

SPECTRUM

Northern Cross Science Foundation Newsletter

May 2006

LOOKING UP

May 4 Thursday

General Meeting

6:30 p.m. Astronomy 101

7:30 p.m. Business Meeting

May 6 Saturday

Astronomy Day

2:00—11:00 p.m.

Harrington Beach S. Park

May 18 Thursday

Board Meeting

7:30 p.m.

Home of Jeff Setzer

May 19 & 20 Fri. & Sat.

Public Viewing Nights

8:00 p.m.

Harrington Beach S. Park

May 26 & 27 Fri. & Sat.

Public Viewing Nights

8:00 p.m.

Harrington Beach S. Park

June 1 Thursday

General Meeting

6:30 p.m. Astronomy 101

7:30 p.m. Business Meeting

June 3 Saturday

Solar and Public Viewing

6:00 p.m.

Harrington Beach S. Park

June 24 Saturday

Solar Day

Afternoon

Ice Age Center

President's Chatter

By Jeff Setzer

Kevin Bert wins 2006 NCRAL Award

At the 2006 NCRAL Convention in Appleton, Kevin Bert was honored with the Region Award. This annual award is given to one person out of the 2,300 NCRAL members for outstanding service in the advancement of amateur astronomy. Nominations are made by NCRAL members, which are reviewed by the NCRAL officers who then choose a recipient.

This year Kevin was a first-time nominee, and he was unanimously selected by the NCRAL officers as the recipient of the award. The text of the nomination will be made available on our website, along with a printed copy at the next meeting. Kevin's 32-year history with the Northern Cross Science Foundation is impressive, and if you ever want to know how the NCSF grew up or what it was like "in the old days," Kevin is the guy to ask because he's been through it all since the beginning. It was an honor to nominate Kevin for the NCRAL Region Award, and I am extremely pleased that he was selected.



DNR Accepts Gift of Observatory Building from NCSF

On April 26, the Wisconsin Natural Resources Board formally accepted our gift of the Jim & Gwen Plunkett Observatory. As of now, we have the green light to actually move dirt, pour concrete, and erect the building! And we're hot out of the chute; Clark's Concrete excavates on April 29 and pours concrete on May 2. The rain date is the weekend of Astronomy Day, so we might have some additional daytime entertainment! Backyard Observatories will come over in June to put up the building. Stay tuned and visit the observatory grounds to check on the progress.

Astronomy Day 2006 Is Here

Astronomy Day 2006 is fast approaching – May 6 is the day! Activities will run from 2:00pm until 11:00pm. We need volunteers to help out with solar viewing, telescope displays, leading people through the Solar System Walk, conducting the Binocular Tour of the Universe, and handing out information and answering questions at the information table. We will have the signup sheet at the May 4 meeting; if you can't make the meeting, please email or call me to volunteer.

NCRAL 2008 Convention

At the business meeting of the NCRAL Convention, the NCRAL accepted our bid to host the 2008 convention. I have appointed Rebecca Sher as the Chair of the 2008 NCRAL Convention Committee. She will be asking people to serve on the committee in the coming months, and it's very important that we get widespread participation. Please consider lending your skills and talents to this most ambitious enterprise.

April Meeting Minutes

By Kevin Bert

The April business meeting of the Northern Cross Science Foundation was held at the Unitarian Church North in Mequon. President Jeff Setzer opened the meeting at 7:30 p.m. and welcomed 31 members and guests. Jeff then asked for standard reports.

Treasurer Rob Powell reports a balance of \$2,126.00 in the club's checking account and \$27,000.00 in the observatory account. He thanked Gwen Plunkett, who was in attendance, for the observatory naming right donation made by her and her husband Jim. She received a round of applause from the attendees. Rob then gave a list of the accessories purchased for the observatory.

Secretary Kevin Bert informed the membership of an updated membership roster in next month's newsletter. Membership cards would be available too. Kevin said that the NCRAL was fast approaching and this would be the final reminder. He said that if you are a club member and are not receiving the quarterly Reflector Astronomical League newsletter, that you should contact him. The leagues national convention (ALCON), will be held in Arlington Texas on August 4-5 this year. Next month a clipboard will make the rounds for members to sign-up for the May 6, National Astronomy Day and other public viewing nights.

