

SPECTRUM

Northern Cross Science Foundation Newsletter

April 2006

LOOKING UP

April 1 Saturday

Superfest

8:30 a.m.—3 p.m.

Amateur Elect. Supply

April 6 Thursday

General Meeting

6:30 p.m. Astronomy 101

7:30 p.m. Business Meeting

April 20 Thursday

Board Meeting

7:30 p.m.

Home of Jeff Setzer

April 21 & 22 Fri. & Sat.

NCRAL Convention

Appleton, WI

April 29 Saturday

Member's Night

Home of Paul Kamikawa

7:00 p.m.

(Directions are at bottom of page 2)

May 4 Thursday

General meeting

6:30 p.m. Astronomy 101

7:30 p.m. Business Meeting

May 6 Saturday

Astronomy Day/Observatory

Dedication

President's Chatter

By Jeff Setzer

Hello friends! As we head into spring, there is an unusual level of excitement in the air when I talk with NCSF members. Not only are we looking forward to returning to warm-weather observing, but we are also anticipating doing so with our new telescope inside of our new observatory! I have notes for you on both projects, along with what I hope is an intriguing proposition for the membership.

Observatory and Telescope

The Jim and Gwen Plunkett Observatory is nearing fruition. Thanks to the generosity of our membership and friends, we have enough funding to excavate the site, pour the concrete, and erect the building. At the time of this writing, the only thing left is to finalize the agreement with the DNR and arrange the construction dates with Harrington Beach State Park.

We are shooting for an open house on May 6, which coincides with National Astronomy Day. This is a very aggressive target, and depending on the weather and DNR, we may have to settle for a groundbreaking ceremony instead. As all of the bits and pieces come together, watch the website and the May issue of *Spectrum* for the latest developments.

On the Panarusky Telescope front, Optical Mechanics, Inc. has received the primary mirror for testing and measurement so we can have a Cassegrain secondary produced. Unfortunately, testing of the primary mirror has revealed a heretofore unknown flaw – the mirror has developed an astigmatism, most likely due to internal strain resulting from improper annealing of the original glass

blank. Longtime members will recall that our own members' attempts to polish the edges of the mirror were unsuccessful, and that Nova Optics, Inc. was contracted to finish the polishing. Although they were able to complete the polish, there were difficulties that they could not account for. Once the quality of the original glass was cast in doubt by OMI, the Board of Directors decided to purchase a new primary optic for the Panarusky Telescope. This new mirror will be delivered by the end of April and be ready in time for Astronomy Day if necessary; a few modifications to the telescope are already in progress to accommodate the thinner glass and longer focal length. The original mirror will also be returned to the NCSF and we decide what to do with it at a later date.

NCRAL 2008

At the March general meeting, the idea to host the NCRAL convention in 2008 was floated. This is an annual convention produced by a different NCRAL club each year; some clubs have hosted the event multiple times, and some have never hosted a convention. We currently fall in the latter category, and I for one would like to change that. The NCRAL convention is essentially a Saturday event, culminating in an awards banquet and preceded by a Friday-night observing and social function. The NCRAL can provide us with "seed funding" to get the convention up and running in the early stages, and in the end all profits are split between the NCSF and NCRAL. I am confident that the Northern Cross Science Foundation can put on a successful NCRAL convention, using the opportunity to showcase our pioneering efforts with Harrington Beach State Park as well as our own telescope-making handiwork. Should the NCSF commit to hosting the NCRAL convention in spring 2008? The membership will vote

March Meeting Minutes

By Kevin Bert

Prior to the business meeting, Jeff Setzer said a few words about a member of the club that was very much responsible for making our vision of a large club telescope a reality. We were all saddened by the recent passing of Alvin Panarusky and extend the club's sympathy to the entire Panarusky family. Jeff presented a photograph of Alvin that was taken by Mike Matthies at the dedication and first light ceremony of the 20-inch telescope to son Mark Panarusky who was in attendance. Mark said a few words about his father and the joy he had in helping the club and presented the club a final gift in Alvin's name of \$1000 to the Northern Cross to go toward the Cassegrain optics of the telescope that will bear his name.

