



Focal Point



December, 2013

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The Winter Program of the MAS

There is no General Membership Meeting in December.

Just as last winter, the meetings from January through April will be held at UWM, Physics building Room 133 at 8:00 PM. Thanks go to Jean Creighton, the Director of the Manfred Olsen Planetarium for

helping us to secure the hall. The program of the meetings will be announced monthly in the Newsletter.

The Observatory will be open during the winter, please contact Keyholders or follow the Google Group for availability on Saturdays or other nights.

Happy Holidays!

The MAS will be holding the annual **Holiday Party on Saturday, December 7th at 4:00 PM at the Observatory.**

We will have pizza and soft drinks and lots of good cheer. Come out, bring your family along, and say hey to all your MAS friends. Donations of \$5/person, or \$ 8/ family will be collected.

During the night Scott Jamieson, President will give a tour to see the newly converted Zemlock Imaging scope.



MAS Membership Renewal

If you forgot to renew your membership it is still not too late! The Membership Renewal Form is available on the last page of this newsletter. Please renew it today if you have not already done so.

Treasurer's Report

WE Energies and water bills were \$77.57. Zurich Insurance and Cintas were \$515.75. We paid \$939 for Astronomy and Sky&Telescope magazine subscriptions.

The income from Parking donations (\$100), group tour and star party donations (\$80), Membership dues and magazine subscriptions totaled \$3175.

Our operating budget for the year is \$2684. We have set aside \$1300 for re-keying the Observatory and \$300 to paint the inside of the Quonset hut.

Currently the checking account balance is at 6366.49. The Albrecht fund balance 8214.76. The Endowment Fund is at \$87501.63.

Respectfully Submitted,
Russell Chabot, Treasurer

Observatory Director's Report

The club keys: I've gone through all the documentation and created a master spreadsheet. This information will be transferred to the website's general membership sheet.

Full Keys – There are 4 keys in the hands of inactive members. I am going to try contacting these people to see if they still have them or claim they are lost.

C-Shed Keys – The information shows we've given out 33 keys. Many of holders are now inactive. I believe after the winter is over we consider a combination lockbox.

Yard Keys – I created a Yard key member agreement form. 1 yard key request was made and granted to Shaunavon Blackmore who deposited a \$10 check. We should consider going to a combination lock to replace the padlock we're currently using.

Full key Replication: I was able to get 10 new high security full keys made. The keys are \$25 each.

Weatherized the two bathrooms and darkroom.

Still looking for an Assistant Observatory Director.

The website: I have received the credentials for the MAS website and our Facebook page. But the better news is I am now able to do updates and add content. Rob Burgess, our webmaster, was happy to have the help as he's been so time constrained. My compliments to those who created it because updating and creating new content seems straightforward.

Respectfully Submitted,
Gene Hanson, Observatory Director

Meeting Minutes

Held on November 15th at the MAS Observatory, New Berlin.

The meeting was called to order at 8:02 PM by President, Scott Jamieson.

Minutes from the October General Membership Meeting, was approved as read.

The **Treasurer's Report** was read by Treasurer, Russell Chabot. Copy attached.

Observatory Director's Report - was read by Observatory Director Gene Hanson. Copy attached.

Membership Committee Report - Five new membership renewal arrived since the last meeting. We are still expecting about 25 more membership renewals by the end of the year.

There was no **Correspondence**

Old Business - Scott Jamieson was delighted to announce that The Board of Directors approved the purchase of all equipments (CCD camera with filters, focuser, guider scope and camera, computer with 24" monitor) necessary to finish the Z telescope rebuilding project. Upon completion the Z-scope will be available for any member who completes a training.

New Business - The annual Holiday Party will be held on December 7th, starting at 4:00 PM. Pizza and soft drink will be provided.

The Program Brian Ganiere Program Committee Director announced the speaker of the night: Dan Fiorino graduate student in astrophysics UW Madison, who gave a presentation about IceCube Neutrino Observatory.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:12 PM

Respectfully Submitted,
Agnes Keszler, Secretary

The Year 2013

It's time to summarize yet another exciting year in the life of the Milwaukee Astronomical Society that we are about to leave behind.

The major project of the year, the conversion of the Z-scope into a narrowband imaging instrument was initiated and led by Scott Jamieson. Both right ascension and declination drives were replaced to achieve smoother movement of the telescope necessary for autoguiding. Thanks to Scott's enthusiasm and perseverance, the scope is now capable to take as long as 20 min exposures, and is ready to be operated from the downstairs library office.

