwaukee

Robert Steinhofner and Family, Milwaukee

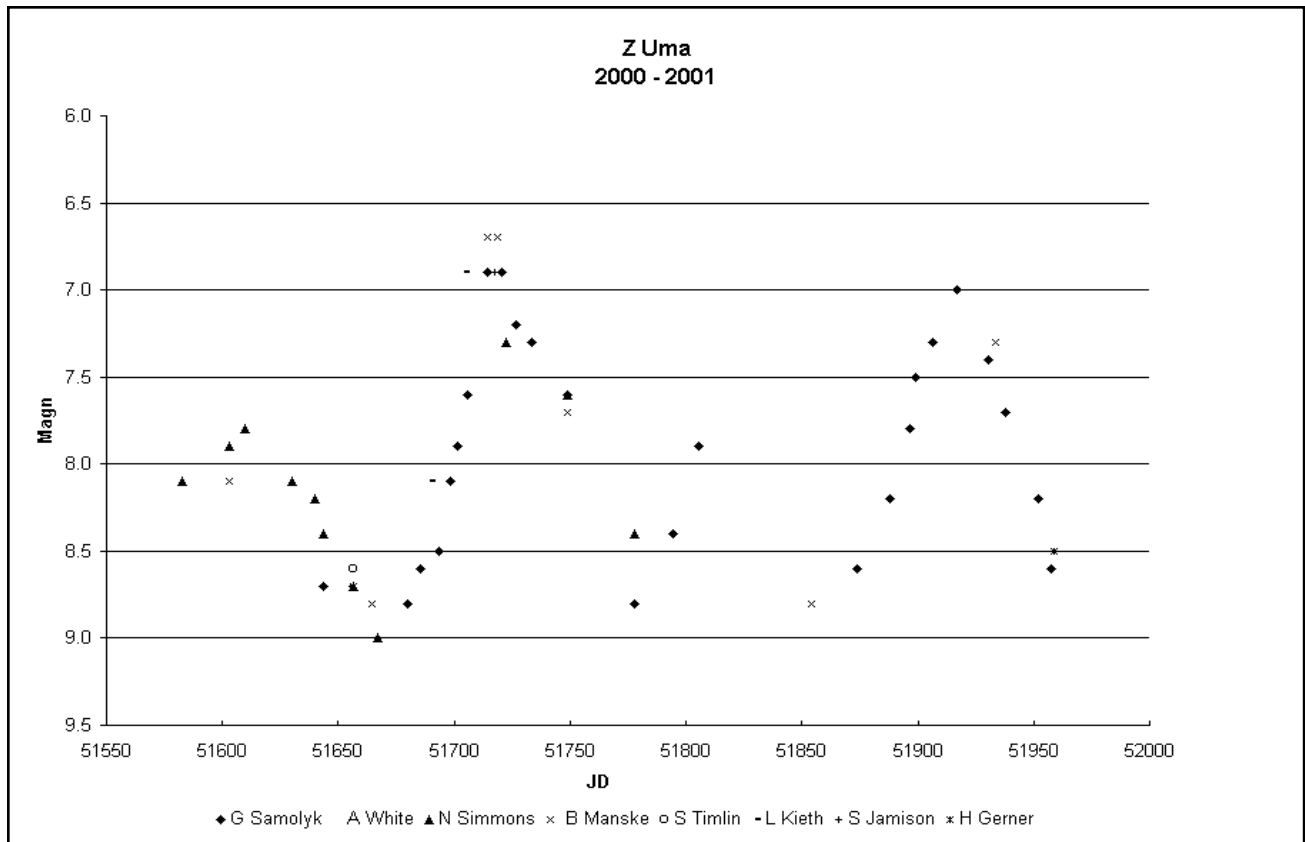
Please feel free to join our meeting and activities

Carlos Garces, New Member chairman

Thank You Margaret!

