

# SPECTRUM

Northern Cross Science Foundation Newsletter

April 2007

## LOOKING UP

April 5 Thursday

General Meeting

7:00 p.m. Astronomy 101

7:30 p.m. Business Meeting

April 14 Saturday

Observatory Viewing/Training

8:00 p.m.

Harrington Beach State Park

April 19 Thursday

Board Meeting

7:30 p.m.

Home of Jeff Setzer

April 20 Friday

Public Viewing Night

7:00 p.m.

Harrington Beach State Park

April 21 Saturday

Spring Astronomy Day

2:00—11:00 p.m.

Harrington Beach State Park

May 3 Thursday

General Meeting

7:00 p.m. Astronomy 101

7:30 p.m. Business Meeting

May 17 Thursday

Board Meeting

7:30 p.m.

Home of Jeff Setzer

May 18 & 19 Friday & Saturday

Public Viewing Night

8:00 p.m.

Harrington Beach State Park

## Messier Marathon

By Joyce Jentges (with reports submitted by members)

What follows are reports from those who showed up to attempt the Messier Marathon, or just do some pleasure viewing on March 17<sup>th</sup>.

—  
Dan and I did not participate in the actual marathon, but we did leisurely view Saturn and observe over 30 deep sky objects from the Orion Nebula to the Hercules star cluster with the Panarusky telescope. We packed up at 1:30 am. The views were all fantastic.

-Kevin Bert

I tried the Marathon on (3/17). I used a 10" Dob and star-hopped everything. I used a 26mm Plossl eyepiece almost exclusively (44x). The Telrad paid for itself many times over.

My toughest object (that I eventually saw) was M33. I could verify I was seeing the correct field, but the seeing was so poor at times, I had to wait my turn with the sky gods. Having seen it many times before, it frustrated me having to fight for it.

One section I was dreading, ended up going unusually smooth...The Virgo Clus-

ter. I'd used the Sky Tools software to make a couple of correct orientation, star-hopping charts that made it seem easy, and even fun (like it's supposed to be).

I observed 104 "M" objects, and stayed till about 6:00 a.m.

-Don Miles

I started out attempting the marathon, but when I failed to find M77, and a few objects after that, I decided to just do some pleasure viewing I did start on the Virgo cluster, but got lost, and couldn't find my way back. I did manage to log 4 new M objects. Most of the rest of the night I spent in the observatory looking through the Panarusky telescope. We looked at quite a few objects including Saturn. I was very impressed with Saturn. This was my first look through the Panarusky in its new home. It was an enjoyable evening, even though I didn't attempt the marathon.

By the way, Jeff Setzer and Becca Sher came out to do the marathon. I understand that they logged 106 objects

-Joyce Jentges

## Observatory Scheduling

By Dan Bert

Greetings NCSF members! The Panarusky telescope is ready for its inaugural season of observing the night sky out at the Jim & Gwen Plunkett Observatory. If you have not had a chance to attend a members night or training session and check out the scope I encourage you to do so. In addition to the many public and members nights scheduled at the observatory, members that are trained in using the 20in telescope may also schedule their own

viewing session. To reserve a time please contact me at 262-375-2239 (best times to call are weekday evenings 6-10pm & weekends). The detailed calendar of all scheduled observatory events can be found on the clubs new google groups web page or e-mailed to you by request. I look forward to serving as your observatory director and hope to hear from you soon, clear skies!

## March Meeting Minutes

By Kevin Bert

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 9:10 p.m. to 21 members and guests and thanked them all for attending. He then asked for standard reports.

Treasurer Gene DuPree reports a balance of \$1,898.33 in the club's checking account. It was noted that membership dues must be addressed this month unless a member joined last year. Magazine subscriptions could be done too.

Secretary Kevin Bert said that the club's roster would be finalized and inserted into the next newsletter. Nametags and membership cards would be updated and present at the next meeting. No information was available on the regional convention at Fargo, North Dakota on May 18 & 19.

Under old business, Kevin Bert said that another observing/training session was held at the Jim & Gwen Plunkett Observatory in February. Another would be held on March 10th. There had been little activity on the telescope due to the cold weather. An operator's manual for members that have had observatory training would soon be available. The observatory tool sign up list had a few openings remaining.

