

SPECTRUM

Northern Cross Science Foundation Newsletter

November/December 2023

Clear Skies in Colorado for the Annular Eclipse

By Rick Sell

Editor's note: NCSF members Rick and Susan Sell traveled west to view the annular eclipse.

Since Mesa Verde was expecting 5,000 people and they were having a fly-in/auto show/eclipse party at the airport in Cortez, Colorado, we set up in a quiet spot, a city park behind the Cortez Visitor Center. We had a Meade 80mm APO refractor with a white light filter, and a Nikon Z6 II camera with a 300mm lens, using the auto settings.

We had people from Florida, Arkansas and Colorado stop by, one of the people from Colorado was [See page 2](#)



The annular eclipse photographed by Rick Sell from Cortez, Colorado. He used a Nikon Z6II camera and a 300mm lens with a Daystar solar filter to get this photo of the Ring of Fire spectacle.

An Astrophotography Journey

November Program

Don Woelz' astrophotos are often featured in the *Spectrum*. In a short time, Don's become adept at mastering the complexities of modern astrophotography, requiring knowledge of mount, telescope, computers, software and astronomy. Don will share his dramatic photos and explain how he made them during our November meeting.



October General Meeting Minutes

The general meeting for September started at 6 pm, in the Jackson Community Center with social time. At 6:30, with about 22 members present, Jeff Setzer called the active part of the meeting to order. Jeff mentioned the growing attendance numbers and his wish for a more powerful projector. Jeff presented for the evening. His subject was appropriately on solar eclipses, total and annular. The

presentation was very informative and filled most of the meeting time. It was well received with questions and answers and recollections of the 2017 eclipse. His resource list:

- greatamericaneclipse.com
- tinyurl.com/bdf6a5wu (interactive map)
- www.bigkidscience.com/eclipse/ (mobile app)

[See page 3](#)

Coming Up

General Meetings
Thursday, Nov. 2, 6 pm
[Jackson Community Center](#)
N165 W20330 Hickory Lane Jackson, WI

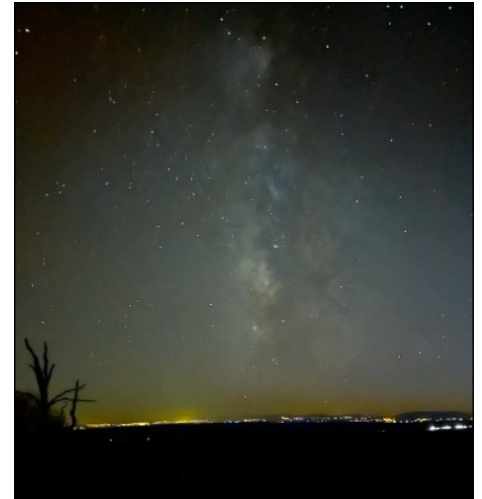
Thursday, Dec. 7, 6 pm
Holiday potluck dinner and (perhaps) a white elephant gift exchange. No program. Bring a dish to pass. Extended hours for this traditional gathering.

Editor's note: *Thanks for all the newsletter contributions this year. Because of my upcoming travels, this issue doubles for December as well. See you in January.*
- Ernie Mastroianni

Eclipse and Stargazing from Colorado

From page 1. originally from Tomahawk, Wis. We had close to 20 people using the telescope. Susan was helping the visitors take pictures through the telescope with their phones.

These pictures are from Mesa Verde, a lookout point parking lot at elevation, 8,491. While attempting to take pictures with the Nikon we had time to look around. We could make out all the stars in the Little Dipper and you did not have to use your averted vision to see the Pleiades, I was amazed how bright it was. Using your averted vision, you could just make out the Andromeda Galaxy. - Rick Sell



Above: At twilight's end, the Milky Way visible to the horizon.

Left: At the same Mesa Verde site before sunset, Susan Sell enjoys the view and clear skies.

The Eclipse Was Almost Eclipsed in Southeast Wisconsin

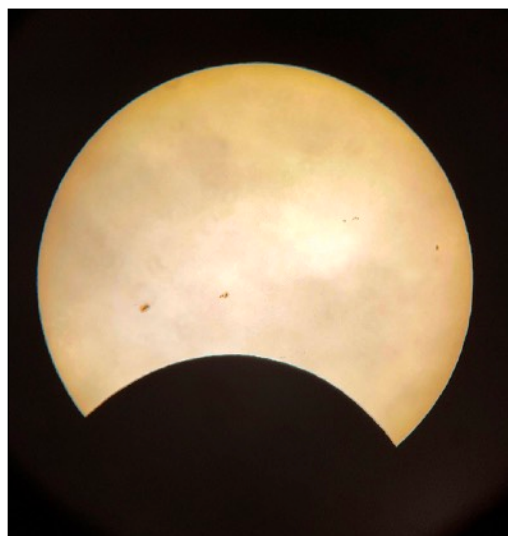


Above: The forecast kept changing all week but Al Steinberg was able view the eclipse at Pike Lake until last contact. We had several people stop to look. And one man came out hoping we would be there, even though he saw that the event had been canceled. - Photo by Gene DuPree

Right: Ernie Mastroianni photographed the eclipse through his Questar Duplex scope from his backyard patio during a break in the heavy clouds using an iPhone 13.



