

# SPECTRUM

Northern Cross Science Foundation Newsletter

August 2007

## LOOKING UP

August 2 Thursday

General Meeting

7:30 p.m. Business Meeting

August 3 Friday

Bayshore Town Center

7:00 p.m.

August 4 Saturday

The Cedarburg Bog

8:00 p.m.

August 11 Saturday

Members Night

Harrington Beach State Park

August 10-12 Friday-Sunday

Northwoods Starfest

Fall Creek, Wisconsin

August 16 Thursday

Board Meeting

7:30 p.m.

Home of Jeff Setzer

August 17 & 18 Fri. & Sat.

Public Viewing Nights

7:00 p.m.

Harrington Beach State Park

September 1 Saturday

Public Viewing Night

8:45 p.m.

Ice Age Center, Dundee

September 6 Thursday

General Meeting

7:00 p.m. Astronomy 101

7:30 p.m. Business Meeting

## President's Corner

By Jeff Setzer

Hello Friends,

July 21 was many things to many people. To millions of people around the world, it was Harry Potter Day. To thousands of people in southeastern Wisconsin, it was Fish Day. To about 70 members and friends of the Northern Cross Science Foundation, however, July 21 was Dedication Day. I would like to extend my sincere thanks to each and every member and friend of the NCSF who helped make Dedication Day such a resounding success.

It is humbling to realize that a 25-year-long journey came to an end when the Jim and Gwen Plunkett Observatory, featuring the Panarusky Telescope, was officially dedicated and opened to the public on Dedication Day. I know that many people are feeling a tremendous sense of pride and accomplishment now that

monumental goal has been accomplished.

There is truth, however, in the notion that the end of one journey coincides with the beginning of another. Many of the conversations after the ceremony were about observing pads on the east side of the building, multimedia enhancements for group presentations, landscaping improvements, and ways to work with the park campground planned for 2009. Now that we have this wonderful facility, we can make improvement and additions as we wish. The possibilities are vast, and we now know that we can accomplish what we set out to do, making the future that much more exciting.

For now, I am content to look forward to many years of astronomy education and plain old good fun at the new observatory. It is ready for young and old to enjoy, so let's be sure to take some time and do just that very thing.

## Dedication Day Pictures

Submitted By Rob Powell



Scene from Dedication Day



(Left to right) Jim and Gwen Plunkett cut the ribbon, Jeff Setzer looks on.

## July Meeting Minutes

By Kevin Bert

The July business meeting of the Northern Cross Science Foundation was held at the Unitarian Church North in Mequon. President Jeff Setzer opened the meeting at 8:30 p.m. to 30 members and guests and thanked them all for attending. He then asked for standard reports.

Treasurer Gene DuPree had a balance of \$1362 in the checking to report. Rob Powell said there was no change in the savings account.

Secretary Kevin Bert informed the membership of our chance to vote for the Astronomical League officer's position of Secretary and Executive Secretary. John Jardine ran unopposed for secretary and was confirmed by the voting members. A show of hands preferred Tammy Plotner to Jeffrey Soper for the office of executive secretary.

Rebecca Sher told members that things are going well for the 2008 NCRAL convention. The registration form will be available soon and we are locked in to hotel reservations. Door prizes from Jeff Setzer and 20/20 telescopes were acquired. The club website has all the details on all the speakers and more.

Observatory Director Dan Bert thanked Steve Schowalter for all the electrical work he had done in the observatory. Dan said that the walkway was com-

pleted and looked great. One of the beams that supported the roll-off-structure was moved up by Don Miles and crew to give a 6' 8" clearance. One half of the grading was done around the surrounding terrain to level out the high spots and fill in the low spots next to the sidewalk. The remaining grading and final beam would be moved up this coming Saturday. Volunteers would be needed to help. Kevin Bert said that planting grass would be done later in the year when conditions are more favorable for growing. Dan said the observatory members night on July 14<sup>th</sup> is still in need of a leader. Rob Powell is the leader for the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> public viewing nights. Paul Kamikawa said that he might have connections with someone for planting the shrubbery when the time is ready. Plants native to Wisconsin would be used.

