

SPECTRUM

Northern Cross Science Foundation Newsletter

August 2006

LOOKING UP

August 3 Thursday
General Meeting
7:00 p.m. Astronomy 101
Business Meeting to follow

August 18-20
Northwoods Starfest
Fall Creek, WI

August 18 & 19 Fri. & Sat.
Public Viewing Night
7:00 p.m.
Harrington Beach S. Park

August 24 Thursday
Board Meeting
7:30 p.m.
Home of Jeff Setzer

August 26 Saturday
Brat fry
10:00—2 p.m. (9:15 setup)
Piggly Wiggly—West Bend
Public Viewing Night
Time TBA
Ice Age Center, near Dundee

September 2 Friday
Public Viewing
7:00 p.m.
Harrington Beach S. Park

September 3 Saturday
Solar and Public Viewing
4:00 p.m.
Harrington Beach S. Park

(Continued on Page 4)

NCRAL 2008 Notice

By Becca Sher

Hello Everybody!

As you all know by now NCSF is hosting the 2008 NCRAL Convention. It is never too early to start planning so on that note we are looking for volunteers! These are the committee positions that still need to be filled: Publicity Coordinator, Vendor Coordinator, along with T-Shirt and Memorabilia Coordinator. We are also looking for someone to volunteer to be at the Friday afternoon event to handle any questions and make sure everyone has

directions back to the convention.

As with any event things will come up and more volunteers will be needed in the future. If you do not feel that you have time to volunteer now, please think about volunteering for "Day-Of" activities, such as driving people to Harrington or a shift at the registration table.

If you have any questions, comments or suggestions please feel free to email me at light_pig@hotmail.com or give me a call 414.379.1661.

July Event Recap

By Joyce Jentges

July turned out to be a busy month with observing nights for both members and the public. The month started with Kevin Bert's Sunday on Saturday on the 8th. Kevin reports "Early attendees to this yearly event had a chance to actually view the sun for a change. Only a few spots could be seen in white light while hydrogen alpha displayed some nice prominences. Increasing clouds and a threat of rain kept most members from setting up equipment. I had a chance to set up for the first time a projection system supported by a flowerpot on a refracting telescope. The screen is made of a special material designed for rear projection. It still needs a little more work to get the correct image scale, but it looks like it will work". Thanks to Kevin and Kathy Bert for their hospitality.

July 14 and 15 were public viewing nights at Harrington Beach State Park. Both nights were actually clear with the

moon rising about 11:30. On the 14th we had about a dozen or so guests look through our telescopes, and the following evening about 20 people came. Now I imagine some of you are disappointed that this wasn't very many people, but considering that there have been times this year where no one has showed up, and it was Fish Day weekend in Port Washington, I was happy to see that we had guests. I believe that we will have several potential new members from some of those who came.

For the Moonlight Hike on July 22, we were given a wrong date. The hike was actually July 21, but we were told the date was the 22nd. Gene volunteered Charlotte and himself to be there on Friday night. The Northern Cross had representation both nights, even though weather wasn't predicted to be very good. Despite clouds, it did clear for a while both nights, and we were able to do some viewing. A couple of guests did come both nights.

July Meeting Minutes

By Kevin Bert

The July business meeting of the Northern Cross Science Foundation was held at the Unitarian Church North in Mequon. President Jeff Setzer opened the meeting at 7:50 p.m. and welcomed 24 members and guests. Jeff asked for standard reports.

Treasurer Rob Powell reports a balance of \$1,648.91 in the club's checking account and \$9,162.00 in the observatory account. Recent observatory disbursements of \$3,640.00 to OMI for the replacement primary mirror and \$900.00 for a computer were made.

Secretary Kevin Bert presented election information on three Astronomical League candidates running unopposed for positions. After a brief discussion, Rob Powell made a motion to cast a unanimous ballot for Terry Mann for president, Carroll Iorg for vice-president, and Mary Sutter for treasurer. Joyce Jentges then seconded the motion. A majority signified verbally in favor of the motion and it carried.

