

SPECTRUM

Northern Cross Science Foundation Newsletter

December 2009

LOOKING UP

December 3, Thursday

General Meeting

7:30 p.m. - Business Meeting
Holiday Party to follow

December 17, Thursday

Board Meeting

7:30 p.m.
Home of Joyce Jentges

January 2, Saturday

Candlelight Ski & Hike

6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.
Harrington Beach

January 7, Thursday

General Meeting

7:00 p.m. - Astronomy 101
7:30 p.m. - Main Program
Business Meeting to follow

February 4, Thursday

Annual Banquet

Fox & Hounds Restaurant
Hubertus, WI
(Details to follow)

February 13, Saturday

Candlelight Ski & Hike

6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.
Pike Lake

2009 International Year of Astronomy *By Jeff Setzer IYA 2009 Coordinator*



Our final event of IYA2009 has ended in yet another spectacular success! The Holiday Folk Fair was attended by several thousand people, and our IYA2009 exhibit was one of the highlights. Perhaps because we were new, or unexpected, people talked about our exhibit and told others. We gave away all 300 of our business cards, and a slew of Wisconsin Astronomy cards after that. Kids and adults of all ages looked through our telescopes indoors during the day and outside after sunset. One woman told me, through her heavy European accent, that her lifelong dream was to look at the Moon through a telescope. When I showed her the view through my little 3" Orion Spaceprobe, she held back tears and could barely speak. "Thank you, thank you, thank you so much..." was all she could muster as she walked away into the parking lot.

I'll keep this article short by including a few snapshots of our efforts at Holiday Folk Fair. Thanks to all the volunteers who made this event possible!

Look for a future article in early 2010 with a recap of IYA2009. Until then, enjoy the holiday season and we'll see you in the new year!



The Presidents Corner *Joyce Jentges*

As we approach the end of this year, I can't believe that the International Year of Astronomy is almost over. I hope that you've been able to participate in some of the public observing events this year, especially some of the events where we were able to mingle with astronomers from other clubs around the area. A big thank you goes out to Jeff Setzer for being our IYA coordinator. He did a great job of keeping us abreast of IYA activities in the area and playing a major role in setting up some of these events. With the addition of these extra events such as 100 Hours of Astronomy and 100 Telescopes in the Park, it is difficult to know exactly how many people we reached, but I think we can say that we have exceeded any previous numbers from other years. The NCSF played a major role in these special events, with many of our club members showing up to help. I am very glad to be a part of such an active club.

Additionally this year we have seen a major

increase in new members. I hope that all of you who have joined recently are able to participate in some of our public outreach activities. We are open to suggestions. If you would like to see a program on a particular topic, just let me or one of the board members know and we will do our best to set up a program with that topic. As always we are always interested in having a member do a program, so if you would like to speak on a topic, we'll be glad to have you do a program.

Even though IYA is almost over, there is still time to go on the web and check out the daily podcasts or some of the other special projects. Our observing season is officially over, but if weather remains mild this will be a good chance to get out and log some of those winter Messier objects. I'm looking forward to getting out in 2010 to get in more observing time.

Wishing you and your family a Happy Holiday Season.

November Meeting Minutes

By Kevin Bert

The November business meeting of the Northern Cross Science Foundation was held at the Unitarian Church North in Mequon. President Joyce Jentges opened the meeting at 7:40 pm and welcomed over 29 members and guests. She then asked for standard reports.

Treasurer Gene Dupree reported a balance of \$400.44 in the general fund and \$678.14 in the Observatory account.

Secretary Kevin Bert acknowledged newest member Jay Thusius. He reported all quiet on the Astronomical League front.

Under old business, Jeff Setzer elaborated on the upcoming Holiday Folk Fair on the November 20 – 22 weekend at State Fair Park. It will be the final public activity to promote our club and the International Year of Astronomy. Charlotte Dupree and Jeff will head up the event and are looking for members to help them out with displays and spending time at the booth. Four hour windows of time are available to get free passes and it is hoped to get at least five members per shift.

Tom Schmidtkunz and Paul Gruener told interested members to gather with them after the business meeting to finalize details on the Adler Planetarium trip. They

felt that the first Saturday in December might be the best time to visit the planetarium. Details will be posted on the club's Google site.

