

SPECTRUM

Northern Cross Science Foundation Newsletter

March, 2018

Looking Up

March 1, Thursday

[NCSF Annual Banquet](#)

Social Hr - 6:00 p.m.

Dinner - 7:00 p.m.

Fox & Hounds Restaurant

1298 Friess Lake Road

Hubertus, WI

March 15, Thursday

[Board Meeting](#)

7:30 p.m.

House of Jeff Setzer

[Date & Location Change](#)

March 16-18

[Astronomy MB activity](#)

[Troop 836](#)

Harrington Beach

(Help needed)

Contact Rick Wandsnider at rwandsnider@earthlink.net.

March 17-18

[Messier Marathon](#)

Dusk

Harrington Beach

March 24

[Annual Swap-n-Sell](#)

9:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

Aviation Heritage Center,

Sheboygan Airport

(See Pg. 4 for details)

April 5, Thursday

[General Meeting](#)

7:00 p.m. - Astronomy 101

7:30 p.m. - Main Program

Business Meeting to Follow

Astronomy Online *by Jeff Setzer*

Welcome to the first installment in a new series called "Astronomy Online." I've been asked to discuss my favorite astronomy-related resources on the Internet, but instead of a simple list, we'll take a closer look in future issues of SPECTRUM. This month, I want to introduce you to the biggest astronomy community on the Internet: Cloudy Nights (www.cloudynights.com)

Cloudy Nights (CN) began way back in 2002 as one of several online amateur astronomy discussion forums, but what made it unique was equipment reviews. It boasted some very experienced and articulate amateur astronomers who wrote in-depth reviews that rivaled — and often exceeded — reviews of the same equipment in the major print magazines. There were so many reviews that eventually Cloudy Nights split them into their own section, separate from the discussion forums. Eventually, they would further distinguish User Reviews from "CN Reports", the latter of which were done by staff.

After several years, Cloudy Nights grew into the largest general amateur astronomy site on the Internet. While most Internet sites at the time were largely unmoderated, CN had multiple moderators for each forum, and they strictly enforced very family-friendly Terms Of Service (TOS); this fueled their growth, in stark contrast to others that faded away when users left the predictable cacophony they became. Cloudy Nights became so large, in fact, that it could no longer function on volunteer effort and donations alone, so As-

tronomics (www.astronomics.com) came to the rescue. Today, Cloudy Nights is supported completely by Astronomics, who run unobtrusive ads on the site (and also give CN members exclusive discounts on their orders).

When you log onto Cloudy Nights, you'll find over 100,000 registered users, some of whom have posted over 96,000 times. Wanna talk? There are 52 separate discussion forums. In the mood to shop? There are 7 swap-and-shop areas. CN also hosts the archives of the IYA2009 American discussion forums, in case you're feeling nostalgic. On the other half of the site, you'll find countless reviews on equipment going back more than fifteen years. There is a Photo Gallery too, and the Forums have tons of photos as well. When I say there is something for everybody in Cloudy Nights, that's not an idle description: there's stuff in there for beginners, experienced, visual observers, imagers, gear-heads, telescope-makers, artists, writers, outreach junkies and any other category you can think of. When Telescopes For Tanzania asked for my help in fixing a donated Edmund Scientific 8" fork-mounted reflecting telescope, I found a complete restoration on CN — complete with pictures — and the original author ready to answer my questions, even though the article was several years old.

When starting out online, you can't do any better than Cloudy Nights; I highly encourage all NCSF members to give it a try.

The screenshot shows the Cloudy Nights website interface. At the top, there's a search bar and navigation tabs for Home, Forums, Articles & Reviews, Photo Gallery, Members, and Classifieds. The main content area is titled 'Recent Additions' and features several articles. The most prominent one is 'OBSERVER'S HANDBOOK 2016' by Tom Trusock, with a thumbnail image of the book cover. Other articles include 'Wireless Control of an Astro-Video Camera's On-Screen Display (OSD) Options and Video' and 'Pop-Up Canopy Observatory'. Below the main content, there are sections for 'Cloudy Nights Announcements' and 'Phil Harrington's Cosmic Challenge'.

