

FOCAL POINT



Issued by the

MILWAUKEE ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY

- : NOVEMBER, 1986 : -

CALENDAR:

- Sun., Nov. 16 - Full Beaver Moon.
- Mon., Nov. 17 - Board meeting (Virgil Tangney).
- Thu., Nov. 20 - Indian Summer ends.
- Fri., Nov. 21 - Nov. Program-Meeting - 8 P.M., AT CATC.
- Thu., Nov. 27 - Thanksgiving Day.
- Wed., Dec. 3 - December "FOCAL POINT" deadline.
- Wed., Dec. 3 - Observatory gathering - 7:30 P.M. All welcome, especially new members.
- Saturdays - Observatory maintenance and improvement. Help wanted Call 475-9418 or 258-5626.
- Sat. Nights - Member's night at the observatory. See keyholder list on last page.

DOES THIS SOUND FAMILIAR? (By Peter Smitka)

You say you've had this interest in astronomy for some time now, but lately you've been acting strangely? You can't wait to get to your mailbox each day, hoping the latest issue of Sky & Telescope or Astronomy has arrived so that you can devour it cover to cover, especially the ads? And you find yourself heading towards New Berlin almost unconsciously each Saturday night? And you've been to a star party or six ... and, yes, even to AstroFest (that's when the drooling really began!).

Yup, you've got it friend...all the classic symptoms of Telescope Fever! You know you need the cure, and BAD, but what's the right treatment? Should you visit Dr. Dob, get an Achromatic Infusion, or follow the Binocular Diet Plan? Or should you consider joining TM's Anonymous, or maybe simply adopt a Cat? Decisions, decisions...

Well Bunkie, before you dash off to the corner scope pusher and find yourself the owner of a T.V. Benny combination Deep Space Spyglass/Microwave VCR (complete with free roller skates), plan to attend our November meeting. Member Peter Smitka will help you select the right treatment with a discussion entitled "Build or Buy - Which and Why". He promises to help you get the right "fix" for your case of Telescope Fever. But he warns us that, while Telescope Fever is controllable, if treated properly, it's never cured!

WHEN: Friday, November 21, 8 P.M.

WHERE: The Child and Adolescent Treatment Center (CATC) auditorium, 9501 W. Watertown Plank Rd., Wauwatosa. The Rt. 71 bus stops nearby. There is ample free, lighted, parking. Location map on next page.



ASTROFEST 1986: (By Gerry Samolyk)

The MAS was well represented at the 1986 Midwest Telescope Conference - "Astrofest" - held at Camp Shaw-wa-nas-see near Kankakee, Il. Sept. 5-7. Among the over 280 delegates from across the U.S. and Canada were MAS members Lance Appel, Richard Berry, Harvey & Sharon Herman, Dan Koehler, George Kutner, Matt and Mark McNeeley, Frank Roldan, Peter and Jan Smitka, Jim Toeller, Sally Jo Trummer, and Dr. Richard Wiesen.

At least 60 telescopes were on display, 24 of which were judged by a panel of experts in 10 categories for use of materials, design, workmanship, and portability, among others. A 17.5-inch Newtonian Dobsonian designed by MAS member John Wiesen and built by him and President Dan Koehler captured the "Overall Workmanship" award this year. Dr. Richard Wiesen also displayed John's "re-built" 12-inch Dobsonian "quick and portable" telescope during the competition. MAS members have received awards for amateur-built instruments in at least six of the past eight competitions at Astrofest since 1979.

NEW MEMBERS to be introduced at the November meeting are John Conover, Elm Grove; Tom Gill, Wauwatosa; Sr. Carol Ann Grandlich, Milwaukee; William Hoffmann, Brown Deer; and William Wilson, Dousman.

OBSERVATORY NEWS: We now have a set of planetary filters. The 26" 'scope needs counterweight balancing to make the drive effective. Lee Keith is mounting finders on the Portascopes. Four are done. Please don't bump the finders when moving the telescopes! Bill Albrecht has donated a new patrol camera finder to replace the one which was stolen. Many thanks, Bill. The A-dome has been sandblasted and repainted.

JOHN ASZTALOS needs volunteers for the Light Pollution Committee he leads.

Light pollution, the bug-a-boo of astronomers everywhere, is growing worse each year as more and more unshielded bright lights (many of them a waste of energy and useless) turn night into day.

While MAS members John Asztalos and Richard Berry, Dr. David Crawford of Kit Peak National Observatory, et al, cannot control light pollution, which is akin to bailing out an ocean with a sieve, they can, through enlightenment and appeal to good sense, do something to curb this nuisance. Volunteers should call John at 258-5626.

HERSCHEL/MESSIER CLUB ANNUAL REPORT - I am happy to announce that the Messier Club has a total of 36 active members, many of them are from out of state. Of the 36, 3 are on the verge of getting their certificates and 2 more are over half completed. Instruments used range from binoculars to 4 inch SCT's to 8 and 10" reflectors. A few are even using the Observatory's Portascopes with the new finders and having good luck with them (when the full moon is not present!). There are no known Herschel Club members in Iowa, there must be somebody out there trying; call Lee Keith if you are considering it.

