

Focal Point



The Newsletter of the Milwaukee Astronomical Society

July-August 2003

AAVSO Meeting in Tucson Arizona

By Rudy Poklar



The MAS was well represented at the last AAVSO meeting in Tucson Arizona. Left to right is: Rudy Poklar, Bob Manske, Gerry Samolyk, Ed Halbach, a founding board member, (currently living in Colorado), and Gene Hanson (currently living in Arizona). This was an opportunity to renew many old friendships and start a few new ones.

The spring meeting of the AAVSO consisted of solid workshop type sessions reviewing the status of all types of variable star observing, both visual and imaged, and the problems of providing a growing data base for use by both professional and amateur astronomers in evaluating the physics of various interacting star types. The uniqueness of this organization is that most of the members (about a thousand strong) are active observers and contributors to this growing data base. One of the professional astronomers in attendance emphasized the importance of this work in helping to define the physical phenomena of these variables and understanding an important segment of our universe. There are not many organizations with such a dedicated membership and record of accomplishment.

On the last night, the highlight of the banquet came when Ed Halbach received the William Tyler Olcott award. Ed has devoted over 70 years to astronomical research (35 as the MAS Observatory Director).



Ed has made contributions in many areas including: Auroras, Solar Eclipses, Occultations, and Variable Stars. During that time Ed has mentored several generations of observers. Many of these have gone on to make significant contributions to astronomy, and some to professional careers. For newer members of MAS, Ed was a key mover that helped build this wonderful MAS Observatory facility and give our club its unique scientific "bent" that has endured to this very day.

Ed's wife, Jane, was also recognized for supporting Ed's efforts during over 60 years of marriage, despite the many absences caused by his work. Wives are often the unsung heroines of putting up with our long lonely hours with the night sky. Jane's patience was amply exhibited as Ed made his 90,000 plus reported observations during his life. By the way, Ed is still a very active observer after 95 orbits of our sun!

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Lastly, our own Observatory Director, Gerry Samolyk, was also given an achievement award by AAVSO Director Janet Mattei in recognition of his 100,000 variable observations he has made since the seventies.. It was fitting that Gerry and Ed received these awards together. Between the two of them, they have acted as MAS Observatory Directors for over 60 years. It certainly has provided continuity to our observatory operations.

MAS Picnic

By Vern Hoag
MAS VicePresident

Don't forget to mark your calendars for the annual MAS picnic this year on Saturday July 26. The start time will be 4:00 p.m. Come out and get some grilled food, drink, and desert and enter your name for the door prizes. This is a great time to meet and socialize with some of the newer members and members that don't get a chance to come out very often. It's also a good time to see what's new and learn how to operate some of the equipment. So I hope to see you all out for the picnic and a night of observing.

Yanko Star Party

By Vern Hoag

About a dozen people drove up on various days to Dan Yanko's farm house in Rib Lake WI. It's an easy 4-hour drive from Milwaukee. When I arrived on Thursday night there was thin haze but it was clearing so we set up our telescopes. We then outfitted the house and garage with red lights and

waited for the night sky. By 9:00 p.m. we were looking at our first objects. My 8" was showing spiral detail in M51 and M101. Dan was jumping from NGC object to NGC objects in Leo. But by 11:00 p.m. the clouds came back and we had to call it quits. I woke up around 3:00 AM. and the sky had cleared again. The summer Milky Way was glowing brightly right down to the horizons. We were back out observing until daylight.

Friday and Saturday night more people came by, the sky was clear and by 8:15 we were in red light mode (no white lights on at all). We had a fire in a Franklin stove burning in the garage to warm up by or go in the house for coffee and snacks now and then. The viewing both nights was superb. Lana was some place in Virgo with her portaball, she had 2 brighter galaxies and 3 or 4 fainter ones in the eyepiece. When I moved the telescope over, there were 4 bright galaxies and 3 fainter ones, it was incredible. Glenn brought his 15" dob and his Bino viewer. Paul used the bino viewer in his portaball for a view of M13 that was resolved to the core with a 3-d effect. Dozens of naked eye M objects were seen up and down the milky way.

We could not have asked for a better observing weekend. Everyone that made the trip up enjoyed themselves. I'd like to thank Dan for being a very gracious host and putting this on. This was a great weekend, thanks Dan.

