

SPECTRUM

Northern Cross Science Foundation Newsletter

February 2010

LOOKING UP

February 4, Thursday

Annual Banquet

Fox & Hounds Restaurant
Hubertus, WI

February 6, Saturday

Candlelight Ski & Hike

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

February 10, Wednesday

Horicon Marsh

7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.
Mayville, WI

February 13, Saturday

Candlelight Ski & Hike

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

February 25, Thursday

Board Meeting

7:30 p.m.
Home of Joyce Jentges

March 4, Thursday

General Meeting

Program to be announced
Business Meeting to follow

Presidents Corner *Joyce Jentges*

Inside this newsletter, you will find our list of public and member nights for this calendar year. You will notice that I have not listed out members nights which are typically the new moon weekend. I have listed something called Member/Public nights. Harrington Beach has requested that we add 1 extra night each month for the campers. So the Member/Public nights are public nights for the campers, but also a members night for those who wish to do their own dark observing after the public leaves at 11 p.m. As always, we invite you to consider hosting a star party at your own house if you live in a

dark sky location. Just let one of the board members know, and we will put it on the schedule. This is a preliminary schedule, so be sure to watch the latest edition of Spectrum or our website, www.ncsf.info for the latest calendar of events, as events do get added throughout the year

Despite the cold weather, I want to encourage you to attend the public viewing night at Pike Lake on February 13th. The reason for this is the large crowd that attends the ski and hike at Pike Lake. We need more than 2 or 3 telescopes out there to accommodate the crowd.

2010 Planetary Phenomenom

Inferior Planets

Planet	Superior Conjunction	Elongation East		Inferior Conjunction	Elongation West
		Evening	Sky		
Mercury	Mar 14 Jun 28 Oct 17	Apr 8, 19°E Aug 7, 27°E Dec 1, 21°E		Jan 4 Apr 28 Sep 3 Dec 20	Jan 27, 25°W May 26, 25°W Sep 19 18°W
Venus	Jan 11	Aug 20, 46°E		Oct 29	

Superior Planets

Planet	Conjunction	Stationary	Opposition	Stationary	Conjunction
Mars			2010 Jan 29	Mar 11	
Jupiter	Feb 28	Jul 24	Sep 21	Nov 19	
Saturn		Jan 15	Mar 22	Jun 1	Oct 1
Uranus	Mar 17	Jul 6	Sep 22	Dec 6	
Neptune	Feb 15	Jun 1	Aug 20	Nov 7	

January Meeting Minutes

By Kevin Bert

The January business meeting of the Northern Cross Science Foundation was held at the Unitarian Church North in Mequon. Because of bad weather, president Joyce Jentges scheduled the following Thursday as the monthly meeting night. Emails and a notice of the change were sent out in addition to posting it on the club's web site. She reminded members to check the web site if ever in doubt of a cancellation in the future. She opened the meeting at 8:15 pm and welcomed over 22 members and guests. She then asked for standard reports.

Treasurer Gene DuPree reported a balance of \$678.14 in the observatory account and \$1006.47 in the general fund. Gene reported that the electric bill at Harrington Beach was \$106.14 for last year. He encouraged members to get in their 2010 membership dues. (We don't want to have to track you down!)

Secretary Kevin Bert noted that there was new members recently joining. George

Kasica from Jackson and Meg Modra from Fredonia.

There was no new Astronomical League information, but Kevin instructed that members not getting the Reflector quarterly magazine should contact him.

Under old business, Jeff Setzer gave a detailed recap of IYA 2009 and said that he was proud of the NCSF's involvement in the related events. Closing ceremonies were held in Italy as they looked back at all the events and looked ahead for future activities. One new event is Global Astronomy Month to be held in April. More details are to come. Jeff also talked of an internet one stop shop and clearing house for all astronomical and space related subjects called "Portal to the Universe" that is being set up.

Joyce reminded members of the NCSF Dinner set for February 4th at the Fox & Hounds restaurant. This will take the place of the monthly meeting at UCN. Gene will take your dinner selection and money tonight or by the deadline of the 28th of January. She also gave another plug for the Astronomy.FM site and Jeff and Becca Setzer's Out & About program on Tuesday nights.

