

SPECTRUM

Northern Cross Science Foundation Newsletter

September 2012

LOOKING UP

September 6, Thursday

General Meeting

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

September 8, Saturday

Community Campfire

6:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.
Pike Lake

September 14, Friday

Public Viewing

7:00 p.m.
Harrington Beach

September 15, Saturday

Public Viewing

7:00 p.m.
Harrington Beach

September 20, Thursday

Board Meeting

7:30 p.m.
House of Jeff Setzer

September 22, Saturday

Sunday on Saturday

2:00 p.m.
Home of Kevin Bert
(Article on Page 2)

September 22, Saturday

Observe the Moon

8:00 p.m.
Horicon Marsh

September 26, Wednesday

Sidewalk Astronomy

7:00 p.m.
Bayshore Towne Center

Fun Observing at the Northwoods Starfest *by Michael E. Bakich (Astronomy Blog)*

For the second year in a row, I spent a great weekend in Fall Creek, Wisconsin. The organizers of the 25th annual Northwoods Starfest—led by Jon Dannehy — once again asked me to speak, so my wife, Holley, and I made the four-hour drive northwest of Milwaukee. This year, the star party occurred during New Moon, Friday through Sunday, August 17–19, at Hobbs Observatory, which is part of the Beaver Creek Reserve.

My talk, “Star Death,” began at 8 p.m. Friday. It went really well, and the 100+ in the audience seemed to like it a lot. When it ended, they peppered me with a variety of questions.

In 2011, I had spent quite a bit of time viewing through the observatory’s 24-inch reflector. “This year will be different,” I thought, and I made up my mind to spend some quality time doing some small-scope observing. The 3-inch refractor I brought along would do nicely.

So much for plans. The 3-inch never made it out of its case all night. Actually, though, I did observe through a smaller scope this year — Jeff and Becca Setzer’s 22-inch Starmaster Dobsonian-mounted Newtonian reflector. What a superb instrument! And the sky cooperated big time: Not only was it clear, but the seeing was as good as I’ve experienced in Wisconsin.

When I walked over to the observing field after my talk, Jeff had just finished collimating the beast and was off and running through Sagittarius. I came to find out that Jeff, like me, is a big fan of globular clusters and planetary nebulae. That said, the first half-dozen or so objects we viewed were emission nebulae.

Jeff had his Ultra High Contrast eyepiece filter in place, and my first sighting of the Omega Nebula (M17) was unforgettable. The hook (it’s the Swan’s neck if M17 is the Swan Nebula to you) was thick and heavy with whorls, and the space it outlined was appropriately dark. Nebulosity stretched past the edges of the field through Jeff’s 35mm 68° apparent-field-of-view eyepiece.

Jeff then turned the tube toward Hercules, and we spent some quality time observing the Hercules Cluster (M13) and its oft-neglected cousin, M92. Jeff then nudged it over to magnitude 9.4 NGC 6229. You think M92 gets short shrift? NGC 6229, which sits nearly 5° east-northeast of Tau (t) Herculis, appears as only an unresolved glow through 8-inch scopes, so most amateur astronomers avoid it. Through 22 inches of aperture, however, this ball of suns 90,000 light-years away looked mottled, with several dozen individual stars discernible.

“Can we see Stephan’s Quintet?” asked someone in the growing crowd forming around Jeff’s scope. “No problem,” Jeff replied, and soon we were looking at all five members of this well-known but really faint group. OK, to be honest, I could only verify four of them. But, hey, if people who have logged one-thousandth the time at the eyepiece as me say they saw all five, I ain’t bitter.

“What’s next?” another person asked. “Has anyone ever seen NGC 1?” I queried. Because only Jeff and Holley replied in the affirmative, off went the go-to drive on a seek-and-display mission to show everyone the first object in the *New General Catalogue*. (Continued on Pg 4)



Panoramic View of 2012 Northwoods Star Party taken by NCSF Member Harvey Sherman

August Meeting Minutes

By Kevin Bert

The August Business meeting of the Northern Cross Science Foundation was held at Unitarian Church North. President Jeff Setzer opened the meeting at 7:50 pm and welcomed 20 members and guests. Jeff then asked for standard reports.

