



Focal Point



November, 2011

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Next Meeting on November 11th

MAS is going to hold the upcoming Membership Meeting on this Friday, November 11th at 8:00 PM at the Observatory. The speaker of the evening will be Russell Chabot, Observatory Chair. He is planning to share with us how his interest in astronomy started, why he joined the MAS, what he learned here so far. Russell is also going to talk about his hobby: imaging with SLR camera.

Other important issue will be the replacement of the lock on the west end of the parking lock cable. Members will be able to exchange their old key or request a new one at the meeting. After the Meeting the old keys will be useless. There is a \$5 deposit for the key. Also Neil Simmons will have a sign up sheet for the intermediate key. For more details see article on page 3.

Adopt a Telescope Program Update

We are happy to announce that all telescopes at the MAS Observatory have been adopted. Recently Jeffrey Fillian adopted the 14" Z-Two scope of the Ray Zit Observatory while Kevin and John McCarthy adopted the LX 200 of the Jim Toeller Observatory. Russell will take care of the 12.5" Armfield scope of the A Dome. See the full list on page 6.

XMAS Party

The Milwaukee Astronomical Society is organizing the annual Christmas Party on December 2nd at 6:00 PM at the Observatory. (Snow day is on December 3rd.) Pizza and beer/soda will be served. Donations of \$5/person, or \$ 8/family will be collected.

Please, join us and bring your family to celebrate together!



Treasurer's Report

We have collected parking donations in October - \$241. We have a checking account balance of \$5,738.59 as of May 4th. The Albrecht fund for the dark sky site sits at \$7,887.26. After compensating for projected bills, subscription payments for members and other set-asides, the amount available for discretionary spending is \$486.06.

Respectfully Submitted,
Neil Simmons, Treasurer

Special Announcement

Hello Milwaukee Astronomical Society members and Astronomy enthusiasts. You will be receiving a survey through the Milwaukeeastro goolegroups.com as part of an ongoing effort to look at how people view Astronomy as a hobby. I am conducting this survey as a Marketing Research project at the Waukesha County Technical College and I will be sharing the results. Please take the time to fill out the survey by either forwarding the survey as an attachment to me at danheleny@aol.com and highlighting the answers or mailing this to my home address at:

Dan Yanko
W140N8080 Lilly Road
Menomonee Falls, WI 53051

Please remember to save your answers when you send this to me. I sincerely "Thank You" for helping the Milwaukee Astronomical Society by conducting this survey. You do not need to be a member of the MAS to return this survey. All information will be confidential. Thank you in advance.

Dan Yanko

Membership Meeting Minutes

Held on October 22th at MAS Observatory, New Berlin. The meeting was called to order at 8:02 PM by Vice President, Brian Ganiere.

There was no **Minutes** of the September Meeting.

The **Treasurer's Report** was given by Treasurer, Neil Simmons. Copy attached.

There was no **Observatory Director's Report**.

There was no **Correspondence**.

There was no **Old Business**.

New Business – Brian talked about the coming MAS Christmas Party, which will be held on Friday, December 2nd at 6:00PM, with a snow day on December 3rd. MAS will provide pizza and beer/soda. We will collect \$5/person, or \$8/family.

Russell said that he and Henry were interviewed about 4 weeks ago by the New Berlin News.

Neil Drake suggested a book entitled Rocket Man about the space program lead by the USA and Russia.

There was no **Announcement**.

Presentation – "Gravitational wave astronomy in the next decade" held by Xavier Siemens, associate professor at the Department of Physics, UWM. His research interest is gravity wave astrophysics, early universe cosmology, especially cosmic strings,



and biophysics. He is currently a Co-Chair of the LIGO Scientific Collaboration's Calibration Team.

Next General Meeting is on November 11st.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:25 PM

Respectfully Submitted,
Agnes Keszler, Secretary

Observatory News

Observatory Access

Recently, more of our members have shown an interest in using the Observatory. Below are a few notes about ways to use the Observatory grounds and equipment.

1. Yard Key Access

Any member can gain access to the observatory grounds with what we call a yard key. This allows members to use their personal scopes and connect to electricity at the MAS observatory. This key opens the lock on the west end of the parking lock cable.

