Focal Point

March, 2013

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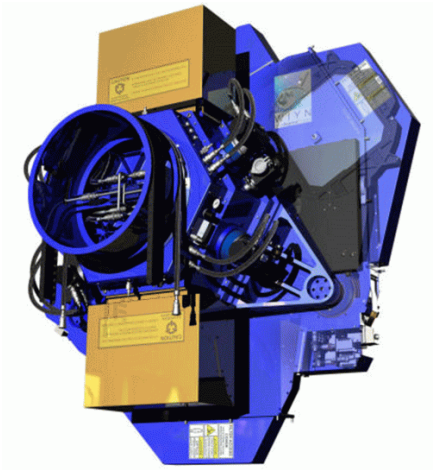
The March Membership Meeting

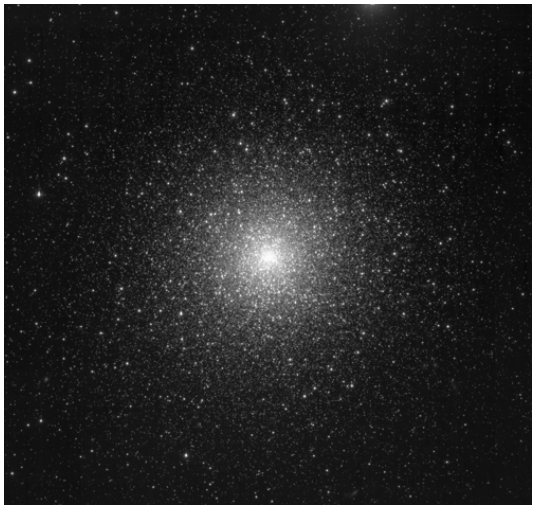
The next General Membership Meeting of the MAS will be held on Friday, **March 15th,** at UWM, Physics building, at 1900 E Kenwood Bld. (parking available in the Science Parking Lot.). The room 133 is located next to the Manfred Olson Planetarium entrance. The meeting will start at 8:00 PM, immediately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

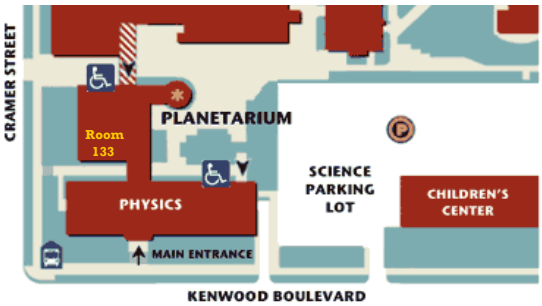
The speaker of the night will be **Dr. Ralf Kotulla** from the Center for Gravitation and Cosmology, Department of Physics at UWM.

Abstract: The One Degree Imager is the new flagship instrument on the WIYN telescope, part of the Kitt Peak National Observatory west of Tucson, AZ. It's large field-of-view combined with the exceptional image quality delivered by WIYN make it a one of the prime imaging cameras of any of the ground-based telescopes. After a short introduction to Kitt Peak and WIYN I will offer some behind-the-scenes views into the commissioning of this instruments, highlighting its novel detector architecture and some very first results.



The One Degree Imager (above) and an image of M15 globular cluster (below) taken with it





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 WE Energies bill, Department of Financial Institutions, and Jill Roberts' returned key deposit totaled $111.19.

The income from Boy Scout tour donation was $50.00.

Currently the checking account balance is at $5754.69. The Albrecht fund balance as of January 13 is 8214.22.

Respectfully Submitted,

Neil Simmons, Treasurer

Astronomical Event

The Rochester Astronomy Club welcomes you to the 2013 North Central Region of the Astronomical League's annual conference. The 2013 conference will be held in Rochester, Minnesota on April 12th and 13th.

We hope you'll join us this spring to share knowledge and passion for the night skies and to support amateur astronomy. We have a full schedule of speakers and events focused around our conference theme "Seeing Is Believing!".

The conference will be at the Kahler Grand Hotel in downtown Rochester, which hosts over 100 major conventions each year. Our club members will be eager to assist you during your stay and look forward to your camaraderie.

Meeting Minutes

Held on February 15st at the UWM, Milwaukee.

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

Minutes of the January 18th General Meeting, was read and approved.

The **Treasurer's Report** was submitted by Treasurer, Neil Simmons and read by the Vice President. Copy attached.

Observatory Director's Report gave an update on a use of the snow blower.

Old Business - Russell Chabot mentioned that he would run classes about Night Sky during the summer. Sue talked about the Public Nights that will start soon. It is essential to find speakers.

New Business - Russell Chabot moved to accept a family membership application of Jamie Victor and Neil Stickel.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:15 PM

The Program For the second part we moved over to the Manfred Olson Planetarium. The regular Friday night planetarium show, the "Birth of the Universe", was presented in the more technical variation, adjusted specifically for MAS membership.

Respectfully Submitted,

Agnes Keszler, Secretary

Astronomical Event

Wisconsin Observers Weekend June 6-9, 2013

One of the biggest highlights of the year for amateur astronomers and their families is the Wisconsin Observers Weekend (WOW), hosted by NEWSTAR. Amateur astronomers from all over the mid-west enjoy three days of summer camping and observing at Hartman Creek State Park just west of Waupaca Wisconsin. Whether or not you own a telescope or are a seasoned observer you will enjoy what WOW has to offer.

