

FOCAL POINT



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Milwaukee Astronomical Society

November 1988

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Meteor Showers

Leonids - November 16. Peak at 4 am. Rate of 5-20/hr. Look south.
Andromedids - November 25-26. Peak at 9 pm. Rate of 10/hr. Look south.
Geminids - December 13. Peak at 2 am. Rate of 50-80/hr. Look south.

November Program-Meeting

This month's program will feature MAS member Gary Sampson, an astronomy teacher at Wauwatosa West High School.

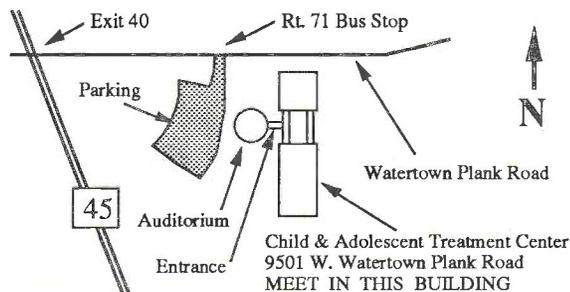
According to an excerpted article from the Milwaukee Journal that appeared in the May, 1988 "Focal Point," Gary was one of four teachers who led a delegation of forty students to mainland China to take part in an American-Chinese Youth Science Exchange.

Astronomy was one of the studied sciences, so Gary will concentrate his discussion on the modern approach the Chinese are taking in his talk, "Chinese Astronomy, 1988."

As an instructor and planetarium director, Gary will provide a worthwhile program to members and guests.

WHEN: Friday, November 18, 8:00 pm.

WHERE: The Child & Adolescent Treatment Center (CATC)
 9501 W. Watertown Plank Road, Wauwatosa.
 Site may be reached by the Rt. 71 bus.
 There is ample, well-lit parking nearby.



Calendar of Events

- | | |
|------------------------|--|
| Monday, November 14 | - Board meeting, 7:30pm observatory. |
| Friday, November 18 | - November Program-Meeting. |
| Friday, November 18 | - December "Focal Point" deadline. |
| Tuesday, November 22 | - Jupiter at its brightest. |
| Wednesday, November 23 | - Full Beaver Moon. |
| Thursday, November 24 | - Thanksgiving Day. |
| Wednesday, November 30 | - Moon occults Regulus, 5:00am CST. |
| Wednesday, December 7 | - First Wednesday at the observatory. 7:30pm. All are welcome. |

Saturdays - Observatory maintenance and improvement. Call 547-3400.
 Saturday Nights - Member's night at the observatory. Call keyholder.

Library News

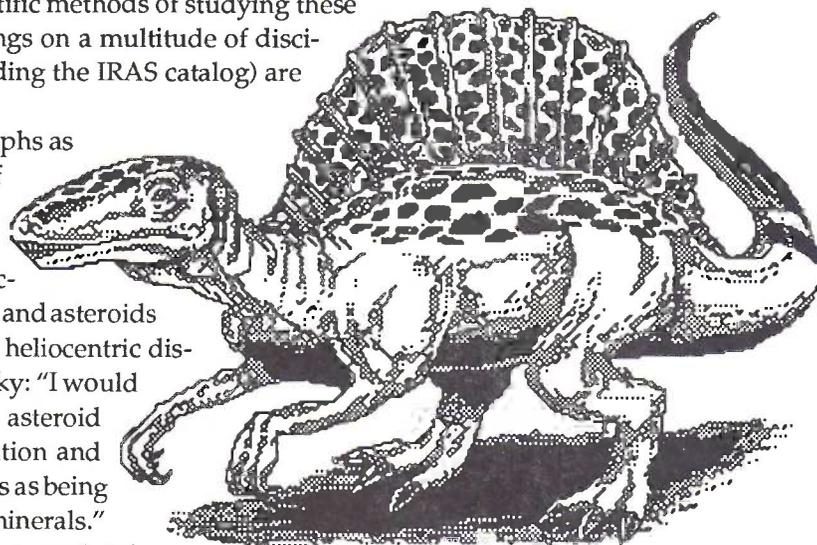
More new books since September:

INTRODUCTION TO ASTEROIDS - Clifford J. Cunningham, 1988.

