

# SPECTRUM

Northern Cross Science Foundation Newsletter

April 2009

## LOOKING UP

**April 2, Thursday**

### General Meeting

7:00 p.m. Welcoming Remarks

7:15 p.m. Main Program

Public Viewing to Follow

**April 1 thru 5**

### 100 Hours of Astronomy

Various Locations

See feature article for details

**April 11, Saturday**

### Swap Meet

10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Aviation Heritage Center

Sheboygan County Airport

**April 16, Thursday**

### Board Meeting

7:30 p.m.

Home of Joyce Jentges

**May 2, Saturday**

### Public Viewing

7:00 p.m.

Harrington Beach

**May 6, Wednesday**

### Sidewalk Astronomy

7:00 p.m.

Bayshore Town Center

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

## 100 Hours of Astronomy

By Jeff Setzer IYA 2009 Coordinator



100 Hours of Astronomy is upon us! Take this chance to participate in this unprecedented worldwide celebration of astronomy; we have opportunities all over the area from April 1 through 5. In addition to night time observing in all locations, we have an all-day extravaganza at Bayshore Town Center on Saturday. Please email me ([astrosetz@hotmail.com](mailto:astrosetz@hotmail.com)) or call me (262) 338-8614 to sign up. This will take a lot of volunteers to pull off so don't be shy!

### **Wednesday, April 1:**

Telescope Viewing at West Bend Library  
7pm to 11pm.

### **Thursday, April 2**

Solar Viewing West Bend Library  
1pm to 5pm  
Lecture and Telescope Viewing at Unitarian Church North from 7pm to 11pm.

### **Friday, April 3**

Telescope Viewing at Bayshore Town Center 7pm to 11pm.  
Telescope viewing at Pike Lake State Park  
7pm to 11pm.

Telescope Viewing & Observatory Open House at Harrington Beach State Park  
7pm to 11pm .

### **Saturday, April 4**

Bayshore Town Center from 10am to 11pm.  
Activities will include:

Solar viewing

A scale model of the solar system people can walk through outside

Live viewing of the "Around The World in 80 Telescope" 24-hour webcast that is part of 100HA

Screenings of the official IYA2009 documentary "400 Years of the Telescope"

Demonstrations on how telescopes work and what astronomers learn by using them

Telescope Viewing after dark

Telescope Viewing at Pike Lake State Park  
7pm to 11pm.

Telescope Viewing & Observatory Open House at Harrington Beach State Park  
7pm to 11pm.

### **Sunday, April 5**

Solar Viewing at Bayshore Town Center  
from 10am to 2pm.

## Top 10 List - Things You May Hear At The Small Scope Star Party

By Kevin Bert

No.10 For putting it together in about a day, it works much better than it looks.

No. 9 I rescued it from the roadside trash one morning.

No. 8 I'm no expert, but the department store really exaggerated the claims on what could be seen with it.

No. 7 Sometimes it is hard to focus with all that color in the image.

No. 6 There is a rumor going around saying that Aperture is king. Everyone knows that

Power is king.

No. 5 Ever since I clamped this vice grip on the end of that shaft the balance was perfect, but only near the horizon.

No. 4 You wouldn't believe the number of useful telescope things you can find for scopes in the plumbing department.

No. 3 I have never seen a Cheese ball can used quite like that before.

(Continued on page 4)

## 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 Joyce Jentges opened the meeting at 9:00 pm and welcomed over 30 members and guests. She was very pleased how the annual NCSF banquet had gone last month at the Fox and Hounds restaurant in Hubertus. She thanked all members that made the evening a great experience.

Joyce then asked Kevin Bert to present an Astronomical League observing certificate to one of our members. Kevin said he was very impressed with this member's observation log and having put the extra effort into sketching the objects as well. A round of applause was then given to Justin Modra for viewing 70 or more objects and receiving the regular Messier Certificate. Justin said it took many years to get to that point with a number of different scopes. He enjoyed the sketching part as it made him more sensitive to detail and he was looking forward to finishing the list of 110 objects and receive the honorary certificate and pin. Joyce then asked for standard reports. Treasurer Gene Dupree

reported a balance of \$851.62 in the general fund and \$2468.26 in the Observatory account. He said that money for the h-alpha sun telescope came to \$5059.00 and the mount was \$220.00 which brought the regular account down considerably. But plans for the expense were anticipated for quite a while.

