

FOCAL POINT



Newsletter for the

Milwaukee Astronomical Society

January 1993

From The Editors

As we open the New Year, we look forward to a year of astronomical opportunities. From casual stargazing to star parties; from field trips to picnics; from open houses to program meetings; the membership once again has a chance to participate in a wide range of MAS-sponsored events.

We personally look forward to seeing you and sharing the experiences of these many and varied activities.

If you have any suggestions for ways to improve the *Focal Point*, or comments about things we have done in the past, we'd enjoy hearing from you.

And we always welcome your submissions (article, story, art, poetry, musings, observation notes, etc.)

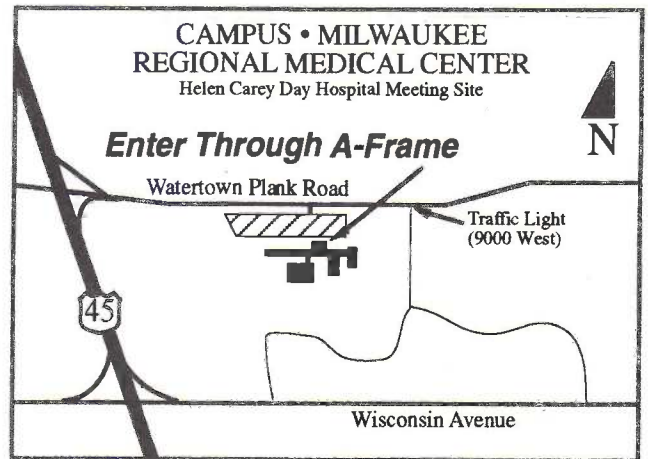
-Matthew McNeely & Tom Gill

Program/Meeting

The speaker for our January meeting is Thomas Hunt who's talk is titled "Space Art: Renaissance to the Future." The talk will be similar to the talk he gave last spring at Universe '92.

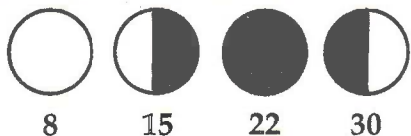
If you've ever seen an artist's rendition of a black hole, or the view from one of Saturn's moons, you've seen space art. Through the imagination and skill of space artists we can be transported to places in the universe we can never visit in person. This talk will explore the origins of space art as well as current trends. He will compare the differences between the space art of the great space-faring powers—the former Soviet Union and the United States.

Thomas Hunt has been art director for *Astronomy* magazine for 13 years and is an active member of The International Association for Astronomical Arts. Join your fellow members for this unique talk. Doors open at 7:30pm, meeting starts at 8:00 pm.



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Calendar of Events

- January 15, Friday 8:00 pm Program-Meeting
- January 22, FridayDeadline for next *Focal Point*
- February 3, Wednesday First Wednesday Meeting
7:30 at the Observatory
- February 8, Monday..... MAS Board Meeting
7:30pm at Paul Borchardt's house
- February 19, Friday..... 8:00 pm Program-Meeting

Saturday Nights—Member night at Observatory—Call key holder

Library News

"Just Point and Shoot"...Not!

Few ambitious astrophotographers these days can resist the appeal of electronic imaging and image processing. The CD workshops at last June's Universe '92 were jammed with enthusiasts—most of whom, including veteran astrophotographers, were just getting started in these new techniques. In his latest book, Choosing and Using a CCD Camera, Richard Berry presents in layman's terms and with meticulous organization just what the title promises.

Berry describes the attributes of different cameras now available; the hows and whys of dark frames, bias, thermal and flat field frames; and matching camera to telescope. He points out the probable need to fine-tune your telescope's mounting, focusing, and tracking/guiding capabilities.

This book even tells how to photograph a computer monitor and make photocopies from inkjet and laser printers. In addition, there are two 5.25-inch floppies*—the QUICKPIX software for calibrating a set of images taken with Lynxx, SBIG, or Electrim systems. If you're ready for more, there's a list of addresses for suppliers of cameras, software, and other accessories.

*Lee Keith has been kind enough to make back-up copies of these diskettes and those accompanying related material in our library, namely Berry's "Introduction to Astronomical Image Processing" and "AstroIP" supplemental disks.

Tim Burrus has given us a copy of Yerkes Observatory's visitor guide. It can be found in the vertical reference file under ASTRONOMICAL OBSERVATORIES. Tim also shares with us the word that he occasionally converses with William Morgan down there at Williams Bay, that it is the 5th anniversary of the compilation of his Revised MK Spectral Atlas, and that the astronomer himself will celebrate his 87th birthday in January. The University of Chicago plans a symposium this year on Morgan's work at Yerkes, and a copy of the spectral atlas is in our historical collection.

Another recent addition is the revised (1992) edition of Modern Astronomy, an Activities Approach by Hemenway and Robbins. This workbook provides a self-paced course in using the tools of astronomical research. Some exercises require only household items. Other materials needed may present a challenge, so Appendix 4 gives a list of possible sources.