Dinosaurs grazing in a Cretaceous marsh, a massive object hurtling toward them from the sky - these decorate the cover in an obvious bid for the prospective reader's attention. That an asteroid impacted the Earth about 65 million years ago is generally accepted. Whether it caused mass extinctions is a matter for debate. And, that debate is only a small part of this book.

In this synthesis of over 1000 books and papers, Cunningham has thoroughly researched the history of asteroid discovery, the most current scientific methods of studying these planetesimal remnants, and the impact of the findings on a multitude of disciplines. Physical data on over 3,000 asteroids (including the IRAS catalog) are tabulated.

A refreshing feature is the inclusion of photographs as well as biographical and philosophical sketches of scientists engaged in asteroid study. The University of Arizona is home base for many investigators including Dr. David J. Tholan who says, "I see a connection between Pluto and comets, comets and asteroids, and asteroids and planetary satellites - the primary variable being heliocentric distance." Or, listen to his colleague Dr. Larry A. Lebofsky: "I would have said at one point the greatest contribution of asteroid research was just our basic knowledge of the evolution and formation of the solar system. Now, I see the asteroids as being important in the context of mining (them) for their minerals."



If you should weary of phase angles, resonances, and light curves; turn to the observation of Professor Frederick Pilcher (Illinois College and Minor Planet recorder for ALPO) that the asteroids are "interesting in themselves. Each a world to be explored. Each becomes recognized as an individual different from all the rest as it becomes better known. ...Insights and applications yet dimly perceived will enrich humanity from the study of this plurality of worlds."



MICROCOMPUTER CONTROL OF TELESCOPES - Trueblood and Genet, 1985

You know who you are! You read "Microcomputers in Astronomy II" and want more details. Since your librarian is one who thinks an encoder is something you send away for with 25 cents and an Ovaltine label, I'll simply quote from the book cover:

"...It starts at the beginning with control theory and progresses through a discussion of motors, position indicators, correction factors (both astronomical and mechanical) to detailed descriptions of working systems capable of generating data of significant scientific value... The hardware described can be easily built or purchased and the software is debugged and running if one wishes to duplicate these instruments... the authors present a logical planning process and a discussion of key considerations necessary for success. This may well be the most valuable element of the book."

Good News

Peter Smitka is again offering his telescope-making expertise and ability to anyone interested in forming a "telescope cloning" class. A meeting is planned in November. Work will start in January or as soon as all necessary parts arrive. MAS member Richard Sterle has again offered the use of his workshop.

Call Pete at 785-0926 (home) or 546-4546 (work) if interested. A dozen fine Dobsonians ranging in size from 6" to 12.5" were produced in his class last year. The MAS received its second Astrofest Award in the category of educational merit for this activity!

Observatory News

Acting Observatory Director John Asztalos will take over maintenance and improvements of our New Berlin facilities during Gerry Samolyk's absence.

John's new phone number is 547-3400.

MAS Dues Increase Follow-up

Treasurer Dan Koehler presented an in-depth financial report at the September Program Meeting. His detailed hand-out to members present showed the flow of MAS monies into and out of its treasury and its sources.

The prime sources of MAS funds are income from the Cora Zemlock Fund, dues, and donations. Operating expenses are paid out of dues. Improvements are paid out of interest from the Cora Zemlock Fund. The board decides how the money is spent. You can rest assured that frugality is the key word. The MAS has always believed in "use it up, wear it out, make it do, or do without."

The bottom line is that to keep up with necessary expenditures and to provide for realization of the Society's future plans, it is necessary to increase dues. Members present at the November meeting will further discuss and vote on the issue. Dan will be present to answer any questions.