February Meeting Minutes

By Kevin Bert

The February 2018 Business meeting of the Northern Cross Science Foundation was held at the GSC Technology Center in Germantown. President Jeff Setzer called the meeting to order at 8:10pm and welcomed 14 members and guests. He then asked for standard reports.

Treasurer Gene Dupree tells the membership that the checking balance is \$13,671.60 and the Observatory balance remains at \$551.40. He told the membership that the Universe Sampler handbooks used in the 101 class were \$12.00 each. He reminded members that there are some that still need to get in their 2018 membership dues.

Secretary Kevin Bert reports that the membership roster had been updated and the count remained the same as last month. Under Astronomical League news the 2018 Regional Convention will be held in Sturgeon bay on May 4th and 5th. A link to the Door Peninsula Astronomical Society and convention details can be found in the

newsletter. After further review, a committee for work on the 2020 Regional convention will take place this month as the Astronomical League gave us the go ahead.

Observatory Director Dan Bert reports that the year's volunteer hours were turned in to the park and they are pleased with the results. He says that a red light will now come on when the eyepiece drawer is opened.

With no new business Jeff Setzer covered upcoming events. February 3rd is a ski & hike at the Ice Age Center in Dundee. February 10th is Pike Lake's Ski & Hike. Telescopes are always welcome.

It was stressed that there is no meeting next month because of the March 1st Banquet at the Fox & Hounds restaurant. Treasurer Gene Dupree says February 18th is the deadline to get your form and payment in.

As a final note Jeff was saddened to report that former board member Jack Heisler had passed away at the age of 72. He gave one of the most interesting programs on clocks and astronomy a few years ago. He will be missed.

With no further business Jeff closed the meeting at 8:35 pm.



Eagle Nebula M16 Ernie Mastroianni

Looking forward new year of imaging

This photo of M16, also known as the Eagle Nebula, was taken at the Plunkett Observatory at Harrington Beach State Park in August 2016 with the Northern Cross Science Foundation's 5-inch refractor and the SBIG 8300 color camera. Clearly visible in the center are the well known Pillars of Creation, made famous by the Hubble Telescope photo in 1995. It's a combination of 24 sub frames of 3 minutes each, processed using Nebulosity and Photoshop software.

I'm hoping to offer more opportunities this year to teach club members how to use this gear to shoot photos like this.

Last year, I hosted only two teaching sessions, but a heavy work schedule, the August eclipse, and family events kept me busier than usual through the end of the year. I'm hoping to do many more sessions this year.

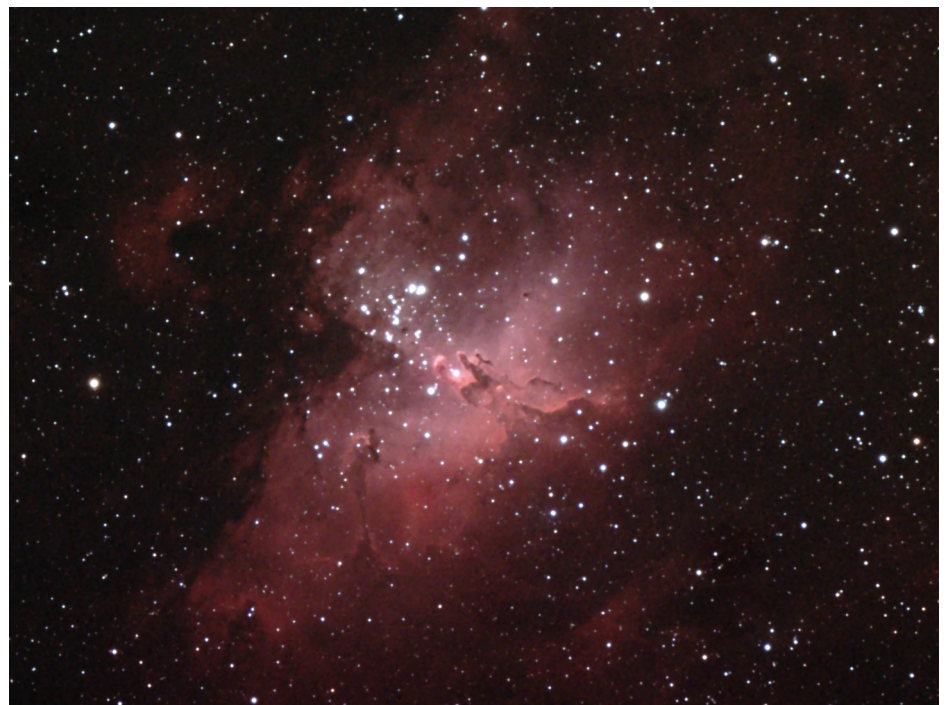
I have a new email address that should will make it easier for me to contact everyone when clear night opportunities present themselves. Please contact me at [er-nie.mastroianni@gmail.com](mailto:ernie.mastroianni@gmail.com) if you are interested in attending more astrophotography sessions this year. I'll also reach out to those on the email list from last year. You can shoot with your own digital SLR or try the SBIG camera, which has a larger learn-

