

The Newsletter of the Milwaukee Astronomical Society

MidSummer 1998

**Message from the New President**

-Scott Jamieson, MAS President

As my first message to the membership as president, I would like to tell you a little about myself and then, more importantly, give you some indications of my feelings about the MAS and what direction I believe we should go in the immediate and longer term future.

First I am an Electrical Engineer with Johnson Controls in Milwaukee and specialize in safety controls. I have been with the MAS since I moved here from El Paso, Texas. My personal interest in astronomy goes back to my teenage years and though my involvement in the hobby was somewhat sporadic until I came to the MAS, my love of astronomy and telescopes has been continuous. My primary interest has always been building my own telescopes, mounts and observatories. Recently, I have begun to concentrate on developing my observing skills and plan to get my Messier certificate this year. (Yes, it is possible to take this long!) I enjoy making telescopes and mounts out of wood and one of my designs appeared in Sky&Telescope in 1994. I have a 12 ft diameter observatory in my back yard in Waukesha, also completely built of wood.

Now on to my feelings about the MAS and it's future. Perhaps this can best be expressed by addressing several issues that have come up recently.

**1) That a small, elite group of people is in danger of taking over the club.** I don't know of any takeovers, but all clubs are run by a very special group of people, those that participate in the clubs activities on a regular basis. Most of us have severe restrictions on our time that make it difficult to donate significant amounts to the club. This has been true throughout our history, but there has always been, and, I believe still is, people that feel this club is important enough to help out.

*Continued on page 2, column 1*

**It's Party Time !**

**Well, it's really Picnic time at MAS on Saturday, July 18, 1998 on the the Observatory grounds (seeMap below)** starting around 3:00PM. The Picnic is for MAS members and families courtesy of the Society. What a nice way to get to know your fellow members (and their kin) while indulging in heart-healthy Brats, Hot Dogs, Pop, or Suds, all on the house! Those with Dessert making skills are encouraged to bring their creations for sampling. Dan Yanko, our enthusiastic Picnic Chairman (as well as faithful MAS Treasurer) assures all that the fixings for a great picnic are in place. One of the activities planned is a scratch volley ball game for the more athletically inclined. One member is planning to position himself on the uphill side of the net...it's easier to spike downhill! By th way, Dan is still looking for a Volley ball net set-up. If you can help, call Dan at the number below'

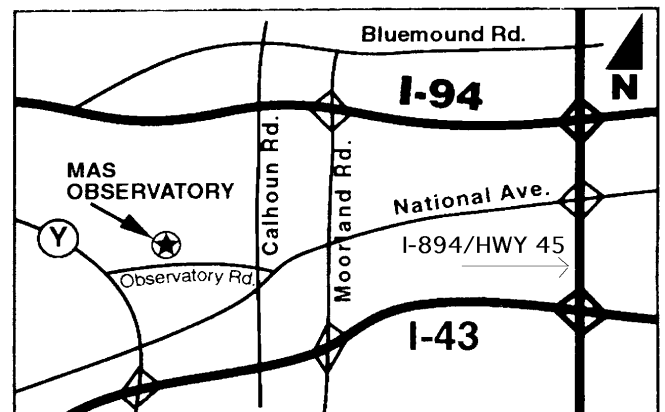
Also planned is an open bonfire (grill) for kids and adults to roast marshmallows, make "sommores", swap yarns, etc. If Dan can get a good head count ahead of time, other activities for kids can be planned as well.

**Also planned is a brief informal (Pop or suds in hand) MAS Board meeting.** All are invited to sit in (or not) to hear club planning.

Lastly, for those who hang on til past sundown, there is always the unfolding universe to behold !

**To help with the picnic or acknowledge your attending, please call Dan & Helen Yanko, if possible at 453-3382.** Mark your calendars and do plan on it!

