

SPECTRUM

Northern Cross Science Foundation Newsletter

June 2023

An observer peers through the Panarusky telescope at the Plunkett Observatory during a public viewing event at Harrington Beach State Park over the Memorial Day weekend. More than 200 people turned out to view the heavens at NSCF-sponsored events at Harrington and Pike Lake state parks. See more on page two.
- © Robert M. Powell



Robert M. Powell
PHOTOGRAPHY SINCE 1948

Talk about your favorite astro gear, software, website or anything

Hello club members, I'm still looking for input for June's meeting. I am calling it Gadget Night. I plan to present a 10-15 minute presentation on the website called [Cloudy Nights](#), where amateur astronomers can buy and sell astro gear, participate in forums, and post pictures. If you have a website, software, favorite movie series, maybe an associated meeting that lends itself to astronomy, a physical tool, favorite eyepiece, or, anything astronomy (you be the judge) please email me at gmborchert@gmail.com.

June Program

I would like to make this a recurring subject for future meetings. It's my intention to share and expand what astronomy means to all of our club members.

You do not have to give a technical report. Simply describe, in your own words, why you're interested in the subject. Keep it short, perhaps no longer than 15 minutes for this meeting. Otherwise, if you feel the topic needs more time to discuss, we could have it for a feature subject at a future meeting. If you have any questions, please let me know, and hope to have an interesting June meeting. - *Mike Borchert*

May General Meeting Minutes

The general meeting for May started at 6 pm at the Jackson Community Center with the social time soft start. At 6:30, with about 15 members present, Don Wrigley of the East Valley Astronomy Club tried to hook up via Zoom.

There was a moment of getting the right protocol down. After the communication was established, Don proceeded to speak for about

45 minutes on observing the moon. The presentation was well received.

As the meeting was turned back over to Jeff Setzer, there were a few glitches and the question-and-answer period did not become available. After the night's presentation, Jeff gave a report on the Plunkett observatory. There are some needed upgrades to the physical building. Since the building is owned by the DNR, *See page 2*

Coming Up

General Meeting

Thursday, June 1, 6pm
[Jackson Community Center](#)
Members talk about their favorite astronomy gadget, book, place, anything.

Solar Viewing

Pike Lake
Discovery Day, 1-4
Pike Lake state forest

[Wisconsin Observers Weekend](#)

June 15-18
Hartman Creek State Park
Waupaca Wis.



Public Viewing Nights for 2023

Anyone trained as a Plunkett Observatory operator is required to fulfill an obligation of either leading or assisting at least one public viewing event during the observing season. We've had a hard time in recent years staffing these events, so please volunteer your time and knowledge. Contact any board member or observatory director Dan Bert (dbert64@gmail.com) to sign up.

- June 3, Solar Viewing at Pike Lake Discovery Day, 1-4
- June 23, Solar viewing, Pike Lake Fish Fry 4-7:30 pm
- July 15, Pike Lake, 8-11 pm
- July 21 & 22, Harrington Beach, 8-11 pm
- August 12, Pike Lake, Public, 8-11 pm
- August 25 only, Harrington Beach, 8-11 pm
- August 26, Ice Age Center, 7-11 pm
- September 9, Family Night, Pike Lake Beach area, 6-9
- September 8 & 9, Harrington Beach, 8-11 pm
- September 9, Pike Lake, 8-11 pm
- September 16, Pike Lake, 8-11 pm
- October 20 & 21, Harrington Beach, 8-11 pm
- October 21, Pike Lake, 8-11 pm



Matthies Clan Visit- Danielle Strawn (second from bottom), the youngest daughter of late NCSF member Mike Matthies, brought her family from Green Bay to the public observing night on Saturday May 27 at Harrington Beach. Pictured from bottom are her husband Gavin and their children Petra, Roark and Delta. Danielle wanted to show her family the observatory her dad had a hand in funding. She even convinced her mother Dale to meet her family at the observatory later in the evening. Robert M. Powell photo.

May Meeting Minutes

From page 1 they will have to okay and carry out those repairs.

Jeff noted that club member Steve Schowalter a retired electrician, volunteered his time and efforts to install a light switch to extinguish the bright outdoor light that illuminate the toilets near the parking lot observing area and the observatory. The bright lights were a major source of light pollution in an area of the state park dedicated to astronomy.

In the past, one needed to retrieve a key from the observatory, unlock a breaker box outside the toilet building, and turn off the fuse switch. With a switch located outside the breaker box, anyone in the parking lot can turn out the lights. Thank you Steve.

NCRAL 2023 was taking place near Utica, Illinois this weekend. Our club treasurer was there, so no treasurer report was available.