At maximum coverage time at Pike Lake, we could see the sun through two different cloud layers. The top layer had open blue patches. The lower layer was fast moving but thinning and served as a filter, so we could see the sun naked eye. - Charlotte DuPree using a Samsung smart phone.



NCSF Board Meeting Minutes for October 19, 2023

Members in attendance included Mark Zellner, Gene Dupree, Jeff Setzer, Joyce Jentges, Don Woelz and Mike Borchert. The meeting was held via zoom. Gene reported \$11,606.92 in the general account. Expenditures included a \$16.01 electric bill and a previously paid Jackson community room that was taken care of before the stated amount. Jeff reported \$231.25 in the PayPal fund. Mike reported on Alcor/NCRAL, as well as secretary business.

NCRAL Resources

There seems to be a resource for program speakers via NCRAL. The board okayed further exploration, and warned to vet the speakers as needed. The NCRAL Blotter was discussed. It is a condensed version of the NCRAL newsletter and is published in this newsletter on page 5. It was suggested to post on slack. NCRAL has asked that the newsletter be shared with their staff. It was mentioned that it is available from our website. Mike will relay that information. As far as secretarial matters. Mike asked the board's thoughts on signs, posters, newsletter being left at the Jackson Community Center location for publicity on the club. The board thought it was a good idea, and suggested Office Max as well as B&G Decal and Apparel as sources to get our printed matter. Mike will check with the Jackson Community Center and get back.

Mike asked about a publicity/media position for the club. Jeff responded that there had been one in the past, but that it

had fizzled out. Don mentioned that he might be interested in looking into the probability. Jeff and Don are going to take the matter as a sidebar and possibly move it forward. This would include sign-in at public outreach events and capture of emails to those interested.

Gear for Zoom Meetings

Mike asked about the possibility of having a spare computer/speaker/camera at the board meetings, in order to have a hybrid Zoom meeting for board members that could not physically make the meeting. Jeff will explore the idea. Mike brought up his own review for the position of secretary. Traveling has made it hard to make some of the general meetings, as well as the board meetings.

Holiday Party and White Elephant Gift Exchange

The club's holiday party will take place during our December meeting. Gene and Mike will not be there. Drinks will be provided by the club. Club members will be asked to bring a dish to pass. The meeting will run an extra hour. Joyce will try a white elephant gift exchange. Any other thoughts, please advise the board. Don or Joyce will record the board meeting for November and December.

There will be no minutes for the December Holiday party. Mike will be at the November general meeting. January board meeting will review club staffing positions from then on. It was mentioned that Kevin Bert may be back at that time. Jeff and Joyce will be absent from the November meeting.

Jeff will get his announcements to Mike, who will in turn, attempt to run his first NCSF meeting. The subject of that meeting will be Don's path and work in astrophotography.

The last observing weekend of the year took place this weekend at Harrington Beach State Park on Oct. 20. The Oct. 21 night was canceled due to clouds. It was discussed how bad weather should be handled. Jeff would cancel via Slack if that would ever be the case.

Harrington Beach road construction discussion was brought up. Don had heard that the park would be closed next year, after Labor Day for substantial road re-paving. The board will ask Dan Bert, Observatory director to get in touch with the DNR and find out the details. The board will need those details moving forward in making plans for 2024.

Mike mentioned that he and Ernie, and Don were interested in editing and updating the 5" refractor telescope observing and imaging procedures. More will be forthcoming.

50 Years for Northern Cross

The board re-announced that next year will be the 50th year for the Northern Cross Science Foundation. A logo addition would be planned. Our March banquet would be themed. Other ideas will be welcomed and studied.

- Mike Borchert, Secretary

From page 1

October General Meeting Minutes

- eclipse.aas.org (AAS page)
- bit.ly/29xYXpm (TED-Ed lesson)
- tylernordgren.com (art posters)

The Apps, and books mentioned in those references are very useful. Jeff's Resource list is:

The not so total (for our area) annular eclipse will take place Saturday, October 14. Jeff and a few members will be out at Harrington Beach State Park, as well as Pike Lake State Park, at 10:30 to meet with the public. Club members are encouraged to help out as well as view. As of this writing of the minutes, the weather does not look like it will cooperate. [editors note: as it turned out, the weather was cloudy and rainy, but some brief breaks in the clouds revealed the eclipse. The Harrington event was a washout, Pike Lake and

Milwaukee had some brief holes in the cloud cover.]