Under new business, Club member's sympathy was extended to the Matthies family after Mike lost his battle with cancer weeks earlier. Mike was the official club photographer and long time member.

Gene Dupree's mother had recently died. Joyce asked that we keep these families in our prayers.

Joyce started the ball rolling on a topic that has been gathering steam over the last month. There are new lights at Harrington Beach near the main entrance to illuminate the wood shed and new flagpole. These lights, (around the wood shed in particular), are very noticeable at the observatory and adjacent parking lot. Joyce had talked to Andy about the problem and he says they will be turned out for our scheduled public events. He says they are required because of camping but is working to aim the full cutoff lights at the proper angle to alleviate the glare. One attempt at tilting has left only one of the four lights in need of additional tilting or shielding. Dan Bert has brought this to the park's attention and is awaiting a response.

Joyce noted the upcoming annual NCSF dinner will be held at the Fox & Hounds

restaurant in Hubertus on February 4th. This will take the place of the normal monthly meeting night. Charlotte Dupree had a list of dinner choices that we need to narrow down to three. Contact her to make your preference known.

For the December meeting's party activities, Joyce said there will be no 101 class or main program. It will start with a brief business meeting to vote for two board members positions to replace outgoing members Don Miles and Kevin Bert. Following the business meeting there will be a time to socialize and enjoy snack. Members are asked to bring a desert or dish to share. Joyce opened the floor for nominations to the board. Jeff Setzer nominated Kevin Bert and Justin Modra seconded. Charlotte Dupree nominated Don Miles and Chris Grenda seconded. Kevin and Don accepted the nominations. With no other names brought forward Joyce closed nominations and said they will be open again next month prior to the elections.

Under upcoming events, we have to look to next year, January 2nd, for a public viewing night at Harrington Beach. It is in conjunction with the park's winter hike.

With no further business, Joyce closed the business meeting at 8:30 p.m.

Things to See in the December Night Sky By Don Miles

Mercury: Mercury (mag -0.6) will be setting just after the sun this month, and will have distanced itself from the sun (as far as it can) by the 18th. Look below and to the right of the crescent moon by about 6 degrees. Mercury will still be relatively close to the sun (about 8.5 degrees above and to the left), but will slide back towards the sun by month's end as it will now pass "in front" of the sun.

Jupiter & Neptune: Both will already be highest in the southwestern sky as the sun sets throughout the month. Jupiter (mag. -2.2) will set by about 10:00pm early in the month, and by about 8pm later in the month. Neptune (mag. 7.9) starts the month above and to the left of Jupiter by about 3 degrees, but Jupiter will pass below Neptune on its way eastward to within a half a degree (one moon's width) the night of the 21st. Neptune will look like a blue-gray "fuzzy star" in a scope at low power.

Uranus: Will also be already be high in the southwestern sky as the sun sets throughout the month and will set by about 12:30am and by about 10pm as the month

progresses. Uranus (mag 5.8) is still in the constellation Pisces (below the right "fish"), and will stay there for the month. Look for a blue-green "fuzzy star".

Mars: Rises in the eastern sky about 9:30pm early in the month and by about 7:30 later in the month, and is the highest in the sky about 3:30am. Look for Mars (mag. -0.7) this month halfway between the Beehive cluster in Cancer and the backwards question mark that forms the head/chest of Leo. Mars will be at opposition (the sun will be "behind" us, and Mars will be directly in "front" of us as we make our lap around the sun) on January 29th. This will give us the best views of Mars until November 2011.

Saturn: Early in the month Saturn (~mag 0.9) rises about 1:30am, and 11:30pm by month's end. Saturn moves slightly eastward this month, but remains at the "head" of Virgo.

Venus: Will be behind the sun for us this month, so will not be visible.

Pluto: Is also behind the sun until next summer.

Moon:

December 2nd: Full Moon

December 8th: Last Quarter

December 16th: New Moon

December 24th: First Quarter

December 31st: Second Full Moon

Special Events:

Meteor Showers: The first showers are the Geminids, and the best time to watch for them will be the early morning hours of Monday the 14th, and Tuesday the 15th. These are very reliable, and peak rates may reach 120/hr. As its name implies, look for them towards the constellation Gemini. The second and much less active are the Ursids. The typical rates for the Ursids are around 10/hr, but have been known to peak as high as 50/hr. Watch for them towards the Little Dipper in the early morning hours of Tuesday the 22nd.



