

SPECTRUM

Northern Cross Science Foundation Newsletter

November 2008

LOOKING UP

November 6, Thursday

General Meeting

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

November 21, Thursday

Board Meeting

7:30 p.m.
Home of Joyce Jentges

December 4, Thursday

General Meeting

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

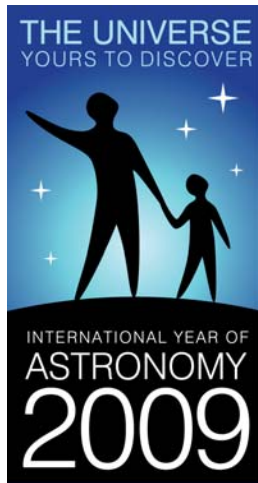
December 18, Thursday

Board Meeting

7:30 p.m.
Home of Joyce Jentges

2009 International Year of Astronomy

By Jeff Setzer IYA 2009 Coordinator



Hello Friends,

IYA 2009 is moving along nicely. As of today, the participation has grown to 129 countries, the latest two additions being Albania and Afghanistan.

I have exciting updates on some of the Cornerstone Projects. The Galileoscope will be entering production soon, and hopes remain high that the final unit cost will remain at or near the \$10 mark. The Portal To The Universe universal astronomy index website is getting organized and the NCSF is already registered. Locally, we have an online group representing the astronomical community in Wisconsin - and almost every astronomy club, museum and planetarium in SE Wisconsin -- who are meeting in person to coordinate our efforts. A map of locations to provide coverage during 100 Hours of Astronomy is already being drawn and updated. In speaking with our friends at Bayshore Town Center, there is a lot of excitement about IYA 2009 and plans are being made to include them in a big way.

An interesting new development from IYA 2009 is the creation of a song about Galileo and the telescope, called "Shoulders of Giants." Created and performed by a group known as Astro-Cappella, this song was recorded and made available to IYA 2009 organizations for non-commercial use. Attached to this is a contest, beginning in January 2009 and running until January 7, 2010, for people to create "music videos" of synchronized images to go along with the song. The prize is \$500 and a (yet to be described) telescope. Categories range from middle school age through adult. It's a catchy tune and you can be sure I'll be playing it a few times in the coming months!

Another new initiative is "365 Days of Astronomy" which will be a new podcast on some aspect of astronomy (professional or amateur) will be released every day during IYA 2009. If you are interested in contributing, see the IYA 2009 website or ask me about it directly. As a contributor you could reach out to literally millions of people!

Observatory Landscaping

By Rick Kazmierski

Soil excavation at the Observatory took place on Saturday, November 1st, as scheduled. A sizable amount of dirt was removed from the west side of the building to promote better drainage. Last winter, heavy ice formed on the floor of the Observatory due to melting snow. Saturday's efforts will hopefully redirect runoff to the south of the building.

Don Miles arrived at 9:00 am with a rented New Holland, equipped with a bucket and tines. Ten other members assisted with shovels, rakes, wheel barrels, brooms, and lots of advice. Present were; Dan Bert, Kevin Bert, Gene and Charlotte DuPree, John Helm, Don Miles, Bob Radtke, Rick Poulin, Justin Modra, Rick and Mickey Kazmierski. President Joyce Jentges arrived after work to join us.
(Continued on pg4)

September Meeting Minutes

By Secretary, Kevin Bert

The October business meeting of the Northern Cross Science Foundation was held at the Unitarian Church North in Mequon. President Joyce Jentges opened the meeting at 8:15 pm and welcomed over 24 members and guests.

She then asked for standard reports.

Treasurer Gene Dupree reported a balance of \$5,269.80 for the total of both accounts. He said that the Observatory electric bill of over \$5,000 had been resolved. Problems came up after a new meter had been installed.

Secretary Kevin Bert was saddened to report that founding club member Rudy Zarling's Wife Carol had recently died. A sympathy card was passed

around for members to sign. Kevin recognized new members John Helm from Grafton. There was no other club or Astronomical League business.