Under old business, Kevin Bert continued with thoughts behind some of the decisions that were made about replacing the 20-inch Panarusky primary mirror. OMI will have the new f/5 primary mirror here in time for the observatory dedication, and a Cassegrain secondary shortly thereafter. Modifications are currently being made to the original optical tube assembly to make it compatible with the new mirror.

Jeff Setzer gave the membership the latest observatory activity at Harrington Beach. The concrete is lined up and waiting for the gift of the observatory to be accepted by the DNR at their April 26th meeting in Stevens Point. With not being able to start excavation earlier, the May 6th dedication of the observatory on National Astronomy day is now out of reach. Backyard Observatories will be rescheduled shortly after May 6th to erect the observatory. The park superintendent thought that the site would be staked out within a week. A copy of the legal document between the park and the NCSF had just been received and would be reviewed by the board ASAP. Additional talk on park regulations continued.

Jeff Setzer last month asked if the club would be interested in hosting the 2008 Regional Convention. After giving the basic details and responsibilities involved, the membership seemed satisfied that it could be done and took a vote on the matter. It unanimously

passed. Jeff said that he would relay to the Astronomical League our intentions at the regions business meeting later this month. The tentative dates would be April 18 & 19 and utilize the Country Inn and Suites in Port Washington.

Under new business, Paul Kamikawa agreed to host the April 29th member's night at his home near Harrington Beach State Park. A map to his home was handed out and would be posted on the club's web site. It would be held rain or shine.

Jeff talked about upcoming events, and said that Astronomy Day activities would be conducted like last year at Harrington Beach. A brief follow-up on Superfest was given. No sun viewing could be done because of clouds, but a table was set-up inside with Jeff's new display board manned by four club members.

With no further new business, Jeff closed the business meeting at 8:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kevin Bert, secretary

NCRAL 2006

By Joyce Jentges

The weekend of April 21 & 22, found many of the NCSF members in Appleton at the Paper Valley Hotel for the 60th annual NCRAL convention, hosted by Newstar.

The NCSF was the group with the most members attending, besides Newstar. We had between 14 and 19 members, which is a very good showing!

Those who were able to get to Appleton earlier in the day on Friday, were able to take a tour of the EAA Museum in Oshkosh, or a tour of Barlow Planetarium. Friday evening, participants got to go see a Big Screen Picture called Solar Max, which was good.

Saturday morning, convention goes ready for a day full of talks, all centered around the theme, solar system. Of the talks, I want to mention two of

them. The first talk of the morning was given by Ron Dantowitz. His talk was animated and very interesting, as he described ways to take high resolution pictures with a video camera.

The first talk of the afternoon session was given by two authors of a very popular astronomy book for beginners. Dan M. Davis and Guy Consolmagno

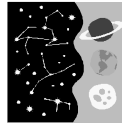
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Astronomy 101

By Kevin Bert

The May 101 class is entitled "What Can I Expect To See In A Telescope," by Kevin Bert. To the person that is new to the hobby of astronomy, their first look through a telescope can be a real disappointment. Find out what some of the misconceptions are and what you can really see.

The featured constellation will be Virgo.



From The Editor

By Joyce Jentges

As an idea for a future newsletter article, I would like members to submit a list of astro websites that they enjoy, or rank high on their list of favorites. You may email me (preferable), or hand me a list at the next meeting.

Aren't you excited??? I can barely contain my excitement about the observatory. It's nice to know that while we are holding Astronomy Day at Harrington

Beach, that there might be some site work being done at the same time. I hope you all got to see the great article that was in the Ozaukee/Washington section of the Milwaukee Journal on April 16th. You couldn't miss the picture of the Panarusky telescope and the accompanying article on the first page. With the exception of a few errors, it was well done.

Please welcome new members Jim and Catherine Eastham, and their children Robin, Will and Julia. They are from Milwaukee.

Registration for WOW is closed.

Newsletter note: The deadline for submission to have information put in the newsletter is the 20th of each month. Absolutely no items will be accepted after this date.

