

SPECTRUM

Northern Cross Science Foundation Newsletter

February 2008

LOOKING UP

February 4, Monday

NCRAL Meeting
7:30 p.m.
Home of Jeff and Becca Setzer

February 7, Thursday

"Annual Banquet"
NO, NO's Restaurant
3498 HWY 33, Newburg
6:00 p.m. Cash Bar
7:00 p.m. Dinner

February 9, Saturday

Candlelight Hike/Ski
6:00—9:00 p.m.
Pike Lake State Park

February 20, Wednesday

Total Lunar Eclipse
Harrington Beach 7:30

February 21, Thursday

Board Meeting
7:30 p.m.
Home of Joyce Jentge's

March 6, Thursday

General Meeting
7:00 p.m. Astronomy 101
7:30 p.m. Business Mtg.

March 7, Fri. & 8, Sat.

Saturn Opposition
Harrington Beach 7:00 p.m.

NCRAL Conference Update

- Editor

The Monthly Meeting of the NCRAL Committee was held on Monday, January 14th at the home of Jeff and Becca Setzer. The mailing to Astronomical League, North Central Region Clubs was the main objective of the meeting. Envelopes were stuffed with registration materials and a NCRAL brochure.

In related news, due to serious health issues, Jack Horkheimer has indicated he will not be able to make the trip to Wisconsin in April. He expressed his sincere disappointment, and offered to provide the Conference with several DVDs and books as door prizes. Although Jack's cancellation as our Keynote Speaker at the Saturday Night Banquet is disheartening, we are most fortunate to have Dave Eicher, Editor In Chief of Astronomy Magazine who has gra-

2007 – The Year in Review

By Joyce Jentges

January – We had a successful public viewing night on January 6th, thanks in part to the mild weather and the candlelight hike. Two members training sessions were held at the new observatory to train members in use of the observatory.

February – Our annual banquet was held on February 1st, with 18 people in attendance. The location was the Park View Grill in Saukville. The good food was mixed with pleasant conversation. The public viewing night on Feb. 3rd, while skies were clear, it was bitterly cold, with wind chills well below 0. On February

10th the annual Pike Lake Ski and Stars took place. A crowd of 200 – 300 people attended this event, with many of them stopping to look through telescopes even though skies clouded over. Gene and Charlotte DuPree were the only members in attendance for the evening.

March – Several members attempted the Messier Marathon on March 17. Dan and Kevin Bert, Don Miles, Jeff Setzer and Becca Sher and Joyce Jentges all showed up to do some viewing on this evening. The team of Jeff and Becca successfully recorded a total of 106 objects.

(Year in Review continued on page 3)

January Meeting Minutes

By Kevin Bert

The January business meeting of the Northern Cross Science Foundation was held at the Unitarian Church North in Mequon. Newly elected president Joyce Jentges opened the meeting at 7:55 pm and welcomed over 20 members. Max, a guest from Cedarburg introduced himself. She then asked for standard reports.

Treasurer Gene DuPree reported \$2,122.27 in the checking account. Gene said that he would be accepting membership dues or magazine subscriptions that evening.

Secretary Kevin Bert informed the membership that the club roster was up to 64. Depending on how many members renew, an updated roster should be enclosed in the Spectrum within the next few months. The Astronomical League's National Convention, (ALCon Expo) will be held this year in De Moines Iowa on July 18 & 19.

NCRAL Report from Joyce said that things were on schedule and the mass mailing would take place at the next scheduled meeting.

Observatory Director Dan Bert said that the observatory sign was ready to mount. Leaders were slated for upcoming events at the observatory. When the viewing nights are scheduled next month, a number of openings would be available. Look for a page on the clubs Google site that will combine the calendar, links to forms, and the operator's manual in the near future.

Under old business, forms for Banquet sign-up and for NCRAL were both available. Members were encouraged to get the forms in with money as soon as possible. The correct return address for the treasurer is 6219 Jay Street. There was a mistake on the form.