Jeff Setzer then gave an update on the Jim & Gwen Plunkett Observatory. The building was up and functional! A photo of the completed structure is on the club's web site. Three days are all that were needed. Two doors were placed on the south wall and an additional north wall door was worked into the plans. Power to move the roof has yet to be brought to the building so an extension cord will be temporarily needed. Gene Dupree offered the use of a 100 ft. cord. Jeff and the park superintendent have keys for the doors. At this point David Eicher from Kalmbach has not come out to see the finished building and complete an article

to Astronomy Magazine. All members are encouraged to check it out soon at a public event or on their own. Just be prepared to purchase a park day pass or year sticker if you don't have one. The question was raised on how members and the public would make it across the rough graded terrain to access the building. Jeff said that he would talk to the park superintendent to see what could be done, and when. Members that wish to contribute ideas and expertise to the completion of the interior should consider it, and look for information on an organizational meeting to plan activities in the near future.

Kevin Bert reported on the status of the 20-inch Panarusky telescope. It was hoped that the telescope would be completed and moved to the observatory by the end of the month. Mike Matthies was asked how the scheduling for the lift was going with his neighbor Paul Schneider, who has the lifting vehicle. The specific Saturday was not yet confirmed. The primary mirror was in our hands and final assembly was near to finish balancing. A solid sub-plate was getting ready to machine and will be the first component of the scope to sit on the massive concrete pier that lies flush with the floor. Volunteers' names were taken to help with the move of the 300 lb. plate or for any other job that might be needed to get the scope ready. Kevin said to watch the club's web site for the date of the telescopes big move.

Under old business chairperson Rebecca Sher informed the membership that she will be looking for volunteers

for the 2008 NCRAL activities and would have more information in the next newsletter.

Under new business, Jeff Setzer took names of members considering the position of Observatory Director. Paul Kamikawa and Kip Kaplan were interested in the possibility of being co-directors. Duties would be to work out scheduling of the facility and equipment, look after inventory, training, address maintenance issues and enforce the policies set up by the board of directors. This person will be overseeing all aspects of running the observatory and delegate work to willing individuals. With something this new to the club, it will be hard to think of all the rules needed to make it run smooth. There is expected to be some initial bumps in the road as different problems arise and issues are addressed and it is asked that club members be patient as operation of the facility is fine-tuned. The goal is that all interested members have access to the facility once they know the procedure to request time and have the proper training to run the telescope.

Joyce Jentges reported on a recent observing outing with a school group at Kohler Andre Park. Attendance was good, unfortunately things started well before dark and the group was ready to leave when things were getting good for viewing. Joyce also reminded the public viewing leaders to send her a brief report on how their evening went.

(Minutes continued on page 4, bottom of page)

Observatory Update

By Jeff Setzer

Hello Friends,

We now have our own observatory. You'll be seeing lots of pictures in Spectrum and NCSF Online as things develop. These are exciting times and

we should all enjoy these "first" moments as we continue work toward a completed facility.

The Board of Directors has created a new appointed position: Observatory Director. The Observatory Director's

job is still being defined, but generally speaking this will be the caretaker of the observatory, and the keeper of the facility schedule. If this sounds appealing to you, please let me or another Board member know of your interest.

Astronomy 101

By Kevin Bert

Please make note that the 101 class will start 30 minutes later (7:00 pm.), in order to accommodate this month's speaker. The August 101 class is entitled "Cleaning Optics," by Al Steinberg. This is a subject that is very important but often receives little attention. Learn how often cleaning needs to be done and watch a demonstration on how to clean a first surface primary

mirror. See what it takes to clean large coated surfaces like corrector plates and objective lenses and smaller coated lenses found in a typical eyepiece. In addition, get to know what materials will be needed to complete the process.

The featured constellation will be Scutum presented by Kevin Bert.

Main Program

By Bob Mason

This month's main program will be a talk about the "Chaco Culture National Historical Park" in New Mexico. I was told about Chaco by people that I know from the Albuquerque club, and was encouraged to volunteer there at the astronomy program. Alan Whitman, who writes for Sky and Telescope now and then, was in charge of the Astronomy program at Chaco. Anabel & I signed up to volunteer for the months of Aug., Sept., & Oct. 2003 and found it

to be very interesting work. Chaco is in the middle of the Navajo Reservation and is a major center of ancestral Pueblo culture between AD 850 and 1250. This agricultural community was particularly interested in the sun and a number of the ruins have astronomical significance. Hear more about our activities and this historical region at the August meeting.