Hartman Creek State Park is 1,500 acres of post-glacial beauty located about 30 miles northwest of Oshkosh on the upper Waupaca Chain-O-Lakes. Visitors can enjoy camping swimming, hiking, biking, picnicking, and fishing, amidst the gently rolling woodlands, prairies, lakes and wetlands. Ten miles of hiking trails, including a segment of the National Scenic Ice Age Trail, offer plenty of opportunity to stretch your legs while enjoying numerous wildflowers and abundant bird life. The park also has designated off-road bicycling trails and low-traffic roads surrounding the area provide safe routes for the touring cyclist as well. Hartman Lake has a 300-foot sandy beach and swimming area.

WOW reserves all five-group campsites at Hartman Creek State Park so that your evening observing environment is white light free and as dark as possible for your enjoyment. This is primitive camping – pit toilets and hand water pump only – but hot showers and "flushes" are available in the family campground a short distance down the road. Tent camping sites are plentiful, however there is no parking on the grassy areas, so recreational vehicles or campers may find space tight in the limited parking areas.

Saturday afternoon NEWSTAR hosts an ice cream social for WOW attendees free of charge. Drawing for door prizes will be held at the same time.

Just down the road, the town of Waupaca has all the conveniences and amenities you might need, and hotels are nearby if you do not wish to camp. Although it's only approximately 5 miles away, light pollution from Waupaca has very little impact on Hartman Creek State Park.

Public registration for WOW 2013 is $15 per adult and $3 per child. This fee includes your WOW registration and camping fee. Registration is limited to 150 attendees. **Registration ends May 25th, 2013**. Pre-Registration fees are non-refundable after June 1st, 2013.

You must purchase a state park sticker or daily pass to enter the park (Resident/non-resident, $25/$35 annual sticker, $7/$10 daily pass).

We hope to see you at WOW 2013.

In the Astronomical News

Bright Comet in the Evening Sky

Skywatchers in the northern hemisphere should enjoy a rare treat in the next few weeks, as Comet C/2011 L4 PANSTARRS enters the evening sky. Although the brightness of comets is notoriously difficult to predict, it looks as though this object may even be visible to the naked eye in the second half of March.

Discovered by and named after the Pan-STARRS telescope in Hawaii, the comet was first detected in June 2011, when it was an extremely faint object 1.2 billion km from the Sun. Looking at its path, astronomers soon realized that it could become very bright at its closest approach to the Sun (perihelion) on 10 March this year.

The Astrophotographer Luis Argerich of Buenos Aires, Argentina, took this photo of Comet Pan-STARRS on March 2, 2013.

Like other comets of its type, PANSTARRS is thought to have originated in the Oort Cloud, a vast region containing millions of comets located more than two light years from the Sun. PANSTARRS travelled in towards the inner Solar system for millions of years, dormant for most of this time as a small nucleus made up of rock and ices.

When comets approach the Sun, these ices heat up, eventually turning to gases that jet out into space together with dusty material to form a head or coma around the cometary nucleus. Particles from the Sun (the so-called solar wind) blow the gases back in a straight tail, whilst sunlight exerts a pressure on the dust particles to create a curved tail. The two tails and coma make up the classic comet familiar in so many astronomical images but are not always easy to pick out with the eye.

Encouragingly, PANSTARRS has already been seen by observers in the southern hemisphere before perihelion, with reports that it is roughly as bright as the stars in the Plough and so is visible to the unaided eye. Later this week (by 8 March) the comet should start to be seen from the northern hemisphere, although to begin with it may only be visible through binoculars or a telescope.

By 12 and 13 March, PANSTARRS will be further from the Sun and should be easier to spot. To find it, skywatchers will need a clear sky, ideally be away from the lights of towns and cities and have a good western horizon. After sunset on those dates the comet will be low down in the west and appear as a misty patch not far from the crescent Moon. Using binoculars will make it easier to find and will certainly help identify the tails which should point up from the horizon.

As the days pass, the comet will move away from the Sun and fade and light from the Moon will interfere more. At the same time however, PANSTARRS will be higher up, will be visible later in the night and so be seen in a darker sky. After its brief period of visibility, the comet will travel back out towards the depths of space where it will be only be detected by large telescopes.

UK research astronomers are keen to encourage the public to look at PANSTARRS. Bright comets are fairly rare and we usually don't know when the next one is on the way. Although we have discovered many comets with the telescope, so far this is the only one likely to be seen by eye. Comets can be quite beautiful and for that reason alone it's worth making the effort to see them.

by ScienceDaily

Adopt a Telescope Program - Signup Sheet

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

At Your Service

Officers / Staff

President	Vacant	
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Treasurer	Neil Simmons	262-889-2039
Secretary	Agnes Keszler	414-475-6267
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Asst. Observatory Director	Russell Chabot	414-881-3822
Newsletter Editor	Tamas Kriska	414-475-6267
Webmaster	Robert Burgess	920-559-7472

Board of Directors

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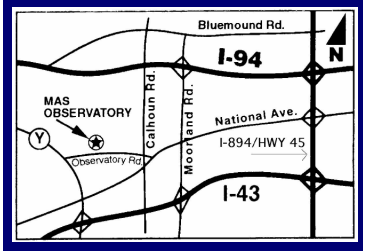
Tamas Kriska	414-475-6267
Neil Simmons	262-889-2039
Michael Smiley	262-825-3981
Sue Timlin	414-460-4886
Dan Yanko	262-255-3482

March/April Key Holders

3/16	Scott Laskowski	414-421-3517
3/23	Tom Schmidtkunz	414-352-1674
3/30	Neil Simmons	262-889-2039
4/6	Dan Yanko	262-255-3482
4/13	Paul Borchardt	262-781-0169
4/20	Russ Chabot	414-881-3822



MAS Observatory

18850 Observatory Rd
New Berlin, WI

www.milwaukeeastro.org