

SPECTRUM

Northern Cross Science Foundation Newsletter

March 2010

LOOKING UP

March 4, Thursday

General Meeting

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

March 12 & 13, Fri. & Sat.

Messier Marathon

Dusk
Harrington Beach

March 18, Thursday

Board Meeting

7:30 p.m.
Home of Joyce Jentges

March 20, Saturday

International

Sidewalk Astronomy Night

7:00 p.m.
Bayshore Town Center

March 27, Saturday

Swap Meet

10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.
Aviation Heritage Center
Sheboygan County Airport

April 24, Saturday

National Astronomy Day

2:00 p.m.
Harrington Beach

2010 Winter Star Party - by Rick Kazmierski

I wouldn't usually write an article about a star party, but this year's Winter Star Party in Florida has proven to be the exception. What an event! Although winds were 15 - 25 mph off the ocean on many days, to include a 65 mph gale force storm on Friday night, we still managed three spectacular nights of viewing, with the atmosphere so calm we could see down to the ocean's surface.

The Winter Star Party is held in the Florida Keys, boasting the furthest southern latitude possible in the Continental USA. This allows for viewing hundreds of objects which never rise above the horizon in Wisconsin. Included in this number are three exquisite objects; Centaurus A, Omega Centauri, and the Jewel Box Cluster.

As beautiful as the Hercules Cluster (M13) may be, it's a pup compared to Omega Centauri (NGC5139), which shines at a magnitude 3.7 and boast a size of 36.3' of arc. A bright object in 6x42 binoculars, it explodes in a telescope eyepiece.

Centaurus A, (NGC5128) is known as a peculiar radio galaxy and is nearly round in shape and shows an obvious dark central lane in my 10 inch Schmidt. Although windy, I was still able to image this beauty though my 105mm apo refractor and a digital DSLR camera. The following photo includes 19 five minute exposures. Only about 20 degrees above the horizon at transit, it still imaged beautifully.

The Jewel Box (NGC4755) is a rich cluster of stars shining at an apparent magnitude of 4.2. The contrasting colors of it's member stars give it it's unique name.

Besides Mickey and I, Rick and Georgine Poulin were also in attendance. Georgine and I both won prizes in the raffle, which was a surprise since there were over 600 attendees.



Centaurus A (NGC5128) by Rick Kazmierski

Mickey and I also had a chance to see the Horsehead and Flame Nebulas through an Image Intensifier eyepiece. We were blown away at how well the Horsehead stood out against the background nebula. This was not an averted vision, "I think I see it", experience. It was so bright it was like looking at a picture. I asked the owner the cost of such an item and it was such that I best not repeat it.

We've been to the Winter Star Party twice now, and have every intention of attending again next year. Maybe we'll see you there!



Telescopes set-up on the berm, overlooking the Atlantic Ocean at the Winter Star Party—2010.

More Winter Star Party Photo's



By Day...

At Rick and Georgine Poulin's telescope site we find Georgine scanning the beautiful ocean's horizon with some impressive binoculars!

Shortly after this photo was taken Georgine and Rick spotted a traveling pod of dolphins.



By Night...

Dark skies are quickly approaching and over at the Kazmierski' site, I am setting up my equipment for a hopeful night of astro-photography.

This would be a good night, but a little windy.



In Memory

Bob Sedgwick passed away on Wednesday, February 10, 2010. Bob was a long time member of NCSF and quite the innovator; both professionally and personally. He designed the Panarusky Telescope, as well as the original design for a roll-off roof observatory for the Club. He built a number of telescopes over the years, including an eight inch Newtonian which is being refurbished for use at the Observatory. Bob's wit and knowledge will be missed.

There will be no visitation or public funeral per Bob's instructions. The NCSF Board voted to make a monetary donation to the American Heart Association.

Things to See In the March Night Sky 2010 *By Don Miles*

Mercury: Mercury (mag -0.8) will be rising in the SE sky just before the sun (~6:30am) early in the month, and will pass "behind" the Sun mid-month, then turn into an evening object as it is now trailing the sun and so will be just visible as the sun sets.

Neptune, Jupiter, & Uranus: All three [Neptune (mag 8.0), Jupiter (mag -2.0), and Uranus (mag. 6.0)] are too close to the sun to be easily seen. Both Neptune & Jupiter will rise before the sun (~6am), but will be lost in the sun's glare, and Uranus trails the sun early in the month, and ends up in front of the sun by month's end, but still too close to pick out.

Venus: Brilliant Venus (mag -4.0) trails the sun, and sets ~6pm early in the month, but by ~8pm later in the month.

Saturn & Mars: Saturn (~mag 0.6) rises before the sun sets, so will be getting high in the SE sky as it gets dark. Saturn will transit (be directly overhead) about 1:30am, and sets around sunrise. Mars (mag. -0.6) is also up at sunset, but transits around 9:30pm, and sets around 3am.

Moon:
March 7th: Last Quarter
March 15th: New Moon
March 23rd: First Quarter
March 30th: Full Moon

Special Events:
Messier Marathon... Hope you've gotten your scope out since last fall. If not, you've got a couple of weeks to get used to the current sky orientation before the Marathon weekend (March 13th). If you've tried a Marathon in the past, and found yourself wanting better reference charts or thought of something that would have made the event more enjoyable, you've still got some time to tie up those loose ends. If you've never tried one, and you're wondering what you've been missing (or not), look up some of the past February/March newsletters for tips and other helpful information. Hope you give it a try. Good Luck.

