

SPECTRUM

Northern Cross Science Foundation Newsletter

October 2010

LOOKING UP

October 7, Thursday

General Meeting

7:00 p.m. - Astronomy 101

7:30 p.m. - Business Meeting

Main Program to follow

October 8, Friday

Members Night

7:00 p.m.

Harrington Beach

October 9, Saturday

Observatory Training

7:15 p.m.

Harrington Beach

October 15 & 16, Fri. & Sat.

Public Viewing

7:00 p.m.

Harrington Beach

October 21, Thursday

Board Meeting

7:30 p.m.

Home of Joyce Jentges

October 23, Saturday

Haunted Hike

6:00 p.m.

Harrington Beach

October 29, Friday

Great Pumpkin Event

6:00 p.m.

Bayshore Town Center

Jim & Gwenn Plunkett Observatory News...by Dan Bert

Special thanks to Al Steinberg for building the guestbook folding wall table on the southwest wall. This will be the new location for the public to sign in.



New Observatory Guestbook location.

Special thanks to Gene DuPree for installing the Sky Commander digital setting circles onto the observatories 9.25 SCT. The system is the same as the Sky Commander currently on the Panarusky. However a 2-star align is required for this unit while the 20" only requires a one-star align.



Sky Commander for 9.25 SCT.

Labor Day was observed at the Jim & Gwenn Plunkett Observatory on Monday Sept 6th. The roof tracks were regreased and the bottom door plate on the southeast door was found loose and reattached. If the plate loosens again please let me know.

The sprouting shrubs were pruned and mulch added & raked.

Several invading weeds were pulled or sprayed all while giving tours of the Observatory to passersby. If you are interested in helping out with observatory maintenance please let me know.



Observatory maintenance & weeding.

We are looking for help with the following:

- The south doors are in need of painting as well as all the door jams.
- The contributor plaques are beginning to fade and in need of another clear coat.
- The corrector plate of the 9.25 SCT needs cleaning.

Jim and Gwen Plunkett
Observatory



Observatory Director:
Dan Bert: 262-375-2239

September Meeting Minutes

By Kevin Bert

The September business meeting of the Northern Cross Science Foundation was held at the Unitarian Church North in Mequon. President Joyce Jentges opened the meeting at 8:35 pm and welcomed over 28 members and guests. She noted that Justin Modra had received the first level of the Outreach Award and was recognized in the latest Reflector for his efforts. He had been active in the Leagues Double Star Club too, and was urged to lead a night on viewing double stars for the membership some time in the future. She then asked for standard reports.

Treasurer Gene Dupree reported \$678.14 in the Observatory account and \$3,645.99 in the checking account. An insurance premium payment of \$685.00 had just been made. It provides liability insurance for members on outreach events, the Observatory and the Coronado telescope.

Secretary Kevin Bert reported that there were no roster changes in the membership. Kevin directed members to the latest Reflector for details about the national convention of the Astronomical League (ALCON 2010). 250 members attended this event. Next years event will be held at Bryce Canyon National Park. Any member not receiving the bi-monthly Reflector magazine should contact him to get on the League's mailing list.

Under old business, Joyce said that a field trip to the Barlow planetarium in Menasha was set for a noon private presentation on October 30th. Over a dozen members expressed an interest.

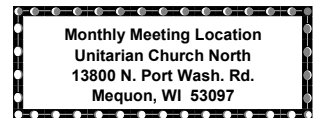
Under new business, Joyce told the membership to look for an article in the Ozaukee Press about her and the Northern Cross. She had just come from an interview out at the Jim and Gwen Plunkett Observatory.

Joyce urged Observatory Operators to follow the check list when using the observatory for a personal or public viewing

night. The turnbuckles were found unhooked on one occasion. Dan Bert said that a training night would be scheduled soon for members wanting to be able to operate the Observatory and Panarusky Telescope, or for Operators to get a refresher course.

Joyce Jentges went over upcoming events for September. The Ice Age Center in Dundee was hosting a talk and telescope viewing the upcoming Saturday. Friday the 10th is a members/campers evening, with the 12th a presentation and viewing at the Bog's UWM Field Station. Public Viewing Nights (PVN's), are held on the 17th and 18th at Harrington Beach, and sidewalk astronomy on the 15th is at Bayshore, (See Jeff for a pass to park at Bayshore).

With no further new business, Joyce closed the business meeting at 8:55 p.m.