A sign-up for leaders and assistants on Public Viewing Nights made the rounds.

Under new business Jeff Setzer informed the club that the park has given us a copy of the proposed final draft of the agreement between the park and us. A few minor changes in the wording need to be made. Afterhour's usage by club members was specified to our satisfaction. Our commitment to hold a minimum of 12 public sessions was an additional requirement not noted in the first draft, but should not be a problem. More details will be

given when the next draft is in our hands.

Jeff announced that Dedication for the Jim & Gwen Plunkett Observatory would be held on Saturday, July 21. Specifics about the event will be coming in the next few months. Jeff ran down upcoming events including April 21<sup>st</sup> National Astronomy day. An additional public date at the Ice Age Center will be on September 1<sup>st</sup>.

Rob Powell said that his new Sky Scout works great and anyone could see him for information about it if they are contemplating buying one and have questions.

With no further new business, Jeff closed the business meeting at 9:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Kevin Bert, secretary

## Things To See In the April Sky

By Don Miles

*Venus*: Brightest "star" in the West-Southwest (PISCES) at sunset. It stays up for about 2 hours even after the sky is completely dark. Venus will pass a little more than 2 degrees (less than 3 fingers width held at on your outstretched arm) to the lower left of the Pleiades (which is an easy naked eye object itself).

*Saturn*: Yellow-orange "star" to the right of the sickle of LEO. Rises in the east as the sky gets dark, and stays up all night. Even small telescope and binocular users can see Saturn's rings and moons. If you're using binoculars, rest against something solid, or a chair with arms help greatly. The

rings are most "open" they'll be for the next 5 years as they will gradually "close".

*Jupiter*: Rises about midnight. Look for it above and to the left of Antares in SCORPIUS.

*Mars*: Rises only about 45min before sunrise towards the beginning of the month. Look for it in CAPRICORNUS.

*Moon*:

April 2<sup>nd</sup>: Full Moon

April 10<sup>th</sup>: Last Quarter

April 17<sup>th</sup>: New Moon

April 24<sup>th</sup>: First Quarter

Lyrid meteor shower: Best time to see is around midnight of the 22nds. Expect to see about a dozen bright, fast meteors per hour.

Note: One location for a free printable sky chart (and other current info) is [telescope.com](http://telescope.com). Pick the "In The Sky" box on the right side of the page for info for the current month.

## Astronomy 101

By Kevin Bert

The Astronomy 101 class for April is entitled "Exit Pupil Calculations" by Kevin Bert. There is an important aspect that is sometimes overlooked when selecting binoculars or eyepieces for a telescope. There are limits to the magnifying powers that can be used in a standard astronomical optical system for visual use. Learn how to calculate

these limits and gauge your own pupil size.

The featured constellation will be Monoceros.

The main program will be a video called the Savage Sun.

## Astronomical Stuff For Sale

Submitted by Don Miles

ETX-125:

Includes UHTC, Deluxe Field Tripod, Deluxe Autostar Controller, factory 26mm Plossl eyepiece, remote focus cable, remote power supply adapter, SLR/digital camera adapter, Custom Solid Oak Case.

**--Excellent Condition--**

\$750 or (unfinished/finished primary mirror?).

Interested? Want more info? Call me.

Don Miles

262-675-2796

donmiles927@hotmail.com

*Editors Note:*

Have some astronomical goodies to part with? Send me an email by the 20th of the month, and space permitting, I will include them in the next newsletter.

## CURRENT CLACK

Welcome to new member Paul Gruener of Bayside!!

Registration for WOW (Wisconsin Observers Weekend) is happening now. If you plan to go, register soon. It will be held June 14-17, 2007 at Hartman Creek State Park, near Waupaca.

Please note: the deadline for submission of items for the newsletter is the 20th of the month. Please get your items to me no later than April 20th.



## From The Editor

By Joyce Jentges

Hurray!!! Observing season is upon us! I don't know about you, but I am really looking forward to the upcoming observing season. On April 20 and 21st, the public will be allowed in the observatory for the first time. How awesome it will be to show off 20 years worth of work that is finally finished with the Panarusky telescope in its final resting place. If you have not been lucky enough to look through it, I really encourage you to come out on April 14th for the next members night, and get a look through it.

