

FOCAL



POINT

Issued by the

MILWAUKEE ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY

- : FEBRUARY, 1986 : -

IN MEMORIAM

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JANUARY 28, 1986

MEMORIAL TO THE CHALLENGER CREW

LVAAS "Observer"

CALENDAR:

Mon., Feb. 17 - Board meeting, 7:30 P.M. (P. Smitka).
Fri., Feb. 21 - February Program-Meeting, 8 P.M.
Mon., Feb. 24 - Full Snow Moon.
Wed., Mar. 5 - MARCH "FOCAL POINT" DEADLINE.
Wed., Mar. 5 - First Wednesday meeting at observatory.
Fri., Mar. 21 - March Program-Meeting.
Saturdays - Observatory maintenance and improvement.
Sat. Nights - Members night at the observatory.

During the winter months, check with an observatory director or the keyholder before coming out to the observatory.

FEBRUARY GENERAL PROGRAM-MEETING: Following a short business meeting, Dr. Paul Rybski will be presented as the keynote speaker.

Dr. Rybski is associated with Yerkes Observatory and has presented several interesting talks at our meetings. This time his subject will be "Chemical Evolution of Spiral Galaxies."

Guests are welcome.

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

WHERE: At the Child and Adolescent Treatment Center (CATC) Auditorium, 9501 W. Watertown Plank Rd., Wauwatosa. May be reached by Rt. 71 bus.

APOLLO FUND LIMITED has presented the Milwaukee Astronomical Society with a \$1,000 donation to be used for capital improvements. We can once again thank MAS member Orin Purinton, the president of Apollo Fund Limited, for this generous contribution, one of several over the past few years.

The requirement that these donations be used for new equipment will be and has been realized. In fact, our photo electric photometer was paid in part by previous Apollo Fund Limited contributions.

BOARD MEMBER CANDIDATES NEEDED: The May general meeting is, for the most part, taken up with the election of Society governors.

There will be four board member vacancies. Terms expire for Brian Ganiere, Frank Roldan, Peter Smitka, and John Wiesen. Frank Roldan and John Wiesen are eligible for re-election, so at least two new candidates are needed. Ideally, there should be several candidates for each post.

In addition, officers will be elected by the board. Brian will be temporarily leaving so we'll need a secretary. You do not need to be a board member to become an officer. You may volunteer and submit to approval by the board.

Any MAS member may become a board member. He/she may be re-elected or replaced by nominees, volunteers, or recommended persons who have agreed to run.

Board terms run three years with a two-term limit. Officers serve one year with unlimited re-election.

NEW MEMBERS: Joseph Bainbridge, Milwaukee; Matthew McNeely, wife Bernardine, sons Terry and Marc, daughter Lica, Brown Deer; and Richard Rydz, Milwaukee, are the most recent additions to our roster.

Welcome to the Milwaukee Astronomical Society. Everyone will be introduced at the February meeting.

OBSERVATORY NEWS: Thanks to Nick Nichols for recently plowing the observatory parking lot. Again, make sure the darkroom and washroom doors are CLOSED when you leave. The 26" telescope is semi-useable. Declination and drive parts are finished. The dome shutter is giving trouble, but with luck and help everything should be completed this year.

COMET HALLEY UPDATE: On February 9, Comet Halley will whiz around the sun at a distance of some 54 million miles, at the breakneck speed of 34 miles per second! Sporting a long, gossamery tail, it will make another grand entrance, viewable low in the early morning sky, as it embarks on its long, 38 year journey to a turn-back somewhere at the edge of the solar system.

Milwaukee observers will have to get up an hour and a half before sunrise beginning Feb. 24. As it reappears in the E-SE, Comet Halley will move higher and higher until it reaches best northern viewing during the weeks of Mar. 8-21, Apr. 2-13. You'll need a binocular or low-powered telescope. Best U.S. viewing will be from south Florida, better yet from countries farther south. See P. 150 in Feb., 1986 "Sky & Telescope."

Anyone with extra "Mr. Halley's Comet" guide books should call Dan Koehler (662-2987) or Peter Smitka (785-0926) as soon as possible.

Excellent photos of the comet have been made through MAS observatory instruments.

MINOOKA PARK COMET PARTY: Thousands of people braved the icy-cold temperature and deep, fresh snow to view Comet Halley in the early moonless evening of Jan. 7 at Waukesha's Minooka Park.

The vast crowd, causing a traffic jam, saw the 4th magnitude visitor above and to the right of Jupiter in a crystal clear sky through Society and private instruments, ranging from binoculars to large Dobsonians.

Pres. Dan Koehler represented the MAS through an on-camera interview with Nancy Chandler of TV Channel 6 (WTMJ-TV6). Lee Keith led a large group of binocular viewers in finding Comet Halley.

