

SPECTRUM

Northern Cross Science Foundation Newsletter

November 2004

LOOKING UP

November 4 Thursday
Monthly Meeting
6:30 p.m. 101 class
8:00 p.m. Main Pgm
Unitarian Church North

November 6 Saturday
Members Night
6:30 p.m.
Home of Kevin Bert

November 18 Thursday
Board Meeting
7:30 p.m.
Home of Jeff Setzer

December 2 Thursday
Monthly Meeting & Holiday Party
Please bring a goodie to share
6:30 p.m. 101 class
8:00 p.m. Main Pgm
Unitarian Church North

December 16 Thursday
Board Meeting
7:30 p.m.
Home of Jeff Setzer

Nov. 17 & Dec. 7
Buying Your First Telescope Seminar
7:00 p.m.
UCN—Lower Level

Twin Lakes Star Party—First Time Perspective

By Rob Powell

Twin Lakes Star Party (hosted by the West Kentucky Amateur Astronomers)

My trip to Pennyrite State Forest, in western Kentucky, started on Wednesday, 10/13. The event would be the first dark-sky opportunity for me to test my “new” 13” Coultter mirror, recently refigured by John Hudek of Galaxy Optics. NCSF members Charlotte & Gene DuPree, and Georgine & Rick Poulin had driven down 5 cloudy nights earlier.

It was overcast when I arrived around 8 PM on Wednesday night, yet I was met by a chorus of cheers. Then I realized that I had stepped out of the car during a particularly funny scene of “Dr. Strangelove”, being shown at the time. The skies cleared and, around 3 AM on Thursday, folks enjoyed about 2 hours of viewing beneath dark skies.

Daytime on Thursday brought scattered clouds yet enough sunshine to enjoy solar viewing. It was a treat to view many large solar prominences through the DuPree’s Televue refractor with its Coronado filter system. The only visible stars Thursday night were those on the movie screen, as we watched Star Wars: Revenge of the Jedi. Outside, it was raining and thundering.

On Friday afternoon, there were two presentations to attend. The first involved a demonstration of the requirements for earning the Astronomical League solar observing award. The second was a talk on public outreach in urban environments. Friday night brought a change in the weather. In other words it was rainy, but this time, without the thunder & lightning.

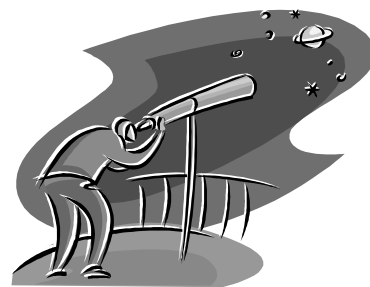
On Saturday, everyone enjoyed a catered luncheon of good old fashioned fried chicken, mashed potatoes, green beans, and coleslaw. After the meal, the door

prizes were awarded. Rick Poulin won a binocular mount, hand-crafted by a WKAA member Charles Funk. Later that afternoon, Jay McNeil’s made a fantastic presentation on how he discovered a cometary reflection nebula in Orion that now bears his name (McNeil’s Nebula).

Saturday evening brought a softer breeze and, to everyone’s surprise, an absence of clouds. It had turned into a naked-eye, binocular, and telescope observer’s delight. The skies were an estimated 6.3 magnitude. By morning twilight, I’d located, identified, and studied 39 Messier objects, 21 NCG objects, one IC object, and four stars from the 84 objects in the “SkyTools 2” target book created for the trip.

Biggest surprise:

As a result of the mirror refiguring, the Blinking Planetary (NGC 6826) no longer blinks for me.



October Meeting Minutes By Kevin Bert

The October business meeting of the Northern Cross Science Foundation was held at the Unitarian Church North in Mequon. President Jeff Setzer opened the meeting at 7:55 p.m. to 35 members and guests.

Jeff welcomed all in attendance to the new meeting location. All future meetings will be held at the Unitarian Church North unless otherwise instructed. Jeff then asked for standard reports.

Kevin Bert gave a brief treasurers report with the latest balance for the checking and savings accounts. Only standard transactions for the newsletter transpired.

Secretary Kevin Bert noted that the next 101 class would be an evening of observing in the UCN parking lot to take advantage of the time change if the weather permits. Then Kevin placed an order sheet out for members interested in 2005 calendars from Kalmbach. Gene DuPree brought an example to check out. The cost was estimated to be between \$7 and \$8.