*DAn Yanko, Picnic Chairman*



**MAS JULY 18TH FAMILY PICNIC**  
Starts at 3:00pm, all Members & families invited  
\*\*\*\*

**JUL 1, AUG. 5, SEP 2, FIRST WED. NITE MEETING**  
Includes planning for the Sept.12 Aldebaron Graze, et al  
\*\*\*\*

**AUG 1, SEP 5, 1ST SAT. NITE MEETING**  
Learn about observing, using observatory scopes et al

*Message from the President contn'd*

There has also been an ebb and flow of the primary interests of the club members. Some of us have specialized interests such as telescope building, deep sky observing or variable star work but many have a more general interest in astronomy. One of the things I enjoy about astronomy is the range of subjects it covers and the many types of people that are interested in it. Like those before me, I would encourage members to get involved in the club activities. Astronomy can be a very lonely hobby or an activity that builds good friends. The choice is yours.

**2) That our clubs facilities are old and rundown. Old?**

Yes, but after seeing what other clubs have over the last couple of years, I must say that we have the core of a fantastic set of observatories and related facilities that many would love to have. Our main handicap is the high ambient light level, but even that does not prevent useful work and many forms of imaging. As you have seen in this newsletter recently, we have been updating the drives of the Z-scope, and are well along on our way to completing the automatic control of the telescope from computers displaying modern star charts. The observatory committee is in the process of formulating plans and recommendations for updating the two 12 inch telescopes. One of the primary efforts will be to make all of the telescopes and observatories easier for all members to use.

A major consideration is the clubhouse itself. It has become obvious that it is time we start planning on replacing this building with a more modern structure. My goal is to complete planning this year and to finish building by the fall of next year.

The financial condition of the club is such that we can consider all of these projects but there is a lot of work to be done and we need the interest and participation of all club members to complete the conversion to a modern facility usable by all club members. There will be discussion of these projects at the board meeting at the picnic on July 18. All members are invited to attend.

**3) That most of the longer term members are no longer active so that little is being done.**

I will agree that many members active in the past do not participate in all aspects of the club and I would strongly encourage them to help guide us newer members through the joys of astronomy. I must also say that in the past year I have seen more encouraging signs of members who really want to get involved in astronomy and this club. We have a board that is very interested in improving the facilities and giving members a reason to be active. This is probably the hardest part of building a club and I believe we have the dedicated people to do it, but we need and will be requesting the help of all members.

Let me end by saying that I believe in the future of MAS, I recognize the diversity of our members' interests and will do every thing that I can to promote the usefulness of our facilities and the advantage of being active in the club. With your help, I look forward to real progress in the coming year.

**-Scott Jamieson, MAS President**

**1998-99 MAS Board & Officers**

As a result of the May 15 elections the following list is the current Board & Officers of MAS.

<u>Director</u>	<u>Officer</u>	<u>Board term expires</u>
Scott Jamieson	President	2001
Scott Laskowski		2001
Rudy Poklar		2001
Vern Hoag		1999
Dan Yanko	Treasurer	1999
Tim Hoff		1999
Chris Weber		1999
Julie Frey		2000
Gerry Stroud		2000
Margaret Warner	Secretary	2000
Sally Michalko		2001

Ex Officio

Lee Keith	Vice President
Gerry Samolyk	Observatory Dir. 2001

Founder Members

- E. Halbach (1964)
- W. Albrecht (1978)
- M. Lange (1988)
- J. Toeller (1993)

*Notes:*

*-Board members are elected by membership to 3 yr tems, but on a staggered basis.*

*-Officers are elected annually (by the board) at the May meeting.*

*-Board selects (or re-appoints) Obs. Director every 3 yrs.*

**June 8, Board meeting**

New MAS President Scott Jamieson outlined his vision for the club and some candidate approaches to increasing the level of participation and observatory usage. Some of the items discussed:

- \* expanding Z scope improvement program to A & B observatories. ie digitizing setting circles and improve ease of use of scopes , domes etc. Possible use of a Sky Commander type readout system
- \*Meeting site improvement. Vern Hoag presented a replacement design for the Quonset hut meeting hall. Building it using member "sweat equity" was within our current funding
- \*Adding a quality CCD imager to Z scope which extends its usefulness with the ever encroaching light pollution.
- \*A survey form may be sent out via Focal Point to make sure membership desires are being considered.
- \* Preliminary visual use of of Z scope shows it to be badly in need of mirror re-aluminization.
- \* Keyholders will be reminded that they are there to train in use of facilities and help members .
- \* Next Board meeting will be at the MAS July18 Picnic in support of Dan Yankos efforts

WE REGRET TO ANNOUNCE THE DEATH OF  
MAS member **Tony Bucht**a on June 8, 1998. Our

## A Grazing Occultation Of Aldebaron (Alpha Tau)

Last year Chris Hesselstine and I traveled to the Black Hills of SD to observe a graze of Alpha TAU. This was very a rewarding experience as we got to work with observers from all over the country. Another graze of this star will occur across the southern states this Sept. This will be the best chance to see a graze of Aldebaron for 18 years.

**The date is 12 Sep.** Since this is a Saturday morning it will be possible for many of us to observe this graze without taking much time off of work. There are several expeditions being planned from SE of Memphis, TN to SE of Bowling Green KY. A map of the graze limit (shown below) can be found at <http://nashville.com/~dega/graze98.htm>. At this time I plan to head for KY however the weather forecast may dictate a last minute change of plans.

This will be a spectacular event with the 0.8 magnitude star grazing 9.75 degrees off the North cusp of a 58% sunlit waning Moon. The altitude near Nashville will be 34 degrees and it gets higher as we go farther East. It will take place at about 7:13 U.T. or 2:13 AM CDT.

With the moon passing thru the Haydes star cluster there are two additional grazes that will be seen that morning. At 4:53 U.T., a 6.7 mag star (ZC 680) will graze 7 degrees off the North cusp. The path is only 30 miles northwest of the Alpha Tau path. After the Aldebaron event we will travel 25 miles back to the northwest to observe 8.3 mag SAO 94056 graze 9 degrees from the North cusp at 11:10 U.T. We will have to leave early Fri. afternoon to make it down there on time.

This trip could be combined with a visit to Mammoth Cave National Park which is on the way. For those who are interested the International Occultation Timing Association (IOTA) will be holding a meeting in Nashville that Saturday afternoon and Sunday morning. *-next column*

*Occultation Continued next Column*

## *Occultation Cont'nd*

I plan to coordinate with anyone from WI who plans to make this trip. You can reach me at [samolyk@ix.netcom.com](mailto:samolyk@ix.netcom.com). I will send copies of updates to anyone who is interested. We will also discuss this event at the Aug. and Sept. first wednesday meetings where we can cover what equipment will be needed and possible car pools.

*- Gerry Samolyk, Observatory Director*

## Library News

Recent MAS Library additions include:

1. **Atlas of the Moon**, by Antonin Ruki, ed. by T. W. Rackham-1996. To be located in the chart and atlas drawers for use at the observatory (it may not be borrowed). Recommended by Vern Hoag.

2. **Photoguide to the Constellations: A Self-Teaching guide to Finding Your Way Around the Heavens**, by Chris Kitchin-1997. Photos From cities to dark skies illustrate what can be seen at different locations. Maps cognate observations.

3. **The Observers Year: 366 Nights of the Universe**, by Patrick Moore-1998. This is more than a whole year of observing for anyone.

## **Yerkes Observatory**

The University of Chicago still operates The largest refracting telescope in the world. It's located in Williams Bay, WI. and is a "must see" for MAS members. Free public tours are given every Saturday at 10:00AM, 11:00AM, and noon. To reach Yerkes, take I-43 south, exit Hwy 67 south, then 67 west in Williams Bay, And 1 mile to the Observatory (on left). A wonder of the modern world, Yerkes is a little known landmark in the history of science located right here in southeast WI.