The three Comet Halley parties sponsored by the MAS have been attended by an estimated 10 to 12 thousand people!

AN EDITORIAL: The past three decades have been exciting as far as amateur astronomy is concerned. First Echo, then the moon walks, the planet fly-bys, and now, Halley's Comet.

Large crowds of people turned out everywhere, even in freezing cold and deep snow to catch a glimpse of a difficult object even for a trained observer, for the adventure and to say "I saw it!"

Many people who bought optical instruments to view Comet Halley were disappointed when they didn't see the glorious glowing object with the gauzy tail shown in old 1910 photos (we all were warned.) But this is a blessing in disguise. All is not lost. The splendors of the sky are still there. Other more spectacular comets, with tails, occasionally appear. According to Rodger Gordon, a prolific, common sense writer for the Lehigh Valley Am. Ast. Society, Inc. "Observer," 1986 will prove a year to remember for all astronomers because the summer skies will abound with all of the planets in favorable opposition or elongation. The more adventurous can try for Uranus and Neptune. The next similar event will occur in mid-2018. There'll even be an annular/total eclipse of the sun in October!

There are lots of things to see out there, so don't put your 'scopes and binocular in the closet with your dusty computer. Do the Herschel or Messier list, time occultations, seek comets, plot variables and binaries. And don't forget our solar system "backyard."

You didn't waste any money if you bought a quality product, only if you don't use it. Every amateur Society has people who will show you how.

FOR SALE: Meade 8" #2080 Schmidt-Cassegrain reflecting telescope with many options. Priced at \$700. Please call George Wucivic, W262-S8610 Oakdale Dr., Mukwonago, Wis. 53149, 662-2361.

FOR SALE: 8" glass mirror kit with pitch for holding and abrasives. Includes 10" x 66" aluminum tube. Priced at \$30. Please contact Ed Bren at 2439 S. 78th St., West Allis, Wis., 53219, 541-2117.

FOR SALE: Meade 8" Schmidt-Cassegrain model 2080 LX with high transmission coating, off axis guider, tripod, wedges, plus many accessories. Priced at \$1500. Please call Lloyd Broehm, 6293 Fleetwood Ct., Greendale, Wis. 53129, 421-2277 or 671-6550.

"NORTHERN LIGHTS," the quarterly received by all MAS members, will soon publish the March issue. Editor James Fox welcomes short, informative astronomical articles from his readers. He will edit where necessary.

If you have something of interest to other amateurs, please jot it down and send the item to Mr. James Fox, 14601 55th St. S, Afton, MN. 55001.

GRAZING OCCULTATIONS:

<u>NIGHT OF</u>	<u>MAG.</u>	<u>TIME</u>	<u>% SUNLIGHT</u>	<u>CUSP ANGLE</u>	<u>RATING</u>
Mar. 14-15	7.4	3:06 PM	18	1.4N	Favorable
Mar. 18-19	8.0	10:51 PM	54	7.0N	Marginal
Mar. 19-20	6.4	11:43 PM	64	7.5N	Favorable
Apr. 14-15	8.3	7:34 PM	27	7.7N	Marginal

For details, call Virgil Tangney (327-7976).

Participants in graze expeditions can deduct expenses for tax purposes. Gerry Samolyk (475-9418) has forms.

THINGS TO COME: The North Central Regional Convention, hosted by the Popular Astronomy Club of Rock Island, Illinois, will take place Sat. April 12 on the campus of Augustana College in Rock Island. Dr. James Van Allen will be key speaker. Contact Paul Castle, 2535 45th St., Rock Island, IL. 61201 for complete information.

ALCON '86 will be hosted by the Baltimore Ast. Soc. and the Space Telescope Science Institute in Baltimore, Maryland, Aug. 6-10, 1986. Astronomy Day will be observed Saturday, April 19, 1986.

THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS will meet Monday, February 17, 7:30 P.M., at the home of Peter Smitka, 15000 W. Cleveland Av., New Berlin (785-0926).

MEMBER'S NIGHT KEYHOLDERS:

Feb. 15	P. Borchart	445-1181	Mar. 8	J. Pfannerstill	475-6494
22	N. Nichols	542-2055	15	F. Roldan	423-0210
Mar. 1	A. Penikis	354-9708	22	G. Samolyk	475-9418

DIRECTORY:

President - Daniel Koehler - 662-2987
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FOCAL POINT Editor - LeRoy Simandl - 933-3052
MAS Observatory - 18850 W. Observatory Rd., New Berlin - 542-9071

MARCH FOCAL POINT DEADLINE - WEDNESDAY, MARCH 5.