Discussion did center around the April 8, 2024 Total Eclipse. It is not too late or early to start planning.

As the public outreach and viewing starts winding down, the last ones of the year will be October 20 and 21st (Friday and Saturday) at Harrington beach State Park, 8pm AND Saturday, October 21st at Pike Lake, 7pm.

The November meeting will feature Don Woelz and his journey into the world of astrophotography.

The December meeting will be the Holiday Pot Luck meeting. Plan on a dish to pass, appetizer, dessert, your favorite. The meeting will be an extra hour long to accommodate. The minutes are respectfully submitted for review. - Mike Borchert, Secretary.

Observing Report

September 8 at Horicon Marsh

We had a clear sky for the event, Starry Night on the Marsh at the Horicon Marsh Education and Visitor Center. But the parking lot lights remained on as the visitor center staff are no longer able to turn them off. So it was challenging to find objects.

We had about 50 visitors, most of them waited until Saturn was over the trees, so they could see the rings.

September 9, Friends of Pike Lake Family Night

There were about 20 visitors. It was partly cloudy to start, then is cleared up. Saturn was popular to look see. Also M11-13-17 NGC 457, 7662.

Thanks to Al Steinberg and new member Joe Barboza.

- Gene and Charlotte DuPree

September 16 Pike Lake

Pike lake public viewing night was rained out.

October 16, Harrington Beach

I was out at Harrington with my telescope on Monday night, October 16 for a personal observing night. It was the first night in many months that I experienced average (and even better than average) transparency. It started out with a hint of fogginess but that soon cleared. Lots of dew but that was tolerable. I logged 26 DSOs from the Astronomical League's Herschel lists and also viewed several Messier favorites. I ending up with the always outstanding M42 and then caught Europa right at the edge of Jupiter with its shadow transiting at about 2:40 AM. An excellent night! - Jim Macak



October 19 Harrington Beach Public Viewing

The weather forecasts during the week were fluctuating, but what else, this is Wisconsin.

Friday ended up being a beautiful night, with our club's namesake, the Northern Cross (aka Cygnus) flying down the Milky way and easy to point out. A little after 8pm a crowd showed up and stayed for 1 ½- 2 hours as we scanned the skies.

Jim Macak expertly aligned the 20" and we were off to our first target, the moon. It quickly set and we went to Saturn, and Jupiter. It was just that kind of night with lots of oohs and aahs.

There was plenty of time and viewers on hand and we continued, viewing the Pleiades, Andromeda, Ring Nebula, and the Dumbbell Nebula. We slewed to check out some clusters, and the Sky Commander setting circle computer gave us some problems. By that time most of the public had left.

The problems did not affect the viewing for the night.

It was nice to see club member Penny Siperly. James Neal's laser was invaluable throughout the night, along with his crowd control, help on the scope and ladder, and astronomical facts. It was fun to see familiar faces too. The discussions are always interesting. Thanks also to Rick Sell for starting the observatory set-up process and continuing with his set up in the parking lot.

Little did we know it would be the last Harrington Beach public outing of the year. Saturday turned out to be a washout and was canceled. I'm looking forward to next year already. - Mike Borchert

Astronomical League Looking for Help with the 2025 Convention at Bryce Canyon

As the club's ALCOR (Astronomical League Correspondent) representative, I received this heads-up for the AL convention in 2025. And see the condensed NCRAL newsletter on Page 5 - Mike Borchert

The Astronomical League (AL) is a federation of astronomy clubs throughout the USA. The AL's annual national convention, ASTROCON 2025, will be held June 25-28, 2025, under the spectacularly dark skies of Bryce Canyon National Park in southern Utah. The venue will be Ruby's Inn and Convention Center a few miles from the park entrance. A special area a few miles east of the convention center will be available for evening viewing plus astrophotography/digital imaging workshops.

The convention will include:

1. Daytime workshops/presentations and evening follow-up sessions to enhance your personal viewing and astrophotography skills
2. Social events to network with fellow amateurs
3. Exhibitors showcasing their products and services
4. Daytime solar and evening viewing opportunities
5. Observing and imaging contests

Volunteers are needed to coordinate workshops

The convention's goal is to enhance one's personal viewing experiences through workshops and evening viewing plus opportunities to learn photography/digital imaging skills. We seek volunteers to help organize and present workshops.