Treasurer Gene Dupree reported that there was \$8387.97 in the Checking. A bill for \$791.00 was paid for our liability insurance.

Secretary Kevin Bert said the latest member to join was Deborah Kern from Milwaukee. He noted that the National and regional League Convention in Chicago had finished. A handful of members attended the event. Congratulations went to Gene Dupree for receiving the Region award. It is the highest award our region of the Astronomical League can give. I cannot think of a more deserving individual. Thank him next time you see him because our club receives the benefits of his outreach efforts.

Observatory Director Dan Bert reported that the purchase of a set of Meade HD-60 eyepieces had been approved by the board to supplement the other supporting club telescopes in the Observatory. He asked for members who are willing to help out at the Observatory on public viewing nights to contact him.

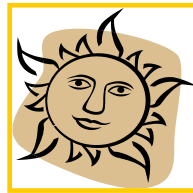
Under new business, Rob Powell said he had a successful run of several nights working on a special project. He presented some short video promoting astronomy

and the Northern Cross. It consisted of a slide show of guests at the Jim & Gwen Plunkett Observatory viewing through the Panarusky telescope along with their verbal comments. Among a number of eventful reactions, it records the satisfaction and excitement of an 86-year-old woman getting her first view of Saturn. Great work Rob!

Jeff thanked all the members that helped with outreach in July. It was a busy month with more activities than usual.

Jeff continued with a list of upcoming NCSF events. August 11 is a talk and viewing at the Ice Age Center. The 18th is a Pike Lake State Park viewing night. The 22nd is Sidewalk Astronomy event at Bayshore. August 24th and 25th are Public viewing nights at Harrington Beach. Jeff noted that registration is open for the August 17-19 Northwoods Starfest in Fall Creek.

With no further business, Jeff closed the meeting at 9:05 pm.



Sun-Day on Saturday

By: Kevin Bert

September 22nd is the date set for this year's Sun-Day on Saturday members' event at my home in the town of Grafton. It seems to be getting harder and harder to

set a date for this event with so many other activities being scheduled, but summer is fading and I did not want to put it off any longer. That's what happens when you procrastinate.

Astronomy was primarily thought of as a nighttime activity and I felt there was a need to spend time appreciating the sun and what it had to offer. Over the last few years there has been a new awareness of the sun thanks to the club purchase of a 90mm Coronado H-alpha dedicated telescope and recent events like the Venus Transit. Solar activity is on the rise as well. This will be another opportunity to view through the Coronado and a variety of the members' sun viewing telescopes. I will give a demonstration on how to set up and operate the club's Coronado for those that are interested in using it in the future, at 2:30. The event will start at 2:00 pm and you can park on the lawn as in other years to set up your own telescopes any time after 2:00 pm.

This is a member's family event that combines leisurely solar viewing with a picnic type atmosphere. I will provide soft drinks and snacks throughout the day. Feel free to come and go as you please, as we will view into the evening if there is an interest. Those that plan to be here at 5:00 pm. and would like to stay and eat should bring a dish to pass. I will provide soft drinks and your choice of sloppy Joes or brats. Please bring a lawn chair too.

If it is raining, the event will be cancelled. If cloudy, you can still come to eat and talk astronomy, as I will still give the Coronado demo. My address is on the back cover of the Spectrum. If in doubt of conditions or in need of directions, call me at 375-2239. I hope to see you there.

Things to See In the September 2012 Night Sky *By Don Miles*

Saturn & Mars: Both are very low in the western sky at sunset, and you'll still be able to see Saturn for the first part of the month. After mid-month, Saturn (mag 0.8) will be too close to the Sun as it works its way around the "back" side, and then returns as a morning object by about mid-November. Mars (mag 1.2) also sets after the Sun, but continues to drift to the East, thus staying up longer. The pair sets about (10 / 9pm) early in the month, but Saturn will eventually set right with the Sun.

