



**From The Editor**

What a wonderful journey I had in time and space as I perused Messier's Nebulae and Star Clusters. Now with Spring's promise of warmer and clearer nights, I can dare hope to gaze upon what I think is one of the more intriguing and poetic regions—The Realm of the Nebulae. As these tiny fire-balls and wispy smoke-specks recede reminding us of cosmic divergence, I know that earthly events are converging.

In MAS, this convergence takes place the weekend of April 24-26 as we host the NCRAL Convention and related activities. To assure your attendance, please complete and send in your registration and dinner fees. See insert with February *Focal Point* or call Dan Koehler at 662-2987. A reminder that the NCRAL Banquet will serve as this year's MAS annual banquet so we look forward to sharing your company at this gala event.

-Matthew McNeely

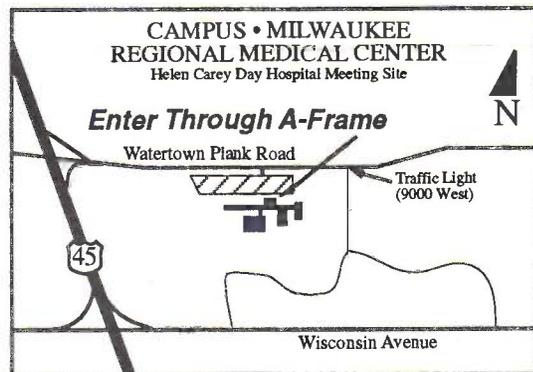
**Program/Meeting**

Do you sometimes wish you knew more of your fellow MAS members by name rather than just by face? Would you like the chance to ask questions one-on-one about Society activities, meetings, finances, the Observatory, observing programs, equipment or whatever? This month everyone will receive a name tag, and after the business meeting we will break into small groups each led by an "expert" in the various activities and functions of the MAS. Topics can be discussed as the mood moves you. This will be an excellent time to meet each other on a more personal basis, and learn more about the MAS at the same time. (The list is printed on page 2).

In addition, our Observatory Director, Gerry Samolyk will share his experience observing and photographing the spectacular January sunset annular eclipse from Palomar Mountain in California. Come on out to mix and mingle with your fellow enthusiasts! Meeting at 8:00pm, doors open at 7:30.

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-Tom Renner



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**Calendar of Events**

- March 16, Monday ..... MAS Board Meeting  
7:30pm at the Kube's
- March 20, Friday ..... 8:00 pm Program-Meeting  
Vernal Equinox
- March 24, Tuesday ..... Deadline for next Focal Point
- April 1, Wednesday ..... First Wednesday Meeting  
7:30 at the Observatory
- April 6, Monday ..... MAS Board Meeting  
7:30 at Wanda Berner's
- April 25, Friday ..... Host NCRAL Convention

Saturday Nights—Member night at Observatory—Call key holder

## Library News

Leprechauns have a substantial literature presence for beings that are firmly believed in but have never actually been seen. So it is with some members of the micro world of particles which make up our universe. The Shadows of Creation: Matter and the Structure of the Universe, by Riordan and Schram, 1991 explores the possible candidates for what is often called the missing mass in the universe. The most viable theory at present, that of an inflationary phase following the standard Big Bang expansion, requires a density of mass that will keep the universe from either expanding forever or contracting back upon itself -  $\Omega = 1$ . And so, the supercolliders and neutrino detectors keep on looking. Further, the authors of this highly readable cosmology explain the possibilities for the seeds upon which gathered the visible clumps of matter such as galactic super clusters and, ultimately, people. (reviewed in November 1991 *Sky and Telescope*).

### A Night Out With Mick Sutov and O'Ryan

OK, maybe I am carrying the Irish thing too far. Anyhow, Turn Left at Orion, by Consolmagno and Davis, 1989 has been designed especially for beginning observers with small telescopes who want to go right out to see the night sky with a minimum of preliminary reading. Naked eye, finder and main scope views are provided along with directions to, and commentary on, nearly 100 deep sky objects within the reach of 2 to 4-inch objectives. There is also a nice section on the Moon's changing aspect night-to-night. The author definitely wants you to learn the proper names of stars, and this is the only guide I know of that shows the telescope view as seen through a star diagonal. (Reviewed in May, 1991 *Reflector*).

