

SPECTRUM

Northern Cross Science Foundation Newsletter

August 2009

LOOKING UP

August 6, Thursday

General Meeting

7:00 p.m. Astronomy 101

7:30 p.m. Main Program

Business Meeting to follow

August 8, Saturday

Public Viewing

6:00 p.m.

Learning Shop Brookfield

August 15, Saturday

Public Viewing

8:00 p.m.

Ice Age Center

August 20, Thursday

Board Meeting

7:30 p.m.

Home of Joyce Jentges

August 23, Sunday

(Rain Date 24, Monday)

Public Outreach

7:30 p.m.

Home School Group

August 26, Wednesday

Sidewalk Astronomy

7:00 p.m.

Bayshore Town Center

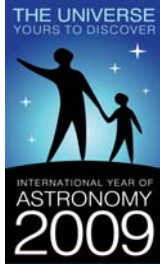
August 28 & 29, Fri. & Sat.

Public Viewing

7:00 p.m.

Harrington Beach

2009 International Year of Astronomy *By Jeff Setzer IYA 2009 Coordinator*



I am pleased to announce that the big Southeastern Wisconsin IYA2009 event, called "100 Telescopes: A Celebration of Galileo," will be held at Greenfield Park in Milwaukee. The dates are Friday and Saturday nights, September 25 and 26. We need volunteers to bring their own telescopes and

share them with the public on one or both nights. Please let me know if you'd like to participate by email or phone. This is the first joint event in the history of Wisconsin astronomy – be a part of it!

The newest IYA2009 Cornerstone Project called Galilean Nights is a sidewalk astronomy event coordinated on a global scale much like 100 Hours of Astronomy. Galilean Nights will occur on October 23 & 24 and the NCSF will hold observing at Plunkett Observatory and most likely Bayshore Town Center as well. Think about participating during these dates as this will be the last big global observing event of IYA2009.

Galileoscopes are in production again and we

will put in our order as soon as our funding check comes in.

Observatory Note

Eagle scout Trevor Metoxen will be working with Harrington Beach and the NCSF for his eagle scout service project. He will be landscaping around the observatory and constructing cement observing pads to the east of the observatory in the shape of the northern cross. Look for further details in the upcoming months.

Jim and Gwen Plunkett Observatory



Observatory Director:
Dan Bert: 262-375-2239

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

By Kevin Bert (Small Scope Star Party is scheduled for September 12th)

No.10 That dent in the tube assembly happened when junior was using it as a Star Wars laser cannon.

No.9 There are 3 kinds of dew at these star parties. The kind you drink; the kind that forms on cold surfaces; and the double dew. You know, the kind you don't want to step in.

No.8 My neighbor had been using it to move rainwater away from his house. This lens fits perfectly inside it.

No.7 The best thing about this shaky tripod is that it keeps you from actually seeing the fuzzy image. I think you might call that a loose-loose situation.

No.6 I found out that tightening and loosening the break act like a slow motion control.

No.5 The first time I thought I saw a footprint from the astronauts on the moon. My spouse set me straight and showed me the true scale on my moon map.

No.4 I had a suspicion that the tube was on backwards when the computer only pointed the tube assembly toward the ground.

No.3 That finder never worked right. The images were always upside-down no mater which way I rotated it in the rings.

No.2 I could never find anything through this scope. Then I discovered that a sun filter was screwed into the eyepiece.

No.1 Averted vision? Heck no. The only way I can see something is to use averted Imagination.

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 Joyce Jentges opened the meeting at 7:40 pm and welcomed over 27 members and guests. She thanked Jeff Setzer for running last month's meeting in her absence then asked for standard reports.

Treasurer Gene Dupree reported a balance of \$1064.24 in the general fund and \$1205.79 in the Observatory account.

Secretary Kevin Bert had nothing to report about the membership or Astronomical League. Joseph Eufemi was noted as the latest member but was not in attendance.

Jeff Setzer gave an IYA update on the new sidewalk astronomy style cornerstone project "Galilean Nights." It follows on the successful 1000 hours of Astronomy and will be held this fall. Details still to come. Organizers of a group event for clubs in the state called, "100 Telescopes" has settled on Greenfield Park to hold the event on September 24 & 25. Another meeting will take place this month at Yerkes Observatory to address publicity details and finalize specific evening activities.

The Galileo Telescope project has been having some difficulty getting funds to keep the scopes in production. There may

be significant delays getting the minimum to start the line for another run.

Under old business Joyce reminded the membership that the club was still looking for a brat fry coordinator to head up one or two events. Any interested member should contact a board member, if they are willing to get the details and have some fun.