MAS Open House Schedule

By Lee Keith

August 8th.....Persied Meterors
September 5th.....Craters of the Moon
October 3rd.....Mars at its Best

All open houses start at 8:00pm and all MAS members are invited to come down and help if possible. For non-members we ask for a \$2.00 donation per carload for parking and we also ask that they bring a jacket along to protect themselves from not only the cool night air but also the MOSQUITOES!!!

There will be slide programs and an opportunity to look at the moon, planets and stars through the many telescopes we have, weather permitting.

3 **Board Meetings**

The July board meeting will be on Monday July 14th and the August board meeting will be on August 11th. Both meetings will start at 7:00pm. The general membership may also attend these meetings. The General meetings will resume on September 19th.

Help!! We need a program chairman

There has been no volunteer for the empty program chairman's job as of yet. Please if you are interested at all call Scott Jamieson. This is a very important position to fill. We all look forward to the monthly meetings to be able to hear someone speak about our great hobby. Your only task is to contact and book speakers for the meetings from September to November and then from January to May. The only real rule is that the speaker should talk about astronomy and astronomy related subjects. If you are interested please contact MAS President Scott Jamieson by email at sjamiem16@aol.com or by phone at 262-896-0119.

Albrecht Moving Fund.

The Albrecht moving fund is now over \$2900.00 as of July 1st. We would like to thank all that have contributed and would ask anyone that would like give a donation contact MAS president Scott Jamieson at 262-896-0119 or email him at sjamiem16@aol.com

Welcome New MAS Members

We would like to welcome two new members: **Paul Wild and family from New Berlin** and **Paul Stevens and family from Greenfield.** Please attend our member nights every Saturday night if the weather is clear. There will be a keyholder out at the club and he or she would be more than happy to show you around and even teach you how to use the equipment and please don't hesitate to ask questions

Library News

By Scott Laskowski
MAS Librarian and Historian

Notice please return overdue books and video tapes to the observatory Library!!!!
Other people might want to check them out!!!

The Kalmbach Astronomy 2004 calendars, "Deep Space Mysteries," have been received by the club. They will be available at the MAS picnic and subsequent meetings (as the supply lasts). The ordinary price is \$11.99; but, as a benefit to MAS members, each calendar is only \$6.00. They include: beautiful photos of all types of celestial objects, and by month, noteworthy events, moon phases, planetary positions, historical information, and holidays. These items make a great gift. Some members inquire too late, so take advantage.

A new addition to the Library is:

1. Traces Of Catastrophe: A Handbook of Shock—Metamorphic Effects in Terrestrial Meteorite Impact Structures by Bevan M. French—1998. Meteoritic impacts have had an important role in the formation of the Earth, its geological history, and even the evolution of life. Do not be intimidated by the jargon. The first chapters are introductory in nature. The more technical text is attainable intuitively, if not intellectually, as by a geologist. Words or phrases, like "Shock Metamorphic Effect" or "Negascopic Shock—Deformation Features just mean that a big rock from space hit the Earth at high speed, made a big hole, and pulverized and fractured the rocks underneath the hole into discernible and recognizable features. Oh, say a pebble hits your windshield on the highway going 65 mph, you curse the truck driver carrying gravel or the speeder passing, same result, the glass fractures radially, a "shatter cone —same principle. This book mainly deals with the results of Earth impacts. For more about the impactors, meteorites, Rocks From Space and Thunderstones And Shooting Stars are recommended, available in the MAS Library.

Any recommendations are appreciated to add to the quality of the MAS.

