

SPECTRUM

Northern Cross Science Foundation Newsletter

May 2010

LOOKING UP

May 6, Thursday

General Meeting

7:00 p.m. - Solar Viewing

7:30 p.m. - Main Program

Business Meeting to follow

May 14, Friday

Member/Public Night

7:00 p.m.

Harrington Beach

May 19, Wednesday

Sidewalk Astronomy

7:00 p.m.

Bayshore Town Center

May 20, Thursday

Board Meeting

7:30 p.m.

Home of Joyce Jentges

May 21 & 22, Fri. & Sat.

Public Viewing

7:00 p.m.

Harrington Beach

June 3, Thursday

General Meeting

Program to be announced

Business Meeting to follow

Astronomy.FM *by Jeff Setzer*

Did you know there is a radio station, on 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, completely devoted to astronomy? It's true, and it can be heard no matter where you live, because this is an "Internet radio station." It's called Astronomy.FM, or "AFM," and you can listen to it by directing your Internet browser to astronomy.fm - no "www" needed.

What does Astronomy.FM play? Well, they play space-themed music, and select podcasts from places like NASA and the Space Telescope Science Institute, but the best stuff is live. There are original, live shows almost every night. Some shows are hosted by amateur astronomers from other countries.

Special events on Astronomy.FM are unique and often ground-breaking. A few months ago a husband and wife team who happen to work at Kennedy Space Center gave us a guided tour of Pad 39B - while the Space Shuttle Discovery was sitting on it, ready for launch! They did a live slide show to all the people logged in from around the world, and we learned all kinds of inside information and saw pictures from a perspective that nobody had ever seen before - pictures they had taken the day before, and shown only 48 hours prior to the launch itself.

NCRAL 2010 *by Rick Kazmierski*

The North Central Region Astronomy League (NCRAL2010) held by the Twin City Amateur Astronomy Club in Bloomington-Normal, IL, was a great time for all. Our Club had six members in attendance. Mickey and I were joined by Jeff and Becca Setzer, and Gene and Charlotte DuPree. We brought our 14 year old grandson Nick along for the first time this year. He showed a real enthusiasm for the program and provided us a different perspective with regards to the Conference.

Friday night we signed up at the Challenger

This past March, Becca and I teamed up with a few fellow AFM friends (one in Rhinelander, one in London, and one in Okinawa) to host our first annual Online Messier Marathon. We took control of three telescopes housed at Global Rent-A-Scope's New Mexico location, and through the night we made quick images, talked about the objects, and shared our experience with a few hundred people from around the world. We never had less than fourteen people with us at any one time during the dusk-to-dawn event! Even though there was some rain early in the evening and a few technical glitches when we first began, we managed to get 83 objects. This during a full moon weekend where our local weather was complete rubbish!

There is a schedule posted on the AFM website so you can see what's coming at least a week ahead of time. Becca and I host a weekly show called "Astronomy, Out & About" which focuses on astronomy and science outreach. We discuss events, equipment, and techniques for bringing the universe to the public. Our show airs live on Tuesday nights, at 8:00pm local time. We take questions from the online chat room, and occasionally we interview people on our show, so it's always an interactive experience for the audience. We invite all NCSF members to listen to AFM and join the fun!



Static electricity alarm. Jeff, Becca, Nick, and I ground ourselves by grabbing a metal bar.

Learning Center along with Becca and Jeff
(cont'd on pg 4)

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 Joyce Jentges opened the meeting at 8:30 pm and welcomed over 27 members and guests. She then asked for standard reports.

Treasurer Gene Dupree reported a balance of \$678.14 in the observatory account and \$5563.20 in the general fund. Gene reported that dues were still coming in.

Secretary Kevin Bert noted that there were two new members that joined at the last meeting. Bob Schatzman and Terry Littz. The membership roster will be mailed in the next Spectrum and membership cards available at the next meeting.

The regional convention of the Astronomical League will be held at Bloomington Normal in Illinois on the 16th and 17th

of April.

Under old business, Joyce was pleased with the turnout at the Sheboygan swap and sell gathering. A number of members participated by bringing items to sell and others found items to buy.

Under new business, Joyce reminded that the club is still looking for volunteers to coordinate a fundraising brat fry at a local store. In addition to fundraising there is an outreach element that can be addressed at the same time. If you are interested in it, please get in touch with her.

Joyce covered upcoming events for April. April 10th will be a training session at the observatory starting at 7:00 pm. April 23rd will be a public viewing night followed by National Astronomy Day on Saturday the 24th. A person that will remain un-named made a motion to volunteer Jeff Setzer to be the coordinator. The entire membership seconded the motion and it carried. He will be looking for help in running this event. This event will tie in to Global Astronomy Month theme.