On a related note: this lock has been giving us problems (it is over 40 years old) so it will be replaced. It turns out that it was more economical to buy a lock and get all new keys than to have a new lock keyed to match out old key. The lock will be swapped out on 11 November, the night of our next meeting. Members who have the old key will be able to exchange that key for a new one at that meeting. Any other member can also pick up a yard key at that time. There is a \$5 deposit for the key. Neil Simmons will be taking care of this in my absence. After that date, the old keys will be useless.

2. Intermediate Key

Members of the MAS can also get access to two of the rolloff observatories. The Albrecht observatory houses a 10" scope on an equatorial mount. The Wiesen Observatory houses an 18" scope on a Dobsonian mount. There are some eyepieces available in each of these sheds. These keys can be obtained from the Observatory Director. There is a \$10 deposit for the key. The yard key is also required to open the parking lot.

3. Members Night

Each Saturday night is designated as Members Night at the Observatory. These nights are to allow all of the members better access to the equipment at the Observatory and provide an opportunity to learn. On each of these nights, a member with full key privileges is assigned to be at the Observatory to open equipment and teach members how to use it. A list of the member responsible for each week is published in the Focal Point as well as on our website. If you plan to attend, it is best to call or E-mail that person ahead of time and let them know your plans. Do not rely on the MAS Google group because some of the key holding members are not on that group.

The key holder on the list is responsible for being available on their assigned night. If a key holder has a conflict, they are responsible for swapping nights with someone else so the Observatory will be open. When any nights are swapped, a message needs to be sent to the Google group so the website can be updated (if the key holder is not on the group, send a message to the Observatory Director).

Of course, all members are welcome to use the telescopes on other nights if a key holding member is present.

by Gerry Samolyk



B is for Buckstaff

You may have heard of the “B” dome. It is our shorthand for the modest-sized dome on the center of our hill, but we should not mistake the initial for the name. “B” is for Buckstaff, Ralph Noyes Buckstaff (1887 – 1980) to be precise. Ralph had succumbed to aperture fever and donated his rock solid 12-inch telescope to make room for a 16-inch cassegrain telescope he was having built. In the 1950’s we built the building that currently houses 12-inch, where we today still use it for visual observing and CCD imaging. Ed Halbach rebuilt the clock drive and it is one of the best tracking telescopes on the hill.

Ralph was born into a family that started their own lumber mill in Oshkosh Wisconsin in the late 1800’s, and later went into business manufacturing of chairs and coffins. He ultimately became the president of the Buckstaff Furniture Company, which continues to this day making furniture for libraries, classrooms, healthcare and restaurants.

During the early part of the twentieth century Americans discovered they had an increasing amount of leisure time, and many young men in

that time period took to learning about the Natural world about them through the sciences. Ralph’s interests were not limited to astronomy. He can be found listed on the membership rolls of the State Historical Society, the Wilson Ornithological Club, The Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts and Letters, as well as the Milwaukee Astronomical Society, and the American Association of Variable Star Observers. His collections of insects, birds, animals and meteorites ultimately made their home at the Oshkosh Public Museum, and his contributions to science in Wisconsin is recognized by the University of Wisconsin – Oshkosh by naming their planetarium after him.

His observatories were deeded over to the University of Wisconsin – Oshkosh in 1965, only to be sold by the university a few years after his death. News reports from early 2011 state that the buildings have been moved off the property, so it may very well be that we are the only active users of one of Ralph’s small collection of telescopes.

by Neil Simmons

Astronomy Calendar 2012



Hello MAS,

I will be selling Astronomy calendars again for the Milwaukee Astronomical Society as a fundraiser.

The Astronomy calendars retail for \$12.95 plus tax. I will be selling the calendars for \$10.00 and I will be taking orders as of today. Please send a check to me in advance for \$10 made out to Dan Yanko to my address at:

Dan Yanko
W140N8080 Lilly Road
Menomonee Falls, WI 53051

If you will be at the MAS Christmas party on December 2 you can place your order via email to Danheleny@aol.com and you can pay me then in person. I will only be able to place one order of calendars with Kalmbach publishing so please place your order promptly. Last year we raised over \$100.00 for the MAS general fund selling calendars. Buy a few for Christmas gifts or ask your friend to buy an Astronomy calendar. Thank you in advance!