Under new business Joyce went over upcoming events and reminded members that there would not be a February meeting because of the scheduled NCSF Banquet.

Mike Matthies informed us that long time member Gail Clapper's husband had recently died and that the funeral would be held this Saturday. The club extends its sympathy to the Clappers on their loss.

With no further new business, Joyce closed the business meeting at 8:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kevin Bert, Secretary

Things to See In the February Night Sky

By Don Miles

Mercury: Look low in the East-Southeast (below and to the left of bright Venus) before sunrise mid thru late-month.

Venus/Jupiter: Watch for the unusually close pairing low in the south-east on the First, as they will be separated by about a pinky's width as your arm is fully extended. They will rise together about two hours before sunrise. The two will separate about 1 degree per day after the Feb 1st.

Mars: Is high in the sky all month, and is highest around midnight, so is visible most all night long. Look for Mars in the "horn tips" of Taurus early in the month, but will be moving back towards the western twin of Gemini thru the month. Mars will get smaller and dimmer as we "pass" Mars on our way around the Sun.

Neptune: Has passed behind the Sun, so is not observable this month.

Uranus: Will be lost in the glare of the sun at sunset, and will also pass behind the sun at the end of the month, so Uranus is also not observable this month.

Saturn: Saturn is still below and to the left of Regulus (the bottom star of the "backwards question mark" that forms the head of Leo. Will reach opposition the night of the 23rd (the sun is on the opposite side of the earth as the sun). So Saturn will be up all night, rising around sunset, and setting around sunrise. Watch for Saturn to "appear" out of the normally washed out sky a little above and to the left of the moon as the sky darkens during the eclipse the night of the 20th (see the moon event below for eclipse times).

Notes:

Total Lunar Eclipse (The moon will travel thru the Earth's shadow). This will be the last total lunar eclipse for North America until December 20, **2010!** The eclipse will start about 7:30 with the moon entering the inner shadow, with the moon completely in the shadow at 9:00. This continues until just about 10:00, when the moon begins to leave the darkest part of the shadow which ends about 11:00.

Comet Tuttle- Still visible from darker skies using a star chart. Currently at the "bottom" of Eridanus, moving thru Horologium.

Moon:

February 7th: New Moon
February 14th: First Quarter
February 20st: Full Moon ****ECLIPSE****
February 29th: Last Quarter

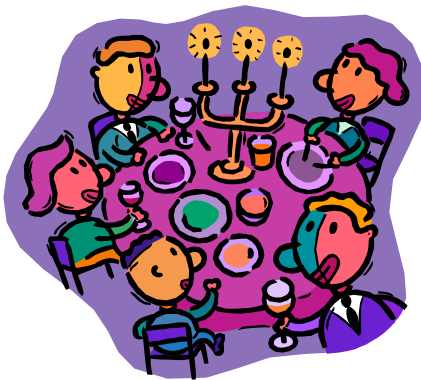
February Meeting

- Editor

Instead of our General Meeting on February 7th, we are having our Annual Banquet. This year's banquet will be held at No No's Restaurant in Newburg. (For details, please see pg. 1 under Looking Up.) As of the Board Meeting on January 17th, we had 16 members participating.

These social events are a great opportunity to meet and get to know other Club members.

Regular meeting will resume next month.



January Events

Candlelight Hike/Ski Report

The Candlelight Hike/Ski at Harrington Beach on January 5th was hosted by Gene and Charlotte DuPree. Although the weather was cloudy, the event still drew 45 interested people.

Mars Viewing Night

- Kevin Bert

For the Mars viewing night on Saturday Jan. 12th the sky was overcast and viewing not possible. No people from the public were present. After some routine cleaning and organizing I closed up at 8:30.

CURRENT CLACK

Leaders for Public Viewings

Feb. 2—Gene and Charlotte DuPree

Feb. 9—Gene and Charlotte DuPree

Feb. 20— Total Lunar Eclipse

You won't want to miss this lunar eclipse! This will be the last Total Lunar Eclipse in North America until December 2010.

