

FOCAL POINT



Newsletter for the

Milwaukee Astronomical Society

December 1992

Seasons Greetings

Another year draws to a close and another will soon begin. The officers and directors of MAS wish everyone of all faiths a pleasant Holiday Season and happiness and health in 1993.

From The Editors

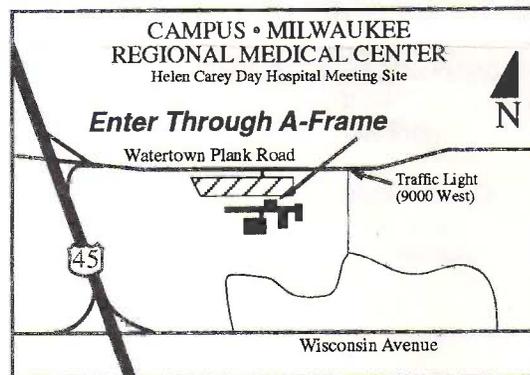
Of course we echo the warm sentiments from above. We extend this thought with a special thanks—not only for the contributions received for the *Focal Point*—but also as friends sharing the many society sponsored events throughout the year. For this, and especially during this season of joy and thanksgiving, we are truly grateful.

—Matthew McNeely & Tom Gill

Program/Meeting

There is no featured speaker this month. Instead, we offer a cornucopia of activities: a chance to show & share with others, an opportunity to socialize, and a chance to talk to committee chairs and other MAS members about the various functions and activities of the society. For the show & share portion, the following list offers some suggestions: information tidbits, observing or other tips, show off new, old or homemade equipment, relate personal advice or experience, show off astrophotographs or photos, etc. You get the idea. You don't need to make a big presentation, just a few minutes to say what you want to say. If you need audiovisual equipment (slide projector, overhead, etc.) contact Dan Koehler at 662-2987.

After the meeting, everyone will get a chance to mingle and meet current and new members. Hope you can make it. The last time we had an informal meeting (March 92), it was a big success. Meeting time is 8:00 pm, doors open @ 7:30—you are always welcome to show up early and visit.

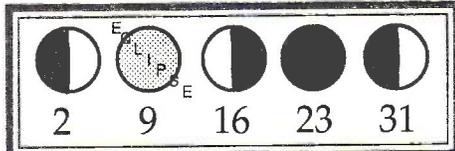


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Calendar of Events

- December 9, Friday Lunar Eclipse (totality starts 5:07 pm CST)
 - December 11, Friday **8:00 pm Program-Meeting**
Board Meeting at 7:30 pm
 - December 18, Friday Deadline for next Focal Point
 - January 6, Wednesday First Wednesday Meeting
7:30 at the Observatory
 - January 11, Monday MAS Board Meeting
7:30pm at Richard Wiesen's house
 - January 15, Friday **8:00 pm Program-Meeting**
- Saturday Nights—Member night at Observatory—Call key holder



Library News

The "V" Word - Videotapes

Many members have been clamoring for this logical extension of our library services. Now that there is a large-screen TV and VCR installed in the new building, we are going to try storing donated videocassettes out there as well. **Martin Brunet Jr.** has donated one about space exploration and the **Berner/Borchardt** Observatory Tour is there too. This will be a very limited operation until we determine how well the equipment functions in a less-than-ideal setting and whether borrowers are faithful about returning the tapes promptly and in good condition.

If you have tapes you wish to donate, please, PLEASE, give them to me; don't just leave them at the observatory. I need to process them as I would for books so we can set up a system that will accommodate the eventual purchase of videotape programs. Also, if this announcement sparks a flood of donations, we will need to plan for more spacious storage.

Good News—Two of our wandering books have returned to their shelves. Amen. **Bad News**—The latest inventory revealed several slides are unaccounted for. Please look for the following:

A69	B Dome and Orion star trails (2 copies!)
B47	Comet West over A Dome
B112	Sun dogs
D149	Cassiopeia
E21	Ursa Major
E89	Canis Major
E118	Ursa Major

I also found a slide of the Moon-Venus conjunction of May '88 lying in one of the boxes. We appreciate the donation but would also like to know whom to credit on the accession list. Sometimes, the photographer must be called on to supply replacement copies.