During the annual Business Meeting in May we elected three new members (Gene Hanson, Lee Keith, and John Hammetter) to the Board of Directors. Founding member Scott Jamieson became the new President. A long time Observatory Director Gerry Samolyk retired after 35 years of service. Gene Hanson who just returned from Arizona assumed that position. Russell Chabot was elected as the new Treasurer.

This year we organized six successful Public Nights. Many members participated in the annual star party at the Yerkes Observatory that MAS hosted for summer students. Observatory visits of a Boy Scouts and a New Berlin Public Library group were accommodated. The MAS Observatory was even chosen as a place for marriage proposal. A couple from Chicago got engaged as part of their private star party in late October. Since the public outreach is an important mission for the MAS we held

a star party at the Kelly Senior Center in Cudahy. Sue Timlin coordinated the event. We continued our tradition to invite guest speakers from nearby universities to talk about their research projects on the General Membership Meetings. We enjoyed a Summer Picnic in August, and will close the year with our annual Holiday Party.

In 2013 two MAS members passed away, Dr Peter McNamara and Peter Smitka who served as president in the past. He became quite famous in the mid 90's for his invention of the Portaball Telescope. The following new members joined the MAS: Jamie Victor, Neil Stickel, Christopher Guest, Ray Lange, Todd Rollenkotter, Shaunavon Blackmore, and Thomas Alberg.

Among astronomical events the two potentially bright comets, the PANNSTARS and ISON that ended up in a disappointment and the nova explosion in the constellation of Delphinus generated the greatest excitement of the year.

The modernization of our website that started last year has been continuing. Gene Hanson is updating the content and uploading new astrophotos submitted by MAS members. Our Facebook page is also regularly updated.

As always, the Focal Point Newsletter will keep the Membership posted on the MAS events and programs in 2014.

We wish you and your families Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

In the Astronomical News

Comet ISON's Thanksgiving Leftover Fades Away

Previous reports of Comet ISON's death may have been somewhat exaggerated, but this time it looks like the real thing.

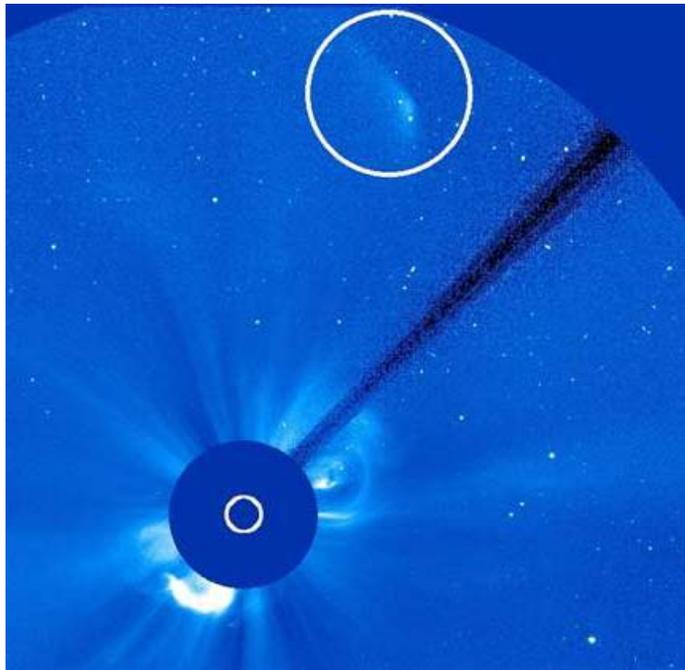
Remnants of the object once touted as the "comet of the century" passed through the viewing field of the Solar and Heliospheric Observatory in the wake of Thursday's close encounter with the sun — and as it passed, the bright spot that survived grew dimmer and dimmer.

ISON's obituary had been written before, on Thanksgiving Day, when a different sun-watching satellite known as the Solar Dynamics Observatory failed to see the comet as it was due to pass within 730,000 miles (1.2 million kilometers) of the sun. At first, ISON was written off as an "ex-comet." But hours later, the Solar and Heliospheric Observatory — also known as SOHO — recorded a bright spot with what seemed to be a fan-shaped tail following the comet's expected orbit.

