

SPECTRUM

Northern Cross Science Foundation Newsletter

September 1998

LOOKING UP

- Sep. 3 Thursday**
Astronomy 101
7:00 PM
General Meeting
7:45 PM
Carlson Tool & Mfg.
- Sep. 5 & 6 Sat. & Sun**
Public Viewing
8:30 PM
Pike Lake State Park
- Sep. 11 – 13 Fri. – Sun**
Astrofest
4-H camp
Shaw-waw-nas-see
Kankakee, Illinois
- Sep. 19 Saturday**
Members Night
6:30 PM
Kevin Bert's House
Grafton
- Sep. 23 Wednesday**
Board Of Directors
7:30 PM
Jeff Setzer's House
- Sep. 25 Friday**
Members Night
Cloud date (See 19th)
- Sep. 26 Saturday**
Public Viewing
7:30 PM ABC Kids Care
Cedarburg

Northwoods Starfest Part 1

By Jeff Setzer

Standing under a starlit sky, the air sweet with humidity, I can't believe my luck. The very first night I bother with critical alignment of my telescope optics, I get sub-arcsecond seeing. We're looking at Jupiter and Saturn with eye-piece combinations that I've never used before. As people stream by the eye-piece of my 22" Starmaster, they ask, "what power is this?" To which I reply, "I'm not sure...I've never used this much before. I know we're well over 500..." The humidity which brought the steady seeing reduces the transparency, so deep-sky ob-

jects are not very good. But that's okay because I've already logged super-faint targets like the Crescent Nebula and



Hobbs Observatory

Stephan's Quintet from observing earlier in the evening. I don't mind studying the planets for the few hours until the sun comes up. When it does, and after I put the scope away, I realize that we were actually using 751x for our planetary observing. And to think I was considering skipping this star party altogether – thank goodness that meteorolo-

(See **WOODS** on page 2)

Members Night

By Kevin Bert

All NCSF members are invited to my house on Saturday, September 19th for a Members Night. Be sure to bring your scope or binoculars if you have them. It's apparent that there a number of members that need some help with the binocular Messier. I will be setting up my Binocular mount to aid in pointing out and finding some of the objects. We will spend some time looking for them early in the evening. It is dark by 8:00 p.m. And the Moon will not be up until morning. Jupiter and Saturn will be well placed for viewing after 10:00 p.m. Come anytime after 6:30 p.m. I am provid-

ing snacks and refreshments. You can get directions at the September meeting if you need them. Or you can call me at 375-2239. This event will only take place if it is clear. If the weather is questionable, call me on the 19th to see if it is on.

If the 19th is canceled due to bad weather I will have a cloud date on Friday, September 25th. Here a 5 day old Moon will set by 10:00 p.m. Again this is only if the 19th was canceled. So if in doubt call me.

March Minutes

By Kevin Bert

The August meeting of the Northern Cross Science Foundation was held in the conference room of Carlson Tool & Mfg. in Cedarburg. The Astronomy 101 class preceded the business meeting.

Secretary Kevin Bert opened the meeting at 7:50 p.m. to over 16 people.

Comments on how things went at the Nebraska Star Party were given by some of the people that had attended. Rain, wind, heat and mosquitoes contributed to a terrible event this



year. One night out of the week was respectable.

A discussion on the Ozaukee County fair followed. It was great as far as the viewing went. Three clear nights, a good number of members with telescopes and lines of people. It was

(See **MINUTES** on page 3)

(**WOODS** from page 1)

gists aren't always right.

The Northwoods Starfest began on Friday, August 21 and ran through the 23rd. I came from a business trip in Madison, and was able to get out of town a little early to boot. So, for once, I would actually arrive early enough to set up during full daylight. The drive to Beaver Creek Reserve, site of the Hobbs Observatory and location of the Starfest, was depressing at first: it was raining and cloudy from Madison all the way past Mauston. But as I continued further northwest on I-94, I could see that I was literally driving out of the clouds and into a clear, blue sky – some kind of front seemed to have pushed the bad weather south. That turned my spirits around 180 degrees, and I cranked up the Jimmy Buffet.

The Beaver Creek Reserve is a woody expanse a few miles outside of Fall Creek, WI. Hobbs Observatory is situated at the head of a large observing field. Adjacent to that is a separate "youth camp" separated only by a thin tree line. Following the paved path from the observatory takes you through the camp, which has several heated cabins, a roomy lodge with full kitchen, and a bathhouse. When I arrived early on Friday evening, Nick

kitchen, fully-finished lavatories, and a few offices. Attached to the west and east sides of the main building are cylindrical 2-story structures topped by 18-foot Ash domes. The east dome holds a Celestron C-14, while the west dome houses a 24" f/5 Newtonian. The 24" was procured from Edwards Air Force Base, where it was used to visually track planes in the 1960s. It is all steel, including the solid steel tube, and weighs over 20,000 pounds! A homebrew computer systems allows the giant altazimuth mount to track the stars, as well as compensate for field rotation at the eyepiece. UW-Eau Claire owns the scopes, while the building is owned by Beaver Creek Reserve. The Chippewa Valley Astronomical Society gets to use all of this in exchange for hosting public viewing sessions, and so they even hold all of their regular meetings in the observatory. **End Of Part**



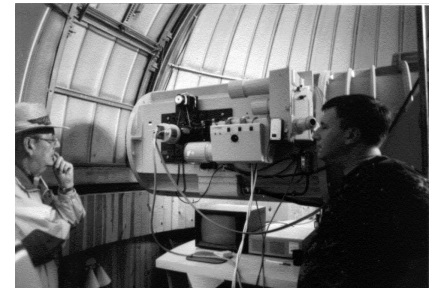
Dan at the control of the 24" scope



The massive 24" Telescope

and Jeanie Nichols, Charlotte Nelson, and Gene DuPree already had camp set up adjacent to the observatory's front door. So much for being early! After I registered and started setting up the telescope, Kevin and Danny Bert showed up, and got their famous binocular mount set up next to the rest of us. Then the three of us headed off in search of our cabin, stowed the gear, and came back to tour the observatory.