Pluto: Is highest in the southern sky about 8:30pm, and hasn't moved any perceivable distance from last year's position. It's still about 7 degrees above and to the left of the top of the teapot of Sagittarius, and around (mag 14.1).

Neptune & Uranus: Neptune (mag 7.8) is highest in the southern sky about 1am,

and is in the constellation Aquarius. Uranus rises about (9pm / Sunset) on the border of the constellations Cetus and Pisces. This month, Uranus will be at "opposition" (where we will be between the Sun and Uranus making it appear *opposite* us from the Sun) on the 29th, which also makes it highest in the sky at midnight. Looking at Uranus even in a small telescope will usually show a tinge of blue or even a little greenish color to it.

Jupiter: Rises about (Midnight / 10:30pm), and is highest in the sky at sunrise. Jupiter (mag -2.4) is located in the constellation Taurus, between the horns.

Venus: Rises about 3am throughout the month. Venus (mag -4.2) starts the month in Gemini, then speeds eastward thru the constellation Cancer, passes below the Pleiades the night of the 13th, and ends up next to Regulus in the constellation Leo.

Mercury: Is now trailing the Sun too closely to be observed. It's on its way around the "front" side of the Sun, and will be too close to see until about mid-October, when you might be able to pick it out of the evening twilight.

Moon:

September 8th: Last Quarter

September 15th: New Moon

September 22nd: First Quarter

September 29th: Full Moon

Special Events:

There are no meteor showers worth mentioning this month. The ones even remotely worth looking for will be mostly be washed out by the moon.

September General Meeting

101 Class... by Kevin Bert

Astronomy 101 class for August is taken from The Universe Sampler Manual and entitled:

"Variable Stars"

See what observations you can make with unaided eyes alone. (The manual of the Universe Sampler is available for \$10.00.)

Constellation of the Month

Vulpecula



Main Program...by Jeff Setzer

"Northwoods Starfest 2012"

The Northwoods Starfest is put on every year by The Chippewa Valley Astronomical Society. It is located at Hobbs Observatory near Fall Creek, Wisconsin. Registration includes camping or use provided dormitory style cabins, meals, speakers, and great camaraderie.

Jeff will speak about his experiencing at the 2012 Event with input from other members having attended.

August Events

Ice Age Center Aug 11

Reported by Charlotte and Gene DuPree

Clear skies and the promise of a better than normal Perseids meteor shower drew a crowd of over 200 visitors! From 8:00-10:00pm Georgine reported seeing 25 meteors. Guests were also able to view Saturn, Neptune, and a variety of deep sky objects. Fun time for all!

Pike Lake Public Viewing Aug 18

Reported by Charlotte DuPree for Al Steinburg

Al Steinburg reports, the Aug. 18, Pike Lake, public viewing was partly cloudy. He had a steady flow of visitors, around 25. One visitor had a 100 milliwatt blue laser, which he let his child play with, so Al left when the campers were gone. (Good Job Al)

Harrington Beach Public Viewing Aug 24

Reported by Charlotte and Gene DuPree

Our Observatory and clear skies, we looked at many Milky Way objects and Neptune. Thanks to Rick D. and Rich for setting-up their scopes.

Horicon Marsh Public Viewing Aug 25

Reported by Charlotte and Gene DuPree

At Horicon Marsh's public viewing, we hosted about a dozen visitors, with a mostly cloudy sky. We did see the Moon off and on and had a sneak peek at Mizar and Alcor. Yes, telescope viewing does bring out the public, even if it is cloudy. Thanks to Jeff for bringing his new scope.

Quote from book, "Starlight Nights"

Written by Leslie C. Peltier

with

A narrative poem by his sister,

Dorothy Peltier

"Unfortunately, some of my weather predictions were not too accurate and on a number of occasions I was forced to hastily terminate my social activities in a town several miles away and drive madly home to cover up the dome before everything was soaked. My sister Dorothy, always ready with a verse for every occasion, commemorated these capers with a long narrative poem "...L. Peltier

Our hero felt the wind's first lash.

He saw the distant lightning's flash.