—Sally Waraczynski

Nov 1992 Board Meeting

To keep members informed of MAS business, this and future issues of the Focal Point will include excerpts from board meetings. Not all information will be printed as some of it is not applicable by the time it appears here. If you wish to review board notes in their entirety, copies are kept in the library.

Treasurer's Report: Savings \$ 3,780.30, checking \$275.80, total \$4056.10. Reports made available were: income statement, endowment report and a summary of membership renewals for 1992-93.

Other reports: Observatory Director—Trash cleared from behind buildings almost done, repairs to Zemlock scope and dome in progress, furnace may need water trap, all members using observatory advised to keep doors closed and make sure breakers are on for heaters. Tool shed passed final approval.

Committee Reports: Program—30 people attended Oct. 17th field trip, a loss of \$126 was incurred. Light Pollution—We are considering joining the Illuminating Engineering Society (IES) at \$135 per year. We plan to approach city and county engineers of surrounding communities to convince them of advantages for proper lighting.

—From notes take by Dorothy Kube

Astronomy Shows on Cable TV

Have you checked out your local cable stations lately? You might be surprised to know that some have astronomical programming. Thanks to **Dorothy Kube** for sharing the following information about two local cable shows, the award winning "The Sky Tonight" (geared toward the casual and curious observer) and "The Starry Messenger" (interviews with people about astronomy and related topics).

The shows are a community service of The Wehr Astronomical Society, Franklin, WI. The Starry Messenger is moderated and produced by **Jim Kube**. Several MAS members have been guests of the show in the past and will be seen in future shows. Part 2 of **Gerry Samolyk's** eclipse talk will run in January as will a special composite of "The Great Solar Eclipse of 1991" which shows many MAS members.

The cable companies and channels which carry the two shows are:

Viacom (N&S) Ch 11B
Warner (Milw) Ch 49*
Crown (West Allis) Ch 13A & Ch 30B
Crown (New Berlin) Ch 30

Programs change monthly, so check cable listings for day and time of broadcast. (*Warner shows are M&F 10:00 am, Wed 10:30 am unless preempted by Shuttle flight coverage).

Mirror Grinding Machine Available

Jim Toeller has extended a generous offer to anyone interested in his home-made mirror grinding machine. Jim will give it away free of charge. For details, call Jim at 352-7144.

Wanted

If anyone has a C-90 they would like to sell or knows of someone who does, contact Wanda Berner at 646-8229 or 691-2360.

MAS IBM Astronomical Software Library

Your society has a substantial library of public domain/shareware astronomical software for IBM-PC and compatibles. Titles are too numerous to name here, so for more information, contact Lee Keith at 425-2331.

New MAS Computer Software Group

For the increasing number of people that have access to increasingly powerful PC's, this new MAS activity group is for you. The purpose would be to talk about and use the newest in astronomical software for the IBM PC (and compatible) and Apple Macintosh computers.

If you have some interesting astronomical software, bring it. The direction we go and the things we do will be determined by the interest of the members attending. Get involved and have fun!

The kickoff meeting will be at the home of Lee Keith, 8150 S. Legend Dr., Franklin on January 31 at 7:30 pm. I'll have an IBM PC available for software demos, so if you have Mac software either bring your Mac or wait until we have a meeting at a member's house with a Mac. Call 425-2331 for more info.

-Lee Keith

MAS Members Bring Universe "Down To Earth"

On December 7, 1992, members Lee Keith and Karen Wesener put on an "out of this world" show to Ms. Way's 4th grade class at Wilson Elementary School in Sheyboygan, WI. They were invited by their nephew. Lee talked on the vastness of the Universe and showed the Sun with a small telescope, while Karen told constellation stories about how the stars in the sky came to be, as well as the Perseus-Andromeda myth. The kids had a lot of fun and learned a lot. Lee & Karen got the best reward of all—a warm heart! They would like to encourage all MAS members to go to an elementary class and talk about astronomy. It may be all the astronomy the kids get!

-Lee Keith

Phone Tree List

The following members are participating in the MAS Phone Tree. If you would like to be put on the list(s), call Wanda Berner at 646-8229. Person starting calls first person on the list after your name, last person calls first person. If you reach answering machine or another person other than member, leave a message and call next name. Keep calling until you reach a member who can pass on the information.