A few ideas include:

- Setting up your own personal observing program (Including Astronomical League Observing Programs)
- Observing tips
- Using star charts (digital and paper)
- Creation of observing lists
- Understanding eyepiece selection
- Using filters for visual and photographic work
- Sketching workshop
- Observing log workshop - keeping your own journal
- Astrophotography workshops (novice and advanced)

Contact us if you wish to volunteer with workshops, exhibitor displays or any other convention aspect.

Registering for the convention and reserving a room is anticipated to start July 2024. Check the Astronomical League website at that time for more information.

Sincerely,

Astrocon 2025 Planning Committee:

Lowell Lyon, Event Coordinator, (801) 699-7283 David Moulton, Curtis MacDonald (Utah Valley Astronomy Club), Aleta Cox, Marlene Egger, Jamie Bradley, Tony Sarra, Krista Lemoine, Ivo Stutznegger, Linda Lyon (Salt Lake Astronomical Society), Bob Cavanaugh, Convention Webmaster

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



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

We're Part of a Bigger Picture

As a member of NCSF, you also belong to the [Astronomical League](#) and its North Central Region ([NCRAL](#)), which publishes a quarterly newsletter. Below is a condensed version of the newsletter, called the *Blotter*, which will appear quarterly in the *Spectrum*. - EM

NCRAL blotter

Vol. 1., No. 1

September 2023

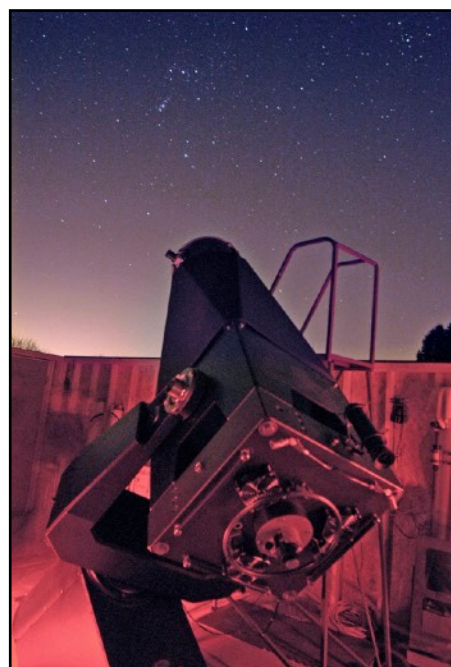
Monthly tidbits from the NCRAL officers, A.L. Representative, & newsletter editor

- [Alan Sheidler](#), PAC, Chairman
- [Bill Davidson](#), RAC, Vice Chairman
- [Roy Gustafson](#), PAC, Secretary-Treasurer
- [John Attewell](#), RAC, Rep to the A.L.
- [Carl Wenning](#), TCAA, Newsletter Editor

Introductory note by Alan Sheidler, NCRAL Chairman

A lot is going on in our Region. To keep you abreast of these goings-on, your NCRAL leadership team thought it appropriate to supplement our *Northern Lights* quarterly newsletter with a monthly *NCRAL blotter*. Ideally, the *blotter* will be a short, one-page summary of topics, new developments, or requests from around the Region. The idea is to have a quick list of bullet points that you might find significant. We hope you will share this valuable information with your club's membership. Please read this first issue and let me know what you think. *all*

- NCRAL has established a **Speakers Bureau**. We have a list of those willing to speak with your membership either over Zoom or through an on-site visit. Complete details will be found in the September 2023 issue of *Northern Lights*, the newsletter of the North Central Region. Please contact speakers directly through our [NCRAL Speakers Bureau listing](#).
- Only 425 of the Region's 1,900 affiliate members receive NCRAL's newsletter. Add your contact information to the NCRAL *Northern Lights* electronic dissemination list so you won't miss out on additional valuable information. Go to the following case-sensitive URL to add your information to our database at <https://tinurl.com/NCRAL>. Please encourage your members to do the same.
- When you receive information about the availability of our *Northern Lights* newsletter, please share it with your affiliate's membership. More than seven years of back issues can be found in the [NCRAL Newsletter Archive](#). An index of key feature articles has recently been added to the web page.
- Please provide updates about your affiliate's contact and website information on the [NCRAL Affiliates](#) web page as necessary. Send your updated information to NCRAL Chair Alan Sheidler at adsheidler@gmail.com.
- NCRAL is looking for convention hosts for 2025 and beyond. If your group has never hosted a Regional convention, please realize that hosting can be fun and has many benefits, including indemnification for unanticipated losses and a 50-50 share of the profits. Assistance is also available from the Region. See our *Convention Planning Guidelines* on our [NCRAL Conventions](#) web page.
- September is another action-packed month. It's Saturn's time to shine. We also have Comet Nishimura — now at 5th magnitude and still brightening — and look forward to a dramatic asteroid occultation. Check out the details at [Sky & Telescope](#).

**Spectrum newsletter**

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<https://ncsf.info>

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