

SPECTRUM

Northern Cross Science Foundation Newsletter

September 2009

LOOKING UP

September 3, Thursday

General Meeting

7:00 p.m. Astronomy 101
7:30 p.m. Business Meeting
Main Program to follow

September 11, Friday

Public Viewing

8:00 p.m.
Cedarburg Bog

September 12, Saturday

Small Scope Party

6:00 p.m.
Harrington Beach

September 17, Thursday

Board Meeting

7:30 p.m.
Home of Joyce Jentges

September 19, Saturday

Moonlight Hike

6:00 p.m.
Harrington Beach

September 19, Saturday

Community Campfire

7:00 p.m.
Pike Lake State Park

September 23, Wednesday

Sidewalk Astronomy

7:00 p.m.
Bayshore Town Center

September 25 & 26, (Fri & Sat)

100 Telescope Event (IYA)

6:00 p.m. – 11:00 p.m.
Greenfield Park, Milwaukee
(See lead article)

2009 International Year of Astronomy *By Jeff Setzer IYA 2009 Coordinator*



100 Telescopes In The Park is coming up fast! September 25 and 26 (Friday and Saturday evenings, 6pm-11pm) at Greenfield Park in Milwaukee; we still need more people to help us reach our goal of 100 telescopes! We're also doing a telescope clinic the first hour of each night so if you are game for that let me know too. For the latest information and easy signup, there is a link on the front page of ncsf.info to the 100 Telescopes event. If you're not a computer user and would like to volunteer, please contact me directly.

On Thursday, September 24 (yes, the night before 100 Telescopes), join award-winning author Dava Sobel for a book signing, lecture and preview of [Galileo: The Power of the Telescope](#), a new Planetarium show produced at the Daniel M. Soref Planetarium and guest-narrated by Sobel. Reservations are required and seating is limited. The book signing is at 6:30pm and the show begins at 7:00pm. See www.mpm.edu or call the planetarium box office for more information.

Don't forget Galilean Nights October 22-24! The next newsletter will have all the details, or watch our website for up-to-the-minute information on all NCSF happenings.

Mark your Calendars! "Small Scope Party" - September 12, 2009

By Kevin Bert



Last call!

It all comes together at the SSSP on Saturday September 12 at Harrington Beach State Park starting at 6:00 pm. Come a little earlier to have things set up at that start time if you wish. This will allow almost an hour of sun viewing and time to look at and enjoy the variety of scopes before it gets dark. Drag out a few swap-table items too if you have any. We are looking for as many small scopes as possible. I know some of you have two or more lurking in attics, closets, and basements. Bring them all. I hope to see the parking lot full of them either set up or on display. The night will be treated very much like a members night. Scaled up enough to call it a party, scaled down, (in aperture), enough to appreciate the joy, (and sometimes frustration), of small scopes. Beverages and snacks will be available and the Observatory will be open, but the Panarusky will remain capped up. If it turns out to be a night to look at your scope instead of through it because of clouds, please consider still bringing your

scope so those in attendance can appreciate it. This is strictly a visual equipment event. Please don't set up a bunch of photographic accessories. Sunset is close to 7:00 with Jupiter and the outer planets available as it gets darker, and deep sky viewing after 8:00. At midnight Moonrise ushers in the warning that it will soon be time to close the book on the event. But only after a few good looks at what was undoubtedly the highlight of old spyglass viewing from times past. The moon never disappoints.

SSSP RULES

- 1) No telescopes over 6.0-Inch in aperture are permitted to be set up.
- 2) Larger scopes, stopped down do not qualify.
- 3) Telescopes of the Reflector, Refractor or Catadioptric persuasions are all acceptable.
- 4) No binoculars please.
- 5) No photon amplification equipment allowed. Visual use only!
- 6) Items for sell or trade are permitted.

August Meeting Minutes



By Kevin Bert

The August business meeting of the Northern Cross Science Foundation was held at the Unitarian Church North in Mequon. President Joyce Jentges opened the meeting at 9:00 pm and welcomed over 29 members and guests. She then asked for standard reports.

Treasurer Gene DuPree reported a balance of \$987.75 in the general fund and \$1045.79 in the Observatory account. Secretary Kevin Bert acknowledged newest member David Drapes and said he was expecting another person to join that he recently had talked to on the phone. The Astronomical League was about to hold their national convention in New York this weekend. The main banquet speaker for the event is comet hunter, author, astronomy enthusiast David Levy. To his knowledge, no NCSF member was attending.