Under old business Joyce ran down the upcoming events. Kevin told members of an Observatory training session at 7:00 pm. on October 18th. He also said that the October 10, 11 & 25 public viewing nights were in need of leaders. Kevin said that Observatory Director Dan Bert would be sending out e-mails asking for help if no member responds tonight.

Under new business Joyce brought up the topic of landscaping out at the Observatory. Drainage from the western slope last spring flows over the sidewalk and seeps into the Observatory. Kevin Bert had a talk with the park superintendent, and no money was in their budget to fix the problem.

A lengthy discussion covering various options followed. It sounds like the club would have to address the issue. Joyce would check with a relative about the possibility for an estimate. Paul Kamikawa would be contacted by Kevin to get his input. Don Miles would look into rental options while Justin Modra would report on other possibilities. As things come together, a date would be set up to start work.

After a discussion the October 31st date was set at Bayshore's Rotunda for sidewalk astronomy viewing in conjunction with Halloween festivities.

As a final note, Joyce said that nominations for the board of directors would take place next month. Specific details will come then.

With no further new business, Joyce closed the business meeting at 9:30 p.m.

Things to See In the November Night Sky

By Don Miles



Mercury: Look ahead of the glow of the rising Sun on the eastern horizon early in the month. Mercury will pass behind the sun in November, so it will be lost in the glare for the rest of the month.

Mars: Is presently also behind the Sun, so it too is lost in the glare.

Jupiter & Venus: Look for Jupiter still above and to the left of the "handle" in the teapot of Sagittarius (lower in the southwestern sky). Look for brilliant Venus below and to the right of the spout of Sagittarius (above and to the left of the setting sun). Both will be easily visible without a telescope. Watch Venus rapidly move from its current location early in the month to just below Jupiter by months end.

Saturn: Look in the eastern horizon about 3:30am early in the month, as it rises about 4 hours before the sun. Saturn is still positioned in Leo, but continues slowly moving eastward (away from Regulus).

Uranus & Neptune: Both visible using binoculars and good finder charts. Both are highest in the sky around

9pm, and set early in the morning. Uranus is still in Aquarius, and Neptune is still in Capricornus. Uranus, at (mag +5.8), is just within the lower limit of naked eye visibility under dark skies, but easy in binoculars. Neptune is even dimmer (mag 7.9), but still easy in binoculars.

Moon:

November 5th: First Quarter
November 13th: Full Moon
November 19th: Last Quarter
November 27th: New Moon

Special Events:

Meteor Showers: Watch for both the Taurid and the Leonid meteor showers this month.

The Taurids peak around the 5th and the 12th (Southern Taurids and Northern Taurids respectively, which are like two bands of denser debris in the main stream), and can be seen about a week before and after their peaks. Their source is debris from Comet Encke, and pre-

dicted rates are only about 7/hour. These are relatively slow movers, but the particles are larger than average, making the few that are observed slow and bright. As the name implies, look in the general direction of Taurus.

The Leonids peak around the night of the 17th. These also can be seen for a couple of days before and after the peak. Their source is debris from Comet Temple-Tuttle, and predicted rates are only about 10/hour. Unlike the Taurids, these are fast movers. These will generally appear to originate from the constellation Leo.

Don't let the low predicted rates discourage you from going out. These are only predictions, and have been known to be wrong. As always, the darker skies the better, and watching after midnight (if possible) puts you on the "front" side of the Earth as it passes thru the debris. Dress warmer than you think you'll need, get comfortable, enjoy.

October Meeting

No 101 Class

Main Program

The Main Program will be presented by Jeff Setzer and is entitled:

Buying a First Telescope

Learn what to look for in buying a first telescope. We will discuss how telescopes work on a basic level, practical considerations of physical size, expense, and show several real world examples. If skies are clear, we will take the sample telescopes outside to observe through them so you can compare under real stars. Whether you're buying as a gift or yourself, you won't want to miss this free event!