April 18 & 19—NCRAL Conference

Registration material, speaker agenda, and other Conference information are available on the NCSF website:

www.ncsf.info

DEATH NOTICE:

Amateur Astronomer Ronald Parmentier past away on January 6, 2008. Ron was a founding and current member of the Neville Public Museum Astronomical Society in Greenbay, WI. since its beginning in 1966. He built his own observatory in Luxemburg, Wis., where he shared his knowledge and love of astronomy with many school groups and astronomy enthusiasts

(Continued from page 1)

April – Astronomy Day was held on April 20th, which is the first day the Jim and Gwen Plunkett was also opened to the public for the very first time. A group of about 80 people came to this Astronomy Day. While winds were brisk, the observatory offered protection from the wind.

May – At the general meeting for May, Becca Sher announced that the speaker for the NCRAL banquet would be Jack Horkheimer. The first annual International Sidewalk Night took place on May 19. The Northern Cross participated with a display at Bayshore Town Center. About 6 members and 100 guests took part in

this event. Rain forced the group inside to the mall rotunda. The public viewing night at Plunkett Observatory on May 18 had good weather with about 20-25 guests in attendance. The event on the 19th at the observatory was rained out.

June – The General Meeting for June was cancelled because of the unusually high threat of severe weather. About 8 members went to WOW in Waupaca and were blessed with clear skies all nights, despite a threat of rain during the day. Public viewing nights were held on June 22nd and June 23rd. Skies were clear on both nights with about 8 guests coming out on the 23rd.

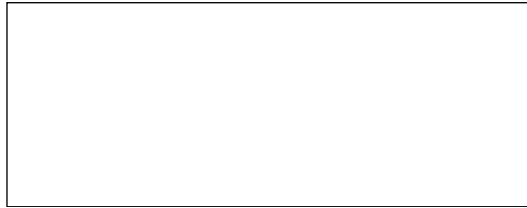
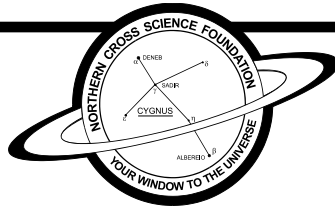
Jim and Gwen Plunkett

Observatory



Observatory Director:
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February – “This Month in History”

Born on February 19th 1473 - Astronomer Nicolaus Copernicus - Copernicus studied law and medicine at the universities of Bologna, Padua, and Ferrara in Italy. Copernicus was considered the founder of modern astronomy in that he questioned the beliefs of his day and theorized that the sun and not the earth was at the center of our solar system.

Born on February 15, 1564 - Galileo Galilei - One of the major contributions by Galileo was the discovery of Jupiter's moons, Callista, IO, Ganymeade and Europa, to be known as the Galilean Moons. Galileo built his own refracting telescope and ground his own lenses, which started at 3 power and eventually improved to 20 power.

1930 - Clyde Tombaugh (at the Lowell Observatory, AZ) discovered Pluto.

1962 - John Glenn orbited the Earth 3 times.

1967 - United States Lunar Orbiter 3 launched and orbited the moon, photographing the far side for potential Apollo 12 landing sites.

1971 - United States Apollo 14 Lunar Manned Lander launched. The crew included Alan Shepard, Jr., Edgar Mitchell and Stuart Roosa. Shepard and Mitchell landed on the moon February 5, 1971 in the Fra Mauro highlands.

1974 - United States Mariner 10 Mercury/Venus Flyby - Mariner 10 flew past Venus for a gravity assist to the planet Mercury. Mariner 10 was the first dual planet mission.

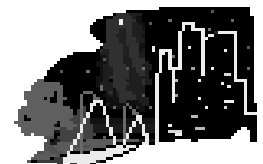


SPECTRUM

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The NCSF supports the International Dark sky association.



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