Jeff Setzer updated IYA activities along with the "100 Telescopes in The Park" set for Greenfield Park on September 25 & 26. Volunteers are needed to bring telescopes for this important activity. At 6:00 pm a telescope clinic will kick off the event giving the public a chance to tune up and get advice on how to use their scopes. As the sky gets darker, viewing through telescopes will follow. Details about the event can be found at the Wisconsin Astronomy site <http://www.wisconsinastronomy.org/>

On the 11th and 12th members can view the Perseids meteor shower from the grounds of the Yerkes Observatory. If you are willing to make the drive it would be an interesting setting to view or photograph this event.

The Galileo Telescope project has been having some difficulty getting funds to keep the scopes in production. Telescopes are starting to be delivered. Go to the NCSF Goggle site to sign up as our order will be sent in soon.

Jeff added news that the Northern Cross has contributed to the 9 panel astronomy display created by the Wehr Nature Center. We will have use of the display for future events too.

Under old business, attendees of the WOW weekend at Waupaca gave a follow-up report on how things went. Two out of three nights were clear and the Jupiter impact mark was seen. Several members won door prizes. Next years event runs from July 8th through the 11th.

Under new business Joyce noted that she is going to be a guest on the Morning Blend next Friday at 9:00 am. The new Coronado H-alpha telescope was to be one of the main talking points. She is looking to advance them photos of NCSF outreach activities with the Coronado telescope and images taken through that scope. Those that could help out in that capacity should get in touch with her by the weekend.

Stephanie Marsala noted that the event at the Learning Shop in Brookfield on August 8th has been postponed. Interested members will be contacted when a new date is set. Kevin Bert said that boy scout Trevor Metoxen will be working on his Eagle Scout service project and has selected the Northern Cross as the recipient of his efforts. Observatory director and Kevin met with Trevor to go over his plan to finish landscaping around the observatory with shrubs and put in observing pads. As you might recall, observing pads in the configuration of Cygnus were in the original plans of the observatory and would be positioned to the east of the facility. Trevor hopes to raise money for the entire project. He is asking for help from NCSF members to assist in working out at the observatory to complete the project. I would like to get an email list of members that are interested in helping. I do not have a specific time line from Trevor for activities. As he plans his specific work activities, dates and times, I will forward the information to you to consider. You can then email me back if you can help. Things will happen quickly because he only has a month to complete it before returning to school.

Joyce gave a rundown of the upcoming events for August and encouraged members to participate. With no further new business, Joyce closed the business meeting at 9:40 p.m.

Things to See In the September Night Sky *By Don Miles*

Mercury & Saturn: Look for Mercury above and to the right of the rising sun before the sun rises later in the month. Early in the month, Mercury will be too close to the sun to pick out. Saturn is even closer to the sun, and won't stray far, so won't be viewable this month.

Jupiter & Neptune: Jupiter (mag. -2.8) will rise in the east in Capricornus at about 7pm early in the month, and by about 4:30 later in the month (so will be already high in the sky as the sun sets). Jupiter will be below and to the right of much dimmer Neptune (mag. 7.8) by about 5 degrees, and will continue to increase that distance to 6.5 degrees by month's end. Neptune will look like a blue-gray "star".

Venus & Mars: Venus rises about 4:00am and Mars rises about midnight. Venus is still the brightest object (mag. -4.0) in the

eastern sky before sunrise. Over the course of September, Venus will move eastward from the Beehive cluster in Cancer to the bottom-center of Leo. Mars (mag 1.0) will also move to the east from the "feet" in Gemini to almost the "shoulders" by month's end.

Uranus: Rises in the eastern sky about 8:00pm early in the month and by about 7:30 later in the month, and sets around sunrise. Uranus (mag 5.7) is in the constellation Pisces, and is below the right "fish". Look for a blue-green "star".
Pluto: Should still be possible around the darker moon phase (around the 11th), but will soon be not viewable any more this year as it sinks into the southern sky.

Moon:
September 5th: Full Moon
September 11th: Last Quarter

September 18th: New Moon
September 26th: First Quarter

Special Events:

Meteor Showers: Watch for the Alpha Aurigids in the early morning hours of Tuesday the 1st. The predictions are very sparse (peak expected rate for this shower is about 5 per hour). The best chance to see these are between 3:30 and 5:00 am.

Asteroid: Look for asteroid 3 Juno as it peaks in brightness (mag 7.6) about 7.5deg above and to the left of Uranus (see above) early in the month. Juno will continue to move to the southwest as the month progresses, after which it will slowly fade until it comes back in 2015.



September General Meeting

101 Class

For September, the 101 class will be given by Kevin Bert and is entitled;

"Using Filters"

Many of the celestial objects have subtle details that can be enhanced through the use of filters. Take advantage of a filter by knowing which one to apply to a particular object.

