

# SPECTRUM

Northern Cross Science Foundation Newsletter

December 2008

## LOOKING UP

December 4, Thursday

**General Meeting**

7:30 p.m. - Main Program

**Holiday Party to follow**

December 18, Thursday

**Board Meeting**

7:30 p.m.

Home of Joyce Jentges

January 3, Saturday

**Ski and Hike**

6:00 p.m. to 9 p.m.

Harrington Beach

January 8, Thursday

**General Meeting**

101 to be announced

7:30 p.m. - Main Program

Business Meeting to follow

101 to be announced



## 2009 International Year of Astronomy

By Jeff Setzer IYA 2009 Coordinator

We are less than a month away from the start of the International Year of Astronomy! Things are really heating up as IYA2009 draws near.

We now have 132 countries participating in IYA2009. Cape Verde, Cameroon, Andorra are the latest countries to get up and running with National Nodes -- we are penetrating the African continent a little further.

Spain has announced their IYA2009 committee has royal participation now that their own Prince Felipe is presiding over their IYA2009 Honor Committee.

Australia has announced new IYA2009-themed coins minted especially for the occasion. The \$1 features a portrait of the famous Parkes radio telescope, and the \$0.20 coin has a depiction of Australians looking at the Southern Hemisphere night sky with telescopes and binoculars.

Pupils in 1 in 4 secondary schools will get close up views of the Moon, planets and the stars, in one of the largest astronomy outreach projects ever seen in the United Kingdom. The Society for Popular Astronomy (SPA), Royal Astronomical Society (RAS) and Science and Technology Facilities Council (STFC) have teamed up to give free telescopes to 1000 secondary schools early in 2009.

The Space Generation Advisory Council is having an essay contest "What Astronomy Means To Me" whereby two students with winning essays will be awarded an expense-paid trip to Paris, France in order to participate in the January 14-18, 2009 Opening Ceremonies of IYA2009. Let me know if you'd like more information.

Forty-six undergraduate and graduate students have been selected to represent

NASA in their local communities as recipients of the agency's IYA2009 Student Ambassadors Program. Two of the students were chosen to attend the IYA2009 Opening Ceremonies in Paris. The students representing NASA at the ceremonies are Rebecca Holmes, a sophomore at the University of North Carolina Chapel Hill who is majoring in physics and astronomy, and Norberto Gonzalez, a junior at the University of Puerto Rico at Arecibo with a biology concentration.

In October 2008, NASA approved an Education and Public Outreach proposal for the US version of the exhibit From Earth To The Universe (FETTU). Approximately \$300,000 has been awarded for use in 2009 and 2010. This money will fund two semi-permanent FETTU exhibits in Chicago (in conjunction with the Adler Planetarium) and Atlanta (with Agnes Scott College and the Hartsfield International Airport), as well as a traveling version that will have multiple stops across the US. Several locations for this traveling version have already been identified and others will be added as the schedule develops.

Celestron's Skyscout has been named the first Official Product of IYA2009. I hope to report more plans regarding local efforts during the December meeting.



## November Meeting Minutes

By Don Miles

The November business meeting of the Northern Cross Science Foundation was held at the Unitarian Church North in Mequon. President Joyce Jentges opened the meeting at 7:30 p.m. and thanked 19 members & 3 guests for attending. Joyce asked for standard reports.

Treasurer Gene DuPree reported a balance of \$4,943 in the clubs' regular checking account, and \$2,688 in the observatory account.

Secretary Kevin Bert wasn't able to attend the meeting, but indicated that he had nothing new to pass along regarding the Astronomical League or other issues at that time.

Joyce mentioned that the nights at Bay Shore Town Center went extremely well this past year, and thanked all that helped to make it successful. With that, Joyce mentioned that the club is looking to schedule more events there next year as the exposure at the mall provides excellent opportunities for public outreach. This will tie nicely into the theme of IYA2009 (International Year of Astronomy -2009)... which among other things, will promote public events. Joyce mentioned one final event at the mall this year, being their Trick-Or-Treat night on Halloween, and

asked for volunteers.