"My dear," he cried, "I shall return

Some other night with lips that burn.

Right now I've got to dash for home,

For I forgot to close the dome.

...Dorothy Peltier

Jim and Gwen Plunkett Observatory



Observatory Director:
Dan Bert: 262-375-2239

RELATED INFO

NEW MEMBERS

NCSF Welcomes

(New Supporting Members)

Richard Kessler

Aaron Kessler

Leaders for Public Viewing

September 8

Pike Lake

Al Steinberg

September 14

Harrington Beach

Leaders needed

September 15

Harrington Beach

Leaders needed

September 22

Horicon Marsh

Gene and Charlotte DuPree

September 26

Bay Shore Towne Center

Observatory Updates

The pair of spring loaded ladder casters were a success at allowed one person to move the observatory ladder, unfortunately the wood housings did not hold up. New aluminum housings will be made in the near future for a permanent addition to the obs. ladder.

At Northwoods Starfest several acquisitions/buys were made by the club for the observatory including:

68 degree super wide angle 40mm Meade 2" eyepiece (pull the pin on this hand grenade for great views of Andromeda, M81 & 82, double cluster and more)

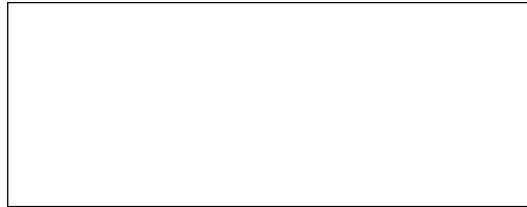
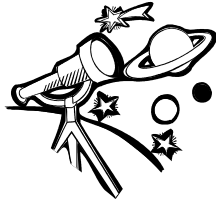
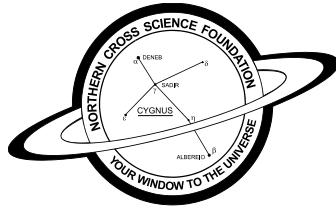
One 25 & 26mm 1.25 plossl eyepieces for auxiliary scopes since we are always short eyepieces for these!

2" Orion sky-glow filter

Bushnell 12x50 Binoculars

Check them out at one of the upcoming events, leaders are still needed for September viewing on the 14th & 15th 7-11PM. Thanks! Dan Bert

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(Continued from Pg 1)

At magnitude 13.6, you can't call this spiral in Pegasus impressive, but, hey, everyone should at least see it once. And through Jeff's 22-inch scope, nobody had the least problem spotting it.

Next we spent some time viewing the Deer Lick Group, whose brightest member, NGC 7331, is a real showpiece. But how many of the surrounding galaxies could people see? Most could spot only magnitude 13.8 NGC 7335, but on and off I glimpsed two others of the fainter members of this galactic patrol.

We all had a great laugh when Becca said she had once heard this collection called the "Salt Lick Group." I explained that the actual name came from a terrific observation American amateur astronomer Tom Lorenzin once made of NGC 7331 from the Deer Lick Gap in North Carolina. But "Salt Lick" is way funnier.

Finally, at the end of my wonderful time with Jeff and Becca, we arrived at the Saturn Nebula (NGC 7009). Eventually, Jeff cranked the magnification up to 525x, and we all marveled at this planetary nebula's central star, its pale blue (or green, depending on one's color receptors) color, and the dual ansae (nebulous extensions) on either side that make it look just a bit like Saturn.

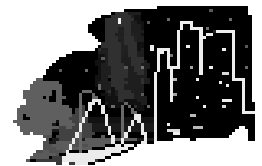
All told, we observed about three dozen objects, including some old favorites. As I look back through my nearly 10 years with *Astronomy* magazine, Friday night at the 2012 Northwoods Starfest was the best night of observing I've had in Wisconsin. Thanks, everyone!

SPECTRUM

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The NCSF supports the International Dark sky association.



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This Issue, along with back Issues of SPECTRUM, can be found on the NCSF Web Site.
<http://www.ncsf.info>

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

Monthly Meeting Location
Unitarian Church North
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