Keyholders

| | | |
|---------|-------------------------|----------|
| Nov. 5 | Peter Smitka | 785-0926 |
| Nov. 12 | Paul Borchardt | 781-0169 |
| Nov. 19 | Chris Hesseltine | 482-4515 |
| Nov. 26 | Dr. Richard Wiesen | 781-4757 |
| Dec. 3 | John Asztalos | 547-3400 |
| | (Note new phone number) | |
| Dec. 10 | Jim Toeller | 352-7144 |
| Dec. 17 | Virgil Tangney | 327-7976 |

The observatory will be closed on Saturday, December 24 and Saturday, December 31. Call Dan Koehler (662-2987) if you wish to use the observatory during the Christmas and New Year's weeks.

New Members

Thanks to the efforts and talents of a lot of dedicated Open House volunteers and more than a few clear, albeit quite warm evenings, our member has increased significantly! Most of the following new members were guests at one or more of the MAS Open Houses. All, no doubt, were pleased with what we can offer.

Please meet: **Wanda, Tom, Michel, and T.J. Berner, Delafield; Robert Bruss, Milwaukee; Raymond Bucholz, Franklin; Barbara Ericson, Brookfield; Ron Fintak, Whitefish Bay; Jerry, Sue, and Angie Glocka, New Berlin; Nadine and Brian Halligan, Milwaukee; Thomas Holdorf, Mukwonago; Kenneth and Darlene Kocher, Menomonee Falls; Federick, Lee, Peter, and David Maager, West Allis; Judith Matton, Wauwatosa; Dr. James, Mary, David, and Joseph Maurin, West Allis; Warren, Mary Pat, Rosemarie, and Jeffry Metzger, Mukwonago; Catherine Milosch, Waukesha; Robert Reisener, West Allis; Paul Reszka, Hales Corners; Gary Rochon, Bayside; David, Eric, Eli, and Diane (Steigerwald) Thomas, Milwaukee; Stephen and Sheryl Westmore, St. Francis; and Wanda White, Greenfield.**

Welcome, all, to the Milwaukee Astronomical Society!

Cold Weather Observing Tips

by Donald Gallian (Chicago A.S. "Observer")

Dress properly. You must keep your head warm with a wool hat or a hooded jacket or parka. Your body loses almost half of the heat it generates if your head is uncovered.

Regular shoes or boots are not warm enough. The best protection is a pair of "moon boots." Second best is a pair of boots with felt liners, but these are somewhat heavier.

Heavy mittens are the warmest, but you will not be able to change eyepieces or make small adjustments. Gloves offer dexterity, but they are not as warm.

Do not be fooled by warmer weather. Carry a warm hat and coat just in case the temperature drops. This also applies in summer.

Practice finding objects with your telescope at home if you plan to observe elsewhere. Make a list of everything you plan on taking. Don't leave a tripod leg at home.

Dew caps are MANDATORY for refractors or Schmidt-Cassegrain telescopes. You can make them. They should extend at least one tube diameter. A dew cap also prevents dew formation on the diagonal in a Newtonian. A car window defroster that runs on 12 volts from a car cigarette lighter will keep optics clear.

Directory

| | | |
|----------------------------|---------------------------------|----------|
| President | Dr. Richard Wiesen | 781-4757 |
| Vice President | Mathew McNeeley | 354-5347 |
| Secretary | Ms. Karen Wesener | 961-8752 |
| Treasurer | Dan Koehler | 662-2987 |
| Observatory Director | John Asztalos | 547-3400 |
| Librarian | Mrs. Sally Waraczynski | 321-0918 |
| Assistant Librarian | Mrs. June Regis | 962-0896 |
| Program Director | Mathew McNeeley | 354-5347 |
| FOCAL POINT Editor | LeRoy Simandl | 933-3052 |
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| MAS Observatory | 18850 W. Observatory Road | 542-9071 |
| | New Berlin, Wisconsin | |