The weekend after that, specifically the 21st, is Astronomy Day. Considering the amount of publicity that will be done for Astronomy Day, please plan to come

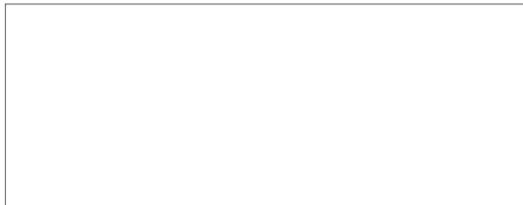
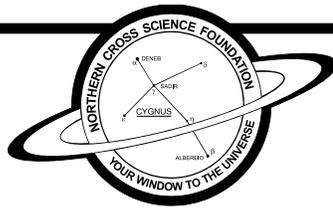
out sometime during this day to help with Astronomy Day. We can use extra telescopes, people with solar scopes, people to hand out information, give observatory tours, etc. There will be a sign up sheet at the April meeting. If you can't come to the meeting, contact Kevin Bert if you plan to participate in Astronomy Day.

Mark your calendar!!! The official dedication of the observatory will be held on July 21st. We will need a lot of help with this. More information will be forthcoming. If you are interested in helping with the planning, please contact a board member.

With a busy public viewing season coming, we are looking for more people to be leaders for the public viewing nights. You need to be trained how to use the telescope. The next observatory training is in conjunction with a members night at Harrington Beach. It is April 14th at 8:00 p.m. Dress warm and come on out to learn how to use the observatory and the Panarusky.

Included in this newsletter is an updated membership roster. Please check your information over carefully. Contact Kevin Bert if changes need to be made.

SPECTRUM  
102 N Montgomery St # 1  
Port Washington, WI  
53074



## 2007 OFFICERS

**President - Jeff Setzer**  
1418 Trillium CT  
West Bend, WI 53095  
262/338-8614  
astrosetz@hotmail.com

**Vice President/Newsletter  
Editor- Joyce Jentges**  
102 N. Montgomery St. Apt #1  
Port Washington, WI 53074  
(920) 254-6705  
joycejentges@hotmail.com

**Secretary - Kevin Bert**  
2292 Ridgewood Road  
Grafton, WI 53024  
262/375-2239  
kevin.bert@hotmail.com

**Treasurer - Gene DuPree**  
6291 Jay Rd.  
Myra, WI 53095  
262-675-0941  
grdupree@netwurx.net

### Other Board Members:

Rob Powell  
262-894-9756  
Rick Poulin  
920-474-3064  
Don Miles  
262-675-2796

**Monthly Meeting Location**  
Unitarian Church North  
13800 N. Port Wash. Rd.  
Mequon, WI 53097

## Historical Blast From the Past

(Taken from an old observatory log book)

May 3, 1997—Open House

### Members Present:

Brad Plaumann, Harold Rogers, "Alvin Clark" Riembold, Dan Prosser, Al "Einstienberg", Dave Rasch, Dan Bert,

Kevin Bert, Scott Kroger, Jeff Setzer, Loren Krug, Clyde Tombach

### Galaxy Fest 97

Open House, nice night for viewing. Looked at comet earlier (Hale Bopp), saw M81 & 82, M51, ring, 65 & 66 in Leo, snacked on vanilla wafers, M92, Owl M97. Excellent night and good # of people. 108 edge on galaxy, 104 the sombrero galaxy. Tehre was a lot we looked at. Not very damp at all out. Came out around 8 and left around 2 or so. Found 87, 100, 88, and 90 later on. 89, 84, 86, 59, 60, 58. Got all galaxies in the Realm of Galaxies!! In Virgo 49 and 61. Guy in distance was squeeling wildly. Madge good use of the nagler. Had tent up and pictures to buy. A greatnight for stargazing!!!! Dumbell looked great!!

**Editors note:** This was a log about an open house at our old observatory West of Cedarburg. The comments are exactly as written in the log book. Who ever the author was, had fun going on a galaxy hunt. I believe the telescope in the observatory at this time was a 17 1/2 inch reflector.

## SPECTRUM

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**Send inquiries to:**  
SPECTRUM  
102 N. Montgomery St. # 1  
Port Washington, WI 53074

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