You might have noticed on the first page that there is an increase in the amount of public viewing nights in May. The reason for this, was because initially we had planned to do the Observatory dedication in May, and hoped to capitalize on the publicity that this would generate. Even though the dedication won't take place in May, we

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spoke about their book called Turn Left At Orion. Consolmagno is a Vatican Astronomer, and Davis is a geologist. The two described how they met, and how the book came to be. They shared tales of how the book has evolved over the years, and adventures they were on before the book came about. At the end of their talk, they asked suggestions on how to improve the book. Their lively personalities lent an air of humor to the presentation. We heard that there was going to be a book signing later in the evening, so a lot of people (I for one) bought the book through a local bookstore that was on hand.

At the afternoon business meeting, the NCSF, formally asked to host the 2008 convention. The bid was accepted! We have a lot of work ahead of us, but we are up for the challenge. The banquet in the evening gave us a chance to mingle with other attendees and catch up with old friends. The dinner was very nice,

then afterwards there was a presentation by keynote speaker, Dr. Harrison Schmitt. His topic was "A Trip To The Moon and Beyond". He was also an Apollo 17 astronaut, which was a subject of questions during the question/answer period that followed his talk.

Following the dinner, door prizes were announced, and the Region Award winner was announced. As you read on the cover of this newsletter, that honor belongs to our very own Kevin Bert.

The book signing was held afterwards, and many people stood in line to get their pictures taken with Dr. Schmitt, or have their copy of his book signed. Davis and Consolmagno were also present for the book signing.

For me one of the highlights of the convention came after the book signing. Several of our members decided to go to the sports bar in the hotel for a drink. By the time I got to our table,

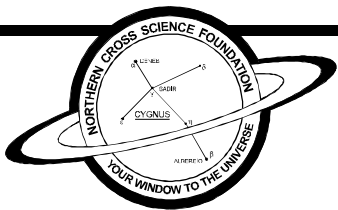
there was a nice group assembled, including Dan M. Davis. I got to sit next to him, and it was thrilling being able to talk openly with him. I found out that he loves globular clusters!

All in all, the convention was great. Newstar did a great job hosting the convention. The location was suburb, and it was really cool being there to see Kevin win the regional award. Way to go Kevin!!!



(Gene & Charlotte DuPree pose with Harrison Schmitt)

SPECTRUM
102 N Montgomery St # 1
Port Washington, WI
53074



2005 OFFICERS

President - Jeff Setzer
1418 Trillium CT
West Bend, WI 53095
262/338-8614
astrosetz@hotmail.com

**Vice President/Newsletter
Editor- Joyce Jentges**
102 N. Montgomery St. Apt #1
Port Washington, WI 53074
(920) 254-6705
joycejentges@hotmail.com

Secretary - Kevin Bert
2292 Ridgewood Road
Grafton, WI 53024
262/375-2239
kevin.bert@hotmail.com

Treasurer - Rob Powell
1429 W. River Oaks Ln.
Mequon, WI 53092
262/894-9756
rkfmpowell4@wi.rr.com

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



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will still go ahead with the public viewing nights.

I am expecting to get invited to do a star party for the school I work at, the weekend of June 23rd and 24th. It will most likely be at Kohler-Andre State Park in Sheboygan. I am trying to get a hold of a parent to confirm. If you are able to help, it would be greatly appreciated. I will know more soon.

Don't forget, when you shop at Pick 'N Save, to use our We Care Number. You can find it on the left hand side of this page.

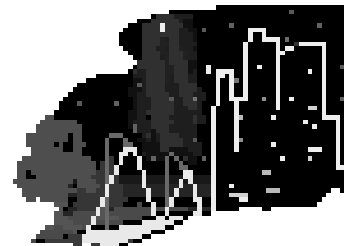
We are in need of several members to step in and be the leader for the public viewing nights in May. Kevin Bert will pass around a clipboard at the next meeting.

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Send inquiries to:
SPECTRUM
102 N. Montgomery St. # 1
Port Washington, WI 53074

This Issue, along with back Issues of SPECTRUM, can be found on the NCSF Web Site.

<http://www.ncsf.info>

The photo's in this issue are courtesy of Kevin Bert.