

FOCAL POINT



Issued by the
MILWAUKEE ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY

- : MARCH, 1986 : -

CALENDAR:

- Thu., Mar. 20 - Spring arrives at 4:03 P.M.!
- Fri., Mar. 21 - March Program-Meeting, 8 P.M.
- Tue., Mar. 25 - Full Worm Moon.
- Sun., Mar. 30 - Happy Easter!
- Wed., Apr. 2 - First Wednesday meeting at observatory. Call first if weather is bad.
- Wed., Apr. 2 - April "FOCAL POINT" deadline.
- Thu., Apr. 10 - Comet Halley closest to earth - 39 million miles, 2.2 mag.
- Fri., Apr. 18 - April Program-Meeting.
- Sat., Apr. 19 - Astronomy Day.
- Saturdays - Observatory maintenance and improvement.
- Sat. Nights - Members night at the observatory.

MARCH PROGRAM-MEETING: Ideally, telescopic views of stars should appear as points of light and other celestial objects should appear as true magnified images. If stars appear as comets or if Comet Halley appears tailless, perhaps your telescope optical system is not aligned.

Collimating a Newtonian optical system takes but a few minutes as MAS member Peter Smitka will demonstrate in the hands-on workshop he will present at the March meeting. You will learn what to look for, how to make a collimation tube, and the purpose of the "mirror spot."

Here's a good chance to learn how to line up your tube assembly. Bring it and necessary tools for disassembly and reassembly to the meeting. An eyepiece and the 'scope mount are not necessary.

WHEN: Friday, March 21, 8 P.M.

WHERE: The comfortable Child and Adolescent Treatment Center (CATC) auditorium, 9501 W. Watertown Plank Road, Wauwatosa. May be reached by Rte. 71 bus. Guests are welcome.

SPECIAL HONORS AWARDED: For their long-time memberships in the Milwaukee Astronomical Society and their generous contributions to its purpose and well-being, Reverend Milton Lange and Darrell Moore were made Founder Members by the Society's board of governors. President Dan Koehler displayed their impressive plaques at the February meeting along with recognition of their devotion to the Society over a period of many years. Reverend Lange joined in 1940 and Darrell Moore joined in 1936.

Our other founder members are Bill Albrecht (1935) and Ed Halbach (1933).

NEW MEMBERS: The Milwaukee Astronomical Society has added ten more members to its membership list. They are: Jeffrey Annis, Waukesha; John Blimke, Waukesha; Elizabeth Gauerke, husband Kenwood, daughter Michelle, Muskego; Edith Quade, Milwaukee; Cathy Riemann, husband Brad, daughter Deidre, Oconomowoc; Terrance Wilkens D.D.S., Brookfield.

Last month's "FOCAL POINT" goofed when it introduced the McNeely family's daughter as Lica. Her correct name is Lisa.

OBSERVATORY NEWS: Some parts of the 26" telescope need remachining. The right ascension and declination control parts are ready for assembly.

As soon as weather permits, work on the scope and the observatory in general will accelerate. There are lots of things to do inside and outside. Hopefully, the observatory directors will make a list. Normally, volunteers turn out on Saturdays to perform these tasks. Call Gerry Samolyk (475-9418) or John Asztalos (258-5626) for details on what you will offer to do. In any event, call before coming out.

Before you know it, our acres of grass will be growing and we still don't have a rider power mower, preferably 11 horsepower or so. We're accepting donations in good running condition.

A word of caution. Don't drive your auto on the observatory grounds except on roads or the parking lot. The grounds are too soft to support heavy traffic.

ASTRONOMY DAY will be observed Saturday, April 19. The observatory will be open to the general public from 2 to 11 P.M. Our program will include tours, short talks, slide presentations, and, weather permitting, viewing through telescopes in the evening. The 26" Zemlock telescope will also be open to the public.

We'll need lots of volunteers to guide, tend scopes, direct parking, tend store, whatever. Please call Frank Roldan at 423-0210. Name your choice(s) of time and task.

HELP WANTED: TOUR GUIDES: Beginning in March, the M.A.S. will again be host to the many civic and private groups that will tour our observatory this spring and summer. We will need individuals who are willing to act as tour guides and help develop educational presentations to be given to the groups that will visit our facilities.

All that is required is a desire to talk about astronomy and show off our observatory. If you are interested contact Brian Cieslak at 679-9663 after 5:00 P.M.

COMET HALLEY UPDATE: So it won't wear out its welcome, Comet Halley is now speeding homeward. It is now in view in the southeast morning sky, left of the Teapot, about a hand-width above the horizon. You will need to begin your search before twilight which, for Milwaukee's latitude, is about an hour and a half before sun-up. On March 15, the sun will rise at about 6 A.M. The moon will be at first quarter on the 18th.

Halley's Comet will soon be crossing Earth's orbit and will be closest to earth on April 10. Best viewing for Wisconsin will be March 8-21 and April 2-13. A binocular will help since some of its brightness will be lost owing to haze and light pollution.

SPRING HERSCHEL OBJECTS (BY LEE KEITH):

The following is my list of the best Herschel Club objects for spring. While not as bright as the Messier objects, they are all within reach of a 6" scope. Now that Halley is returning to the dark abyss, check out some of these. You may decide that the Herschel list is not that tough and continue with it.

SPRING HERSCHEL OBJECTS (Cont'd.)

