



The Newsletter of the Milwaukee Astronomical Society

September 1999

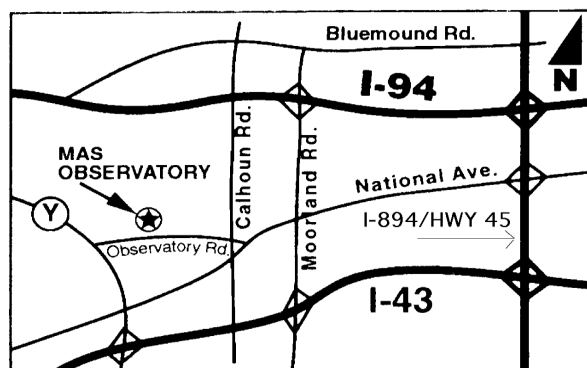
Upgrading Our Observatory *A Message from the MAS President*

Many projects have been discussed over the last year and I think it's a good idea to bring you up to date.

The new building project - The early plans for replacing the Quonset hut indicated that it would be possible to do this project mostly with sweat equity and purchased materials. However, the more work the construction committee did to finalize the plans, the more changes were found necessary to satisfy local construction laws. The primary problem was in the fact that more than 50% of the building was being rebuilt (The observatory was to stay the same.) This meant that all of the building and grounds had to be updated to current standards and would require major changes. This quickly caused costs to go beyond reason considering that the primary function of the Quonset hut was for lectures and monthly meetings in the summer.

The committee has recommended that we continue to use the hut as long as it can be used safely. (Some floor work will need to be done.) After that the hut will be demolished and be replaced with a small telescope storage area and warm-up room. Alternate ideas for the long term are being discussed, including the possibility of an out-door lecture area for under-the-stars type presentations. In any event, the decision has been made not to spend a lot of money on a lecture hall. Instead we will continue to expand the equipment capability and use-ability of the site for both serious and casual astronomy.

The Yard Scope - This is the project to build a roll-of-roof observatory and acquire a suitable telescope, to be accessible to any member that is willing to buy a yard key (Two Dollars) and get trained in how to use the telescope. This will dramatically improve the accessibility of the site to our members and, I hope, will inspire many new amateur astronomers to develop their capabilities. The original idea was to use a simple Dobsonian, but the more people I talked to about the



MAS Monthly Meetings resume on Friday, Sept. 17 at 8:00 PM.

Another season for all Amateur Astronomers is upon us and it promises to be an even more interesting year. Our general membership meeting will be held per the above time at the MAS observatory (see map inset). Featured talks will be **Gerry Samolyk speaking on experiences in photographing the 1999 eclipse in Europe. Additionally, Scott Jamieson will discuss the Status of MAS CCD imaging and potential new directions for the club.** Gerry is our Observatory Director and Scott is President. Both talks should be of interest to all, so plan on attending.

There will be a MAS Board meeting preceding the general meeting at 7:00 PM. Some major purchases and plans will be discussed. Hence, all Board members are requested to be there for some important decisions. In the event you cannot attend, please advise the President at the phone number listed on the back page..

Membership Renewal Time !

Membership Chairperson, Julie Frey has done a yeoman's job of reducing membership renewal to circling a few items on a postcard and writing a check. There is no need to set the application aside for further study at a later date. You'll also save us a lot of hassle with late renewals!

*Membership Renewal time is
the Month of
September*

President's Message Continued from Page 1

Cassegrain telescope donated to the club by Mrs. Ceola years ago. The scope is a 10-inch, F/14 (See picture) and has electric slow motions on both axes. I have tested this scope and find that it is very good optically and built like a tank mechanically. It should be an excellent scope for general use and should really shine on planetary work. With the drives, it should also be good for photography and even has it's own 3 inch guide refractor.

The observatory design is now underway and should be presented to the board at the September meeting. Since this is being done primarily for the non-key holders, we would really appreciate any ideas you have on how to maximize its usefulness.