The Featured Constellation:

"Ursa Minor"



Main Program

The Main Program will be a continuation of the astronomy 101 class on filter use. If weather permits, telescopes will be set up in the parking lot to let you compare the difference between filters by applying what was learned in the 101 class. Members are encouraged to bring their own equipment to explore a combination of filter scenarios. Jupiter will be the primary target for planetary viewing and deep sky objects will be explored as well. The moon will be near full. But Wait! There is a filter for that, Right!

Note Worthy

Harvey Sherman will give a brief description of a Free Downloadable Planetarium Software Program called Stellarium.

August Events

Sidewalk Astronomy

July 29th

Jeff Setzer reported that clear skies contributed to as many as 200 visitors stopping to view and/or ask questions. Members had four scope available for public viewing.

Ice Age Center

August 15th

Charlotte DuPree reported a healthy turn out of 200—250 visitors for this event. Skies were clear and seven club members participated.

Northwoods Starfest

August 21-23

Skies were clear both Friday and Saturday nights of this event. Nine NCSF members attended. I'm told we made a killing on door prizes. A good time was had by all.

Sidewalk Astronomy

August 26th

Don Miles reported overcast skies limited public interest to about 50 visitors. Although overcast, the moon and Jupiter were occasionally visible. Five member scopes were on site.

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

Jim and Gwen Plunkett Observatory



Observatory Director:
Dan Bert: 262-375-2239

Observatory Notes

Eagle Scout Trevor Metoxen has been working with the NCSF and Harrington Beach for his service project. He has finished landscaping around the observatory and will be constructing small circular concrete pads in the pattern of the northern cross constellation to the east of the observatory. It was decided that large observing pads would not be beneficial as most prefer setup in the parking lot. The pads will be used for the mounting of six parallelogram binocular stands to be built at a later time.

A special thanks to Jeff Dollak who donated and installed cabinets and a counter top on the north wall of the Observatory. Don Miles assisted in the installation and made other improvements. (See page 4)

CURRENT CLACK

New Member

NCSF welcomes new Club Member

Teddy Krol

Leaders for Public Viewing

September 11

Cedarburg Bog

Kevin Bert

September 19

Moonlight Hike

Leader Needed

September 19

Community Campfire

Gene and Charlotte DuPree

September 23

Sidewalk Astronomy

Jeff Setzer

September 25 & 26

100 Telescopes Event (IYA)

Jeff Setzer

Members Night

September 18 & 19

Open

Star Parties

Prairie Skies

September 17-20

4H Camp near Bourbonnais, IL

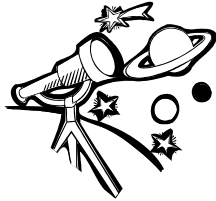
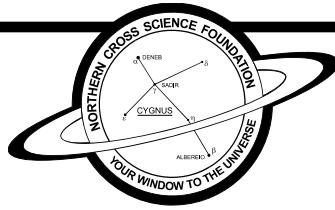
www.prairieskies.org

Special Notes

— Camping is now available at Harrington Beach. It is anticipated that the presence of campers will increase interest on Public Nights at the Observatory.

— The "Take a Walk through the Sky" is now on display at the Wehr Nature Center. This exhibit was co-sponsored by our Club. Members are encouraged to attend.

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Observatory Cabinets & Countertop installed
 by Jeff Dollak and Don Miles

Top 10 list Things You May Hear At The Small Scope Star Party...By Kevin Bert

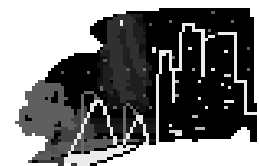
- No.10 I thought I discovered a comet the other night. I then realized it was just a bright star and dew had covered my lens.
- No.9 Either your objective has developed a crack from being too tight in its cell or Jupiter has just split in two.
- No.8 This eyepiece cost 10 times as much as the whole telescope.
- No.7 I had a strange feeling that the night was going to be bad when I discovered that spike relieved himself on the leg of the telescope tripod.
- No.6 That focuser became so stiff that night it was below freezing that I stripped off a few of the plastic teeth in the rack.
- No.5 I heard that it was going to clear up cloudy with a warm frost.
- No.4 Don't worry. It is only that inverted thing. Just move the telescope in the opposite direction you think you should move.
- No.3 An old trick is to tap on the tube so the image will wiggle, bringing out faint detail. I see that this telescope happens to be permanently in that mode.
- No.2 I can say from experience that you should never adjust your secondary mirror holding any tool, with the scope aiming straight up.
- No.1 It is just the opposite of the magnitude scale. The smaller the number on the eyepiece, the fainter the star images.

SPECTRUM

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