December Meeting Holiday Party!

The December meeting is the one meeting we are required to have during the year. The meeting will begin at 7:30 p.m. Nominations for the Board of Directions will be opened again, then elections will take place to fill 1 positions on the board. After the meeting is over, we will have our holiday party. Drinks will be supplied. We ask that everyone bring a dish to pass. Some suggestions are dips, appetizers, cookies, cakes, a hot dish, cheese/sausage platter.

It's always nice to have more than just deserts.

November Events

Haunted Hike

October 31st

Charlotte DuPree reported clear skies attracted approximately 125 visitors throughout the evening. The Moon and Jupiter were prime targets, but the night's viewing also included Uranus, Neptune, and a number of deep sky objects. The evening ended around 11:00pm.

Sidewalk Astronomy

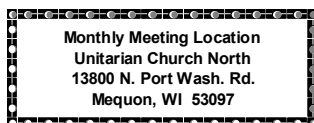
October 31st

Jeff Setzer reported the event was a bust.

Holiday Folk Fair

November 20, 21 & 22nd

The Holiday Folk Fair was a fitting end to a spectacular year of public outreach. Twenty one volunteers assisted thousands of Fair visitors over the three day event. Although NCSF provided the majority of volunteers, groups also represented included WEHR, MAS, and MLRS.



In Memory

Long time Northern Cross member and former Club President Michael Matthies passed away on October 27, 2009. His dedication to our Club and his love of Astronomy will be forever remembered.

In honor of his passing, Gail Clapper submitted the following poem for publication.

The Astronomer's Soul

A clear sky, filled with stars
Welcomed the upward gaze
A full moon lit the night
Without a ring of haze

Orion laid low on the horizon
Weary from his global trek
He beckoned one to join him there
While lying on his back.

Another soul went forth to link
With family already there
To meet his maker and his Lord
Now free from every care

His journey toward the heavens
To see the source of light
Brought him to salvation
On this starry night.

He waits for his dear loved ones
But wants them all to know
The Lord will walk beside you
Wherever you may go

His spirit is within you
And as you pass each day
Find joy in what surrounds you
And you will find your way

In memory of Michael Matthies
NCSF Astronomer & Photographer

3/23/47 – 10/27/09

written by Gale Clapper

CURRENT CLACK

Special Note

2010 Dues

Your 2010 Dues invoice is included with this Newsletter. New members having joined the Club this past year will find their dues have been prorated, making them payable on the same schedule as the rest of our general membership (at the beginning of each calendar year). Members receiving electronic mailing can download the Dues Invoice from the Club website. Additional copies of the Invoice will be available at the December Membership Meeting.

Instructions for submitting Dues are indicated on the Invoice.

For Sale

Meade 12" LX200 Classic

\$1850.

Contact: Dick Adduci

[radduci@centurytel.net]

Meade LX75 - EMC AR6-AT

152mm F/8 Achromatic Refractor

GOTO German Equatorial Mount

Heavy-Duty Tripod

Polar Alignment Finder

Used only once and like new

Contact: John at 262-268-1352

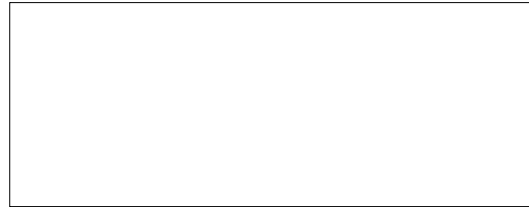
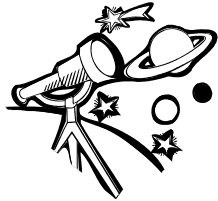
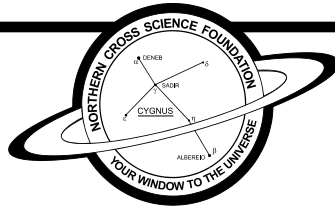
for price and details.

Jim and Gwen Plunkett Observatory



Observatory Director:
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Holiday Folk Fair 2009 Memories



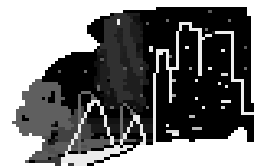
Our club has a "Discussion Group on Google"
 See our website: <http://www.ncsf.info/> for details.

SPECTRUM

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The NCSF supports the International Dark sky association.



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