Tom Schmidtkunz and Paul Gruener are looking into details of an Adler Planetarium field trip this summer. Costs for transportation and planetarium along with dates and times will be given at the next meeting.

Under new business Joyce made a plea for members to take the option of the electronic newsletter to save the club printing and postage costs. You would get an email notice prior to normal mailings to download the Spectrum in a PDF format. Interested members should contact the Spectrum editor Rick Kazmierski if interested. Jim Marsala made comment that the club might want to consider charging more for members that prefer the mailed paper copy.

Stephanie Marsala is looking for members to help her entertain families at the Learning Shop in Brookfield on August 8th. Please let her know if you could assist in bringing a telescope.
srcmarsala@earthlink.net

Kevin Bert said that Gene Dupree and he picked up a telescope made by Robert Sedgwick to refurbish and later use at the Jim and Gwen Plunkett Observatory. The long focus Newtonian 8-inch scope was made in 1935 when Bob was 17 years old. It is mounted on a heavy steel pier that can easily be moved on castors.

Joyce gave a rundown of the upcoming events for the month. Public viewing on the 17th and 18 at Harrington Beach, and sidewalk astronomy on the 29th at Bayshore. Sun-Day on Saturday at the Bert families home in Grafton on the 11th with WOW the 23rd thru the 26th.

Saving a major announcement for last, Joyce was pleased to announce that our quest to move the meeting place is no longer an issue thanks to member Gwen Plunkett. Gwen has offered to pay UCN our costs to continue to have our monthly meetings at the church. The offer will help UCN, where she is a member, and the Northern Cross. "If the Vatican can have an observatory, so can we" said Gwen. The offer was unanimously accepted and followed with an enthusiastic round of applause.

With no further new business, Joyce closed the business meeting at 8:25 p.m

Things to See In the August Night Sky

By Don Miles

Mercury & Saturn: Look for Mercury above and to the left of the setting sun about half an hour after the sun sets. It will be fairly bright (-0.4 mag), but because it's so close to the sun, it won't appear as bright as the numbers would lead you to expect. On the 2nd, Mercury will be directly above Regulus by just a little bit more than the width of the Moon. On the night of the 16th, Mercury will pass below much dimmer Saturn by less than 3 degrees. Saturn will be passing behind the sun for the rest of the summer, but will return as a morning object in October.

Jupiter & Neptune: Jupiter (mag. -2.8) will rise in the east in Capricornus at about 9pm early in the month, and by about 7:30 later in the month. Jupiter starts out 2 degrees below and to the right of much dimmer Neptune (mag. 7.8), but will slowly continue to move lower and to the right of Neptune to a distance of almost 5 degrees

by month's end. Neptune will look like a blue-gray "star".

Venus & Mars: Both rise about 2 hours before sunrise. Venus is still the brightest object (mag. -4.0) in the eastern sky before sunrise and will move thru the left edge of Taurus, across Gemini, and end up close to the Beehive cluster in Cancer. Mars (mag 1.1) will also move to the left thru Taurus and end up being very close to M35 in Gemini also by month's end.

Uranus: Rises in the eastern sky about 10:30pm early in the month, but by about 8:30 later in the month. Uranus (mag 6.0) is in the constellation Pisces, and is below the right "fish". Look for a blue-green "star".

Pluto: Tough, but this is the best time of the year to pick it out as it will be highest in the sky around midnight. It'll be directly over Sagittarius (about 9-1/2 degrees

above the top of the lid on the teapot). Obviously, good charts and maybe the Panaruskys will help greatly.

Moon:
August 5th: Full Moon
August 13th: Last Quarter
August 20th: New Moon
August 27th: First Quarter

Special Events:
Meteor Showers:
Watch for the Perseids in the early morning hours of Wednesday the 12th. The peak expected rate for this shower is about 110 per hour. The near last quarter Moon will wash out some of the more faint meteors, but it should still be a good show.



August General Meeting

101 Class

For August, the 101 class will be given by Kevin Bert and is entitled "Recording Your Observations." Taking notes makes you look deeper into the subject and has the benefit for you to look back to glean details and see how your observation skills are improving. Find out what things you needed to record to make useful observations and satisfy the many observing club requirements of the Astronomical League.

The Featured Constellation:

"Ursa Minor"



Main Program

The Main Program will be presented by Justin Modra and is entitled:

"Recording Observations with Pencil and Paper"

Justin will cover keeping an observing log or journal, using observing form templates, and techniques on sketching observations and illuminating the paper during nighttime observations. There will be a session during the presentation in which those attending the meeting will have a chance to try to sketch a few objects themselves - so members are encouraged to bring a clipboard and a #2 pencil and eraser. The lights will be on during the sketching session - so there's no need to bring a flashlight.