*-Scott Laskowski, MAS Librarian*

Graze Map Paste up

Dark Line on map shows ground track for observing Aldebaron grazing occultation.. Circles represent some of the planned gathering sites for astronomers. See article, this page and get more info at First Wednesday meeting.

## ALCON '98, French Lick, IN. July 21-25 51st Astronomical League features Astronaut & Stargazer

This summer, July 21-25, the gently rolling hills of Southern Indiana will be the hot spot for amateur astronomers from around the country as the 51st annual convention of the Astronomical League (ALCON'98) gets under way in the town of French Lick at the French Lick Springs Resort.

**Headlining the event will be Space Shuttle astronaut, Dr. F. Story Musgrave.** Dr. Musgrave, who is tied for the most spacewalk of any person (6), commanded the Hubble Space Telescope Repair Mission. He will be the main banquet speaker for registered guests and will relate his experiences dealing with repairing the famous telescope. For a small admission, the public is also invited to Dr. Musgrave's lecture.

**Jack Horkheimer, Stargazer, is another main attraction** of ALCON 98. Jack is that enthusiastic man you see talking about the night sky just before your Public Television station signs off. He will also be making two appearances. During one, he will present the first Jack Horkheimer Award. This annual award will be to the amateur astronomer, 18 or younger, selected who provided outstanding service to the League or to a member society the previous year.

Several other speakers will be on hand covering a number of diverse subjects from the next Martian probe to bird navigation. There are a variety of workshops to involve yourself in and, of course, the annual Star-B-Que. Bring your want list too, as several vendors will be on hand to help you round out your collection of Astronomy items. Of course, there'll be plenty of observing. Our quality site is only 25 minutes from the hotel.

For family members who may not gravitate quite so much to all the Astronomy events, there are many area attractions. There are several terrific caves nearby waiting to be explored. The Lincoln Boyhood National Memorial in Lincoln City hosts costumed interpreters working the land just as Abe did. Across the road is the Lincoln Amphitheatre featuring the Young Abe Lincoln Musical. The Gus Grissom Memorial, honoring one of America's early astronauts, is close by. And within walking distance of the hotel, you can take a ride on a historic train or tour the area on a 1930 electric trolley.

The resort rests on 2600 acres and features many quality activities for its guests: 2 golf courses, a tennis court, horseback riding, a 6 lane bowling alley and 2 swimming pools. There is also a spa on the premises to relax your aching muscles after all that fun. All the daily activities will cause you to work up an appetite and there are several wonderful restaurants at the hotel and in the area to satisfy any size hunger.

Your hosts for ALCON '98, the Evansville and Louisville Astronomical Societies, want you to have the best ALCON experience ever. Make ALCON '98 your Astronomy Vacation.

For registration information, see the ads in the February and May issues of the REFLECTOR, the newsletter of the Astro

*Next Column*

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nomical League visit our website <http://ouworld.compuserve.com/homepages/sconner/> where you can download a registration form. Join our e-mail newsletter by sending mail to [alcon98@gs1.revnet.com](mailto:alcon98@gs1.revnet.com). Type "join" in the body of your message to receive updates as ALCON '98 draws closer.

Your Evansville Astronomical Society Host Chairperson is Mitch Luman-812-985-7739. E-mail Mitch at [luman@aol.com](mailto:luman@aol.com).

Your Louisville Astronomical Society Host Chairperson is Sally Lambert-502-587-7711. E-mail Sally at [105153.2244@compuserve.com](mailto:105153.2244@compuserve.com).