New CCD Imager -

The amount of activity on the clubs' ST-6 camera has been fantastic! It has become necessary to get to the observatory before sunset to get the camera and so far 12 people have been trained and have used the camera. Our editor, Rudy Poklar has designed and built a roll-around computer desk/imaging station that works very well. (See picture) and some astounding pictures have been made (See astro-picture pages 3 & 4), including Paul Borchardt's image of the columns of the Eagle-Nebula (M16) We are now reaching 19th and 20th magnitude on a dark night and 17th on a moon lit night! Three members are making regular variable star measurements that could lead to published papers. All this from a heavily light polluted site!

It has become obvious that, in order to break the congestion and take advantage of the new enthusiasm that has been generated, we need to acquire a new CCD camera. Our intention was to get another ST-6, but advancement continues and SBIG has come out with a new camera called the ST-9. This camera has similar characteristics to the ST-6 (Large pixels etc.) that have made it so useful for our long focus telescopes, but has a much larger detector for a wider field of view and has been enhanced to make it roughly 5 times more sensitive overall and 10 times more sensitive in the blue portion of the spectrum. These cameras are quite expensive but the money is available and the final decision will be made by the board on Sept. 17. This meeting will be right before the usual club meeting at the observatory, so feel free to sit in.

Finally, I would like to comment on **Z-scope**. To many people, this large telescope has been a white elephant for years. Thanks to a few people that have worked very hard in the last couple of years, it is now very easy to use (With training!) and is being used regularly. On a recent all night session on a Saturday night, I was able to view 29 M-objects, 12 NGC-objects, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus and Neptune! Tests with the recently acquired Focal Reducer have been successful and the scope is able to operate at F/7.5 for CCD imaging. Progress is great fun!

-Scott Jamieson, MAS President

MAS Fall Campout at Greenbush on Oct. 8 & 9

Yes folks, that campout time of year is almost here once again! So mark your calendar for the second weekend in October and start looking for all that camping gear you haven't seen since last October. Once again, we'll journey to the northern unit of the Kettle Moraine State Forest and pitch our tents at Greenbush Group Campground, sites #3 & #4. Hopefully we'll also be using our scopes from these sites too! But clear skies or not, I know that this campout should be a fun time for all, like in years past.

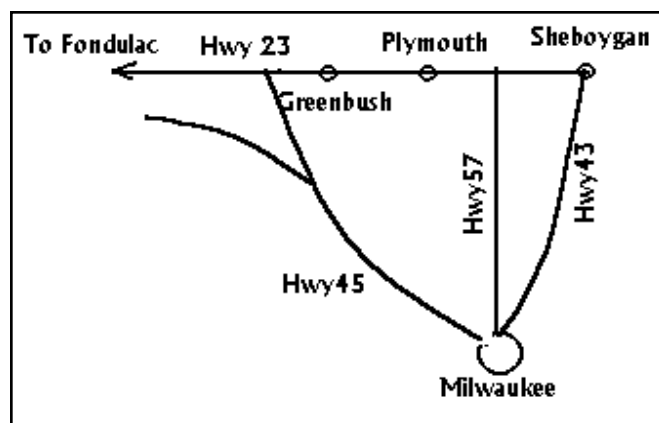
The fall colors should be in full swing and there's added bonus this year. Saturday night is the peak of the Draconids meteor shower and new moon. The club has paid camping fees, so all you need is a state park vehicle sticker (which can be purchased at a daily or annual rate in the park).