Jeff Setzer gave an update on Harrington Beach activity. The initial plans were reviewed by the DNR and no red flags came up. Specific plans will be needed to get final approval from the state. A meeting with the DNR will be held in the near future. The goal was to break ground this spring if the fundraising effort is successful. Details of fundraising would be presented in the near future.

Joyce Jentges informed the member-

ship about a delay in the upcoming order for T-shirts and sweatshirts. Infinites has been on the star party road and was soon to get back home and take care of business. She told members that a minimum of 24 items are needed to place an order, and that orders for hats and other small merchandise will need a modified logo to have the words legible.

Under new business Jeff Setzer reported that Brad Plaumann had thought it be best if he resigned from the treasurers position. Board member Rob Powell had offered to take his place as treasurer until the end of the year.

Jeff brought up the possibility of starting the 101 class a half an hour earlier to keep the monthly meetings from running too late. That would make the 101 class start at 6:30 p.m. and have the main program start promptly at 7:30. After some discussion a show of hands was called for making the move. It passed with 28 in favor and only 3 opposed. After further discussion it was decided to implement it at the November meeting.

Jeff explained that the NCSF annual financial situation was close to losing money with the present membership dues scale. Several board meetings had lengthy discussions on the subject of raising dues. After weighing all the options it was recommended and approved that a new dues structure that would take place starting in

2005. Student membership will be \$25.00, Adult membership \$35.00, Supporting membership \$70.00. As before, an adult membership is also a family membership with additional family members paying \$6.00 each for full club privileges.

Electronic newsletter options will be made available in the near future to help cut costs.

Jeff reminded members that vacancies for three new board positions would be made at the December meeting. Brad Plaumann, Rob Powell and Mandy Matthies are finishing their three-year term. Nominations will be open at the November meeting.

Joyce Jentges informed the membership about a star party at the school she works at in Sheboygan Falls on October 19th. She said that she would provide details on how to get there and would appreciate any help from the membership that could attend.

Jeff Setzer gave a rundown of upcoming events. In particular the Nichols Observatory members night on the 16th of October, a move in Kevin Bert's members night to November 6th to make room for the FOG (fall observers get-away) at Hartman Creek state Park on the 8th and 9th of Oct.

With no new business, Jeff closed the business meeting at 8:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kevin Bert, secretary

First Annual Fall Observers Getaway

By Joyce Jentges

NCSF members love star parties, and it was decided we should try to do one dark sky outing yet before cold weather came. Jeff Setzer was kind enough to book a group campsite at Hartman Creek State Park in Waupaca for the weekend of October 8-10. He opened

it up to NCSF members first, then people from other astronomy clubs.

I drove up on Saturday after work and it was about 5 p.m. when I got to the site. Jeff was there with his A-frame camper. There were two other people

there from local area clubs as well. We were at group site number 3 which shares the site with group site number 4. The people in group site number 4 were Phy. Ed. Majors from U W Oshkosh. After dark, some of them came

(See **FOG** page 4)

**Astronomy 101
By Kevin Bert**

Starting this month the 101 class will start at 6:30 p.m. The November class will be an observing night in the UNC (Unitarian Church North) parking lot if clear. Members are encouraged to bring their own telescope or binoculars to share views. A handout with details of selected objects will be distributed then. It is my intent to start out viewing from this list first. I would encourage members to do a little research on the objects on their own prior to the event. The list of objects are as follows; NGC 457 the Owl Cluster; Eta Cassiopeiae Double Star; NGC7209 Open Cluster; M52 Open Cluster; M15 Globular Clus-

ter; Gamma Andromedae Double Star, M31 the Andromeda Galaxy; Algol Variable Star; NGC 7662 the Blue Snowball Nebula. Taking notes is optional. At 7:30 a business meeting will take place inside, then open observing will continue for the remainder of the evening. IF CLOUDY, any images of the October lunar eclipse can be presented and a discussion of them and telescopes will take place for the 101 class. The constellation of the month would be Auriga.

**Main Program
By Kevin Bert**

The main program will be videos taken at this years star parties with discussion.



Do you know of someone who is planning on purchasing a telescope for a Christmas gift? If you do, don't let them buy a telescope without attending one of our Buying Your First Telescope seminars. Conducted by Jeff Setzer with support from NCSF members, this seminar will explain the difference between "department store" telescopes and better quality telescopes, and what to look for when buying. Two sessions will be held at Unitarian Church North, one on November 17 and another December 7th at 7 p.m.