*-Dave Stevens , Evansville Astronomical Society*

*Editor's Note: Last year, MAS did some soul searching on retaining Astronomical League Membership. The Board voted heavily to stay with AL. Here is an opportunity for members/board to find out more about AL. A more complete Alcon info packet is the log-in desk at the observatory.*

## Astrofest 98, Fri. Sept. 11 to Sun. Sept.13

Our brethren of the Chicago Astronomical Society are once again hosting their Annual Campout convention for Observers and Amateur telescopemakers. at the 130 acre Camp Shaw-Waw-Nas-See 4H site in Kankakee, Il.. This event is usually attended by a fair contingent of MAS members. This years rates are somewhat higher (due to rental increases). and are: Two Day Registration \$35 per adult; children (6-12) \$15. One Day Registration is \$25/adult, \$10/child (6-12). Walk-ins on the day of the event are \$100. Most over niteres campout but some cabins are available. Last year, this event went to full house on the Sunday; obviously pre- registration is encouraged.

Major vendors such as Meade, Astro-Physics, Astronomy, S& T and even some of our local types such as member Paul Kreige (Obsession Telescopes), Peter Smitka (Portaball ) are usually present.

The neat thing about this fair is you can try-before -you-buy the commercial scopes , pick homebuilders brains for clever design features you might want to put into your homebuilt, visually try out various aperture scopes (you can't find a more freindly bunch) or just get Astronomically smart listening to lectures on many aspects of astronomy. Last year MAS member Robert Naeye, Associate Editor of Astronomy magazine was one of the featured speakers (there were lots of good speakers).

Anyway, For an "immersion" weekend of astronomy, or a one day exercise (start early!) give this a try, but only if your not going to participate in the Aldebaron Graze (written up elsewhere in this Newsletter)!

Registrations are accepted until Aug 22, 1998. For a more detailed description , directions etc., a reference brochure is pinned to the bulletin board (above the log-in desk ) at the Observatory.

### ***May Issue Error correction***

MAS member Pat Baker's Web "Astronomy Central" site correct address is: <http://www.execpc.com/patrickbaker>

## Focal Point Mail

Dear MAS Member:

An incorrect webpage address was given in the May issue of the Focal Point for my webpage

:PAT BAKERS ASTRONOMY CENTRAL”

The correct url or webpage address is :

<http://www.execpc.com/patrickbaker>

At this point, I have upgraded my webpage to include links, with content definitions for 35 major sites. these provide access to over 20,000 images and dissertations on astronomy in all different categories. Also, I have started a science section. Each of the sites has been carefully evaluated for content and only the best included. I would suggest bookmarking the site for future use since there are many months of viewing and and reading available, including latest astronomy news and development, links toMAS site, NASA,Astronomy Magazine, Sky On Line, Hubble, Extrasolar Planets etc., etc., etc.,etc.. After revieing, if you like, got to my email section, click on my email address and send me a note.

*-Shields (Patrick) Baker, MAS member*

*Eds Note, My apologies to Pat on truncating his email address. I have posted a correction elsewhere as well.*

## Publishing Star & Planetary Charts

Publication of night sky charts and Planetary observation data has been considered for Focal Point. Abrams Planetarium (University of Michigan) puts out a monthly chart with a simplified nite sky and detailed “how to find” various planets, some deep sky events. However these are redundant with the very detailed charts already found in both Astronomy and Sky & Telescope magazines. Both do an excellent Job detailing Deep Sky, Lunar and Planetary observation data for amateurs.

The message here is that all members should seriously consider subscribing to one of these fine magazines for this feature alone. They also both do a good job of tracking the rapidly evolving new knowledge of the universe.

We will , of course try to publish Charts for special events such as Comet tracks, and possibly VSO charts , grazes etc. if sufficient interest is shown.

Lastly, we are looking for low cost ways of repro-ing member photos of various Astro events, Any suggestions will be appreciated.

*-Ed*

## For Sale

Two 8x10 Photos of the February 1998 Eclipse.

-One highlights the Sun’s Corona

-The second features the “Diamond Ring”.

These are custom color photprocessing; \$20 each.