Don Miles gave a brief summary of the landscaping that took place the previous weekend (11/01). This involved relocating some of the dirt from the side of the observatory nearest the picnic area in an effort to help guide the spring melt water away from the observatory. Joyce thanked all the volunteers for their help.

Joyce mentioned that the 2009 Banquet in February was proposed to be held at the "Fox & Hounds" restaurant, and that other details would be in an upcoming newsletter.

Joyce mentioned that the years planned events were dwindling down, but asked for volunteers for one last 2008 event, which is the Ozaukee Radio Club at the Grafton Senior Center. Jeff volunteered to lead the event.

Joyce mentioned that the December meeting would consist of our annual Christmas party, and a reminder that if people would like to bring a "dish to pass", that seems to work well. Along with the party announcement, came a reminder that there will be a required election of one person to fill a soon-to-be-open position on the Board of Directors. This is a 3-year term, and will need to be filled, as Jeff Setzer's obligation to stay on for a year as Vice President is over. With that being said, Joyce opened the floor for nominations. Rick

Kazmierski nominated Jeff Setzer for the position, which he accepted. After a few minutes, and no further nominations, Joyce closed the floor for nominations for the November meeting, and mentioned that the nomination process will be re-opened at the December meeting before the election.

Jeff Setzer then gave an update on some of the news of the "International Year of Astronomy" projects:

-Some of the parts for the Galileoscope are going into production.

-Jeff will work with MP at Bay Shore Town Center to see if she will be willing to promote the IYA2009 using their media systems.

-There will be a contest (sponsored by the IYA2009 organization) to put together an astronomically related slide show.

-There will be daily podcasts on various subjects.

Jeff mentioned that the NCSF is one of the first clubs to sign up for IYA2009 participation, and thus will have access to a clearinghouse of helpful information. We are also an official member of the Night Sky Network (NSN). More information will be available at the NCSF website. With no more new business, Joyce closed the meeting at 9:05.

## Things to See In the December Night Sky

By Don Miles

Mercury: Look behind the setting Sun on the southwestern horizon late in the month (around the 27th). Mercury can be seen between the sliver of a very new moon and Jupiter.

Mars & Pluto: Are presently behind the Sun, so they're not viewable this month.

Jupiter & Venus: Look for both above and to the left of the "handle" in the teapot of Sagittarius (lower in the southwestern sky) after sunset, and on December 1st, a crescent moon will join the party in a tight triangle arrangement. Both planets will be easily visible without a telescope. Watch Venus rapidly move from its current location early in the month to Capricornus (where Neptune currently resides) by month's end.

Saturn: Look in the eastern horizon about 1:00am early in the month, and earlier as Saturn is still positioned in

Leo, and will be placed high in the sky until the sun comes up. Saturn's rings are nearly edge-on for the month, but will start to tilt until they reach their maximum for 2009 in late spring.

Uranus & Neptune: Both are visible using binoculars and good finder charts. See the mention of Neptune under "Jupiter & Venus" above. Both Uranus & Neptune are highest in the sky around 6pm with Uranus being highest of the two at about 45deg. in elevation in the southwestern sky. Uranus sets before midnight, and Neptune before 10pm. Uranus is still in Aquarius, and Neptune is still in Capricornus. Uranus, at (mag +5.8), is just within the lower limit of naked eye visibility under dark skies, but easy in binoculars.

Neptune is even dimmer (mag 7.9), but still easy in binoculars.



Moon:

December 5th: First Quarter

December 12th: Full Moon

December 19th: Last Quarter

December 27th: New Moon

Meteor Showers: Watch for the Gem-inids the night of the 13th. They should peak after midnight (~2am). Look to the east in the general direction of Gemini. As it seems to happen more often than not this year, it will be only one day past the full moon, so only the brightest will be visible. One way to get the most of the showers is to make sure you are in the "shadow" of the light of the moon... Any blocking of the bright moonlight will help.



