

# STARRY NIGHTS



January, February, March 2006

Volume 25, Issue 1

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## Search for a New Observing Location

In the month of November, the board went out to various Milwaukee County parks both in the daytime and at night to check out their suitability for observing sessions. Since we have new users of the Milwaukee County Sports Complex from August through October, we are looking to relocate. On the short term, this may be just a move during the months that the Ironman Football League is using the field. But the county is advertising these fields for other users, so our days are pretty well numbered for continuing to use Froemming Park as an observing field.

Your input means a lot to us. By no means is our search exclusive to the sites listed here. Please use the message board on our website (messages should be posted in the Club News forum) for a public discussion of a new location for observing or contact the Observatory Director with a suggestion. A link off of our main web site page will show you pictures of the various parks.

We want the observing sessions for the general public to be held in the Milwaukee County area, preferably on the south side of Milwaukee. The reasons for this are so that we can get people to attend the sessions without having to drive for miles and our home base is the Wehr Nature Center in Franklin. The area should be easy to find and have ample parking. The observing field should have minimal obstructions and, optimally, low levels of light pollution.

With these basic criteria, we looked at a list of Milwaukee Parks (<http://www.county.milwaukee.gov/display/router.asp?docid=10627>) and checked out the map (<http://www.county.milwaukee.gov/display/displayFile.asp?docid=10627&filename=/Groups/cntyParks/maps/map04ol.pdf>) and went out to look at the following parks--Franklin Park, RC Park, Oakwood Golf Course, Bender Park and Warnimont Golf Course. Below I will list the pros and cons of each park.

**Franklin Park** is a large park to the southwest of Froemming Park on Oakwood Rd at about 108<sup>th</sup> St. in Franklin. The up side is that it is very open and I was amazed at how dark the skies were only a few miles from Froemming Park. For an amateur astronomer purist, this would be the park to go to, no questions asked. But this park has several drawbacks. For starters, there is no park sign marking

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its location, just an open field. The driveway into the park is a five foot gravel drive by the side of the road, so there is no parking lot, just grass. And the grass isn't even grass, as this park is leased to a farmer to grow hay. So due to these drawbacks, this park cannot be used.

**RC Park** is where we used to observe from and is just south of Froemming Park on Oakwood Rd. at about 68<sup>th</sup> St. The advantages to this park are a locked gate and ample parking. The disadvantages are that this area fogs over quite easily due to being lower than the surrounding terrain and near a river. Also there is heavy forestation to the west. Since the club has already been here and moved out, I would vote no on this park.

**Oakwood Golf Course** is southeast of Froemming Park on Oakwood Rd. at about 36<sup>th</sup> St. It is amazing how much the sky brightens from Franklin Park to Oakwood Golf Course which are only a few miles apart. Oakwood Golf course has a large parking lot that could be used for observing. This facility also has a locked gate. There are some trees that would obscure the view a little bit. On the down side, there is a building that has some lights on and this park is fairly close to the Milwaukee County Sports Complex. But it remains to be seen how much of an impact these lights will have here. Plus, these lights would be to the northwest and wouldn't be glaring directly at us. During the winter this park is plowed, but not the entire parking lot. This would be my vote for a park for public viewing even though it has fairly bright skies. The question would be if we could get permission to use the park after hours.

**Bender Park** is right next to the lake in Oak Creek on Ryan Rd. off of Hwy 32. The down side is that the area where we would be observing from is a gravel parking lot which does not get plowed in the winter. While the park is next to the lake and the sky toward the east is dark, there are some areas to the east that are brightened by lights in that direction. The sky is bright toward the west. There are also some trees that obscure the view.

**Warnimont Golf Course** is also next to the lake and is in Cudahy east of Lake Drive and north of Grange Ave. The downside to this park is the various lights in the parking lot and elsewhere. Plus, the area we were considering to use is right next to a cliff (not good for wandering around in the dark). It was also very bright toward the west

and lights along the cliff line hindered viewing to the east.

If you know of a park that might be suitable for observing, have different options or want to vote your view on the parks that are mentioned here, please let us know. We need to make a decision before May 1<sup>st</sup> when the observatory schedule is completed for the second half of the year. Once we make a selection, we will need to get in touch with the proper people to get permission to use the park at night.

-- Tim Grunewald, Observatory Director

## W.A.S. NEWS AND INFORMATION

### Members Help out at Franklin Public Library

Wehr Astronomical Society was asked by the Franklin Public Library for our participation with their program, "Our Favorite Solar System" presented for children and their families on September 20, 2005. They asked if we could set up our telescopes for outdoor viewing after the program at 8 pm. The members set up at 7:30 pm and helped the children and parents view through the telescopes until 9 pm. The members who helped out were Dave Beine, Phil Schumacher, Pauline Beck and Sandy Dombeck. Greg Gonia also brought his large binoculars with base. Phil had brought his laptop with the great digital pictures he had taken from his home. The area next to the library was large and grassy, the temperature and clear skies were great, but we had a bit of trouble with the streetlights. Deep space objects were a bit hard to see but most enjoyed looking at constellations, different colored stars and the moon, if they stayed late enough to see it come up. Thanks to the members who helped out.

### New Member Update as of November 2005

We would like to welcome the new members who have joined our club. Dale and Eric Glad joined in August, Margaret Guderyon joined in September and Jack Simanonok and family joined in October. Hope they will be able to come to the regular monthly meetings and join us on Fridays at the observing site.