The March business meeting of the Northern Cross Science Foundation was held at the Unitarian Church North in Mequon. President Jeff Setzer opened the meeting at 8:35 p.m. and welcomed 33 members and guests. Former member Dan Prosser was in attendance and recognized. Jeff then asked for standard reports.

Treasurer Rob Powell reports a balance of \$2,122.00 in the club's checking account and \$16,601.00 in the observatory account. He concluded by saying some needed accessories for the observatory had also been purchased.

Secretary Kevin Bert noted new mem-

ber Alan Kent from Milwaukee and gave a final notice for attending the 2006 NCRAL convention on April 21 & 22. Jeff Setzer gave a few of the highlights that were scheduled and said that it was not too late to register.

Under old business, Jeff Setzer gave a breakdown of the latest observatory activity. The board was still looking at a May 6th dedication of the observatory to coincide with National Astronomy day. Concrete quotes for foundation work would be coming in soon and Backyard Observatories is leaving a window open for an April trip to assemble the structure. They estimate a three-day session would finish it. Paul Kamikawa would look into accommodations for the crew when they arrive. It looks like the event would tie in with a possible article for Astronomy Magazine. A lot needs to be done and there is a chance that dedication might have to be pushed back a month or so. Jeff says as of now we are still optimistic that the May 6th date is attainable.

Under new business, Bob Sedgwick, the designer of the 20-Inch telescope, turned over a book and some of the original calculations of the Cassegrain secondary. The importance of having the mirror done in a timely manner would eliminate the need for the public to climb a tall ladder to reach the eyepiece in the Newtonian configuration. The reputable company OMI had been selected to produce a finished 3x Cassegrain mirror. They specialize in

large size mirrors and Cassegrain systems and provide the bulk of the optics in Obsession telescopes.

Jeff Setzer asked if the club would be interested in hosting the 2008 Regional Convention. He thought that we would finally be in a position to give back to the League. Jeff said that it could easily be done with the help of the membership and could showcase the completed observatory at Harrington Beach. Activities for the 100 or so participants could be accommodated at the Country Inn and Suites in Port Washington. Other details would be presented at the April meeting so the matter can be voted on.

Jeff talked of upcoming events and finalized the date for Superfest on April 1st. Messier marathon dates at Harrington Beach would be on March 24/25 and March 31/ April 1. An additional date of August 26th was set for observing at the Ice Age Center to update the calendar.

With no further new business, Jeff closed the business meeting at 9:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kevin Bert, secretary

From The Editor

By Joyce Jentges

For a lack of space other places, these are directions to Paul Kamikawa's house in Belgium:

Directions: I-43 to exit #100 Port Washington/Fredonia exit. Turn left onto Wisconsin Ave. Turn a soft right turn onto Hwy KW. Immediately over Railroad tracks turn left onto Dixie Rd.

The first road is Six Mile Road, and turn right. House is before A on right side.

It is with sadness that I pass along word that a former NCSF member has died. Bill Fisher passed away on March 1st in California. Those of you who were in the club back in the 1980's will remember Bill for his jolly

smile, and orange 8 inch Schmidt Cassegrain. Being a speech teacher, it was natural that Bill would give talks for our club as well. He developed a series of astronomy related slide shows that were used at club meetings, and at schools. He frequently came out to public nights and other club events.

Astronomy 101 And Main Program

By Kevin Bert

The 101 class entitled "Deep Sky Objects" by Kevin Bert. The novice star gazer might have a hard time following along when highlighted objects of the constellation of the month are presented during the 101 class. Kevin will go through an abbreviated list of expla-

nations of deep sky objects and terms often used to describe them.

Cancer is the constellation of the month. At this time information about the Main Program was not available

Last Call For Donors

By Rob Powell

Attention Would-Be Donors: Time is running out!

The NCSF donor recognition plaque is about to be ordered.

If you have not yet made a gift to the observatory campaign fund, and if you want your name to be included on the donor plaque, you have until Sunday April 9th to get your check to Rob Powell, treasurer. NCSF really needs your support to make this dream a reality.