Member	Phone	Observing	Aurora Alert*	Sunspots
Wanda Berner	646-8229 or 691-2360	•	• not after 12*	•
Sally Jo Michalko	524-9499	•	• not after 11	•
Tom Gill	476-6986	•	• not after 11	• summer/wknds
Tim Burrus	783-6572	•	• not after 11	
Tom Schmidtkunz	352-1674 299-6383 (w)	• esp. if out of Milwaukee		
Lee Keith	425-2331	• not after 11	• not after 11	
Karen Wesener	425-2331			•
Debbie Frey	355-3470	•	•	•
Scot Laskowski	421-3517	•	•	•
Jeff Annis	542-0105	•		
Jim & Dorothy Kube	453-8858		•	
Brian Ganiere	961-8745	•		
Matthew McNeely	354-5347	•		
Mark & Nora Kniskern	744-5735	•	•	
Keith Bodoh	272-2078	•	•	
Charlotte Nelson	466-2081	•	•	
Dan Koehler	662-2987	•	•	
Peter Smitka	785-0926	•		
Alan Dyer	594-3763		•	
Paul Borchardt	781-0169		• not after 10:30*	

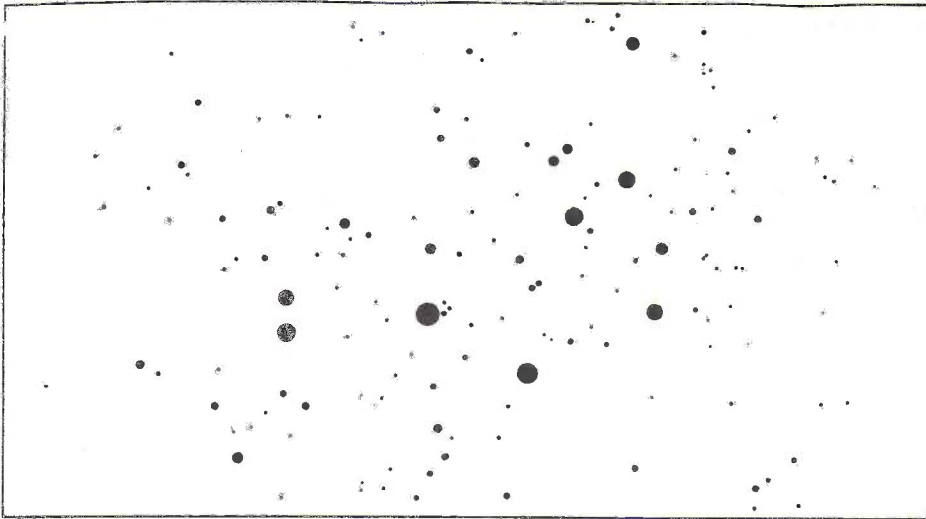
Note: For spectacular aurora, those with a "" say OK to call anytime. For others without time limits, please use common sense.

Saturday Night Keyholders

Jan 16	Ken Waraczynski	321-0918
Jan 23	Richard Wiesen	781-4757
Jan 30	Wanda Berner	646-8229
Feb 6	Paul Borchardt	781-0169
Feb 13	Mary Brunet	544-1342
Feb 20	Greg Cieslak	529-0548

MAS to go "On Tour"

In addition to our regular Open House schedule, with which we reach hundreds of people each summer, I would like to try to extend the "Universal Tour" theme of the 1992 NCRAL convention by bringing the telescopes of the MAS closer to the public and showing them the universe in local parks. We could potentially reach thousands if the park is well placed. Do you have a park nearby that may lend itself to this sort of thing? Call Lee Keith at 425-2331 with your suggestions.



IDA Star Watch

Show that you care about light pollution. The chart at left is from the International Dark Sky Association (IDA) and is a part of their "Star Watch" program. Check off the stars you see in the Pleiades using the naked eye and binoculars. Feel free to photocopy the chart and share it with friends, neighbors, etc. Send completed charts to our Light Pollution Committee chair, **Brian Ganiere**, 2212 E. Stratford Ct., Shorewood, WI 53211. Brian will forward the charts to the IDA.

Special Observation Chart for the Pleiades (Winter Sky)

Date: Local Time: to
 Name:
 Occupation:
 Age: Sex: M F Eyesight:
 Address:

Place of observation (be as specific as possible, identifying by street intersections, mileage from a known point, etc. Example: North edge of my backyard at 1234 N. Main St., Thistown, IA):

Comments on the location (Example: Only one streetlight within 200 yards of the observing location, and it is well shielded by trees.):

Comments on the sky condition (Example: Light clouds to the north, some haze but about normal for this location.):

Experience of the observer (Examples: First time I ever looked up at night. Active amateur astronomer.) Please note if you used averted vision:

Record of the observation:

1. I can see the Milky Way in (see the all-sky chart in the center of *Sky & Telescope* magazine for the location to look):

- a. Perseus b. Gemini c. Monoceros d. Not at all

2. Binocular specifications (Example: 8 x 50, or 7 x 50, or 10 x 70):

Spec: Make of binoculars:

3. A chart of the Pleiades is given above. Circle the stars you can see with certainty with your naked eyes (wear eyeglasses if you need them for distant vision). Then draw an X over the stars you can see with binoculars.

4. No. of slides included Label with your name and the exposure!

Camera used

Lens: Film:

Please sign here allowing us to publish the photograph if needed:

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781-4786

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354-5347

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