Hobbs Observatory is impressive. It consists of a large rectangular building of around 2000 square feet. We're talking double-door front entry, vaulted ceiling, carpeting and insulation. We're talking doors each leading to a small



Showing off the de-rotating device at the Newtonian focus

(MINUTES from page 2)

unanimous to all the members that set up telescopes that one improvement needed to be made. For future events we need some kind of banner to attach to the canopy tent to identify our group. One question the majority of people asked is "what is the name of your organization?"

Sun viewing was done on Saturday, but the Moon was the primary object, and most people were amazed at the

detail that could be seen. It was a shame that Jupiter was a late object. Even at that it was seen by a lot of people.

Nick Nichols reported that he and other members entertained a group from West Bend Social Services at his observatory. The outing was very successful

Harold Rogers gave a Pike Lake update. The 100 car parking lot will instead be a 40 car lot. Progress in

(Continued on page 4)

CURRENT CLACK

Survey work done.

Brad Plauman organized a few members to help him do a survey of the proposed site at Pike Lake. This will be valuable in the future if things go well and building becomes a reality. It will also show the people at the park that we are serious about our commitment to build, operate and maintain a structure at the park.

Panarusky 20" Telescope Optics.

Kevin has been in contact with Nova Optics and the primary mirror is about 2 weeks from completion. The mirror will then be sent to QSP for coating. They typically have a 2 week turnaround. That means we should have it in our hands near the end of September.

IT WAS CLEAR!!

Al Steinberg loaded his scope in the rain and headed out to Harrington Beach for the scheduled public night on the 22nd last month. He had a hunch that things there might blow over and clear. He was right! He reported to me that the clouds started to break when he arrived there. He had over 2 hours of viewing. There were only about a half a dozen people that showed up along with the park ranger. But one of them showed an interest in possibly joining the club. Thanks for going the extra mile, or should I say miles Al.

Speaking of Al, there is a person that's considering donating a 10 foot home-made dome to our organization. Al has expressed an interest in storing it at his house if it in fact becomes a reality.

written or typed out.

If you are not getting the quarterly Reflector magazine of the Astronomical League, please let me know. It is an informative publication of astronomy groups across the country. It is also a benefit of your membership dues.

Astronomy 101

By Kevin Bert

The September meeting 101 topic will be "Comets." Dan Prosser will present the details of comets their history, make-up and how to view them. Dan tells me that if he can get the materials rounded up in time we will make a comet too!

They can be objects that generate a lot of interest if they are bright and achieve naked eye visibility. Just look what a stir the Hale-Bopp comet created a year ago.

The highlighted constellation will be Pegasus, The Great Square.

The October 101 topic will be Newtonian Collimation by Jeff Setzer. His

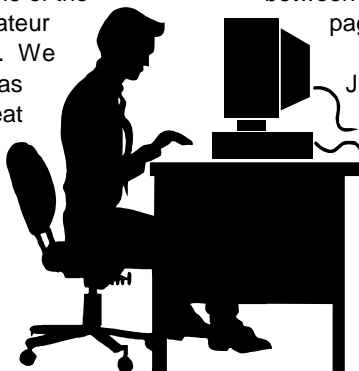


highlighted constellation will be Per-

From The Editor

By Kevin Bert

My son Dan and I spent an enjoyable weekend at the Northwoods Starfest. Jeff Setzer has the details in the lead article in this issue of the Spectrum. It is one of the most impressive amateur facilities I have seen. We had one night that was clear and offered great viewing. The food and accommodations were excellent. I would recommend you getting there some year to get a first hand look.



This issue of Spectrum is only a 4 page publication. I had more material for the last 6 page issues. I hope to keep the pages of future publications between these levels. I do have a 2 page layout just in case.

Just as a reminder I am looking for more articles for upcoming issues. Send one my way of some experience you have had to share with others in the club. I am using MS Publisher 98. I would prefer getting it on a disk or by E-mail. But I would still enjoy getting it

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general is slow because of the superintendent's work load at this time of the year. A group of members visited the proposed site to evaluate it. All were pleased at what they had seen. Kevin ran down the upcoming events scheduled for the month.

Rudy Zarleng expressed the need to have a special get together of the financial contributors to the Panarusky telescope, to show off the instrument. Kevin said he will look for an ok from Jerry Edquist and set up a date.

The business meeting was closed by Kevin Bert at 9:15 p.m.

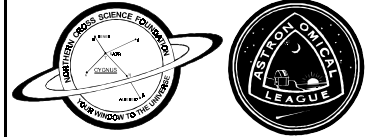
Respectfully submitted,
Kevin Bert, secretary



Check out our great site
On the World Wide Web
<http://www.gxsc.com/ncsf>

SPECTRUM

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