For more information/order, **Contact Paul Borchardt 781-0169.**

## Membership Renewal

MAS membership renewal time takes place in September of every year. To this end, our capable membership chairperson, Julie Frey will be mailing out applications ,instructions etc in the mid-August time frame under separate envelope. The membership renewal also has options for reduced rate subscriptions to Astronomy and /or Sky and Telescope and includes membership in the Astronomical League. PC capable prospective members can also get membership info and applications from our website at:

<http://members.aol.com/masmemb/index.html>

You can also reach Julie at:

Julie Frey, MAS Membership Chairman  
11040 W. Meinecke Avenue #4  
Milwaukee, WI.53226-1247  
Phone:414-456-0864

## Delayed Northern Lights Issues

The Editor apologizes for delays in delivery of issues of Northern Lights (a regional publication of the Astronomical League). For reasons unknown, an inadequate number (175) were ordered of this quarterly newsletter. Unfortunately, Bulk mailings require a minimum mailing of 200 (our mailings average 210). The Post Office has gotten very strict about equal weight and equal content between individual bulk mail pieces. As a result, the April issue, got gaggled up in the process. Hopefully, this will be resolved by the next issue of Focal Point.

*-Editor*

**MAS Officers/ Staff**

President	Scott Jamieson	425-2331
Vice President	Lee Keith	896-0119
Treasurer	Dan Yanko	453-3382
Secretary	Margaret Warner	327-7427
Observatory Director	Gerry Samolyk	529-9051
Assistant Observatory Director	Paul Borchardt	781-0169
Focal Point	Rudy Poklar, Editor	786-8931

**Future MAS Events**

**July 18th**, MAS Family Picnic (See Page 1)  
**Aug 7; Sept 11, 25; Oct. 9** Public open houses  
**Sept. 11,12** Graze Occultation Trip (See Article inside)

**MAS Membership** is open to all with an interest in Astronomy and expanding their knowledge of the Universe. Yearly Membership Dues are: Individual \$28/yr; Family \$32; Non-resident (individual \$18, Family \$22); Student (under 18) \$12. **For more information, contact Membership Chairperson Julie Frey, 11040 W. Meinecke Avenue, Milwaukee WI.**

**Focal Point Publishing Guidelines**

Focal Point Newsletter is published monthly from Sept through May with a Mid-summer issue in July. Articles, Announcements, Graphics, Photos, Swap/Sale Ads etc should be submitted at least 10 days prior to the first of the month ( of the desired issue). Article inputs are preferred via E-Mail, or diskette in a text or Word compatible format, if possible. Submit FP inputs to:

MAS Focal Point c/o Rudy Poklar  
 12905 W. Crawford Drive

**Saturday Keyholders**

**July**

4*	Terry Ross	784-2093
11	Gerry Samolyk	529-9051
18	Tom Schmidtkunz	352-1674
25	Ken Waraczynski	321-0918

**August**

1*	Dan Yanko	453-3382
8	Wanda Burner	646-8229
15	Paul Borchardt	781-0169
22	Brian Ganiere	961-8745
29	Brian Garness	538-3888

**September**

6*	Chris Hesseltine	482-4515
13	Vern Hoag	548-9130
20	Tim Hoff	662-2212
27	Scott Jamieson	896-0119

*\*First Saturday Observatory nite meetings will be held in parallel with standard Observatory operations*

**Loaner Telescopes** (available to members for local use)

Scott Jamieson (Waukesha)	896-0119	4"	f / 1 5 refractor
Lee Keith (Franklin)	425-2331	8"	Dob reflector
Rich Stearle (Greenfield)	543-7479	8"	Dob reflector

**Visit our MAS Website:**

<http://members.aol.com/masmemb/index.html>  
*Note: New WEB page address as of June 1998*

**The Milwaukee Astronomical Society**

2933 N.68th Street  
 Milwaukee, WI. 53210-1208

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**Inside**

- \*Message from the New President
- \*MAS Family Picnic, July 18th
- \*Forthcoming Graze Trip, Sept. 12th
- \* Alcon '98, July 21- 25, French Lick, IN.