Not only will your gift help to offset recent increases in material costs, your gift will increase the percentage of member participation, which is among the criteria taken into consideration when we approach outside donor prospects for their support.

A heartfelt "Thank You" goes out to the following members that have contributed, so far:

Registration is now available online for WOW 2006 (Wisconsin Observers Weekend), near Waupaca, WI. This event will take place May 25—29th (Memorial Day weekend). Go to: <http://www.new-star.org/WOW/> to register. Hurry, spaces fill up fast!!!

Newsletter note: The deadline for submission to have information put in the newsletter is the 20th of each month. Absolutely no items will be accepted after this date.

Arnow, Jentges, Mason, Schultz , Bert, Kamikawa, Mat-thies ,Schumacher , Bert, Kaplan, Miles, Setzer, Du Pree, Kasinskas, Plunkett, Steinberg, Edquist, Lynfoot, Poulin, Tannehill, Eichers, Maertz, Powell, Zadra, Evans, Marek, Reimbold, Zarleng

Marden Lecture on Mathematics

Submitted by Dave Schultz

The Department of Mathematical Sciences at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee invites you to the seventeenth annual MARDEN LECTURE ON MATHEMATICS

"The Shape of Space" presented by Dr. Jeff Weeks

When we look out on a clear night, the universe seems infinite. Yet this infinity might be an illusion. During the first half of the presentation, computer games will introduce the concept of a "multiconnected universe". Interactive 3D graphics will then take the viewer on a tour of several possible shapes for space. Finally, we'll see how recent satellite data provide tantalizing clues to the true shape of our universe. The only prereq-

uisites for this talk are curiosity and imagination. For middle school and high school students, people interested in astronomy, and all members of the UWM community.

Jeff Weeks is a freelance mathematician living in Canton, NY. He holds an A.B. from Dartmouth College and a Ph.D. from Princeton University, both in mathematics.

The Marden Lecture was established by Morris and Miriam Marden. Dr. Marden was a Distinguished Professor of Mathematics at UWM and was responsible for the inauguration of its graduate program, the first at the University. The lectures are designed to bring distinguished mathematicians to UWM to speak to

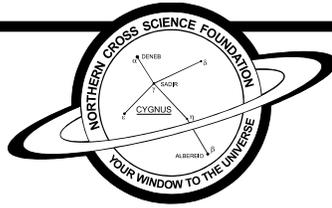
a general audience on a topic of mathematical interest. They have been given annually since 1989.

Thursday, April 6, 2006, 5:30 - 6:30 PM
Chemistry Bldg, Room CHM 180 (East and Next to EMS Bldg),
University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee
3200 N Cramer St., Milwaukee, WI

This program is free and open to the public. Reception 4:30-5:15 PM in EMS E495A.

The lecture is sponsored by the Miriam and Morris Marden Fund and co-sponsored by the Department of Mathematical Sciences and the College of Letters and Science.

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Stretching donor dollars By Rob Powell

Among the list of "must-have" items on our observatory equipment list are eyepieces and viewing filters. TeleVue Radian and Plossl eyepieces were chosen for their high eye-relief and superior quality. At the February NCSF board meeting, a motion to purchase as much as possible from the used market was unanimously approved. To date we have saved \$417 buying items for sale on AstroMart.com from both east and west coasts, and even Hawaii. If you have an 18mm TeleVue Radian or a 2" TeleVue Bandmate UHC filter to sell or donate, please contact Rob Powell as soon as possible.

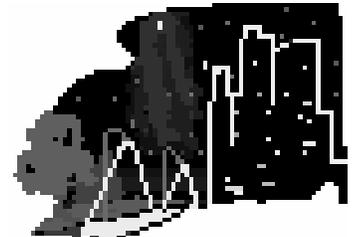
	Item	New	Used	
Eyepieces	55mm Plossl	235	120	
Eyepieces	32mm Plossl	118	87	
Eyepieces	18mm Radian	250		
Eyepieces	10mm Radian	250	170	
Eyepieces	5mm Radian	250	178	
Eyepieces	3mm Radian	250	160	
Filter 2"	O3	185	155	

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>