Note Worthy

Tom *Schmidtkunz* will be discussing options for the field trip to the Adler Planetarium.

July Events

Sidewalk Astronomy

June 27th

Charlotte Dupree reported she, Gene, and Carol Nelson set-up solar scopes at 2:30 pm for an afternoon of passing clouds. Dark skies and the threat of rain shut down the event at 6:30 pm. Over 100 visitors stopped to view or ask questions.

Sun Day on Saturday

July 11th

Kevin Bert wrote; "July 11th turned out to be a great day to hold this year's Sun-Day on Saturday. A dozen members looked through several telescopes at the sun from the simple solar projection method to Hydrogen-Alpha. Unfortunately, the sun displayed only a blank disc. The first major sunspot group of cycle 24 faded from view earlier in the week. I tried my hand at recording the event with the club's Astro-Vid camera attached to the 90mm Coronado. There were some tremendous prominences at the time as well and I was very surprised how well it worked. After dinner and sunset, scopes were converted to evening viewing. Simple recreational viewing continued until the glow of the moon lit the eastern sky. I

would like to thank all those members that came, and in particular those that brought a dish to pass. This is the first time that the weather cooperated for the entire day and I hope this is a trend that will continue."

Public Viewing

July 17th

John Helm reported that he assisted Dave Windorski at this Public Event. Cloudy skies and cool temperatures dominated the evening. As rain showers threatened, the Observatory was closed at 8:00 pm.

Public Viewing

July 18th

Charlotte Dupree reported mostly clear skies with occasional passing clouds. The event attracted 12 visitors.

Members Night

July 24-25th

Observatory Director Dan Bert reported that no one used the observatory for Members night.

CURRENT CLACK

New Member

NCSF welcomes new Club Member

David Drapes

Leaders for Public Viewing

August 8

Learning Center Brookfield

Stephanie Marsala

August 15

Ice Age Center

Gene and Charlotte DuPree

August 23

Home School Group

Jeff Setzer

August 26

Sidewalk Astronomy

Jeff Setzer

August 28 & 29

Public Viewing

Leaders needed

Members Night

August 21 & 22

Open

Star Parties

Northwoods Starfest

August 21- 23

Fall Creek, WI

www.cvastro.org

Prairie Skies

September 17-20

4H Camp near Bourbonnais, IL

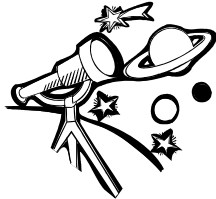
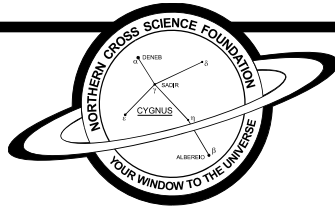
www.prairieskies.org

Special Note

Following the generous donation by Gwen Plunkett, NCSF will be able to continue holding monthly meetings at the Unitarian Church North..

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

SPECTRUM
5327 Cascade Drive
West Bend, WI 53095



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Adler Planetarium visit.

By Tom Schmidtkunz

NCSF Members: Here is an update on the trip to Adler Planetarium this summer.

The planetarium is open Saturdays in the summer from 10 till 4:30pm. Admission rates are \$10 to \$25.

Amtrak: The train leaves Milwaukee Saturday at 6:15 and 8:00, and a round trip ticket is about \$42.00. A Taxi from the Amtrak station to the planetarium would be about \$15, but could be split 3 ways. A train leaves for Milwaukee at 5:08 and 8:05.

Lamers's Bus Trips:

Because of licensing regulations, Lamers can not provide a small bus which crosses state lines. A large bus would be required, and is available at \$452.32, and would have to be prepaid. We would also have to cover parking for the bus while we are there. This would involve a pick up from Bayside park and ride at 8 a.m. and departure from the planetarium at 4:30.

No decisions have been made and we will discuss options at our August meeting.

FOR SALE

- Celestron NexStar 8SE Telescope
 - Schmidt-Cassegrain Design Features Celestron's Premium Starbright XLT Coating
 - Flash Upgradeable Hand Control, Contains Data base of Nearly 40,000 Celestial Objects
 - Includes 8" Full Aperture Solar Filter
- Together they retail for nearly \$1400

SALE PRICE: \$1100
Call Michael @ 414-238-4808

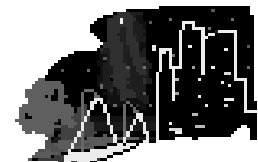
Our club has a "Discussion Group on Google"
See our website: <http://www.ncsf.info/> for details.

SPECTRUM

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The NCSF supports the International Dark sky association.



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