**From the Editor
By Joyce Jentges**

I am writing this the night of October 27th, and I am trying to hurry because contrary to what the weather predictions have said, it is clear outside and I can see the full moon out of the window next to the computer. I had not made plans to watch the lunar eclipse because it sounded like it would be completely cloudy.

I hope you did in fact get to see the lunar eclipse. There were several of us at Harrington Beach, and we had a few

families that came. It stayed clear until after 9:30, so at least we got to see part of totality. I enjoyed watching the shadow crossing the moon, and still seeing the outline of the moon behind it. It was also really neat knowing that it was full moon, but as the sky got darker, you could pick out deep sky objects.

I want to thank everyone who volunteered to show up for the private star party at the parish I work at.

Don't forget: Astronomy 101 will begin at 6:30 starting with the November meeting. The business meeting will begin at 7:30 p.m.

The Infinitees order is being shipped! Those of you who ordered merchandise, I should have it by the Nov. 4th meeting.

It's that time of year...

With all of the election stuff happening, the NCSF has their own election to worry about. In December, members present at the general meeting will vote for 3 new board members. Outgoing board members are: Mandy Matthies, Rob Powell, and Brad Plaumann. President Jeff Setzer will begin accepting nominations at the November meeting, and will also accept nominations at the December meeting.

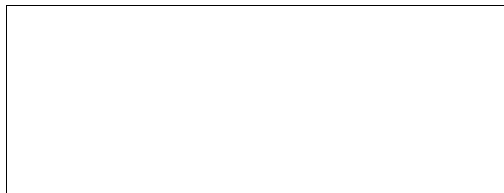
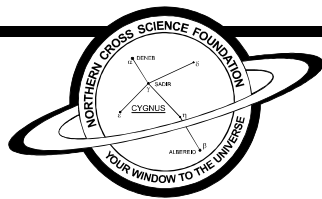
Wanted:

A podium to be used for our general meetings at UNC. A podium with storage space and shelves would be useful for storing electronic equipment. If anybody would be willing to make one or knows of one that could be donated, please see a board member at the November meeting.

Unfortunately, skies were completely cloudy. I will try again in Spring.

Just a reminder to everyone that the new dues structure was announced at the last meeting. The adult membership or family membership will be \$35.00. You may also pay \$8.00 for an additional family member. The student membership will be \$25.00, the supporting membership will be \$70.00. This will take effect beginning in January 2005.

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556190

(FOG from page 2)

over to look through our telescopes. We happily obliged. What a better way to show them that we didn't want any extra light! They seemed pretty amazed by the sites we showed them. One of them nicknamed Jeff's 22 inch scope Goliath.

We were joined later in the evening by Scott Nehring, and Becca and Joe. Becca and Joe belong to a club that meets in downtown Milwaukee. We met them one night at Harrington Beach, and they have been active on Jeff's Wisconsin Astronomy area on the web.

Skies were clear Saturday night. After the Phy. Ed. people left, I turned my attention to Capricornus.

At one point, I was getting pretty cold, so I went and warmed up in Jeff's camper where the heat was nice and toasty. I ready to go again for a while after that. I was determined not to go to bed until I had seen Saturn and the Orion Nebula (in both my scope and Jeff's). This would be the first glance I have had at Orion with my 10 inch. I was very impressed. It was about 3 in the morning when I decided to go to bed. I was up at 7 a.m., and was surprised to see frost on the cars when I got up.

It was certainly nice to be able to get away for a last weekend of observing yet before the weather gets colder. Look for this event again next year, although the site will probably be booked much further in advance so we can try to keep it to just astronomers on the site. Thanks to Jeff for arranging the site for us.

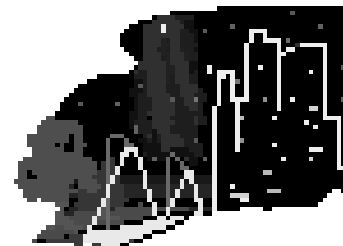


SPECTRUM

Is published by the Northern Cross Science Foundation, Inc. A nonprofit organization based the state of southeastern Wisconsin and is a Member of the North-Central Region of the Astronomical League.



The NCSF supports the International Dark sky association.



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<http://www.ncsf.info>