From the Editor -

At the November meeting, nominations will be taken for one open position on the board of directors. The term of Jeff Setzer is expiring. Nominations will continue to be accepted at the December meeting at which time an election will take place.



October Members Night

Gene and Charlotte DuPree reported that the Members night held at their home on October 4th was a resounding success! Clear skies and good company were had by all attending. It was well after midnight when the final guest departed.

Jim and Gwen Plunkett Observatory



**Observatory Director:
Dan Bert: 262-375-2239**

Observatory Note:

An outdoor handout box has been mounted outside the observatory for our Viewing Schedule and Club information.

Haunted Hike

By Dan Bert

The ghost of Pucketts Pond did not make an appearance at the Haunted Hike, but 8 members of the NCSF did to offer views of the fall sky. Some Halloween themed music was played by the DuPree's to go with the evenings theme. The sky started out clear as Venus set and early views focused onto Jupiter. Focusing of the planet was easy in the Panarusky thanks to the new slow-motion focuser addition to the west focuser. Out under the roof, Carol welcomed visitors and handed out literature, Sky & Tel, and Astronomy magazines. Waves of people showed up as the shuttle unloaded and at times the observatory was well packed. In a similar fashion the clouds also came in waves. Those who went on the torch lit haunted hike first came back later with the skies clouded over. Even though scopes could see nothing, some children still wanted to climb the ladder and pretend to look anyways. Some arrived in costumes, the caped count Dracula decided not to count the stars in M15. Off and on views of Alberio and the Andromeda Galaxy thru thin patchy clouds were viewed in the 9-1/4 SCT.

Park manager Andy stopped by near the end and thanked us for our presence at the haunted hike event. Overall at least 250 people came by to look through our telescopes.

CURRENT CLACK

New Members

NCSF welcomes the following new Club members:

John and Cindy Helm

Public Viewing

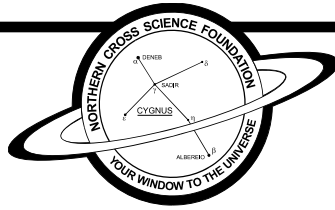
The NCSF viewing season has ended for 2008 and will resume the first Saturday in January with a candlelight hike/ski event at Harrington Beach State Park. The Board of Directors wishes to thank all those members who lead and/or assisted at Public Nights this past year.

Bayshore Halloween Bash

By Joyce Jentges

On October 31st, seven members of the Northern Cross Science Foundation (in various Halloween garb) found themselves bombarded by ghostly ghouls of all kinds. We were invited to be part of the Halloween Bash at Bayshore Town Center. With all the lights, Jupiter and Alberio proved to be about the only thing we could show people, but they seemed to really be impressed with Jupiter. Most of us set up by the rotunda like usual, which proved to be pretty crowded as the carriage rides were taking place in that location as well. The DuPree's set up near the Town Center, and caught the crowd on that side of the street. While observing from this location can be somewhat frustrating because of the street lights, headlights, and kids bumping your telescope, it is successful from the vantage point of sheer exposure to a large amount of people. Right now, I am not sure I could accurately guess the amount of people who looked through our telescopes. We handed out a lot of flyers, and answered many questions from curious people. A few members even brought extra friends and family out to help! I would like to say thank you to all of you who have made our events at Bayshore Town Center a success this year. We look forward to hosting more events there next year as part of IYA 2009.

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(Continued from pg 1)

The weather was perfect, but equipment problems slowed us down for about an hour. However, once back in the saddle, Don Miles made short work of what was left, and did an outstanding job on the overall excavation. Director Dan Bert thanked everyone present for their help and support. We left the site at 2:30 pm.



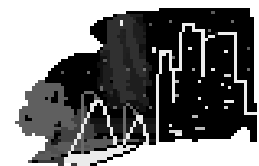
Monthly Meeting
 Location
 Unitarian Church
 North
 13800 N. Port Wash.
 Rd.
 Mequon, WI 53097

SPECTRUM

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