3rd Annual Swap-n-Sell

- Diane Van Minsel

The 3rd Annual Swap-n-Sell sponsored by the Sheboygan Astronomical Society is set for Saturday, March 27th from 10 a.m. - 3 p.m. at the Aviation Heritage Center, Sheboygan Airport. It's time to check those cabinets and corners for unused equipment (scopes, eyepieces, books etc.) and get rid of them.

Like last year, we'll have tables and chairs set up for your use. There will be food and beverages available, as shopping makes one hungry!

Terms are the same as always: cash, check or swap. The Sheboygan Astronomical Society is not responsible for and will not be held liable for any dealings which do or do not occur.

Hope to see you there.



March General Meeting

The main program will be presented by Paul Gruener and is entitled:

“Telescope Optics”

Paul plans to review optical aberrations, provide an overview of the key telescope optical designs with an emphasis on the benefits of each. He will talk about the difference between visual and photographic applications.



February Events

Thursday, February 4

Annual Banquet

Once again the Annual Banquet was held at the Fox and Hound Restaurant in Hubertus. Twenty members attended, good food, great conversation made this night a success!!!

Saturday, February 6th

Harrington Beach Candlelight Ski & Hike

Charlotte DuPree reported that the Candlelight Ski & Hike was cloudy and breezy which held down the number of visitors. However, there were nine guests interested in looking through the big scope.

Wednesday, February 10th

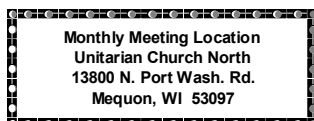
Horicon Marsh

Gene DuPree reported cold temperatures but clear skies. A total of thirty visitors were on hand for this event.

Saturday, February 13th

Pike Lake Candlelight Ski & Hike

Charlotte DuPree reported that she, Gene and five other club members hosted nearly 1,100 visitors under clear skies.



**Jim and Gwen Plunkett
Observatory**



Observatory Director:
Dan Bert: 262-375-2239

Observatory Notes

Saturday, April 10th 7 p.m.

Learn or get a refresher on how to use the Jim & Gwen Plunkett Observatory and Panarusky Telescope.

2010 Dues

If you inadvertently forgot to submit your 2010 Dues, we ask that you make that commitment now. There are still a dozen or so members who are delinquent. Dues are used to pay for Club and observatory expenses, including this Newsletter. The 2010 Dues Invoice can be downloaded from our Club's website www.NCSF.info.

Submit completed invoice, with payment to Secretary Gene DuPree. Your cooperation is appreciated.

CURRENT CLACK

New Members

NCSF Welcomes New Club Members

Lucy Myka
Gene Myka
Joseph Myka
Nate Myka
Liana Myka



Star Parties

NCRAL Convention

April 16 -18

Bloomington - Normal, IL

www.ncral2010.org

Wisconsin Observers Weekend

July 8 -10

Hartman Creek State Park, WB

www.new-star.org

Northwoods Starfest

August 13 - 15

www.cvastro.org

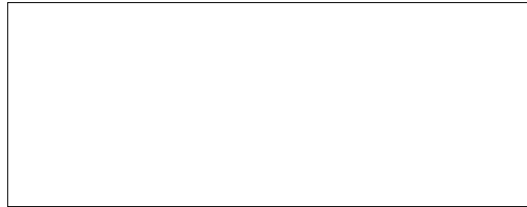
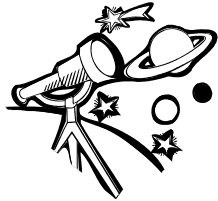
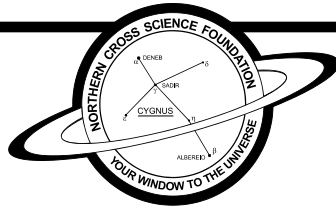
Prairie Skies

September 30 - October 3

Kankakee, IL

www.prairieskies.org

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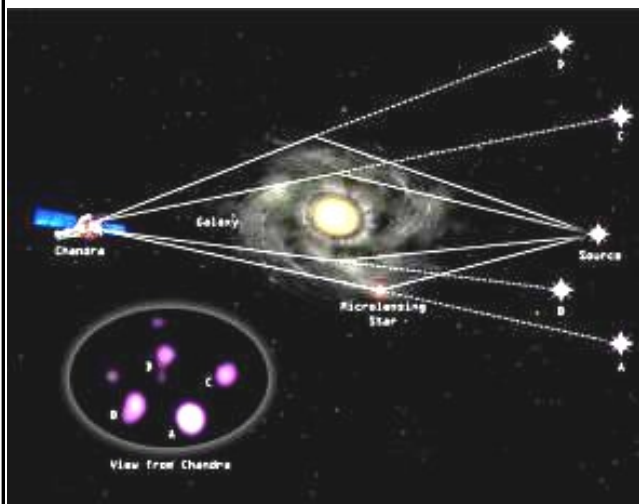
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Chandra looks over a Cosmic "Four-Leaf Clover"



The Cloverleaf quasar is a single object about 11 billion light years from Earth that appears as four images produced by a process known as gravitational lensing. If one or more galaxies lie along the line of sight to a more distant quasar, the gravitational field of the intervening galaxies can bend and magnify the light from the quasar and produce multiple images of it. The four images of the Cloverleaf quasar have been produced by one or more intervening galaxies.



Science Daily (July 13, 2004) — Analysis of observations by NASA's Chandra X-ray Observatory.

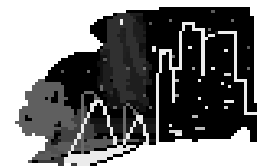
Our club has a "Discussion Group on Google"
 See our website: <http://www.ncsf.info> for details.

SPECTRUM

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