Secretary Kevin Bert announced that there was a new member from Shorewood, Jeremy Jensen. Kevin then handed a check to Gene from the We Care program of Pick & Save that came to \$62.50. He noted the NCRAL convention at Cedar Rapids Iowa was coming soon, but little was found on the web about it. Jeff Setzer made a comment on hearing that speakers for the event were just being set up but that it would still follow the standard convention format. Open house and viewing on Friday, speakers and tour of OMI on Saturday along with an evening banquet.

Under new business Joyce Jentges gave a grilling pitch for someone to take the ball, (I mean brat), and bun, (I mean run, with it). The Spectrum gave all the sizzling details of this fundraising proposal and interested parties can add condiments and contact any board

member if interested. On a less tastier but happier note, an additional \$4000.00 will again be coming in the Northern Crosses direction from Bayshore Town Center. Part of the money will be directed toward IYA activities at Bayshore. We are indeed fortunate to have such a good relationship with Bayshore and intend to continue to focus on maintaining it.

Joyce gave a list of upcoming events. April 11th will be the second annual Swap and Sell event sponsored by the Sheboygan Astronomical Society. This year's event will be at the Aviation Heritage Center from 10:00 to 3:00 p.m. All NCSF members are welcome. The Messier Marathon on March 27 & 28 are much anticipated. For those not quite up for the whole event, the observatory will be open to browse the heavens at a more leisurely pace. As always you can come and go as you like but respect each other's dark adaption. A frenzy of IYA activity is nearing and all should look to sign-up to help in some way. In particular, the 100 hours of astronomy in early April.

Jeff Setzer gave a report on the latest  
(continued on page 3)

## Things to See In the April Night Sky

By Don Miles

**Mercury:** Look above and to the left of the setting sun about an hour after the sun actually sets. It will get much easier to pick out after the first week as it puts some distance between itself and the sun. It will actually get brighter than any star in the sky by the 9th. Towards the later part of the month, Mercury will move close to the Pleiades star cluster as the month progresses. A crescent Moon will also join the party the night of the 26th with Mercury being the lowest of the group. As with the Pleiades in general, binoculars will give you the best view of the show.

**Venus, Mars, & Uranus:** Venus is a much fainter object low in the eastern sky before sunrise. Venus has just passed between the Earth and Sun so it is now a morning object. Mars and Uranus are also morning objects, but both very dim and low in the eastern sky and as such will pretty much get washed out by the sunrise for the month.

**Jupiter & Neptune:** Jupiter is another morning object in the southeast, and glows at mag. -2.1, so is not glaring, but much brighter than any other stars in the area. Once you've found Jupiter, look about 5 degrees east to find Neptune. (5 degrees is about the spacing of the last two stars in the bucket of the Big Dipper, or three fingers width at arms length). This spacing will close to about 2 degrees by months end.

**Saturn:** Look for Saturn high in the Southeast as the sun sets. Saturn is still located below the "hind legs" of Leo and will be highest in the sky about 10:30, but will stay up for the rest of the night. Saturn's rings have "opened" to their greatest tilt by mid-month, and from then on will start to close on their way to edge-on by about mid September.

**Pluto:** As usual with outer "planets", not much seems to change with them, but only our vantage point does. Pluto is still viewable early in the morning, but at almost 15th magnitude, and low in the

southeast, you'll need at least a 12" scope and dark skies.

**Moon:**

April 2nd: First Quarter  
April 9th: Full Moon  
April 17th: Last Quarter  
April 24th: New Moon



**Special Events:**

**Occultation:** Watch for the Moon to occult Venus the morning of the 22nd. Venus will disappear at 7:45am, and will reappear at 8:28am. All times are local.

**Meteor Showers:** Watch for the Lyrids the early morning hours of Wednesday the 22nd. They should peak around 3am, with maximum predictions of about 20/hour. We will actually be passing thru the debris field from the 16th thru the 25th, but will be thru the thickest part the night of the 21st. Look to the east in the general direction of Lyra. As always, dress warm and try to pick a spot away from lights.

## April Meeting

By Editor

### No 101 Class

### Main Program

#### How Telescopes Changed the Universe

Presented by Jeff Setzer

Exactly 400 years ago Galileo turned his crude telescope on the sky and changed the way we perceive the world in which we live, as well as the very fabric of our society. Jeff's program will leave us with a better understanding of the impact the telescope has made on mankind's world view.

**Public Viewing** will follow the Main Program in the church parking lot, weather permitting. A back-up program is planned if the weather does not cooperate.