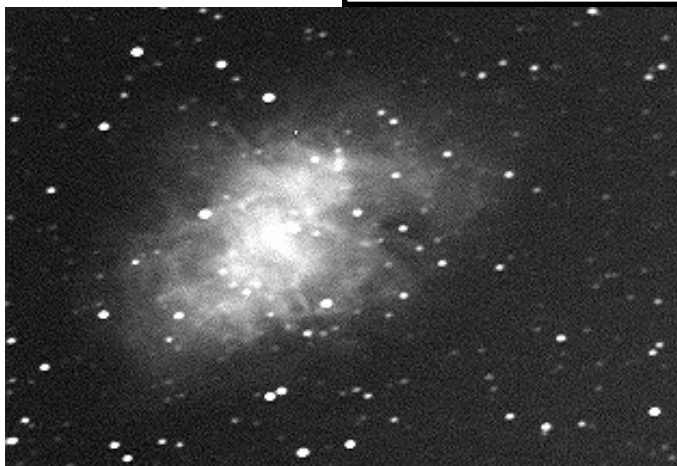
Remember you don't have to "campout" to be part of the fun, Milwaukee is just an hour drive away, so you could drive up for the evening, return home that night. What? You say that you don't own a telescope. That's no problem either, there will be several scopes brought up for every one to use including the M.A.S. 18" Dobsonian and my own 12" ballscope. Lastly there is always the campfire camaraderie. Firewood is something that any one coming up can bring along. If a few people bring a little each, we'll have a good fire to warm up by during the night.

Family and friends are also great to bring along, you don't need to be a member of the club to participate in this weekend, and I've yet to see the two sites not have enough room for a few more tents.

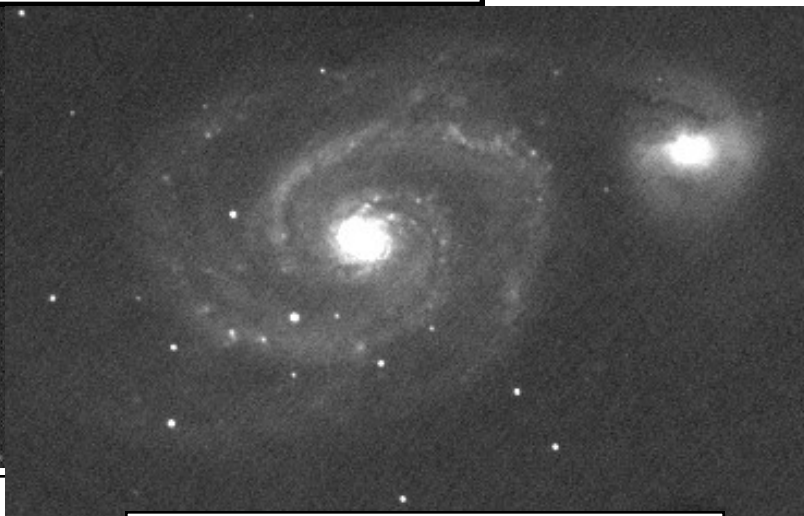
Any questions? If you need a map or instructions on how to get there, you can contact me, by phone at 781-0169 or e-mail pjb924@aol.com. Hope to see you there under clear skies!