-Sally Waracznski

## Program/Meeting (continued from page 1)

The tentative topics for the March Program Meeting include:

- Board of Directors and Officers**—how they guide the Society.
- Observatory Functions**—observing programs, members nights, First Wednesdays, construction activities, etc.
- Club Library**—Resources for member use.
- Observing Clubs**—Messier, Burnham's and Herschel clubs.
- Society Finances**—Endowment Fund, Dues, and Budget.
- Astronomical League and NCRA**—what they are and what they do for us.
- Commercial Equipment**—Member Alan Dyer's job is to know about this stuff—come with questions!
- Topics and Speakers**—for future Membership Program/Meetings
- Telescope Care & Maintenance.**
- General Rap Session**—meet and greet the membership!

## Hospitality Helpers Needed

Volunteers are needed at the Observatory for the convention in the following areas:

### Sat.-Sun., April 18-19:

General final cleanup.

### Fri.-Sat., April 24-25:

- Parking lot attendants
- Greeter and guides
- Telephone answerers
- Telescope attendants
- Book, magazine and other sales people
- Refreshment dispensing (coffee, soda, etc.)
- Donations of baked goods and light snacks

To offer your help and/or to make other suggestions regarding hospitality during the convention, call the Waracznski's at 321-0918.

-Ken Waracznski

Member's

## Member's Hubble Proposal Reaches Semi-Finals

Member Harald Schenk was informed that his proposal for amateur use of the Hubble Space Telescope had made it into the semi-finals in the second round of competition. Harald's proposal is to search select asteroids for evidence of transition comets. The existence of such would be helpful for future space voyagers. The volatiles could help supply fuel, water, and oxygen. His proposal is one of ten under consideration. The final list of five proposals should be announced at any time.

If he survives the final cut, Harald will be teaming up with James Secosky, a science teacher from New York who submitted a similar proposal. It was suggested that they form a team, with Harald as leader. James was a finalist in the first competition in which he elected to search for frost on Jupiter's moon Io.

Good luck Harald!

## Top Twenty Books

The January 1992 issue of the *Astronomy Network News* ran this list of the Top Twenty Books recommended for amateur astronomers and club libraries. I am reprinting it here as a reading list, also to show which books are a part of the MAS library (those preceded by a "•" below).

• *The Cambridge Atlas of Astronomy*, Audouze, Jean and Guy Israel, eds. A folio-sized survey containing fundamentals for backyard astronomers.

• *The New Solar System*, Kelly J. Beatty and Andrew Chaikin, eds. The best general overview of the solar system and what's known about it.

*Man Discovers the Galaxies*, Richard Brendzen, Richard Hart and Daniel Steeley. How early scientists demystified the Milky Way Galaxy.

• *Build Your Own Telescope*, Richard Berry. Plans for six telescopes you can build and information useful to commercial telescope owners.

*The Milky Way*, Bart J. and Priscilla F. Bok. Regarded as the definitive book on our Galaxy for nontechnical readers.

• *Burnham's Celestial Handbook Vol 1-3*, Robert J. Burnham. A voluminous compilation of deep-sky objects with photos, charts and tables.

• *Astrophotography for the Amateur*, Michael Covington. Chapters provide how-to advice for getting started in astrophotography.

• *The Backyard Astronomer's Guide*, Terence Dickinson and Alan Dyer. A luxuriously illustrated beginner's guide to amateur astronomy. (on back order)

• *The Universe from Your Backyard*, David J. Eicher. Republished "Backyard Astronomer" articles from *ASTRONOMY* magazine.

*Sky Catalog 2000.0*, Alan Hirshfeld and Roger W. Sinnott, eds. Fundamental data for stars and deep-sky objects that every club should have.

• *Galaxies*, Timothy Ferris. A folio-sized essay on galaxies with an engaging narrative.

• *Colours of the Stars*, David and Paul Murdin. Professional astronomers discuss color in astronomy and what it means. Many photographs.

*The Cambridge Encyclopedia of Astronomy*, Simon Mitton, ed. Authoritative, fact-filled reference covers all aspects of modern astronomy.

*The Guide to Amateur Astronomy*, Jack Newton and Philip Teece. The best all-around introduction to what amateur astronomy is all about.

• *Starlight Nights*, Leslie C. Peltier. One of the greatest amateur astronomers of all time describes his experiences as a stargazer.