4 July Asteroid Occultation

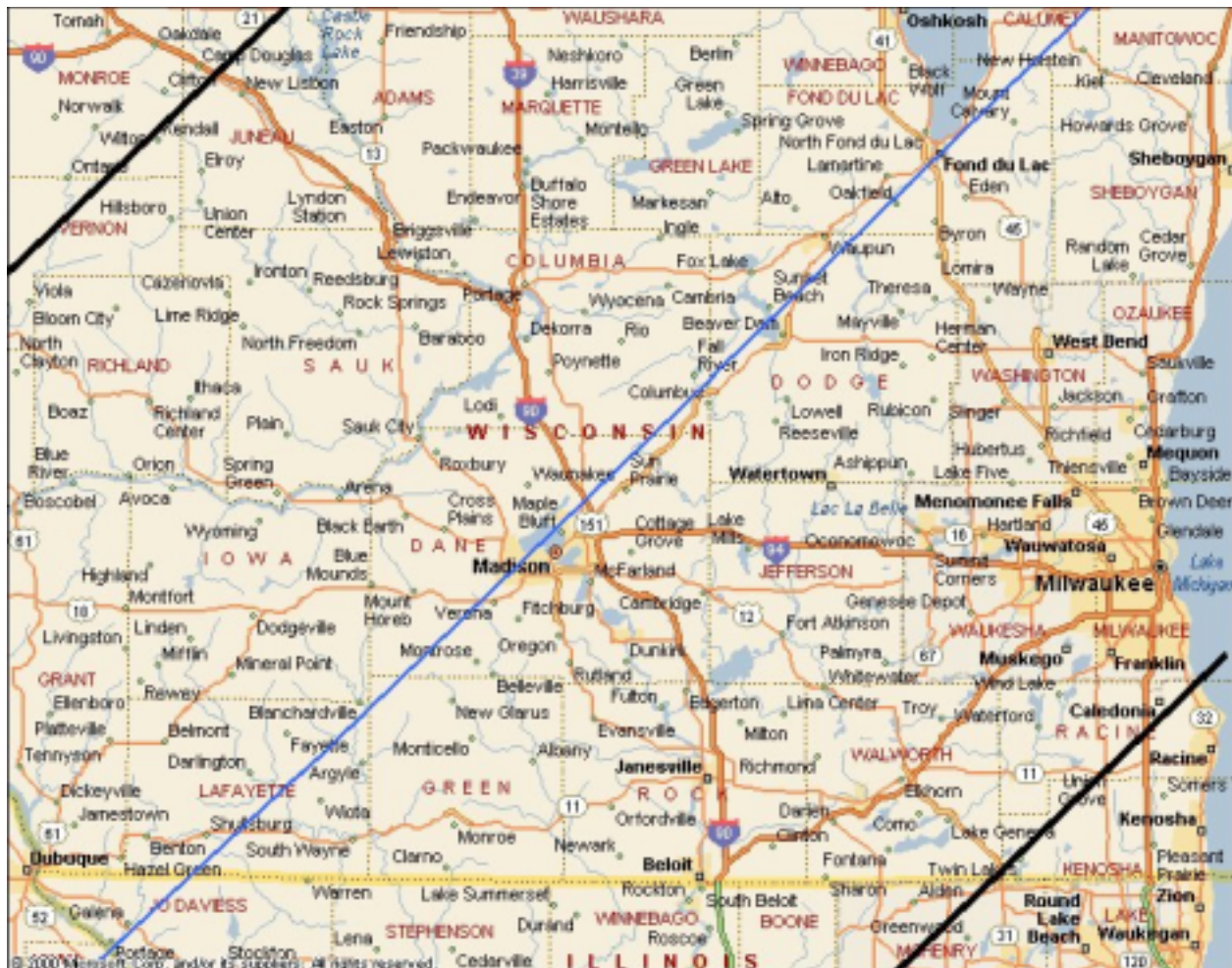
By Gerry Samolyk
MAS Observatory Director

On the night of July 12-13 the asteroid (747) Winchester will occult an 11.4 magn star TAC +02#09343. As of June 14, the path of this occultation is predicted to pass over Wisconsin. The map shows the predicted track. The blue line is the center line of the shadow and the black lines are the north and south limits.

Since the asteroid is 13.6 magnitude, the star will appear to drop over two magnitudes at the time of the event. The maximum duration of the occultation is expected to be 14.5 seconds. Finder charts and additional information will be posted on our website (on the special events page). Any last minute information on the path location will be posted there.

This can be observed visually and recorded on audio tape or on videotape using a low light video camera. In either case you will need to record WWV time signals. Since the event takes place as evening twilight is ending, we will need to be able to find the star quickly. It will be best to practice finding the field a few nights ahead of time. By observing the occultation from as many different locations as possible, we will be able to get a two dimensional snapshot of the size and shape of the asteroid.

If you plan to observe this event let me where you plan to be. This will help place mobile observers to fill any gaps. My email is: Samlyk@ix.netcom.com.



MAS May Elections Results

By Scott Laskowski

MAS Librarian & Historian

The election results for the Milwaukee Astronomical Society's Board of Directors are as follows..