-Paul Borchardt

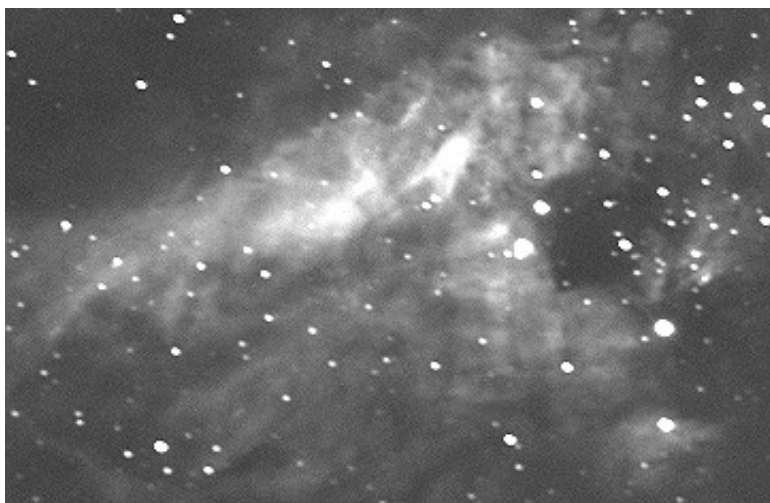




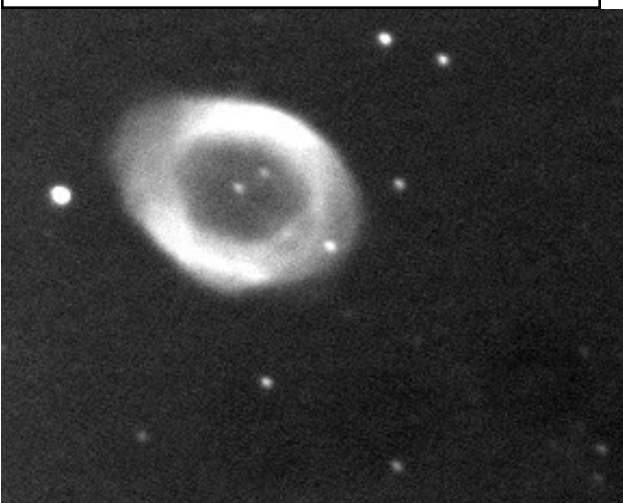
M1 Crab Nebula taken by Vern Hoag



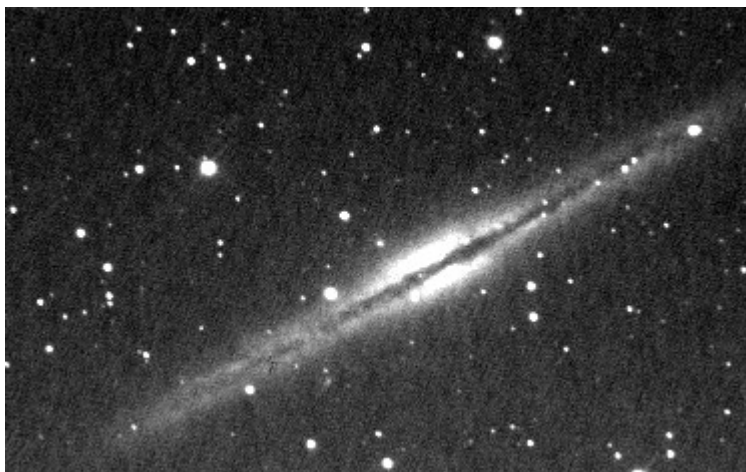
M51 by Paul Borchardt



M17, the Omega Nebula taken by Paul Borchardt (ST6, A Scope)



M57, the Ring Nebula in Lyra, taken by Chris Hesseltine using his own ST5 imager on A Scope



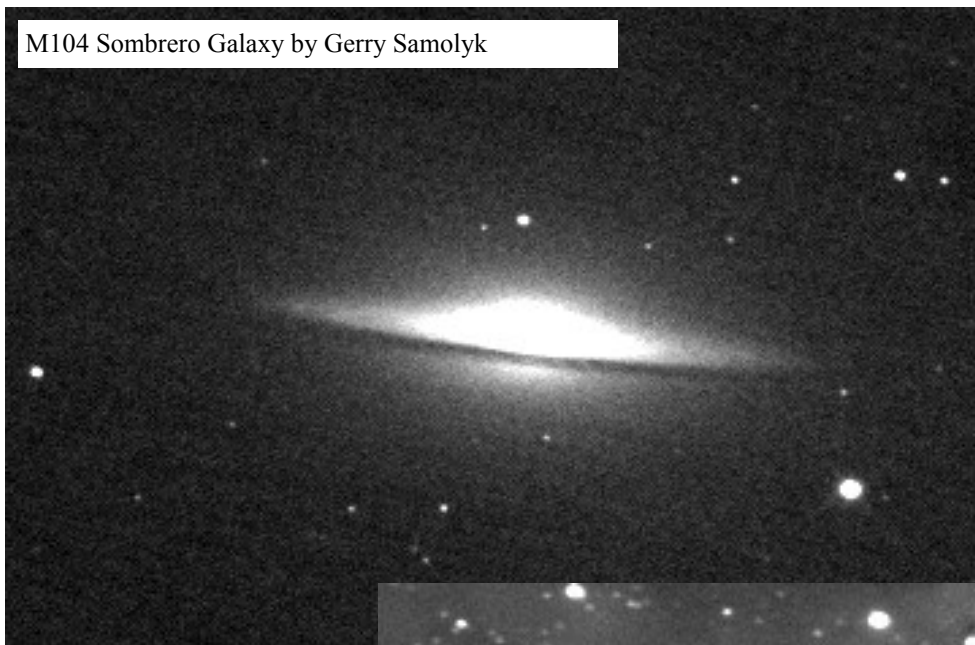
NGC 891, Looking at a Galaxy edge-on by Paul Borchardt