June Regis and I offer best wishes for the coming holiday season and this reminder as you get into the gift-giving mode—MAS receives bonus books for sponsoring new memberships in the Astronomy Book Club which advertises in *Astronomy* and *Sky and Telescope* magazines. Call the librarian for details.

For further library news, be sure to read **Lee Keith's** article about Michael Porcellino elsewhere in this issue.

—Sally Waraczynski

Total Lunar Eclipse December 9

On Wednesday, Dec. 9th, the moon will undergo a total lunar eclipse. Published times (CST—our time) are in the table at right. MAS members are invited to come to the observatory although dome use will be limited as other members have signed up in advance. The buildings may make it difficult to get a good view so binoculars or a small telescope might be your best way to view from the MAS Observatory.

Total Eclipse Begins	5:07pm
Mid Eclipse	5:44pm
Total Eclipse Ends	6:22pm
Partial Eclipse Ends	7:29pm

Give the Gift of Astronomy

Are there any budding astronomers on your Christmas list? How about giving a gift of astronomy? The MAS has 3 separate Golden Guides for sale at \$3.75 each (lower prices than at a bookstore). The books are Stars, Planets, and The Sky Observers Guide. Buy one or all three!

I will have a small supply of these books available at the December 11 meeting so you can do some of your Christmas shopping.

—Karen Wesener

Chili Dump Report

As luck would have it, our Chili Dump/Messier Search would have to fall during the month-long streak of cloudy weather. Therefore, the only "M" objects visible were the M&M's that I brought to sell for my son Jake's Cub Pack. The social part of evening was a great success. Over 35 members (including about 6 brand new faces!) showed up to share chili and conversation on that balmy November night.

Besides the ability to just chat and mingle we had a few diversions: **Lee Keith** brought a clear sky with him in the form of computer software, **Scott Laskowski** brought his photo albums and I brought my 3 years worth of Astrofest videos which featured many wonderful 'scopes and a few cameo appearances by MAS members including: The Well-Equipped Astronomer (**Tim Burrus**), Mr. Big (**Dave Kriege**), and the Pied Piper of Astro Scans (**Peter Smitka**).

The food was fantastic and there were enough condiments and snacks to leave everyone satisfied. Thanks to **Wanda Berner** for the idea and her toppings (lettuce on chili—why not!?) All in attendance agreed that it was a lot of fun and we should do it again sometime soon. Next time maybe the stars will be there!

—Tom Gill

For the Kid in Us All

The MAS library has just acquired A Young Astronomer's Guide to the Night Sky by Mike Porcellino. It is a gentle introduction to the night sky for older children and is written by "a man with a mission" who's intent was to introduce as many kids to the wonders of astronomy as he could. He did this through many classes and shows at Morton College near Chicago and in a monthly newsletter, articles for *ASTRONOMY* magazine, public viewing and his "First Light" program to promote astronomical fun for all ages. Mike passed away last July but his mission continues and he remains a mentor to me and others who bring the universe to everyone, especially kids, for they are truly "the next generation."

This book joins Mike's first book, Through the Telescope: A Guide for the Amateur Astronomer in the MAS library. It is a book that captures the real "soul" of amateur astronomy—not only by covering the basics, but by showing what it's like to be a member of the amateur astronomical community. Mike writes about star parties, unique telescope designs, and he introduces the reader to some real amateurs and how they work.

If you would like to support the "First Light" program with a donation of equipment, magazines, books or money, contact First Light, c/o Morton College, 3801 S. Central, Cicero, IL 60650. All donations are tax deductible.

-Lee Keith

You Can Assist HST Research

During 1983, I will be using the Hubble Space Telescope to search for OH emissions from three main belt asteroids.

I am looking for members who might be willing to do ground based observations of these objects while the HST studies them from space.

The brightest of the asteroids will be 11th magnitude. The faintest will be around 15th. I can use visual observations as well as astrophotography. If anyone has a CCD system, that would be super.

The three asteroids to be observed have all been seen with coma in the past. The observers would simply notify me if anything to that effect was noticed during their observation.