Sincerely,
Dan Yanko MAS

In the Astronomical News

Galaxy Caught Blowing Bubbles

Hubble's famous images of galaxies typically show elegant spirals or soft-edged ellipses. But these neat forms are only representative of large galaxies. Smaller galaxies like the dwarf irregular galaxy Holmberg II come in many shapes and types that are harder to classify. This galaxy's indistinct shape is punctuated by huge glowing bubbles of gas, captured in a new image from the NASA/ESA Hubble Space Telescope.

The intricate glowing shells of gas in Holmberg II were created by the energetic lifecycles of many generations of stars. High-mass stars form in dense regions of gas, and later in life expel strong stellar winds that blow away the surrounding material. At the very end of their lives, they explode in as a supernova. Shock waves rip through these less dense regions blowing out and heating the gas, forming the delicate shells we see today.

Holmberg II is a patchwork of dense star-forming regions and extensive barren areas with less material, which can stretch across thousands of light-years. As a dwarf galaxy, it has neither the spiral arms typical of galaxies like the Milky Way nor the dense nucleus of an elliptical galaxy.

This makes Holmberg II, gravitationally speaking, a gentle haven where fragile structures such as these bubbles can hold their shape.

While the galaxy is unremarkable in size, Holmberg II does have some intriguing features.

As well as its unusual appearance -- which earned it a place in Halton Arp's Atlas of Peculiar Galaxies, a treasure trove of weird and wonderful objects -- the galaxy hosts an ultraluminous X-ray source in the middle of three gas bubbles in the top right of the image. There are competing theories as to what causes this powerful radiation -- one intriguing possibility is an intermediate-mass black hole which is pulling in material from its surroundings.

This colorful image is a composite of visible and near-infrared exposures

taken using the Wide Field Channel of Hubble's Advanced Camera for Surveys.

The Hubble Space Telescope is a project of international cooperation between ESA and NASA.

The above story is reprinted from materials provided by [ESA/Hubble Information Centre](#).



The NASA/ESA Hubble Space Telescope has captured this image of dwarf irregular galaxy Holmberg II. The galaxy is dominated by huge bubbles of glowing gas, which are sites of ongoing star formation. As high-mass stars form in dense regions of gas and dust they expel strong stellar winds that blow away the surrounding material. The cavities are also blown clear of gas by the shock waves produced in supernovae, the violent explosions that mark the end of the lives of massive stars. (Credit: NASA & ESA)

Adopt a Telescope Program - Signup Sheet

	Adoptee	Scope	Location
1	Sue Timlin	18" F/4.5 Obsession	Wiesen Observatory
2	Neil Simmons	12.5" F/7.4 Buckstaff	B Dome
3	Russell Chabot	12.5" F/9 Armfield	A Dome
4	Dan Yanko	10" F/6 Newtonian	Albrecht Observatory
5	Tamas Kriska	25" F/15 Zemlock	Z Dome
6	Henry Gerner	12" LX 200	Tagney Observatory
7	Jeffrey Fillian	14" Z-Two scope	Ray Zit Observatory
8	Kevin & John McCarthy	10" LX 200	Jim Toeller Observatory

At Your Service

Officers / Staff

President	Henry Gerner	414-774-9194
Vice President	Brian Ganiere	414-961-8745
Treasurer	Neil Simmons	262-889-2039
Secretary	Agnes Keszler	414-475-6267
Observatory Director	Gerry Samolyk	414-529-9051
Asst. Observatory Director	Henry Gerner	414-774-9194
Editor	Tamas Kriska	414-475-6267

Board of Directors

Russell Chabot	414-559-3502
Henry Gerner	414-774-9194
Chris Hesseltine	414-482-4515
Al Hovey	262-524-5510
Agnes Keszler	414-475-6267
Tamas Kriska	414-475-6267
Lana Silke	262-966-4929
Neil Simmons	262-889-2039
Sue Timlin	414-460-4886
Dan Yanko	262-255-3482

Nov/Dec Key Holders

11/12 Henry Gerner	414-774-9194
11/19 Chris Hesseltine	414-482-4515
11/26 Tim Hoff	262-662-2212
12/03 Scott Jamieson	262-896-0119
12/10 Lee Keith	414-425-2331



MAS Observatory

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