*Norton's 2000.0 Star Atlas and Reference Handbook*, Ian Ridpath, ed. A classic, showing stars to mag. 6 with an introduction about observing.

*Cosmos*, Carl Sagan. A superb narrative tour of the universe.

• *Uranometria 2000.0*, Wil Tirion, Barry Rappaport and George Lovi. Meticulously detailed, large-scale atlas shows 332,556 stars to mag. 9.5 and many thousands of deep-sky objects.

*Atlas of Deep-Sky Splendors*, Hans Vehrenberg. Contains hundreds of photographs of deep-sky objects at the same scale for easy comparison.

*Color Star Atlas*, John Cox and Richard Monkhouse. An easy-to-use atlas showing the colors of all naked-eye stars.

## Saturday Nite Keyholders

Mar. 7 Frank Roldan 608-787-1730

Mar. 14 Terry Ross 784-2093

Mar. 21 Gerry Samolyk 529-9051

Mar. 28 Tom Schmidtkunz 784-0253

Apr. 4 Peter Smitka 785-0926

Apr. 11 Virgil Tagney 327-7976

Apr. 18 Jim Toeller 352-7144

Apr. 25 Ken Waracznski 321-0918

## For Sale

**Meade 2120 LX3**, 10-inch Schmidt Cassegrain. Like new with heavy-duty tripod, fork mounted wedge, electric driver on both axis, carrying case and two eyepieces. \$1100 or best offer. Call George Schimmel at 771-5903.

**6-inch Newtonian Reflector** with very heavy-duty steel tripod that breaks down for travel. Stainless steel 8-inch diameter tube. No drive. Call Don LeMoine at 374-5865.

**8-inch f/6 Dobsonian telescope**. 6 months old. Mirror custom made, superb optics have complete Focault test data. Small secondary (1.52"). 2" helical focuser with 1.25" adapter. Comes with Telrad and rotating Fiberglass tube. Call Nolan Zadra at 962-3021 evenings.

## New Members

The MAS Board recently announced the addition of the following new members. Please make them feel welcome:

**Dennis Melbye and  
Terry, Jeff, and Jason**  
—New Berlin

**Michael Ganber and  
Jody, Andrew and Emily**  
—Bayside

## 1992 Open House and Activity Schedule

Here is the 1992 Open House schedule and topics. Help is always needed for parking cars, working the telescopes, MAS Bookstore, and greeting the public on the grounds (with or without a telescope). Contact Open House chairperson Lee Keith at 425-2331 if you have any questions about Open Houses.

May 9	Astronomy Day
May 22	When the Moon Bleeds: Lunar Eclipses
July 24	Miranda: The Moon That Broke Apart
August 7	Faster than a Speeding Bullet: Meteors
August 21	Jupiter Meets Venus
September 4	Heavenly Heroes: Constellation Myths
October 2	Saturn: The Planet with "Ears"
October 23	The Hubble Space Telescope is NOT Dead!

Below is a list of other activities occurring in 1992. Notice the list does not include the Society's "standard fare": Open Houses, Board Meetings, First Wednesdays, Saturday Member Nights and 3rd Friday Program/Meetings.

Watch the *Focal Point* for additional information on these activities as the event draws near. The list is provided here to assist you in planning ahead.

April 24-26	Host NCRAI Convention
May 1-3	Spring Greenbush Campout
May 9	Astronomy Day
July 25	Annual Picnic
July 30-Aug 2	Campout at Wildcat Mountain
Sept 18-20	Astrofest, Kankakee, IL
September 25	Fall Greenbush Campout

While not an "official MAS event, there will be an important astronomical event occurring in Madison Wisconsin this summer.

*Astronomy* magazine and the Astronomical Society of the Pacific will host "Universe '92—A Weekend Astronomy Expo" on June 20 through June 25. Some of the activities include talks, seminars, workshops and the Midwest's largest product fair. Details in a future issue of the *Focal Point*.



## 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 392-2799

### FOCAL POINT Staff

Matthew McNeely (Editor)  
8200 N. Cedarburg Road  
Brown Deer, WI 53209  
354-5347

Tom Gill (Editor/Publisher)  
1391 N. 72nd Street  
Wauwatosa, WI 53213  
476-6986

**MAS Observatory**  
18850 W. Observatory Rd.  
New Berlin, WI  
542-9071