Secretary Mike Borchert reported that for the June meeting, a show and tell format was going to be used. In an effort to see what club members were interested in they're being asked to give a 5 to 10-minute presentation on an astronomy-related subject. It could be a gadget, website, podcast, citizen science program, something astronomy related. Hopefully this format would be well received, and could be repeated in the future. Please email Mike Borchert at gmborchert@gmail.com or Joyce Jentges at joycejentges@hotmail.com on the subject you wish to present. The email is only being used to prevent duplication.

Tom Sorlie asked if there was anyone who knew of any electronic versions, i.e. Kindle, on the subject of cosmology. Any information could be emailed to thejasmineplanet@gmail.com The meeting was adjourned and the room was vacated by 8 pm per meeting room terms.
- Mike Borchert, Secretary

May Public Observing at Harrington, Pike Lake



Pike Lake - Photo by Charlotte DuPree

Harrington Beach:

We had 84 people sign the guestbook last night (5/26/2023) and we know that means we'll over 100 people visited the observatory on our season opener.

The Moon was the only target for much of the evening, but in the last 30-40 minutes we turned to M13 which was decently visible despite the moonlight.

Thanks to Jim Macak [@jimmac](https://www.instagram.com/jimmac) for assisting and doing much of the telescope driving as I addressed the crowds. Also thanks to Don Woelz [@Don Woelz](https://www.instagram.com/donwoelz) for helping out early on and having his 8" Dob in the parking lot, and a few other members who were out there as well. - Jeff Setzer

Pike Lake State Forest:

Saturday May, 27. 8 to 11 p.m. Leaders, Gene and Charlotte DuPree. We set up with thin, hazy clouds and started out with the usual objects: the Moon and Venus. The clouds cleared for awhile as we looked at M3, 13, 44, 57, 81, 82, NGC 6826, and Mars. The clouds became thicker again, and we were packed up by 11:00. Thanks to Al Steinberg for his assistance. Estimated around 50 visitors, a lot of them were from Slinger. - The DuPrees

Grafton High Student and NCSF Member accepted into Yale Summer Program in Astrophysics

NCSF member Hailey Markoff has been accepted into the [Yale Summer Program in Astrophysics](#), led by Dr. [Michael Faison](#) at Yale University.

She will be using programs and telescope data to which the university has access in order to model photometric light curves and spectra of extra galactic supernova. Hailey is currently a junior at Grafton High School.

Hailey describes it best: There will be ongoing observations while I am a part of the research program that we will use for our data. I will be working remotely from Grafton for the first two weeks of the program (June 26 to July 8), and I will be going to Yale in New Haven, Connecticut for the four subsequent weeks (July 9 to August 6).

My name will be included on any research papers I am a part of writing.

I received an email from Dr. Faison mid-January inviting me to apply [based on information on her application to Yale]. I needed to confirm my age, submit my high school transcript, send letters of recommendation from both a science teacher as well as a mathematics teacher, and respond to a series of essay questions.

I intend to study astronomy and astrophysics in college. My current top colleges are Yale, Harvard, Brown, the University of Wisconsin-Madison, the University of Colorado Boulder, and the University of Michigan Ann Arbor.

I am a stargazer in my spare time. I got my first telescope from Joyce Jentges a year ago and have been out stargazing with her and by myself. Other than looking at the moon, comets, planets, and Messier objects, I enjoy watching meteor showers, particularly the Perseids in August.



Hailey Markoff with her dog Teller. Photo courtesy of Hailey Markoff

Telescope Craftsmen - NCSF members Mark Zellner (left) and Kevin Bert work on making a funnel solar projector during the annual North Central Region Astronomical League convention at the Grand Bear Resort in North Utica, Ill., last month. The convention was hosted by the Twin Cities Amateur Astronomers of Bloomington and Normal, Ill. - Photo by Charlotte DuPree



Joyce Jentges exhibits at Rockets for Schools

On May 12th I spent a fun day at [Rockets For Schools](#), held at Blue Harbor in Sheboygan. The event ran Friday and Saturday, but I was only able to attend Friday this year due to a family wedding on Saturday. Teams need to develop a payload for the rocket, do an oral presentation about their payload and rocket, then launch the rockets on Saturday.