Things to See In the October Night Sky By Don Miles

Mercury: Is currently a morning object (mag -1.1) just ahead of the sun, but is already sliding back towards the sun on its way around the back side. It will then stay lost in the sun's glare until about mid-November when it turns into an evening object as it will then trail the sun.

Mars & Venus: Both start the month trailing the sun with Mars (mag 1.5) above Venus (mag -4.3) by about 6.5 degrees. They're both in the constellation Libra, and will start to separate as the month progresses. Mars will stay about the same distance from the sun, but Venus will slip towards the sun on its way around the near side. Venus will also appear larger in diameter, but the sunlit portion will be just a sliver until it gets lost in the glare of the sun until it passes between us and sun after which will become a morning object again around mid-November.

Saturn: Look for Saturn (mag .09) still in the constellation Virgo in the morning right before the sun comes up. It will continue to rise earlier and earlier for the rest of the year, so the views will only get better.

Neptune: At (mag 7.8) and still in Capricorn, Neptune is best viewed about 10pm early in the month, and by 9 by month's end. You'll know you're looking at the right object as it will have a greenish hue, and won't be stellar.

Jupiter & Uranus: The pair are evening objects close to each other and will stay fairly stationary in the constellation. They're both in the lower right fish of the constellation Pisces, and rise about 9pm, with Uranus (mag 5.7) about 1.4 degrees above and to the left of much brighter Jupiter (mag -2.9). By month's end, they will have separated slightly with Uranus now about 4 degrees above and to the left of Jupiter.

Moon:

October 1st: Last Quarter

October 7th: New Moon

October 14th: First Quarter

October 23rd: Full Moon

October 30th: Last Quarter

Special Events:

There are two meteor showers (the Draconids and the Orionids) and the bright-

est comet of 2010 to watch for this month. The Draconids happen on the 8th and peak rates of ~50/hr, and the Orionids the night of the 21st with a peak of ~20/hr. Your better of the two options will be the Draconids, as there will be little moonlight to interfere. The comet is 103P/Hartley, and will peak (brightness-wise) at 5th magnitude (almost bright enough to see with the naked eye). The light of a comet is spread out, so it is much harder to see than a star of equal magnitude. You'll need a pair of binoculars, but they will give you a beautiful view.



October General Meeting

101 Class...by Kevin Bert

The October 101 class is entitled:

"Astronomical Pronunciations."

You often hear the comment "there is my pronunciation and there is the correct pronunciation." You will be presented the correct way to pronounce the names of constellations, stars, planets, moons and lunar features with the help of the Astronomical League astro-notes.

Main Program

We will show a video from the History Channel series "The Universe" season four.

Death Stars: Explore the threats to Earth from supernovas, gamma-ray bursts, and stars that collide.

October's Featured Constellation



October Meeting Raffle

Member Mark Hirschman has graciously donated a \$99.00 gift certificate from Software Bisque for Club use. We will be raffling off the certificate at the October meeting, but you must be a member in good standing and present to win.

September Events

Saturday, September 4

Ice Age Center

Charlotte Dupree reported that Gene, Al, Joyce, Harvey and Gail, setup scopes for the 8:30 start time. There had been a talk inside the interruptive center earlier. Over 100 people enjoyed the great skies for viewing Nebula, galaxies, star clusters, and double stars, Jupiter, Uranus and Neptune. Viewing lasted until 11:00pm.

Friday, September 10

Members Viewing Night

Ernie Mastroianni reported six people attended the members viewing night at the Jim and Gwen Plunkett Observatory at Harrington Beach State Park. Although the sky was clear during the day, clouds and haze drifted in as we opened the roof shortly after 7 p.m. Despite the conditions, some clear patches allowed high power views of the Ring Nebula and the nearby globular cluster M-56 with the 20" Panaruskysky telescope. A hole in the haze allowed clear viewing of M-13, then we moved on to the Owl Cluster, NGC 457 in Cassiopeia. We closed the roof at 9:15.

Saturday, September 11

Pike Lake Community Campfire

Gene, Charlotte DuPree and Al Steinburg setup scopes at 6:00 and looked at a few sunspots through Al's scope. The early visitors saw Venus, Mars and a thin crescent Moon set early. A group of people came over during the break of the entertainment, so they could see the international Space Station fly over. A few of them could not believe that people actually live up there. The viewing was good all eve-

ning and we looked at star clusters, galaxies, nebulas and saw double stars, Jupiter, Uranus and Neptune. We had around 75 visitors and the last people left about 9:30.