Under old business, Kevin said the 20-inch has had a small collimation adjustment with newly acquired tools. A power strip was mounted to the pier and polar alignment will be done very soon. A new observatory operator's manual would be issued soon to reflect a number of changes in procedures. An Astro-Vid imager had been purchased for use at the observatory and was initially used by Rob Powell. Rob will keep us posted of the results.

Jeff Setzer said that all things are in place for the observatory dedication. Speakers are lined up to start at 4:00 pm with a ribbon cutting to follow. If the weather is good some daytime viewing will take place followed by evening viewing. All members are invited and should contact Rick Kazmierski or any board member to RSVP.

Under new business, Jeff Setzer informed the club that there is an additional private viewing night set at the Cedarburg Bog on August 4<sup>th</sup>. Contact Jeff for details if you would like to help out.

Rob Powell forwarded a big thank you from the events planner at Bayshore shopping mall. Another stargazing event to bring astronomy to the people is scheduled on August 3<sup>rd</sup>. Contact Rob for details.

Mike Matthies recently purchased a 5 mw green Laser for \$35.00 online. Contact Mike if you are interested in getting one.

With no further new business, Jeff closed the business meeting at 9:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kevin Bert, secretary

## Observatory Outtings

By Rob Powell

The night of Saturday, July 7 was a night that the Clear Sky Clock was wrong. While Attila Danko only predicted average seeing conditions, the actual conditions were about as good as they can get ; in a word, spectacular. Sure, there was sky glow to the south from Port Washington, and sky glow to the north from Sheboygan, and sky glow to the west from Belgium, but one of the unique aspects of the nighttime conditions was that you could clearly see the limits of the glow in each direction.

In attendance that night were my

daughter, Michaela Powell (10) and three generations of the Plunkett family. Jim and Gwen, their two daughters, one son-in-law, and two grandchildren.

By 11 p.m., the Milky Way was clearly visible from the north, in Cassiopeia, across Cygnus at the zenith, through Sagittarius in the south. Every star was visible in Ursa Minor. I estimated the skies were magnitude 5.7. In my book, there are only a handful of summer nights with skies so steady, dark, and clear as that evening. Observations of M57

in excess of 450x were met with excellent visual clarity. Even a 5 milliwatt laser pointer seemed excessive.

Among the observed objects were: Jupiter, M8, NGC 6530. M13, M27, M57, and M51/NGC 5195.

Jim was most impressed with the 20" Panarusk telescope. Gwen remarked about the design and spacious interior of the observatory, having only seen the building from the outside until then. Everyone in attendance, including 9-year-old grandson Martin, loved the views through the telescope.

## Main Program

By Joyce Jentges

For those of you who were unable to attend the July 21st Observatory Dedication, the main program for August will be a recap of the dedication.

There will be no Astronomy 101.



Jeff speaking at ceremony. (Photo courtesy of Rob Powell)

## Sidewalk Astronomy Event at Bayshore Town Center

By Rob Powell

The Northern Cross Science Foundation has been invited to lead another sidewalk astronomy night at Bayshore Town Center, in Glendale.

Date: Friday August 3, 2007

Time: 6 p.m. to 10 p.m.

Place: Across the street from Alterra Coffee, immediately to the west of the Discovery Channel Store.

Viewing: Until sunset, we'll look at

Venus and the sun (solar viewing with proper filtration), then Jupiter until dark, then try our luck at M57, M31, and M27 from under urban skies.

In case of clouds: We'll still set up outside and pass out club literature, point at terrestrial objects and let the public enjoy themselves.

In case of rain, we'll relocate inside the rotunda, located behind our viewing area.

## CURRENT CLACK

The NCSF board extends its wishes for a speedy recovery to Carol Nehring, wife of member Scott Nehring, who has returned home from the hospital after an unexpected and lengthy stay."

Astrofest is September 7th and 8th near Kankakee, IL.. See [www.chicagoastro.org](http://www.chicagoastro.org) for more information.