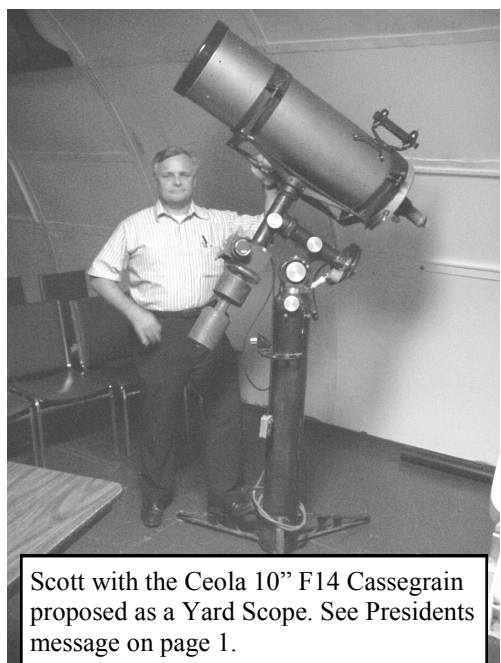
A partial Lunar landscape by Carlos Garcia (ST6, A-Scope)

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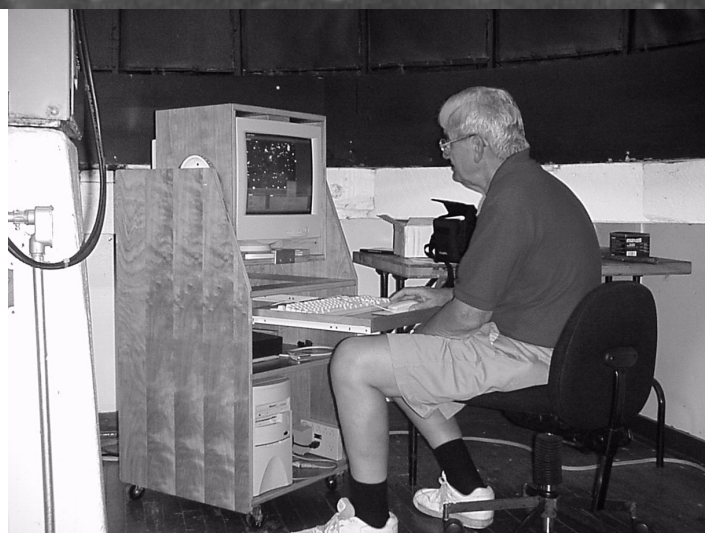
M104 Sombrero Galaxy by Gerry Samolyk



M16, Eagle Nebula (right)
by Paul Borchardt



Scott with the Ceola 10" F14 Cassegrain
proposed as a Yard Scope. See Presidents
message on page 1.