It was noted to members that there is a NCSF facebook and twitter link on the clubs website. A link to our Google Calendar of events is there too.

With no further new business, Joyce closed the business meeting at 9:00 p.m.



Newsletter Articles Needed

If you have a special Astronomical interest that you would like to share, consider writing an article for the Spectrum. Give me a call or drop an e-mail. Rick Kazmierski / Editor

Things to See In the May Night Sky By Don Miles

Mercury: Mercury (mag 1.3) starts out between us and the sun early this month, so will not be visible then, but by mid-month, Mercury appears to pull away from the sun and will then be visible as a morning object. Mercury will rise by about 5am with the sun rising by about 6am, and both about ½ hour earlier each by months end. Mercury will get brighter (mag. 0.2) as the month progresses, but will appear smaller as it pulls away from us and shows us more of the sunlit side.

Venus: Brilliant Venus (mag -4.0) also trails the sun, and sets shortly after the sun. Venus moves easterly thru Taurus (from just above the Hyades), and ends up in the middle of Gemini. Venus sets about 10pm early in the month, but by about 11pm by months end.

Mars: Gradually dimming Mars (mag. 0.9) is still highest in the sky at sunset, and will set around 2:30am early in the month, but by about 1am at the end. Mars also drifts eastward (starting on the eastern side of Cancer) and will end up close to Regulus (which is the bright star on the bottom of the sickle in Leo).

Saturn: Saturn will also be high in the sky at sunset, sets by about 4:30am early in the month and by about 2:30am at the end. Saturn will transit (be directly overhead) about 10pm, and will remain relatively stationary (between Leo & Virgo) for May. Saturn is still easy to find with ordinary binoculars if you look for a brighter yellowish star halfway between the star Spica in the constellation Virgo and Regulus (mentioned above). If you can hold them still (lean against a tree trunk, etc.), you'll still be able to see the rings as flat lines extending from the planet, and usually see at least Titan (the brightest of Saturn's moons).

Neptune: Neptune (mag 7.9) rises about 3am, and by 1am towards months end. Neptune continues to rise earlier thru early summer.

Jupiter, & Uranus: Both are close to the sun for now, but they (along with Neptune) are pulling away from the sun, and will continue to be morning objects. One way to remember their rising times is that they are rising as Saturn is setting. That will be true for the summer, and into fall.

Moon:

May 6th: Last Quarter

May 14th: New Moon

May 20th: First Quarter

May 27th: Full Moon

Special Events:

The Eta Aquarid meteor showers peak the morning of the 6th. There will be a last quarter moon setting, so it won't be much of a hindrance. There is a predicted peak rate of 60/hr, so if you happen to have the luxury of staying up on a weeknight, the weather will be warm enough to watch them relatively comfortably.

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

May General Meeting

101 Class

With Kevin Bert

For May, viewing with the Coronado H-Alpha scope will start at 7:00 pm. if the skies are clear. If cloudy, a 101 class will start at that same time and be given by Kevin Bert showing how to set up the Coronado. This is a chance to learn how to operate the scope if you some day would wish to borrow it for viewing the sun. There is no featured constellation of the month.



Photo by Mickey Kazmierski

Main Program

"Dewing Less and Enjoying More!"

Jim Marsala will give a presentation on building a dew-less observing workstation using inexpensive items you can purchase at local stores. He will also cover other helpful tricks like setting up your computer for night vision and building an aperture mask adaptor for your telescope to view bright objects such as the moon.



Photo by Mickey Kazmierski

April Events

Friday, April 23rd

This public event was rained out.

Saturday, April 24th

Clouds and rain kept public participation to minimum for National Astronomy Day activities. Charlotte DuPree reported ten Club Members came during the day and stayed dry inside the observatory. They entertained two visitors from the Janesville Astronomy Club. Rob Powell reported locking up the observatory at 8:30 pm.

