

FOCAL POINT



Issued by the
MILWAUKEE ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY

- : APRIL 1984 : -

CALENDAR:

- * Fri., Apr. 20 - April Program-Meeting, 8 P.M.
- Sun., Apr. 22 - Happy Easter!
- Wed., Apr. 25 - May Focal Point deadline.
- Fri., Apr. 27 - Board of Directors Meeting, 7:30 P.M. at the observatory.
- * Wed., May 2 - First Wednesday, 7:30 P.M., at the observatory.
- * Saturdays - Work parties at the observatory.
- * Sat. Nights - Members nights at the observatory.
- * Please read on for details.

APRIL PROGRAM-MEETING! The luminosity function relates the numbers of stars within a given volume of space to their absolute magnitude, absolute magnitude being defined as the brightness a star would have at a standard distance of 32.6 light years.

The discovery of Cepheid variables with very regular periods in the comparative nearness of the Magellanic Clouds provided a powerful astronomical measuring tool.

Our next program-meeting will feature Dr. Chris Anderson of UW-Madison. His talk "The Luminosity Function in the Large Magellanic Cloud" will acquaint us with the practical application of using a star's light to determine its distance.

WHEN: Friday, April 20, 8 P.M.

WHERE: The UW-Milwaukee Physics Bldg., corner of Kenwood and Cramer, room 133.
Guests are welcome.

MAY ELECTION MEETING: The annual election of MAS Officers and Board Members occurs during the May General meeting.

The terms of Messrs. William Tuerck, John Asztalos, and Donald Grenda expire in May. They may be re-elected or replaced by nominees, volunteers, or recommended members. If you recommend someone, be sure he or she knows about it.

Directors serve three-year terms with a two-term limit. Officers serve for one year with unlimited re-election.

LIM TOELLER will turn his MAS Treasurer duties over to Frank Roldan from April 26 through May 10, 1984

Please call Frank at 344-2354 during this time.

PUBLIC OPEN HOUSES: Following is a preliminary layout. Dates may be subject to change. All open houses are on Friday nights except the one on National Astronomy Day, which is a Saturday.

May 5 - National Astronomy Day
June 1 - The Moon
June 29 - The Planets
July 20 - Deep Sky Objects
Aug. 17 - Deep Sky Objects
Aug. 31 - General Astronomy

Volunteers for parking, guiding, or operating 'scopes are needed for all of these nights. Guests should dress warmly. One dollar per car donations for parking will be appreciated.

The observatory is located west of New Berlin at 18850 W. Observatory Road, 1 mile west of the Calhoun (KX) Road.

ALCON '84: According to Committee Chairperson Dan Koehler, convention registration is proceeding satisfactorily. If you're planning to attend, please register now. You can pick up a convention packet at a meeting to save your Society 85 cents postage. Since the registration price rises in steps as time goes on, you will save money by acting now!

The next Committee meeting will be Wed., May 16 at Carroll College in Waukesha.

OBSERVATORY NEWS:

IN GENERAL:

An inventory of observatory items will soon be taken. Please return ALL equipment, especially eyepieces. No questions will be asked. Check your favorite observing coat(s). It's easy to inadvertently slip an eyepiece into a pocket.

The new focuser for the "A" 'scope is ready for use. Please take good care of it.

Comet Crommelin was recovered at the observatory by Brian Cieslak. Comet Halley was not found.

The next graze is Wed. night, April 25-26, 4:18 A.M., mag. 7.1, 4.0°S cusp., 20% sunlit, and favorable.

Maintenance at the observatory must necessarily proceed at a quick pace if all the fix-up and painting is to be done before the National Convention. Work parties are planned for each Saturday in order to complete the many tasks that must be done. Please call the observatory (542-9071) on the Saturday you plan to be out.

26" TELESCOPE: Gerry Samolyk has picked all of the metal for the telescope tube. He is waiting for the declination shafts and bolts.

Telescope meetings will occur during the Saturday work parties.

FOR SALE: Yellow-green filter, \$400; mirror diagonals, \$8; eyepiece, 8mm RKE, \$20; 35mm camera with Barlow, \$40. All items will fit in an 1½" opening.

Please call Don at 545-2313.

WANTED: 1¼" light pollution filter and a set of 1¼" threaded color filters
Please call Lee Keith at 962-2856.