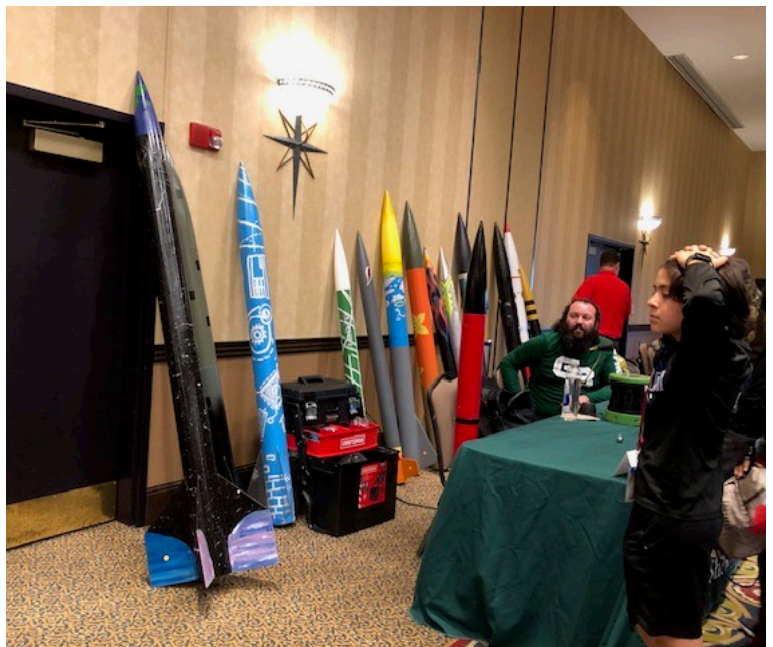
The featured speaker was retired NASA astronaut [Marsha Ivins](#), who flew to orbit five times aboard space shuttles from 1990 to 2001. The teams are judged on the trifold display they had to create for whatever payload they chose. I was an exhibitor, so in between, the teams were able to check out the exhibitors. According to the kids, my display was the “must visit table”. I had information on NASA’S Artemis program. I also had a bunch of

NASA goodies to give away. In addition, I had these semi-squishy foam planet balls to give away if they answered a question about a NASA mission. Towards the end of the day I got to have a few in depth conversations with a few on the kids about the Artemis program. - *Joyce Jentges*

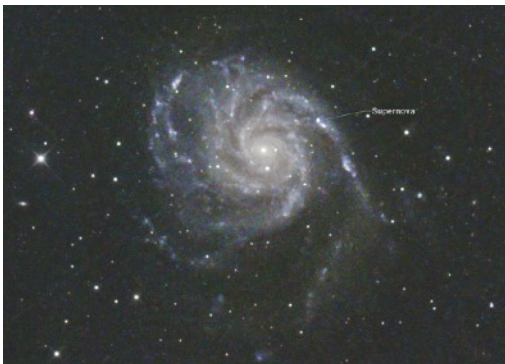
From the Rockets for Schools Website:

Sheboygan has been Wisconsin's home of Rockets For Schools since its inception in 1995. Each year, more than 300 students from Wisconsin, Illinois, Iowa and Michigan have participated in successful launches at Spaceport Sheboygan.

Rockets For Schools provides an opportunity for all U.S. students in grades 6 through 12 to learn about aerospace technology, scientific experiments, and space launches. Besides constructing their rocket, students design a payload and give an oral and visual presentation of their experiment.



Above: Joyce Jentges at her exhibit. **Bottom:** The rockets that the students build tower over the participants. **Above left:** a rocket blasts off. Photos courtesy of Joyce Jentges and Rockets for Science.



Having a Blast - Shortly after Supernova SN 2023ixf exploded in the Pinwheel Galaxy (M101) on May 19, NCSF members Don Woelz, Ernie Mastroianni and Rick Sell (their photos as seen from left) captured the event with their respective gear. Discovered by Japanese astronomer Koichi Itagaki, the star quickly brightened to 11th magnitude.

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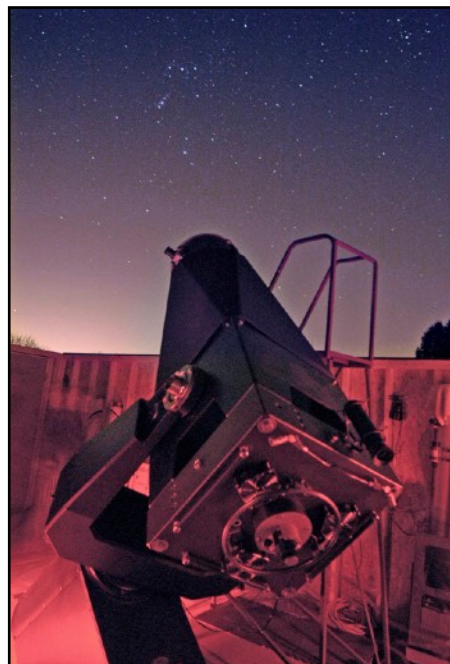
NCSF is a member of the [North-Central Region of the Astronomical League.](#)



NCSF supports the [International Dark Sky Association](#)

Imaging Report

Solar Activity Continues - Sunspots were numerous on May 5 as solar activity continues toward solar maximum during the current 11-year cycle. Some experts believe that this cycle's maximum will peak in 2024, a year earlier than thought.
- Ernie Mastroianni photo.

**Spectrum newsletter**

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