-Harald Schenk

Contact Harald at 2330 S. 11th St., Sheboygan, WI 53081

Messengers From The East

Thanks to Steve Cariddi & Alan Levin from the *Starry Messenger* for donating enough copies of their publication to reach every MAS household. We even got our club mentioned in the first page editorial column! In the past we have received donated subscriptions as door prizes and we once again appreciate their generosity.

I've been subscribing to the *Starry Messenger* for years and have bought several items, all at great prices. Even when my checkbook balance prevents me from making a purchase, I enjoy "window shopping" the various 'scopes, accessories, books, etc. I have also made a few phone and pen pals from responding to and placing ads.

It has been my experience that if something looks too good to be true, best call the seller immediately or its gone. So the issue enclosed may be a week or two out of date but it was the best we could do to match ours and their deadlines. It will, however, give you a good idea of what you could expect on a monthly basis, should you wish to subscribe.

-Tom Gill

Saturday Nite Keyholders

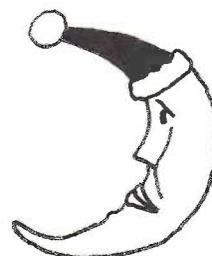
Dec. 5	Terry Ross	784-2093
Dec. 12	Gerry Samolyk	529-9051
Dec. 19	T. Schmidtkunz	784-0253
Dec. 26	Peter Smitka	785-0926
Jan 2	Virgil Tangey	327-7976
Jan 9	Jim Toeller	352-7144
Jan 16	K. Waraczynski	321-0918

For Sale

Equatorial mount for a small telescope—deluxe hardwood tripod is adjustable up to 60" tall. Same set-up as advertised in Orion's Fall Catalog (Pg. 44). New, \$199.00, mine which is like new will cost you \$100.00. Matthew McNeely at 354-5347 if interested.

6" f/12 Super Planetary Starfire Astro Physics Refractor. The ultimate 'scope for lunar/planetary observing or astrophotography. 2.7" Astro Physics focuser, German Equatorial mount with dual axis drives and hand controller, 2 stainless steel counterweights, quick release 6.5" hexagonal mounting rings, 60" pier, dual axis drive corrector, 8 x 50 Astro Physics finder with illuminated reticle, carrying cases for tube assembly and accessories.

All used very little and in excellent condition. Retail \$6000, asking \$3800. You pick up. Dave Kriege, 414-648-8284 home, 414-648-2327 work.



Space permits inclusion of another page from the Member Packet so I chose to add the other part of our Special Directory. Keep these useful phone numbers for future reference.

Special Directory 1992-93

Board of Directors

Wanda Berner	691-2360	Tom Gill	476-6986
Paul Borchardt	781-0169	Martha Kelty	963-1953
(also the Assistant Observatory Director)		Jim Kube	453-8858
Martin Brunet, Jr.	544-1342	Tom Renner	524-0932
Tim Burrus	783-6572	Ken Waraczynski	321-0918
Brian Ganiere	961-8745	Sally Waraczynski	321-0918

Committee Chairmen

Light Pollution	Brian Ganiere	961-8745
Membership	Dan Koehler	662-2987
Observatory	Jim Kube	453-8858
Outreach	Wanda Berner	691-2360
Picnic	Tom Gill	476-6986
	Matthew McNeely	354-5347
Program	Tom Renner	524-0932
Publicity	-	-

Other Coordinators

Astronomical League :		
Correspondent	Dan Koehler	662-2987
Observing Projects	Lee Keith	425-2331
Campout Coordinator	Paul Borchardt	781-0169
Focal Point	Tom Gill	476-6986
	Matthew McNeely	354-5347
Librarian/Historian	Sally Waraczynski	321-0918
New Member Contact	Sally Jo Michalko	524-9499
Open House Coordinator	Lee Keith	425-2331
Tour Coordinator	Lee Keith	425-2331



MAS INFORMATION

MAS OFFICERS

President	Dr. Richard Wiesen	781-4786
Vice President	Matthew McNeely	354-5347
Secretary	Dorothy Kube	453-8858
Treasurer	Dan Koehler	662-2987
Obs. Director	Gerry Samolyk	529-9051
Ast. Obs. Director	Paul Borchardt	781-0169
Librarian	Mrs. Sally Waraczynski	321-0918
Assist. Librarian	Mrs. June Regis	962-0896
Program Dir.	Tom Renner	524-0932

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