Saturday, September 11

Cedarburg Bog

Dan Bert reported skies clearing up just in time for the stargazing event at the UWM field station at the Cedarburg Bog. Approx. 30-40 people attended the event. A short PowerPoint presentation was given by Kevin Bert followed by a laser guided sky tour. Telescope viewing began at dark with members Dan Bert, Tony Marek and John Helm in attendance. The Bog enjoyed the program and provided this feedback:

"Thanks so much for doing the Star Gazing program at the Bog on Saturday night. It was a beautiful evening and we had a good turn out. You and the other members of your group have a wealth of knowledge on all kinds of astronomical topics. I think the participants learned a lot and enjoyed the entire program. Please extend my appreciation to the rest of your group.."

Wednesday, September 15

Bay Shore Town Center

Jeff and Becca Setzer reported a good night for sidewalk astronomy. There was a threat of rain and clouds in the forecast but partly cloudy skies held until 10pm. The Moon was visible all night and Jupiter

CURRENT CLACK

Leaders for Public Viewing

October 8

Members Night

Open

October 9

Observatory Training

Kevin Bert

October 15 & 16

Public Viewing

Leaders Needed

October 23

Haunted Hike

Gene and Charlotte DuPree

October 29

Great Pumpkin Event

Jeff Setzer

Star Parties

Prairie Skies

September 30 - October 3
Kankakee, IL
www.prairieskies.org

rose above the buildings in the final hour. Thanks to Robert Radke, Don Miles, and Tony Marek for bringing out their scopes!

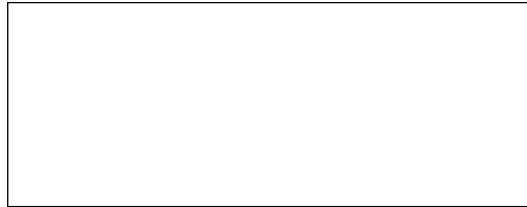
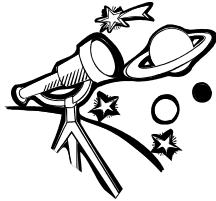
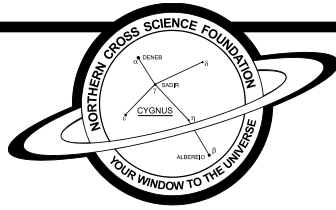
Friday, September 17 Public Viewing Night

Rob Powell reported this event was a rousing success despite the early arrival of "the Milwaukee Nebula". Over fifty star-seeking members of the public visited the observatory to view the Moon and Jupiter. Partly cloudy skies precluded viewing deep-space objects, but everyone thoroughly enjoyed viewing Jupiter, which shone through the heaviest of clouds (at times).

One visitor, a retired gentleman from Sheboygan, brought a vintage Celestron 90mm Maksutov (1000mm focal length). It was old enough that it

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boasted a 0.965" focuser, with matching diagonal and 18mm eyepiece, and a helical focusing mechanism in which the entire optical tube rotates as the operator focuses the field of view. I mounted the telescope on my heavy-duty camera tripod, and the owner & other visitors enjoyed lunar views through the telescope. We also obtained lower power and higher power views by placing modern-day .25" diameter eyepieces in a .965 to 1.25 inch adapter.

By 10:00pm the clouds were too thick, the crowds had departed, and the roof was closed shortly thereafter.

Saturday, September 18 **Public Viewing Night**

Gene and Charlotte DuPree were leaders for this event and reported mostly cloudy skies during most of the night. Gene put the 9 1/4 Celestron on the Moon, even though it was barely visible. Around 10:00 Jupiter made its appearance, to look at with the 20". A mother and daughter stayed in their car, hoping, to be able to look through the big scope. The friends group was having a campfire and hike, which provided a steady stream of about 50 visitors all night. The observatory was closed at 11:00.

Friday, September 25 **Annual Historic Days**

The DuPree's reported taking astronomy display materials to this event at the Community Park in Thiensville for the Logemann Center. Gene set-up the club's 90mm Coronado and a C-4.5 for solar viewing. Also in use was an 80mm Astrophysics and a Galileo scope for some structural observation. The day started out with a mostly clear sky, which turned mostly cloudy with some viewing in between clouds. Kevin Bert stopped by on his way home from work. They estimated 100+ Guests.

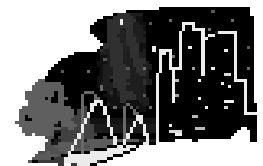
Our club has a "Discussion Group on Google"
See our website: <http://www.ncsf.info/> for details.

SPECTRUM

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