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## February Events

### *Candlelight Ski & Hike*

February 7<sup>th</sup>

Gene & Charlotte DuPree reported clear skies and a mild evening resulting in a turnout of over 40 interested people for the Harrington Beach Ski & Hike event. The Observatory was open and several members had telescopes set up on the parking lot.

### *Candlelight Ski & Hike*

February 14<sup>th</sup>

Clear skies and pleasant temperatures resulted in 250 people attending this Pikes Lake Ski & Hike, led by Gene & Charlotte DuPree. A total of five NCSF members made themselves available for this program.

## March Events

### *Observatory Training*

March 21<sup>st</sup>

Dan & Kevin Bert held a training session under clear skies for eight interested club members. I am told that we now have over 30 trained observatory operators.



*(March Mtg. Minutes - Cont'd from page 2)*

IYA happenings. The largest IYA Cornerstone project will be the 100 hours of astronomy and will run Thursday through Saturday with the goal of getting millions of people around the world to look through a telescope. The Northern Cross will be leading the way in SE Wisconsin's activities with groups at Pike Lake, Bayshore, Harrington Beach and Thursday at UCN. A global web cast over a 24-hour period will be included during this time, as people will learn what projects observatories around the world are preparing for that evening. Jeff said if he does not hear from you, you might be getting a call to help. The club's website will have a link to it along with other IYA details.

The Galileo scope will be ready to order in a few days. It will cost \$15.00 plus shipping for small quantities, but lots over 100 are \$12.50 each. Jeff was looking into saving shipping costs and sales tax by having the club pick them up in Racine. The club will be ordering enough to satisfy all the programs at Bayshore and our personal members needs too. Contact Jeff if interested in your own.

Stephanie Marsala informed the membership that on the 13th of this month a star party would be held in the parking lot of the Learning Shop in Brookfield. She said the response so far has been very good and the store manager is very excited about the event. Any member that is interested in bringing out a telescope to help entertain the turnout is welcome. Starting time would be at 8:00 p.m. Jeff said the club website will have directions to the event.

### **NCRAL 2009**

May 1 & 2

Cedar Rapids, IA

[www.cedar-astronomers.org](http://www.cedar-astronomers.org)

## CURRENT CLACK

### New Member

NCSF welcomes new Club Member

**Jeremy Jensen**

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### Leaders for Public Viewing

April 1 & 2

#### **West Bend Library**

Leaders: Gene and Charlotte Dupree

April 2 thru 5

#### **100 Hours of Astronomy**

Bayshore - Jeff Setzer

Harrington Beach - Kevin Bert

Pike Lake - Don Miles

May 2

#### **Public Viewing**

Leaders Needed

May 6

#### **Sidewalk Astronomy**

Leaders Needed

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### Star Parties

#### **Wisconsin Observers Weekend**

July 23 - 26

Hartman Creek State Park, WI

[www.new-star.org](http://www.new-star.org)

#### **Northwoods Starfest**

August 21- 23

Fall Creek, WI

[www.cvastro.org](http://www.cvastro.org)

#### **Prairie Skies**

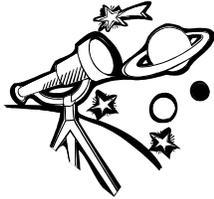
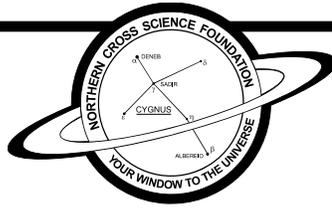
September 17- 20

4H Camp

Near Bourbonnais, IL

[www.prairieskies.org](http://www.prairieskies.org)

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(*Top 10 Continued from page 1*)

No. 2 I spent way too much for something this small.

No. 1 Some say you get use to the dim images because of the exceptionally dark background. I still say it is a lack of light.

(*See part two of the Small Scope Star Party, "The Telescopes," next month.*)

### Jim and Gwen Plunkett Observatory



**Observatory Director:**  
Dan Bert: 262-375-2239

### Observatory Note *by Dan Bert*

During the observatory training session this month the keypad on the north door began to malfunction. A similar issue was encountered last spring.

Until the keypad can be repaired please use the lockbox located on one of the south doors. There will be a key inside the box to open the south observatory door. The combination for the lock box is identical to that of the keypad. Please remember to reset the lock tumblers when done. Thank you.

## SPECTRUM

Is published by the Northern Cross Science Foundation, Inc. A nonprofit organization based the state of southeastern Wisconsin and is a Member of the North-Central Region of the Astronomical League.



The NCSF supports the International Dark sky association.



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<http://www.ncsf.info>



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