ing curve and needs special software to run the camera and process the images. I hope to host some software learning sessions too.

- Ernie Mastroianni,
ernie.mastroianni@gmail.com

2018 Dues

Just a reminder that if you haven't paid your NCSF 2018 Dues yet, it is not too late. Submit a completed Dues Invoice form to Secretary Gene DuPree. Form is attached with the digital copy of the Newsletter.



I love social media. I spend lots of time on Twitter and Facebook. I happened to be looking at Facebook one day when I was off, and I found a post by NASA about a podcast about Saturn that was called Gravity Assist. It sounded interesting, so I went out to NASA's website and listened to the podcast. While I was there, I did some looking around at [.NASA.GOV](http://NASA.GOV). I found a lot of information including other podcasts, ebooks and apps for your electronic devices. I've been on the NASA website before, but never really paid that much attention to this section. There is a wealth of information to be found here - for free.

Podcasts - the podcasts here mostly focus on things happening around NASA and the different space missions. I was listening to Gravity Assist, which takes turns talking about the planets in our solar system. The one I listened to was about Saturn and spoke about the recent ending of the Cassini mission. Each podcast features a guest speaker from one of NASA's missions. Listening to scientific stuff is not always of interest to me unless I like the topic. Over the years, I seem to have developed a short attention span and it is difficult for me to sit through scientific lectures. The podcast was only 20 minutes which was just the right amount of time while I did some work around the house. Here is the website for the podcasts: <https://www.nasa.gov/podcasts>.

Ebooks - While I was thinking about Saturn, I went over to the the E-book section and found one called Through The Eyes of Cassini. This was mentioned in the podcast I listened to. There were lots of amazing pictures of my favorite planet. I will certainly go back and look at this later. If deep space is more your thing, there is a whole collection of books based on Hubble Space Telescope discoveries. Are you into the history of NASA and spacecraft? There are books for you here too. For those of you who like aeronautics, you will find several books to interest you. You can download them to your favorite device, or PDF format and go back and look at them as much as you want. This link will take you right to the podcasts: <https://www.nasa.gov/connect/ebooks/index.html>.

Apps - NASA has a wealth of apps on their website, and these can be downloaded through the various platforms: IOS, Google Play or Amazon. Do yourself a favor and browse through the selections. All of the apps I looked at were free. To find the apps, use this link: <https://www.nasa.gov/connect/apps.html>.

The information on this website is plentiful enough that a person interested in space could be kept busy for quite a few hours. Take some time out to check out the resources on this website. You will be glad you did.

Welcome to New Member

Mike Potter

Conferences 2018

NCRAL

May 4 - 5

Surgeon Bay, WI

Door Peninsula Astronomical Soc.

www.doorastronomy.org

ALCON

July 11 - 14

Minneapolis/St. Paul, Minnesota

Minnesota Astronomical Society

alcon2018.astroleague.org

Star Parties 2018

WOW

July 12 - 15

Hartman Creek State Park

WWW.new-star.org

Northwoods

August 17 - 19

Hobbs Observatory

Beaver Creek Reserve

Fall Creek, WI.

www.cvastro.org

February Public Viewing Events

Ice Age Center Ski & Hike, February 3

By Charlotte DuPree

There was a winter weather advisory on this night. As I was calling the Reuss Ice Age center to cancel the stargazing, she had sent me a message stating that since it was cloudy she was canceling. We then decided to stay home and not take out the snow shoes either.