<u>Director</u>	<u>Office</u>	<u>Year Elected</u>	<u>Term Expires</u>	<u>Eligible 2004-5</u>
C. Weber.....	Treasurer.....	1997.....	2005	
P. Borchardt		2000	2005	
B. Ganiere		2001	2006	
H. Gerner.....	Secretary.....	2001.....	2006.....	Yes
G. Parson		2001	2004.....	Yes
T. Schmidtkunz		2001	2004.....	Yes
N. Simmons		2001	2004.....	Yes
S. Diesso		2002`	2005	
R. Manske		2002	2005	
S. Jamieson.....	President.....	2003.....	2006	
D. Weier		2003	2006	

Ex Officio

V. Hoag Vice President

G. Samoylk Observatory Director Since 1980 his term expires in 2004

Founding Members

E. Halbach since 1964

W. Albrecht since 1978

M. Lange since 1986

Astronomical League News

By Lee Keith

The Astronomical League, is looking for a Press Officer to do publicity for the league on a national scale. If you would like to apply for this important position to promote astronomy to the public, contact the League President, Bob Gent at RLGent@aol.com.

Also, the League has two new Observe Clubs up and running: Observe Comets and the Sky Puppy program for kids. These are in addition to the multitude of observing programs already in place for all different observing levels and objects from deep sky to the Moon. Check out all the Observe Clubs at www.astroleague.com.

Side note-from the editor

There was a rumor going around that the dues for the Astronomical League were going to double this year. I have been reassured by Paul Castle secretary of the NCRAL that the rumor was just a rumor and the dues will stay at \$3.50 a member.

Calling all Amateur Astronomers!

Take this opportunity to complete the new online survey supported by Astronomical Society of the Pacific (ASP) and have a chance to win a \$100 gift certificate to the ASP Catalog! You will be assisting in developing training and materials for amateur astronomers to help the public understand concepts of astronomy. In addition, the survey is collecting your experiences with any astronomy misconceptions you have come across in your encounters with the public. Just put one of these links in your web browser to access the survey: <http://fs8.formsite.com/astrosociety/AstroSurvey/index.html> Or from the ASP web site: <http://www.astrosociety.org/> As an added bonus, if 15 or more of your club members respond to the survey, you will receive a copy of your club's responses (no names or other identifiers will be included). Just have your members put the clubs full name where they put there own name to enter the drawing.

6 MAS Officers/ Staff

President	Scott Jamieson	262-896-0119
Vice President	Vern Hoag	262-548-9130
Treasurer	Chris Weber	262-789-7128
Secretary	Henry Gerner	414-774-9194
Observatory Director		
	Gerry Samolyk	414-529-9051
Assistant Observatory Director		
	Paul Borchardt	262-781-0169
Focal Point Editor - Gary Parson		262-895-3015

Future MAS. Events

Next Board meeting on July 14th and August 11th at 7:00pm

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**. Email : **cgarces@wi.rr.com**

Focal Point Publishing Guidelines

Focal Point Newsletter is published bi-monthly(Sep,Nov,Jan,Mar, May and 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 email, Mail, or diskette in a text or Word compatible format. Submit FP inputs to: email gparson@wi.rr.com or

**MAS Focal Point c/o Gary Parson
7521 E Wind Lake Rd
Wind Lake, WI 53185-1513**

Keyholders list

July

5	Scott Jamieson	262-896-0119
12	Lee Keith	414-425-2331
19	Dan Koehler	262-662-2987
26	Wanda Berner	262-691-2360

August

2	Paul Borchardt	262-781-0169
9	Carlos Garces	262-786-2623
16	Scott Laskowski	414-421-3517
23	Bob Manske	608-849-5287
30	Gary Parson	262-895-3015

September

6	Terry Ross	262-784-2093
13	Gerry Samolyk	414-529-9051
20	Tom Schmidtkunz	414-352-1674

MAS Open House's

The open house schedule will be August 8, September 5, and October 3rd

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
Chirs Weber(New Berlin)	262-789-7128	8" Dob reflector

MAS Observatory 262-542-9071

MAS Web Page: www.milwaukeeastro.org

The Milwaukee Astronomical Society

C/O Gary Parson
7521 E Wind Lake Rd
Wind Lake, WI 53185

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

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