INTERNATIONAL HALLEY WATCH UPDATE: By Brian Cieslak, MAS IHW Coordinator.

In the last few issues of the FOCAL POINT you've seen a line or two concerning the INTERNATIONAL HALLEY WATCH. Let me take a few seconds to give you an idea of what we're up to and how you can get involved in a major project involving both amateur astronomers and professional astronomers.

We as a society will be contributing observations of the next passage of Halley's comet which will begin late next year. These observations are needed by professional astronomers in their studies of comets, but because of the lack of manpower and funds they are asking amateurs to help out with observations.

The Milwaukee Astronomical Society will be making observations in the following areas:

- 1) Visual observations of coma size and brightness.
- 2) Large field photography of the comet and tail taken through various filters, including darkroom work to separate the dust and gas tails on photographs.
- 3) Narrow field photography. This is the type of photography everyone's familiar with except for one added challenge. The comet moves faster than anything you've probably tracked before and at angles other than east to west.
- 4) Observations of meteor showers associated with Halley's comet (Aquarids and Orionids). We will be doing experiments in visual, photographic, and radio observation of meteors.

We think we've put together an observing program that everyone can contribute to, whether a beginner with binoculars or a seasoned regular at the observatory. Even though Halley's comet won't be visible until late in 1985 we should begin practicing and developing our observing techniques now. A few members have already been out observing Comet Crommelin last February. Thanks to the wonderful Wisconsin weather we missed the passage of Comet Encke.

This is a brief summary of our Comet study activities. Members who are interested in becoming involved in I.H.W. should attend the May observatory meeting. We will be discussing observing techniques and handing out the necessary forms provided by I.H.W. Those who will not be using the observatory for their observations should bring the latitude, longitude, and height above sea level of their intended observing site.

FIRST WEDNESDAY MEETING, May 2, 7:30 P.M. at the observatory, weather permitting.

The purpose of these monthly meetings is to acquaint MAS members, especially the recent joiners and youngsters, with observatory equipment, observing techniques, new programs, or to use the library. Some of the older, experienced members will be on hand to answer questions.

The MAS observatory is located west of New Berlin, on Observatory Road, 1 mile west of the Calhoun (KX) Road.

| <u>METEOR SHOWER</u> | <u>PEAK DATE, TIME, AND RADIANT DIR.</u> | <u>MOON AGE</u> | <u>PEAK RATE/HR.</u> |
|----------------------|--|-----------------|----------------------|
| Lyrids | Sat., Apr. 21, 4 A.M., S | 20d | 10-15 |
| ETA Aquarids | Fri., May 4, 4 A.M., SE | 4d | 10-40 |

Best viewing is between midnight and dawn. Peak rate may occur a day or two before or after maximum. On any normal night, an observer should see from 5 to 10 meteors per hour.

MEMBER'S NIGHT KEYHOLDERS:

| | | | | | |
|---------|-----------------|----------|-------|----------------|----------|
| Apr. 14 | C. Hesseltine | 482-4515 | May 5 | F. Roldan | 344-2354 |
| 21 | P. Murn | 464-1539 | 12 | T. Schmidtkunz | 276-9675 |
| 28 | J. Pfannerstill | 475-6494 | | | |

Saturday night is member's night at the observatory. All members are invited to come out to observe, learn how to use the equipment available, or just chat. Call the keyholder the Fri. before his night - cancel Sat. if necessary. Keyholder should report anyway. He will also oversee tours during the week ending with his assigned night. Mr. J. Toeller (352-7144) will act on requests.

- : FULL PINK MOON, SUNDAY, APRIL 15 : -

DIRECTORY:

President - Peter Smitka - 785-0926
Vice President & Program Chairwoman - Eileen Korenic - 541-3999
Secretary - Brian Ganiere - 425-1384
Treasurer - James Toeller - 352-7144
Observatory Director - Gerry Samolyk - 475-9418
Asst. Obs. Director - John Asztalos - 258-5626
ALCON '84 Chairpersons - Dan Koehler (662-2987), Eileen Korenic (541-3999)
FOCAL POINT Editor - LeRoy Simandl - 933-3052
MAS Observatory - 18850 W. Observatory Rd., New Berlin - 542-9071

MAY FOCAL POINT DEADLINE - WEDNESDAY, APRIL 25, 1984.