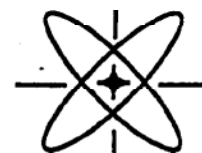


# METEOR WRITE



NEWSLETTER OF THE MEMPHIS ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY  
A NON-PROFIT, PUBLIC SERVICE ORGANIZATION PROMOTING INTEREST  
AND EDUCATION IN ASTRONOMY AND RELATED SCIENCES. FOUNDED IN 1953.

March, 2009

VOL.43 NO.3

## MARCH MEETING

The Memphis Astronomical Society will hold its regular monthly meeting at 8:00 P.M. on Friday, March 6<sup>nd</sup> 2008, in the Science Auditorium on the campus of Christian Brothers University at Parkway and Central. Members are urged to attend and to bring guests; the public is welcome.

### PROGRAM

**WELCOME** \* \* President Moore will greet the members and guests and outline the evening's program.

**BUSINESS** \* \* The Treasurer's Report will be given by Treasurer Bill Wilson and the Minutes of the February Board of Directors Meeting will be read by Secretary Carrie Armus.

**THE MAS SIDEWALK ASTRONOMY PROJECT** \* \* by Brenda Harris.

In conjunction with our activities for the International Year of Astronomy, Brenda, our Vice-President for Observing, will describe this program in which MAS members can show off the wonders of the heavens to members of the general public.

**COMET LU-LIN** \* \* by Various Members of the MAS.

Comet Lu-Lin, approaching maximum brightness as we go to press, has been observed and photographed by various MAS members as it moves *westward* (!) along the ecliptic. This part of the program will be reserved for anyone who has taken pictures or made observations of this interesting comet. Please come a few minutes early to upload your presentations.

**BREAK** \* \* Time to refresh and mix and mingle, while sharing comet tales.

**THE SOLAR NEUTRINO DILEMMA** \* \* by William J. Busler.

As most of us know, the Sun is powered by thermonuclear reactions in which hydrogen is converted into helium, as energy is released. These reactions also produce neutrinos, tiny neutral subatomic particles. Unfortunately, there has been a scarcity of detectable neutrons, casting doubt on the whole scenario. Bill will attempt to bring us up to date on recent advances in neutrino detection and other means of reconciling the discrepancy.

**MAS E-MAIL ADDRESS:** info @ MemphisAstro.Org

**MAS WEB SITE URL:** <http://www.MEMPHISASTRO.ORG>

**MARCH OBSERVING SESSION** \* \* The March Observing Session will be held on Saturday, March 21<sup>st</sup> at 7:45 P.M. at our observing site near Lagrange, Tennessee. Maps and directions will be readily available at the General Meeting.

**TRUSDOB FOR SALE** \* \* Astro Systems Telekit Dobsonian 14.5" f/6 telescope with a Swayce Optics 2" primary mirror & a 2.25" secondary. Both have enhanced coatings and was professionally built 8 years ago. This has had very little usage (stored in garage). Included: 9 point flotation cell; the Phase 4 Crayford 2" low profile focuser w/Quick Switch Filter Slide & the AstroSystems 4-vane spider; eyepiece height about 6' when viewing near zenith; mirror cover, 6" mask, & transport cover boards included; hand-sewn case for truss-tubes; go-to dob tracking drive; multi-wood in-laid storage case; matching optical and laser collimators; TelRad; 3 Televue eyepieces available at additional cost. Asking Price is \$1000.00  
CONTACT: Todd Juths 256-503-4714 [todd.juths@applied-analytical.com](mailto:todd.juths@applied-analytical.com)

**THE GALLOPING AMATUER** \* \* by Richard Moore.

...*Beware The Ides of March*... The soothsayer's warning to Julius Caesar, "*Beware the Ides of March*", has forever imbued that date with a sense of foreboding, much like Halley's Comet. But in Roman times the expression "*Ides of March*" did not necessarily evoke a dark connotation - rather in contradistinction it was simply the standard way of saying "*March 15<sup>th</sup>*". Surely such a fanciful expression must signify something more than merely another day of the year? Not so. Even in Shakespeare's time, some sixteen centuries later, audiences attending his play *Julius Caesar* would have thought nothing of hearing the date called the Ides.

The term comes from the earliest Roman calendar, which is said to have been devised by Romulus, the mythical founder of Rome. Whether it was Romulus or not, the inventor of this calendar had a penchant for complexity. The Roman calendar organized its months around three days, each of which served as a reference point for counting the other days. The Kalends is the first day of the month, the Nones is the seventh day in March, May, July, and October and the fifth in the other months. Lastly, the Ides is the fifteenth day in March, May, July, and October and the thirteenth in the other months.

Used in the first Roman calendar as well as in the Julian calendar, the confusing system of Kalends, Nones, and Ides continued to be used in varying degrees throughout the Middle Ages and even into the Renaissance.

So, the Ides of March is just one of a dozen Ides that occur every month of the year. Kalends, the word from which *calendar* is derived, is another exotic sounding term with a mundane meaning. *Kalendrium* means account book in Latin: Kalend, the first of the month, was in Roman times as it is now, the date on which bills are due.

**THE PLANETS FOR MARCH, 2009** \* \* by Richard Moore.

PLANET	DATE	R. A.		DEC		MAG.	RISE		SET	
		h	m	o	'		h	m	h	m
Saturn	03/01	11	22	06	27	0.6	06	29 PM	07	03 AM
	03/05	11	21	06	35	0.6	06	12	06	47
	03/10	11	09	07	41	0.9	05	35	06	17
	0315	11	18	06	54	0.6	05	29	06	06
	03/20	11	17	07	04	0.6	05	07	05	45
	03/25	11	16	07	12	0.6	04	46	05	24
	03/30	11	44	07	21	0.6	04	24	05	04

**WHAT's UP** \* \* by Richard Moore.

**MARCH, 2009**

**Visible Constellations**

Cancer      Gemini      Leo      Hydra      Camelopardalis      Taurus

**Visible Planets**

Saturn...      sets in early morning.

**Good Objects to Observe**

C5	barred spiral in Camelopardalis	C40	barred spiral in Leo
M105	elliptical galaxy	NGC2775	spiral galaxy

**Good Objects to Observe**

The Ursa Major Cluster of stars is so near to us that its outskirts spread over a hemisphere of our sky; so it can be seen as a whole only at about 10<sup>h</sup> sidereal time, which is in the evening in March. The core of the cluster is the Big Dipper excluding the two end stars (Dubhe and Alkaid); other possible members are Gemma in Corona Borealis, Zosma in Leo, Menkalinen in Auriga, Cursa in Eridanus, and even Sirius.