New Messier Club members can get the MAS's (MESSIER CLUB OBSERVER'S HANDBOOK) free of charge by sending a SASE with \$0.66 postage to Lee Keith, 1239B E Randolph Ct., Milwaukee, WI 53212. All members should also plan on attending the Amateur Astronomer's Series held at the observatory in the spring. There you can learn good observational techniques to find those dim fuzzies in the sky! They are geared toward the novice, so don't be afraid of not knowing much about astronomy, you won't be alone! Everyone must start sometime.

HAVE YOU GOT PROBLEMS?? STILL CAN'T FIND A CLUSTER OF 100,000 STARS?? There has been interest shown from some members for special observational "tutoring" given at the observatory or AT YOUR HOME by appointment. How does that sound? The details have not been worked out, but if you would like someone to be your personal astronomical "tutor", call Lee at 961-8752 after 7pm. If there is anyone else out there that would like to be a "tutor", call me also. I need to see some interest from members in order to pursue this, so please call soon! Be ready for M42, the "Great Orion Nebula" (By Lee Keith).

NICK NICHOLS has volunteered to act as Special Observatory Activities Scheduler. He will be responsible for determining dates for special events at our New Berlin observatory such as tours and special programs for Scouts, church, and other groups interested in astronomy and what we do. Call Nick at 542-2055 for times available.

While the observatory is active the year round, most special and public events take place from mid-spring through mid-fall owing to the extremes of Wisconsin's climate. While the Quonset building is heated, the scope domes are not, and access to parking and buildings can be difficult owing to deep snow and bitter cold. Visitors and members planning to use MAS facilities in winter must dress very warmly.

"NORTHERN LIGHTS," The North Central Regional quarterly newsletter now enjoyed by all MAS members, will soon publish its December issue. The deadline is November 28. If you have any newsy astronomical items to contribute, please write James Fox, 14601 55th St. South, Afton, MN 55001.

WANTED: A librarian to take charge of the Society's library at the observatory.

All members are welcome to use the library. Simply sign out the book(s) of your choice and make an entry in the office log. Please return them as soon as possible.

WANTED: Completed MAS membership surveys. Please take a minute or two to fill in the survey you received in September. Return it to Pres. Dan Koehler, W248 S7040 Sugar Maple Dr., Waukesha, 53186. (662-2987).

WANTED: MAS membership dues. Please remit as soon as possible to continue the many benefits of your MAS membership. The dues statement you received in September lists your applicable amount.

FOR SALE: Periodical subscriptions. You may order subscriptions to the following publications at reduced rates through your Society.

Astronomy Magazine - \$14/yr.

Deep Sky (Quarterly) - \$10/yr.

Odyssey (great for youngsters) - \$10/yr.

Telescope Making (Quarterly) - \$10/yr.

1987 RASC (Canadian) Observer's Handbook (Available in Jan. 1987) - \$7/copy.

Any of the above items would make a great Christmas gift!

Make checks for dues or periodicals payable to the Milwaukee Astronomical Society and remit to James Toeller, 407 W. Mall Rd., Milwaukee, Wis. 53217. (352-7144).

WANTED: Items of interest pertaining to the history of the Milwaukee Astronomical Society.

Society historian Sally Waraczynski is putting together the many pictures, newspaper clippings, newsletters, biographies, etc. that tell about your Society's past.

Please forward what you have to Sally at 3725 S. 71st St., Milwaukee, Wis. 53220 (321-0918).

MEMBERS NIGHT KEYHOLDERS:

Nov. 15 - C. Hesselstine	482-4515	Dec. 6 - N. Nichols	542-2055
22 - L. Keith	962-1428	13 - A. Penikis	354-9708
29 - D. Koehler	662-2987	20 - J. Pfannerstill	475-6494

Members wishing to use the observatory on a particular Saturday evening WILL CONTACT THE KEYHOLDER BY TELEPHONE NO LATER THAN THE FRIDAY BEFORE THAT SATURDAY EVENING, to schedule observing or instruction time. The member should inform the keyholder of his/her intentions and equipment requirements at that time to avoid conflicts of usage. Members should contact the keyholder as early as possible.

Please reread your copy of the SOCIETY MEMORANDUM ON "MEMBER'S NIGHTS" RESPONSIBILITIES.

DIRECTORY:

Pres. - D. Koehler, 662-2987

V. P. - Dr. R. Wiesen, 781-4757

Sec. - Ms. K. Wesener, 961-8752

Treas. - J. Toeller, 352-7144

Obs. Dir. - G. Samolyk, 475-9418

Asst. Obs. Dir. - J. Asztalos, 258-5626

Special Obs. Activities Scheduler - N. Nichols, 542-2055

FOCAL POINT Ed. - L. Simandl, 933-3052

Program Chair - M. McNeeley, 354-5347

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

DECEMBER FOCAL POINT DEADLINE - WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 3.