For the newer members that would like to look for distant galaxies and the like but don't know how to go about it - take heart! You are not alone! For those members that would like to learn about amateur astronomy, I will be again offering the Amateur Astronomer's Series sometime in late June. Watch the Focal Point for more info. Topics include buying a telescope, the capabilities, strengths and weaknesses of different types and sizes of scopes; faintest star and resolution to expect; field of view; alignment & cleaning of an astronomical mirror; what accessories to buy; filters; eyepieces; reading a star atlas and planisphere; and finally, finding dim celestial objects! You will also learn to use the large 12.5" telescopes at the MAS observatory! After each class will be a workshop to use the knowledge gained!

In the past 2 years that they have been offered, dozens of new members have painlessly learned the "ropes" of amateur astronomy. With the knowledge and skills you gain, you will be prepared to participate in the many observing projects that your MAS is involved in. GET INVOLVED!! YOU PAID FOR IT!!

NGC	RA	1950 DEC.	SEEING	DESCRIPTION (using 10" f/4.5 unless noted)
3034	09h 52m	+69 56'	Avg.	Bright, highly elongated, irregularities of illumination noted. Beautiful!! [6" f/6; 36x]
3166	10h 11m	+03 40'	V.Good	Fairly bright, small, very bright center with elongated halo. Makes nice pair w/ NGC 3169.
3169	10h 12m	+03 43'	V.Good	Fairly bright, but small; only slightly elongated, fuzzy. Slightly brighter toward center. Nice pair with NGC 3166.
3184	10h 15m	+41 40'	V.Good	Large, round, easily seen. Sensed some unevenness. Reminds me of Owl Nebula.
3242	10h 22m	-18 23'	V.Good	Large, bright, blue green with edges dimmer & center brightest. Looks unevenly lit, some patches darker. (197x)
3379	10h 45m	+12 51'	V.Good	Bright, round with very bright nucleus. Large halo.
3384	10h 46m	+12 54'	V.Good	Bright, fairly large, round with bright nucleus & large halo.
3486	10h 58m	+29 15'	V.Good	Large, round, easy to see, evenly lit.
3628	11h 18m	+13 53'	Poor	Large, elongated, even illuminated. Nice! (6" f/6; 36x)
4088	12h 03m	+50 49'	Good	Large, bright, lens shaped; of some uneven brightness. Nice!
4147	12h 08m	+18 49'	Good	Small but bright, seen in 9x60 finder. Some resolution hinted and of irregular outline.
4490	12h 28m	+41 55'	Avg.	Large, bright highly flattened. Slight brightening toward center. Nice!
4565	12h 34m	+26 16'	Good	VERY long & thin with nuclear buldge prominent. Dark central dust lane glimpsed with averted vision.
4594 M-109	12h 37m	-11 21'	Fair	In rich field. Very nice! Large halo, central lane & dark lane seen with averted vision. "Sombrero" shape glimpsed. Bright nucleus!
4631	12h 40m	+32 49'	Fair	WOW! Large, bright needle. Nuclear buldge prominent. West side seems longer & thinner. Faint star on north edge. Show this one!
4699	12h 47m	-08 24'	Fair	Small, very bright, very bright nucleus, faint halo & arm extensions hinted; fuzzy star.
5195	13h 28m	+47 31'	Good	Small, round with faint nucleus. Nice! 92x [companion to M51]

GRAZING OCCULTATIONS:

<u>NIGHT OF</u>	<u>MAG.</u>	<u>TIME</u>	<u>% SUNLIGHT</u>	<u>CUSP ANGLE</u>	<u>RATING</u>
Mar. 14-15	7.4	3:06 PM	18	1.4N	Favorable
Mar. 18-19	8.0	10:51 PM	54	7.0N	Marginal
Mar. 19-20	6.4	11:43 PM	64	7.5N	Favorable
Apr. 14-15	8.3	7:34 PM	27	7.7N	Marginal

For details, call Gerry Samolyk (475-9418).

For go-nogo, call Virgil Tangney (327-7976).

Participants in graze expeditions can deduct expenses for tax purposes. Gerry Samolyk has forms.

The March 14-15 grazed star is a 7.4-11.4 mag. variable. Check with Virgil before going.

A REMINDER: The election of officers and board members will take place at the May meeting, Friday, May 16. All MAS members in good standing are eligible. Vacancies are filled by elected volunteers, nominees, or recommended consenting candidates.

Board terms run three years with a two term limit. Officers serve one year with unlimited re-election. The board usually meets once a month.

We need serious people who are concerned about the future of the Society and the judicious use of its treasury.

ANOTHER REMINDER: The North Central Regional Convention, hosted by the Popular Astronomy Club of Rock Island, Illinois, will take place Sat. April 12 on the campus of Augustana College in Rock Island. Dr. James Van Allen of Van Allen Belt fame will be key speaker. Contact Paul Castle, 2535 45th St., Rock Island, IL. 61201 for complete information.

MEMBER'S NIGHT KEYHOLDERS:

Mar. 15	F. Roldan	423-0210	Apr. 5	T. Schmidtkunz	784-0253
22	G. Samolyk	475-9418	12	W. Tuerck	782-2844
29	P. Smitka	785-0926	19	V. Tangney	327-7976

DIRECTORY:

- President - Daniel Koehler - 662-2987
- Vice President - Dr. Richard Wiesen - 781-4757
- Prog. Chairperson - Thomas Renner - 1-392-2799
- Secretary - Brian Ganiere - 258-5626
- Treasurer - James Toeller - 352-7144
- Observatory Director - Gerry Samolyk - 475-9418
- Asst. Obs. Director - John Asztalos - 258-5626
- Special Observatory Activities Scheduler - Brian Cieslak - 679-9663
- FOCAL POINT Editor - LeRoy Simandl - 933-3052
- MAS Observatory - 18850 W. Observatory Rd., New Berlin - 542-9071

APRIL FOCAL POINT DEADLINE - WEDNESDAY, APRIL 2.