Those images revived hopes that millions of skywatchers might be able to see at least a glimmer of the comet of the century as early

as next week. But the fading glow suggests that ISON is now little more than a dissipating cloud of cosmic dust in the solar wind. Late Friday, the cloud's brightness was estimated at magnitude +5 and fading fast. If that trend holds, ISON's remnants won't be visible to the naked eye.

Skilled astrophotographers might be able to capture a picture of the comet's



The white circle highlights Comet ISON's remnants toward the edge of the viewing field for the Solar and Heliospheric Observatory's LASCO C3 ultraviolet detector. The sun's glare is blocked out by an occulting disk, but a solar storm can be seen emerging toward the lower edge of the frame.

Thanksgiving leftovers within a couple days, when ISON has moved farther away from the sun's glare. The rest of us are *almost* certainly out of luck, though there's always a chance the comet will pull off yet another death-defying stunt.

ISON may turn out to be a disappointment for casual skywatchers, but the data collected during the comet's journey should represent a bonanza for astronomers. When ISON was discovered in September 2012, scientists knew they had a special opportunity to watch a pristine comet come in from the very edge of the solar system and make its first (and apparently only) swing around the sun.

by Alan Boyle

Science Editor, NBC News

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 Halbach	A Dome (Armfield)
4	Dan Yanko	18" F/4.5 Obsession (Kyle)	Albrecht Observatory
5	Tamas Kriska	25" F/15 Zemlock	Z Dome
6	Henry Gerner	12" LX 200	Tangney Observatory
7	Jeffrey Fillian	14" Z-Two scope	Ray Zit Observatory
8	Vacant	10" LX 200	Jim Toeller Observatory

At Your Service

Officers / Staff

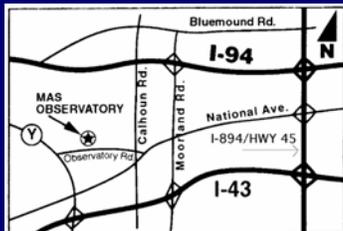
President	Scott Jamieson	262-592-3049
Vice President	Brian Ganiere	414-961-8745
Treasurer	Russell Chabot	414-881-3822
Secretary	Agnes Keszler	414-581-7031
Observatory Director	Gene Hanson	262-354-0138
Asst. Observatory Director	Vacant	
Newsletter Editor	Tamas Kriska	414-581-3623
Webmaster	Robert Burgess	920-559-7472

Board of Directors

Robert Burgess	920-559-7472
Russell Chabot	414-881-3822
John Hammetter	414-519-1958
Gene Hanson	262-354-0138
Lee Keith	414-425-2331
Agnes Keszler	414-581-7031
Tamas Kriska	414-581-3623
Neil Simmons	262-889-2039
Michael Smiley	262-825-3981
Sue Timlin	414-460-4886
Dan Yanko	262-255-3482

September/October Key Holders

12/7	Tamas Kriska	414-581-3623
12/14	Mike Smiley	262-825-3981
12/21	Tom Schmidtkunz	414-352-1674
12/28	Dan Yanko	262-255-3482
1/4	Russ Chabot	414-881-3822
1/11	Brian Ganiere	414-961-8745



MAS Observatory

18850 Observatory Rd
New Berlin, WI

www.milwaukeeastro.org

MAS Membership Renewal Form



Please return this form with your payment. We encourage you to join our online community at the **Milwaukee Astronomical Society Google Group**. Please visit our website at www.milwaukeeastro.org

Add my email to the MAS Google Group: YES _____ NO _____

Name:

Address:

City, State Zip:

Phone:

E-mail Address:

Membership (select one of the following)

- _____ \$46.00 - Resident Individual
- _____ \$52.00 - Resident Family
- _____ \$23.00 - Resident Student
- _____ \$28.00 - Non Resident Individual
- _____ \$32.00 - Non Resident Family
- _____ \$20.00 - Non Resident Student

A resident is defined as a person who lives in Milwaukee, Waukesha, Ozaukee, or Washington counties. Non-residents are all other locations. Keyholders must pay resident dues.

Subscriptions

- _____ \$33.00 - Sky and Telescope magazine subscription
- _____ \$34.00 - Astronomy magazine subscription

\$ _____ Total due.

Make checks payable to **The Milwaukee Astronomical Society.**

Please complete and mail form with payment to:

Tamas Kriska
923 Currie Place
Wauwatosa, WI 53213