Custom made CCD electronic/computer cart in A scope. Photo also
shows a lowly Editor can master the rudiments of CCD imaging.
See President's comments on CCD imaging, page 1

Annual Picnic a Success

The MAS Picnic on July 17th was another excellent event. Boy, did the weather ever turn out nice. The rain earlier in the day undoubtedly spooked some people from attending...and that was unfortunate. The rain stopped for the picnic festivities and then the skies cleared for some evening observing.

Some members enjoyed a round of Croquet and/or Badminton ...and a few adult sized "kids" had fun making giant bubbles with the real little kids present.

A fine cooked meal was prepared by Chris Weber and Vern Hoag and a lot of good side dishes set out by Helen Yanko and Jill Roberts.

There were a lot of excellent door prizes due to generous donors. In fact the ratio of prizes to attendees was high enough that every one present had a very good shot at a major prize. Some of the generous donors include,

Edmond Scientific
Sky and Telescope
Orion Telescope Center
Jim's Mobile Inc.
Meade Telescopes
Lumicon Corp.
Mag1 Instruments
Helen Yanko

Many of the donors were generous with multiple prizes. Long time MAS member Peter Smitka (of Portaball fame) stopped by and donated a Rigel one power finder.

Our sincere thanks to the donors.

The evening brought clear skies and viewing of Planets and Messier objects took place

Once again, I want to thank Chris Weber, Vern Hoag, Jill Roberts, Helen Yanko. also thanks to all those who stopped by to renew old acquaintances.

Dan Yanko

Eds Note:

We had a superb picnic thanks to Dan. A real surprise this year was the bountiful supply of excellent door prizes all of which were worth being there for ...not to mention the fun of socializing with each other. Thanks you Dan!

MAS Library News

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1, The Facts on File Dictionary of Astronomy- Edited by Valerie Illingsworth, 3rd Ed.. 1994. A resource in, of, and on astronomy, (recommended by D. Kube).

2. Blind Watchers of the Sky; The People and Ideas that Shaped our View of the Universe - by Rocky Kolb - 1996. Experience the evolution of the of the understanding of our "world", - the universe, and our knowledge of its origin, and its future evolution cosmology.

3. Billions & Billions; Thoughts on Life and Death at the Brink of the Millennium- by Carl Sagan- 1997. C. S.'s final book:thoughts, philosophies, and hopes for the present and future of humanity.

****Kalmbach—Astronomy Calendars** are available at any meeting for \$7.00 to MAS members.

-Scott Laskowski, MAS Librarian

Observatory Cleanup Session

Saturday Sept. 25th

10:00 AM to 4:00 PM

Work will include general cleanup,

Painting,

etc.

Come for all or part of the work session.

Lunch fixings will on the house

MAS Officers/ Staff

President	Scott Jamieson	896-0119
Vice President	Lee Keith	425-2331
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

MAS Open House: Sep 24; Oct 1

MAS Observatory Fall Cleanup: Sept. 25, 10:00AM to 4:00 PM
Greenbush (North Kettle Moraine) Campout Oct. 8 & 9

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**Sept.**

4	Chris Hesseltine	482-4515
11	Vern Hoag	548-9130
18	Tim Hoff	662-2212
25	Scott Jamieson	896-0119

October

2	Lee Keith	425-2331
9	Dan Koehler	662-2987
16	Scott Laskowski	421-3517
23	Rudy Poklar	786-8931
30	Jill Roberts	427-4495

** If members want to be assured of observatory access on a given Saturday nite, they should call the keyholder ahead of time.*

PLEASE NOTE: The above keyholder list reflects additions and deletions to previous lists. Please discard any prior list.

MAS Observatory 542-9071

The Milwaukee Astronomical Society

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

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***Speakers include:**

-Photographing the 1999 Eclipse - Gerry Samolyk

- New Directions in CCD Imaging - Scott Jamieson

*** MAS Open houses, Sept. 24, Oct. 1**

*** Observatory Cleanup, Sept. 25th**

*** September is membership renewal time**

