



# Focal Point



February, 2013

## The February Membership Meeting

The next General Membership Meeting of the MAS will be held on Friday, **February 15<sup>th</sup>**, at UWM, Physics building, at 1900 E Kenwood Bld. (parking available in the Science Parking Lot.). The room 133 is located next to the Manfred Olson Planetarium entrance. The meeting will start at 8:00 PM, immediately following the Board Meeting.

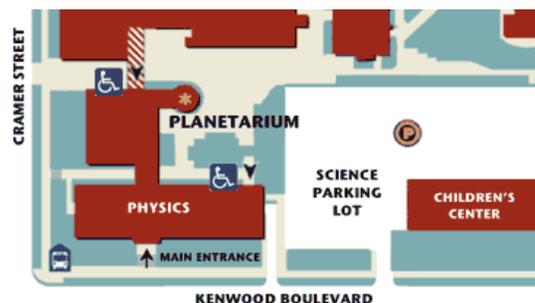
The Meeting will be comprised of two parts, the typically 10-15 minutes long business meeting part followed by a planetarium presentation. For the second part we will move over to the Manfred Olson Planetarium. The program will be the "Birth of the Universe", the more technical version of the regular Friday night planetarium show, adjusted specifically for MAS membership. It will describe what we know about the beginning of the cosmos. The main focus of the program will be to present the evidence we have for the Big Bang theory, such as the cosmic microwave background radiation which

is omnipresent throughout the universe, and the motion of galaxies which seem to be flying away from us. We will also have the opportunity to enjoy several winter constellations such as Pegasus and Orion projected on the dome.



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The winter meetings of the MAS from January through April will be held at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Physics building located at the corner of Kenwood and Cramer. Starting from May the meetings will return to the MAS Observatory in New Berlin.

## Treasurer's Report

Payments of utility bills, Christmas Party, Zurich Insurance, and City of New Berlin fire protection fees totaled \$1448.18.

The income from donations, membership dues, donation box receipts, and Christmas Party collections was \$495.00.

Currently the checking account balance is at \$5815.88. The Albrecht fund is 8214.22.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Neil Simmons, Treasurer

## Classified

A 14" Celestron Schmidt-Cassegrain optical tube with 2 telrads is for sale. 12 years old, in good condition. Eyepieces are not included. Asking \$2500 or a serious offer. If interested please call Robert Callanan at 847-839-3115.



## Meeting Minutes

**Held** on January 18<sup>st</sup> at the UWM, Milwaukee.

The meeting was called to order at 8:01 PM by Vice President, Brian Ganiere.

**Minutes** of the November 16<sup>th</sup> General Meeting, was read and approved.

The **Treasurer's Report** was read by Treasurer, Neil Simmons. Copy attached.

**Observatory Director's Report** the replaced focuser of the B-scope was adjusted by Scott and now fully operational. It can be used with DSLR cameras at prime focus.

There was no **Correspondence**

**Old Business** - Russell installed the student version of the Starry Night planetary software to the computer in the quonset hut.

**New Business** - Sue will distribute a suggested plan for the 2013 Public Night for discussion.

**The Program** MAS member Scott Jamieson gave a presentation about the 2012 Convention of Amateur Telescope Makers he attended at Stellafane, VT.



The next General Membership Meeting will be held on February 15<sup>th</sup>, at UWM

The meeting was adjourned at 9:03 PM

Respectfully Submitted,  
Agnes Keszler, Secretary

## In the Astronomical News

### Jupiter Explosion Spotted by Amateur Astronomers

In September 2012 U.S. amateur astronomers spotted a bright light squiggling across the upper cloud deck of Jupiter. Both assumed they'd witnessed a large meteor or comet impact, and so far, professional astronomers seem to agree.

NASA's Amy Simon Miller, though, cautioned that, "at this point, we can only confirm based on the fact that there were two independent reports." Official observations will have to wait.

Such a strike would be the fourth impact seen on Jupiter in just the last three years. And the fact that the explosion was visible via backyard

telescopes more than 454 million miles (730 million kilometers) away—indicates it was probably a significant event.

"Although we don't yet know the size or exact nature of the impactor, based on the flash brightness we expect it is slightly bigger and energetic than the one seen in 2010, which was estimated to be on the order of 10 meters [33 feet] in size," said Miller, chief of the planetary systems laboratory at Goddard Spaceflight Center in Maryland. "By contrast, the impactor in 2009 was likely 200 to 500 meters [660 to 1,600 feet]."