Prairie Skies Star Party is September 13—16th also near Kankakee, IL. Go to [www.prairieskies.org](http://www.prairieskies.org) for more information.

Please note: the deadline for submission of items for the newsletter is the 20th of the month. Please get your items to me no later than August 20th.

Mall management understands the need for dark, and expects to be able to turn off street lighting in our area.

**If you can join us, please contact Rob Powell right away (262-894-9756) to make arrangements to receive a map and a parking pass by e-mail. The pass will allow NCSF participants to park at any meter, free of charge.**

## August Things to See

By Don Miles

*Venus:* Look for Venus very low in the west at sunset in the beginning of the month. Venus will disappear in the glare of the sun for most of August, but appears low in the east just before sunrise by the end of the month.

*Mercury:* Visible low in the east-northeast early August about ½ hour before sunrise. Look about (10) degrees above the horizon. Will be below and east of Pollux about the same distance as the separation of Caster and Pollux.

*Jupiter:* Is high in the southern sky thru the late afternoon, and will set about 1am early in the month, and by 11pm by the end of the month. Look for it above Antares (the heart of SCORPIUS) by about (5) degrees. Use a finder chart to find the asteroid Vesta as it passes less

than ½ degree north of Jupiter on the 29<sup>th</sup>.

*Mars:* Rises about 1am below and south of the Pleiades by midnight in the beginning of the month. By the end of the month, Mars will have moved to a point halfway between both horn tips and the base of the head of Taurus.

*Uranus & Neptune:* Best viewed from around midnight and later. Look for Uranus in Southern Aquarius, and Neptune between Aquarius and Capricornus. Use a finder chart and steadily held binoculars.

*Moon:*

August 5<sup>th</sup>: Last Quarter

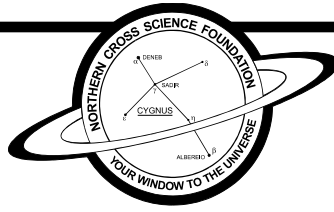
August 12<sup>th</sup>: New Moon

August 20<sup>th</sup>: First Quarter

August 28<sup>th</sup>: Full Moon (**Total Eclipse**). \*\* Look for the some darkening of the moon by about 3:50am (local time) on the morning of the 28<sup>th</sup> as the moon enters the penumbra (pale edges of the shadow) of the Earth's shadow. By about 4:50am, the moon will enter the umbra (darkest part of the shadow). The eclipse will continue as the moon sets below the horizon and the sun rises.\*\*

Note: One location for a free printable sky chart (and other current info) is [telescope.com](http://telescope.com). Pick the "In The Sky" box on the right side of the page for info about the current month.

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**Monthly Meeting Location**  
Unitarian Church North  
13800 N. Port Wash. Rd.  
Mequon, WI 53097

## Odds 'N Ends

By Joyce Jentges

To all of you who were able to attend the dedication ceremony on July 21st—thank you for sharing this day with us. Skies were partly cloudy, but we were able to see plenty of deep sky objects to keep the crowd happy.

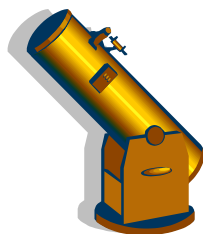
What follows are Public Viewing Night Leaders for August and September. If you have been trained in how to use the observatory, please consider signing up for open nights.

### Public Viewing Night Leaders:

August 17th –Open  
August 18th—Tony Marek  
September 1st—Gene and Charlotte DuPree  
September 14th—Open  
September 15th—Open

### For Sale:

10" Orion Dobsonian with 4 eyepieces. \$300.00. Contact Gene DuPree at (262)-675-0941.

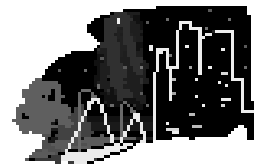


## SPECTRUM

Is published by the Northern Cross Science Foundation, Inc. A nonprofit organization based the state of southeastern Wisconsin and is a Member of the North-Central Region of the Astronomical League.



The NCSF supports the International Dark sky association.



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<http://www.ncsf.info>



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