## Observatory Sign Stolen

For people who have a hard time locating Froeming Park, we have had a white sign made to make it easier to locate the observatory. On November 11<sup>th</sup>, at about 10:00 that sign was stolen. Now maybe it was the new red flashing lights that Todd Weiler had gotten that attracted our thief. We looked all around the area, including the dumpster, but did not see the sign. We reported the theft to the Franklin Police Department, but have not heard back. Well, I guess it is time to make a new sign.

## In these SAD times of the year, follow the sun

A little grouchy, aren't we?

Perhaps you feel sluggish, less creative or withdrawn. Maybe you're eating more than usual. Join the club of 14 million Americans with Seasonal Affective Disorder, or SAD, a type of depression. SAD and its milder form, the "winter blues," are caused by shortened exposure to daylight. Symptoms begin in the fall. Five or six months later, the blues are gone, only to return the next fall. Peak SAD season runs through all of February, according to the American Psychiatric Association.

About 6% of the U.S. population has SAD, and another 14% cope with winter blues, says Norman Rosenthal, a SAD expert and author of *Winter Blues* (Guilford, \$15.95).

Come fall, our brains and our behavior change with shorter days and less daylight exposure, Rosenthal says. We produce more melatonin, a hormone that is made almost exclusively at night. Some call it the hormone of darkness. People with SAD are more susceptible to the extra melatonin, which affects their mood. For reasons that aren't clear, women with the problem outrank men 3 to 1.

SAD can sneak up. "It starts with feeling sluggish," says Rosenthal, a Georgetown University psychiatrist. "You start sleeping in. You aren't as pumped up as usual."

Jennetta Helton of Dearborn Heights, Mich., started noticing the problem shortly before she was diagnosed seven years ago.

"I start feeling down; I just don't want to do anything," says Helton, 37, a homemaker with a 12-year-old son. "I could sit around, pretty much all day."

Today, she uses antidepressants and light therapy to help reduce the symptoms.

The three known therapies are antidepressant drugs, light or phototherapy and counseling known as cognitive behavioral therapy, or CBT. CBT helps people take negative thoughts and turn them into realistic ones, says Jed Magen, chairman of the Michigan State University Department of Psychiatry.

Antidepressants such as Prozac work in 50% to 60% of people, and light therapy is effective in as many as 70% of patients, says Alireza Amirsadri, a psychiatrist and SAD specialist at Wayne State University School of Medicine.

Medication is the main choice for people who want a quick, convenient option and whose insurance does not pay for light units or counseling. In the long run, a light unit that costs \$200-\$300 is much cheaper if a person has no insurance drug coverage.

For some, there's the option of escaping someplace sunny. For others, try an outdoor sport such as skiing on sunny winter days. People also can cultivate indoor plants in a sunroom or drink their morning beverages in the sunniest spot of the home.

Or, people can take a day now and again to hibernate by rolling up on the couch, covering up with a blanket and watching television.

-Patricia Anstett,  
Detroit Free Press  
Thu Jan 12, 6:57 AM ET



# SCHEDULED ACTIVITIES

FOR

THE WEHR ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY

<http://www.wehrastro.org>

## REGULAR MEETINGS

(FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC)



**January 10, 2006**

Wehr Nature Center

Latest Discoveries on Mars by the Rovers and Orbiting Satellites presented by WAS member Jay Wichmann



**February 14, 2006**

Wehr Nature Center

Latest Discoveries in the Saturn System by Cassini presented by WAS member Jay Wichmann



**March 14, 2006**

Wehr Nature Center

Program to be presented by Michael Bakich, Associate Editor for Astronomy Magazine; title to be announced later on our web site. ([www.wehrastro.org](http://www.wehrastro.org))

## OBSERVATORY ACTIVITIES

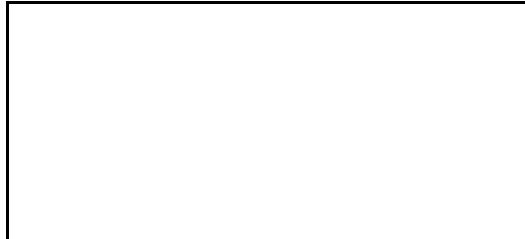
(FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC)

January 6	7:00	Observing the moon and deep sky objects. See a 1st quarter moon. See Mars
January 20	7:00	Deep sky observing. Locate the constellation Perseus. See Saturn (closest to Earth January 28th) and Mars.
February 3	7:00	Observing the moon and deep sky objects. See a crescent moon and the brighter deep sky objects. See Saturn and Mars.
February 17	7:00	Deep sky observing. Locate Auriga, the Charioteer. See Saturn and Mars.
March 3	7:00	Observing the moon and deep sky objects. See a crescent moon and the brighter deep sky objects. See Saturn and Mars.
March 17	7:00	Deep sky observing. Locate Canis Major and Minor, Orion's hunting dogs. See Saturn and Mars.
April 7	8:30	Observing the moon and deep sky objects. See a gibbous moon and the brighter deep sky objects. See Saturn and Mars.

Note: All observatory dates fall on a Friday, and are held at Froemming Park, on 51<sup>st</sup> Street between Ryan Rd. and Puetz Rd.



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**FRANKLIN, WI 53132**



January, February, March 2006

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**Contact a board member if you are interested in a position.**

## **Starrynights**

**The official newsletter of the Wehr  
Astronomical Society.**

We are a group of amateur astronomers organized to promote the study of astronomy and further public and members' interest in astronomy. We have been serving the Milwaukee area since 1981 and welcome the public to our meetings. Our aim is to give guidance and information to those who want help in the pursuit of stargazing.

Back issues of starrynights can be requested or downloaded from our website at: [www.wehrastro.org](http://www.wehrastro.org)