Pike Lake Ski & Hike, February 10

By Charlotte DuPree

February 10, Friends of Pike Lake annual Candlelight Ski and Hike. The evening was cloudy but not too cold. Gene and Al set-up scopes in the snow-plowed area that the park clears out for us. When they looked up, the sky was clearing just enough to see the brighter stars and constellations. They had to settle for M45, the Pleiades in Taurus. It soon clouded over, but they were able to keep the Pleiades in their scopes for several hours. The visitors were amazed they could still see the object. I did not have on enough layers so I stayed inside with our display poster. I was telling people about the good viewing of the planets this coming summer.

2018 planet viewing *by Gene R. DuPree*

Welcome to a new year of planet viewing, and it should be a good one. Starting in March, if you have a good horizon, Mercury and Venus will be visible just 4° apart, March 15-20. Opposition for Jupiter will be May 9, Saturn on June 28, and Mars on July 27. Opposition is the point in a planet's orbit at which its celestial longitude is 180° from that of the sun and its orbit brings it closest to the Earth. A planet at opposition is visible all night long.

For Sale

**Meade EXT 90/EC telescope
with 497 autostar controller
&
Additional Accessories**

Telescope has not been used for several years.

Will be at the Sheboygan Astro Swap & Sell

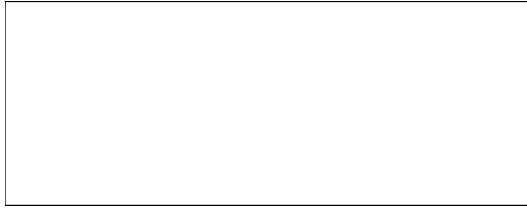
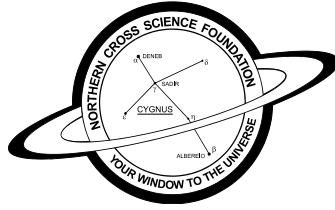
Price: \$250

Contact David Schultz Phone 262-853-1231

**Jim & Gwen Plunkett
OBSERVATORY**



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11th Annual Swap-n-Sell



Aviation Heritage Center, Sheboygan, WI

Got some astronomical stuff (scopes, eyepieces, books, etc.) laying around and you want to get rid of them? Here's your chance! Bring unwanted astronomy items to sell or swap with other amateur astronomers?

10:00 Regan Haulotte, NASA Solar System Ambassador, will be presenting: Upcoming NASA Space Science Missions.

11:00 Michael Bakich, Senior Editor from Astronomy magazine, will also give a talk: "Astronomy's Stranger Things" Ever wonder what numbers are rattling around in Michael's brain? In this talk, he'll present a list with some that will make even seasoned astronomers say "WOW!"

A brat fry will also be occurring to help raise funds for our planetarium dome project.

Door prizes donated by WI Astronomy
Date: Saturday, 3/24/2018

Time: 9:00 AM - 2:00 PM

Location: Aviation Heritage Center, N6191 Resource Drive, Sheboygan Falls, WI 53085, Sheboygan, WI 53081

SPECTRUM

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NCSF is a member of the North-Central Region of the Astronomical League.



NCSF supports the *International Dark Sky Association*

This Issue, along with back Issues of SPECTRUM, can be found on the NCSF Web Site.

Monthly Meeting Information

7:00 p.m. Astronomy 101 Mtg.
7:30 p.m. Main Program
Location at the -

GSC Technology Center
W189 N11161 Kleinmann Dr
Germantown, WI 53022

Spectrum Newsletter
5327 Cascade Drive
West Bend, WI 53095

Please send your Questions, Suggestions, Articles, and photos to:
rickkaz@charter.net