Amateur astronomer Dan Peterson, in Racine, Wisconsin, watched the Jupiter impact live while peering through a 12-inch telescope. Later, his counterpart to the south—George Hall of Dallas, Texas—realized he'd accidentally caught the flash on video, thanks to a webcam-telescope link.

Searching for a signature—dark markings on Jupiter's cloud tops—is what astronomers should do next, NASA's Miller said. "An impact

superheats the immediate atmosphere and will essentially produce soot," she said.

Only if such stains are spotted will heavy-duty telescopes be enlisted to confirm the Jupiter blast, she said. "Professional telescopes and Hubble are typically very oversubscribed and won't be called into action unless a debris

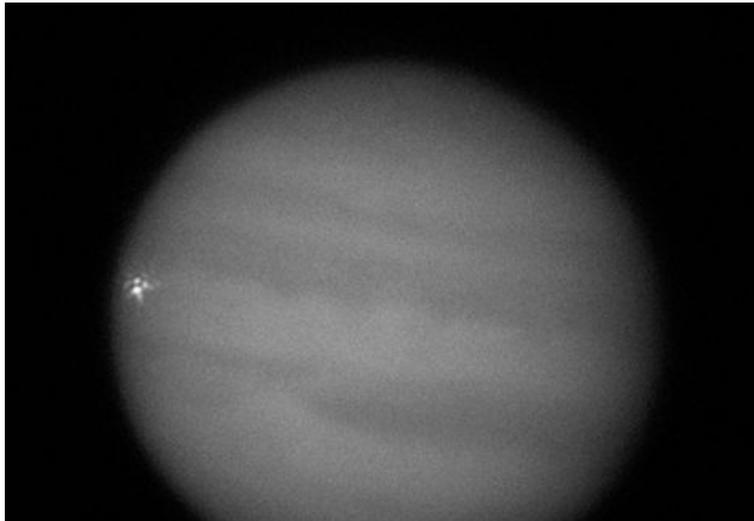
field is confirmed first by amateurs."

Before the recent rash of Jovian collisions, it was thought that Jupiter impacts were rare cosmic events—with the 1994 death of comet Shoemaker-Levy 9 a spectacular exception. That impactor consisted of at least 21

fragments, some as wide as 1.3 miles (2 kilometers), according to NASA. Now astronomers have begun to think the impacts are in fact fairly common.

On Jupiter "very small events are probably quite frequent," Miller said, though many would occur on the half of the planet we can't see. "In fact, they probably happen up to once a week, but some would be too small to even make a flash."

With more tech-savvy amateurs like Peterson and Hall monitoring Jupiter on a regular basis, she said, scientists hope to get a better grip on the number of meteors floating in Jupiter's vicinity—one grainy video at a time. "The impacts in 2009 and then 2010 showed that there were very many smaller objects out near Jupiter with the potential to impact," Miller said. "At that point we expected that many more sightings would occur," she added, "so this new one confirms our hypothesis."



The bright flash - captured on amateur video - lasted two seconds

## Adopt a Telescope Program - Signup Sheet

	<b>Adoptee</b>	<b>Scope</b>	<b>Location</b>
<b>1</b>	Sue Timlin	18" F/4.5 Obsession	Wiesen Observatory
<b>2</b>	Neil Simmons	12.5" F/7.4 Buckstaff	B Dome
<b>3</b>	Russell Chabot	12.5" F/9 Halbach	A Dome (Armfield)
<b>4</b>	Dan Yanko	18" F/4.5 Obsession (Kyle Baron)	Albrecht Observatory
<b>5</b>	Tamas Kriska	25" F/15 Zemlock	Z Dome
<b>6</b>	Henry Gerner	12" LX 200	Tagney Observatory
<b>7</b>	Jeffrey Fillian	14" Z-Two scope	Ray Zit Observatory
<b>8</b>	Kevin & John McCarthy	10" LX 200	Jim Toeller Observatory

### At Your Service

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Webmaster	Robert Burgess	920-559-7472

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Michael Smiley	262-825-3981
Sue Timlin	414-460-4886
Dan Yanko	262-255-3482

#### February/March Key Holders

2/16	Tim Hoff	262-662-2212
2/23	Scott Jamieson	262-592-3049
3/2	Lee Keith	414-425-2331
3/9	Tamas Kriska	414-475-6267
3/16	Scott Laskowski	414-421-3517
3/23	Jill Roberts	414-587-9422



### MAS Observatory

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[www.milwaukeeastro.org](http://www.milwaukeeastro.org)