Jim and Gwen Plunkett Observatory



Observatory Director:
Dan Bert: 262-375-2239

CURRENT CLACK

New Members

NCSF Welcomes New Club Members

Jennifer Ryan

Leaders for Public Viewing

May 14

Member\Public Night

Leaders Needed

May 19

Sidewalk Astronomy

Jeff Setzer

May 21 & 22

Public Viewing

Leaders Needed

Star Parties

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

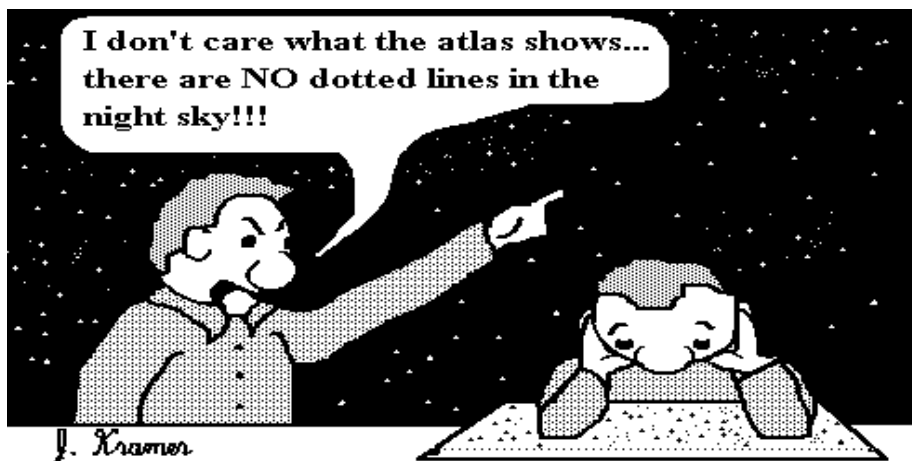
For Sale

Celestron

4 inch refractor with equatorial mount.

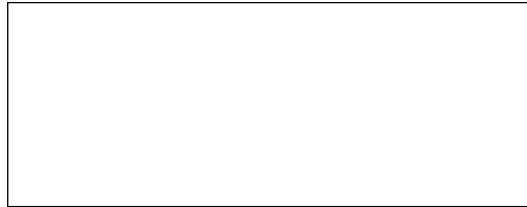
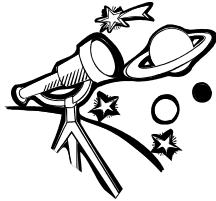
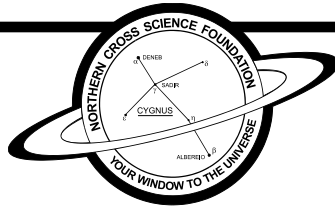
MAKE OFFER

Gene DuPree 262 675-0941



J. Kramer

SPECTRUM
5327 Cascade Drive
West Bend, WI 53095



2010 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President—Joyce Jentges
102 N. Montgomery St. Apt #1
Port Washington, WI 53074
262-483-4270
joycejentges@hotmail.com

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

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

Treasurer - Gene DuPree
6219 Jay St.
Myra, WI 53095
262-675-0941
grdupree@charter.net

Rick Kazmierski
262-305-1895

Don Miles
262-675-2796

Al Steinberg
262-644-8089

Newsletter Editor & Publisher

Rick & Mickey Kazmierski
262-305-1895 / rickkaz@charter.net

Setzer for a Simulated Space Mission to the Comet Enche. They advertise their Center as the next best thing to an actual space flight, and they didn't disappoint. To begin, attendees had to choose from eight separate mission teams. Nick decided he liked "Life Support", and our fate was cast!

Following a simulated flight on the Space Shuttle to the International Space Station, Nick and I began monitoring the Station's Life Support Systems. Five minutes into the simulation, alarms blared and red lights flashed. Seems our team had let the humidity fall too low, allowing the possibility of static electricity and explosion. All crew members had to ground themselves until the threat was eliminated. Nick turned to me and said, "I'm just a kid; I blame you." I laughed so hard I almost fell off my seat! KIDS!

Later in the simulation, Mickey and her team partner left an oxygen valve open; causing another emergency situation. Sirens blared and red lights flashed AGAIN. Everything came to a standstill. With only a minute to spare, the danger was neutralized. Nick and I looked at each other, smiled, and simultaneously said "I blame Grandma"! So much for a future in Life Support. I think we are now on NASA's "no-hire-list".

Saturday was a day of illuminating lectures and door prizes. Nick won a DVD of the Discovery of Pluto and made me promise I'd trade prizes if I won something! I won the popular vote in the Astrophoto Contest for an image of NGC 7023, taken with my 14" LX200 from our backyard observatory. My awarded prize was a gift certificate for \$100 to Bisque Software. (I wonder if that counts towards my promise to Nick?) Later that night Nick and I took a ride out to the Twin City Amateur Astronomer's Observatory site for some viewing. Without his expertise with my GPS, we would still be looking for that place! Found it though, and viewed two new comets among other things.

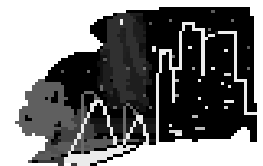
I believe the NCSF members in attendance are looking forward to NCRAL 2011 hosted in Green Bay, WI.

SPECTRUM

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The NCSF supports the International Dark sky association.



Send inquiries to:
SPECTRUM
5327 Cascade Drive
West Bend, WI 53095

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