Margaret Warner has resigned her position of MAS secretary for personal reasons. We are truly sorry to lose Margaret's services but sincerely thank her for her dedicated efforts over the last several years.

MAS Board of Directors



MAS Observing Project *Getting started in observing variable stars*

We started a project to observe the star, Z UMa last year. The purpose is to introduce members to variable stars. The target is easy to find, located in the bowl of the big dipper and bright enough to see in binoculars or a small telescope. It is a semi-regular pulsating variable so the cycles do not always duplicate each other. The graph above shows the results (8 observers) with the latest observation in mid-February 2001

In the past year, four members made their first visual estimate of a variable star (Al White, Sue Timlin, Scott Jamieson, and Henry Gerner). As you can see from the graph their observations fit well with the more experienced observers.

Give it a try! Finder charts with magnitudes for comparison stars can be found on our web site at www.milwaukeeastro.org or contact Samolyk. You can report your observations to Samolyk using the email link on the web site. Make sure you include your name, the date and time (indicate if it's UT, CST, or CDT).

An observing hint, when the star is near it's minimum use a small scope at low power. You will need at least a degree field to fit the comparison stars (the dimmer comp stars are within a degree of Z Uma) in with the variable. As the star gets brighter it will be easier to use binoculars (or a finder the 50mm finders on the portascopes works real good). Also, the brighter comp stars are farther away. Typically, 50 mm

Continued in adjacent column

Observing Project continued

binoculars offer over 3 degrees FOV which allows you to encompass Z Uma and the brighter comp stars. It only takes a few minutes to make an observation.

Gerry Samolyk, MAS Observatory Director

Eds Note:

As the season progresses, the "cup" of Ursa Major swings more south in the evening hours, and hence for the MAS site, it moves away from the city lit north sky glow for better observing of Z Uma.

If you give it a try and feel uncertain about estimating brightness against comp stars, Gerry would be more than willing to have you drop by the observatory in the evening, by mutual arrangement, for a short period of coaching.

A copy of the AAVSO chart for Z Uma, showing the variable location in Ursa Major along with magnitudes of comparison stars, can be obtained from the Editor.

Starry Nite 2001

Call for volunteers. We're planning to hold Starry Night 2001 in Westfield April 27 and 28. We need people to bring their scopes and give sky tours, and others to give slide shows and lectures. If you're interested, contact us at any of the numbers given below.

Joan and Tom Pelnar
3445 S. Vista Granada Drive
New Berlin, WI. 53151
rumples5@hotmail.com
fax: 262-782-8116
phone: 262-782-6226

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

Mar 16, April 20, - Regular MAS monthly meetings at UWM-Kenwood Campus, 8:00PM

Mar. 24 MAS Messier hunt at the Observatory.

Sept. 21, 22 MAS Campout at Greenbush

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 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

Saturday Keyholders**March**

3	Tim Burrus	262-548-6372
10	Brian Ganiere	414-961-8745
17	Carlos Garces	262-786-2623
24	Brian Garness	262-538-3888
31	Chris Hesseltime	414-482-4515

April

7	Vern Hoag	262-548-9130
14	Tim Hoff	262-662-2212
21	Scott Jamieson	262-896-0119
28	Lee Keith	414-425-2331

May

5	Dan Koehler	262-662-2987
12	Scott Laskowski	414-421-3517
19	Rudy Poklar	262-786-8931
26	Terry Ross	262-784-2093

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
Paul Borchardt (MAS site)	262-781-0169	6" Dob reflector

MAS Observatory 262-542-9071

MAS Web Page: www.milwaukeeastro.org

New and timely, Check it out

The Milwaukee Astronomical Society

2933 N. 68th Street
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** March 16, Professor Jim Lattis speaks on aspects of Astronomy history, UWM, 8:00 PM*

** March 24, Member Messier Hunt at MAS Observatory from dusk til...*

** April 20, Professor Linda Sparke addresses missing matter in the Universe, 8:00 PM, UWM*