## December Meeting Holiday Party!

The December meeting is the one meeting we are required to have during the year. The meeting will begin at 7:30 p.m. Nominations for the Board of Directions will be opened again, then elections will take place to fill 1 positions on the board. After the meeting is over, we will have our holiday party. Drinks will be supplied. We ask that everyone bring a dish to pass. Some suggestions are dips, appetizers, cookies, cakes, a hot dish, cheese/sausage platter. It's always nice to have more than just desserts.

For the program, Jeff Setzer has promised an Astronomy related video for those interested.

## Electronic Mailing

— Editor

The Spectrum is published monthly and is mailed to Club members the week prior to the General Meeting. With the cost of publishing and postage on the rise, a paper mailing now costs about \$1.00 a member each month. The Newsletter is posted on the Club's webpage prior to mailing each month and offers an alternative form of delivery. Advantages include color vs. black & white publishing, quicker delivery (as members receiving an electronic copy are notified several days prior to the paper mailing), and savings for the Club. For those with Internet access wishing to take advantage of electronic mailing, you can contact me by e-mail at [rick-kaz@charter.net](mailto:rick-kaz@charter.net) or by phone at 262 675-0488.

### Jim and Gwen Plunkett Observatory



Observatory Director:  
Dan Bert: 262-375-2239

## Observing Summary for 2008

The volunteer participation forms completed at each public viewing event have now been totaled and will soon be submitted to Harrington Beach State Park. Looking back at this past year, a total of 20 public viewing events were held at the Jim & Gwen Plunkett Observatory. All together 28 different members gave a combined total of 475 volunteer hours to public outreach at the park.



## 2009 Dues

Your 2009 Dues invoice is included with this Newsletter. New members having joined the Club this past year will find their dues have been pro-rated, making them payable on the same schedule as the rest of our general membership (at the beginning of each calendar year).

Members receiving electronic mailing can download the Dues Invoice from the Club website. Additional copies of the Invoice will be available at the December Membership Meeting.

Instructions for submitting Dues are indicated on the Invoice.

## CURRENT CLACK

### Leaders for Public Viewings

January 3

Ski and Hike

Harrington Beach

6:00 pm—9:00pm

Leaders: Gene and Charlotte Dupree

February 7

Ski and Hike

Harrington Beach

6:00 pm—9:00 pm

Leaders: Gene and Charlotte Dupree

February 14

Ski and Hike

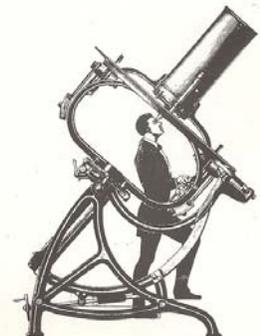
Pike Lake

6:00 pm—9:00 pm

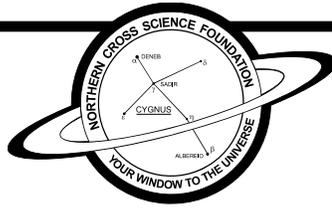
Leaders: Gene and Charlotte Dupree

### Special Thanks!

A special thanks to Charlie Bucholz of Cedarburg, who generously lent his truck to the club to move some heavy equipment for the landscaping done Nov. 1st. If you happen to know Charlie or his wife Kathy, please mention our appreciation.



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## November's "Main Program — *Editor*

Our November Main Program featured Jeff Setzer and was entitled, "Buying a first Telescope". This interesting and informative presentation spoke to those new to the hobby and interested in the purchase of a telescope. Jeff not only addressed telescope and observing basics, but provided information on specific telescopes, suppliers, and pricing.

Following his presentation, Jeff announced that this power point presentation would be available on the NCSF home page. Those who missed this presentation or wish to review it can access it at [www.NCSF.info](http://www.NCSF.info). Click on "First Telescope Buyers Guide" and enjoy.



Photos by Mickey Kazmierski

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

## SPECTRUM

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The NCSF supports the International Dark sky association.



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<http://www.ncsf.info>



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