From The Editor

By Joyce Jentges

We are scheduled to do a brat fry at the Piggly Wiggly in West Bend on August 26th. I have broken the duties into two shifts, in case a person can't stay all day. First shift is from 9 a.m.—11 a.m. and second shift is 11 a.m.—2 p.m. or close. At this point, I need help in these areas for both shifts: grillers, cashier, selling food, a "gopher" for the 2nd shift, and people to set up telescopes.

I will pass around the sign up sheet at the August meeting. If you can't make it to the meeting, please call or email me. Please sign up to help us, as the money raised from these brat fries goes towards the observatory.

A second brat fry will be held at Piggly Wiggly in Saukville on September 30. I will have a sign up sheet for this one at the August meeting.

If you look at the calendar of Events that came out earlier in the year you will see that August 25, September 15 and 16 and October 20 and 21 are listed as potential members nights. If you are interested in hosting a members night, please let a board member know, or speak up at the August meeting. Remember, you can host one at Harrington Beach if you so wish, so don't let the lack of good skies at your home stop you!

Welcome to new members: Marcia and Jim Trotchie of Port Washington.

Public Viewing Night Leaders

August 18—Rick and Mickey Kazmierski

August 19—Paul Kamikawa

August 26—Gene & Charlotte DuPree

Sept. 2—Kevin Bert

Sept 3.—Rob Powell

For Sale:

Price Reduced!!!!

4" Meade Refractor. Model 102ACRH/500, on a German Equatorial mount. \$250.00

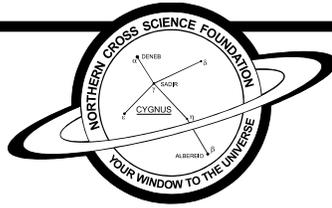
See Gene DuPree if interested.

Please note: the deadline for submission of items for the newsletter has been extended for the month of August due to Northwoods Starfest. Please get your items to me no later than August 24th.

Backyard Observatories made a trip out to the observatory this week to do some extra work on the roof of the observatory. The first time we tried to open it after they left, we had a few problems getting the roof off. I'm sure Jeff Setzer will have more details on this at the next meeting.

If you are going to Northwoods Starfest, you need to know that on Friday night around 5 p.m. members from our club go to a fish fry right down the road from the camp. So, if you are going, plan to be there before 5 p.m. to join us for this! Here's wishing for great skies!

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



2006 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 - Rob Powell
 1429 W. River Oaks Ln.
 Mequon, WI 53092
 262/894-9756
 rkfmpowell4@wi.rr.com

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



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556190

September 7 Thursday
 General Meeting
 6:30 p.m. Astronomy 101
 7:30 p.m. Business Meeting

September 21 Thursday
 Board Meeting
 7:30 p.m.
 Home of Jeff Setzer

September 21—24
 Astrofest
 Near Kankakee Illinois

September 29 & 30 Friday & Saturday
 Public Viewing Nights
 7:00 p.m.
 Harrington Beach State Park

September 30 Saturday
 Brat Fry
 10:00 —2:00 p.m.
 Piggly Wiggly—Saukville

(Minutes from page 2)

That way a permanent record of the event would be placed in the Spectrum. The newsletter deadline is the 20th of each month.

Rebecca Sher announced that the Milwaukee Public Museum would have a display/program starting July 8th until the 8th of October on ancient Chinese astronomy called "Dragon Skies."

Jeff Setzer ran down the upcoming events for the month. With no further new business, Jeff closed the business meeting at 9:00 p. m.

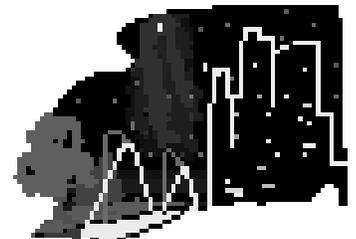
Respectfully submitted, Kevin Bert, secretary

SPECTRUM

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

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<http://www.ncsf.info>