Under new business, Joyce covered upcoming events for February. The 6th is a public viewing night at Harrington Beach. It is in conjunction with the park's winter hike. Pike Lake will have a winter Ski and Hike event on February 13th. These are all Saturday events starting at 6:00 pm. A February 10th outing at Horicon Marsh is scheduled as well. Contact Gene DuPree for details. Looking further ahead there will be the 3rd annual Swap-an-Sell hosted by the Sheboygan Astronomical Society on March 27th at the Aviation Heritage Center. It will run from 10:00 am to 3:00 pm.

Kevin Bert announced that he would be setting up a few dates in the coming months to give members an opportunity to see what is involved in testing telescope primary mirrors. There are a few club mirrors and members mirrors that will be the subjects of scrutiny. Room is limited at his house, but he will attempt to set up there. If there turns out to be a large number of members interested, an alternate site will be looked for.

(cont'd pg 3)

Things to See In the February Night Sky 2010 By Don Miles

Mercury: Mercury (mag -0.1) will be rising in the SE sky just before the sun (~6am) early in the month, and will move closer to the sun as the month progresses as it will soon be passing "behind" the Sun.

Neptune: Neptune is still trailing right behind the sun, so is too close to the sun to be seen. Venus has been on the opposite side of the sun from us, and will continue to hide for the month of February.

Venus, Uranus & Jupiter: All three start out very close to the sun early in the month and are mostly lost in the glare. Jupiter (mag. -2.0) is viewable early in the month at sunset, but will continue to slide closer to the sun thru the month. Venus (mag. -3.9) will start to pull away from the sun, and will pass within ½ degree of Jupiter the evening of the 16th. Both will be right behind the sun (~9 degrees) at sunset, and you'll need a clear western horizon to pick them out. Venus will slowly continue to separate from the sun thru the month.

Pluto: Is below the horizon until next sum-

mer.

Uranus: Will also be already be high in the southwestern sky as the sun sets, and will set before 9pm early in the month, and just after sunset by months end. Uranus (mag 5.9) is still in the constellation Pisces (below the right "fish"), and will stay there for the month. Look early in the month for your best chance in a while.

Mars: Mars is already high in the eastern sky as the sun is setting, and will be highest around midnight. Mars (mag. -1.2) starts out the month just above the Beehive cluster in Cancer, and will move towards the eastern twin of Gemini thru the month. Mars will also fade to (mag. -0.6) by months end as the Earth pulls away in our race around the sun.

Saturn: Early in the month Saturn (~mag 0.7) rises about 9:30pm, and 7:30pm by months end. Saturn slowly moves westward, but remains in the constellation Virgo.

Moon:

February 5th: Last Quarter

February 14th: New Moon

February 22nd: First Quarter

February 28th: Full Moon

Special Events:

Meteor Showers:

The only showers this month will be the Delta Leonids, and the best time to watch for the slow movers will be the early morning hours of the last few days in the month. They peak on the 26th, but "peak" is a relative term (read sparse). Peak rates may reach a whopping 5/hr, and a near full moon will probably obscure all but the brightest meteors. Look for them in the eastern sky after midnight.



February Meeting

Editor

As is tradition, the General Meeting in February is replaced by our Annual Banquet. This year's Banquet is again being held at the Fox & Hounds Restaurant, 1298 Friess Lake Rd, Hubertus. All those having registered will enjoy an evening of socializing with other members of the Club, not to mention a quality dinner at a very reasonable price. Hope to see you there!

Regular meetings will resume in March.



January Events

Candlelight Ski & Hike

January 2

Charlotte DuPree reported that although skies were clear for this event, frigid cold temperatures kept people away.

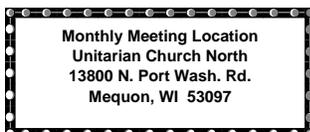
(January Meeting Minutes cont'd)

On a slightly different subject Robert Radke informed the membership of an upcoming water color paint show in the Mequon-Thiensville Library starting on February 1st. Bob has some entries in the event and they are using a painting of his in the promotional brochure.

With no further new business, Joyce closed the business meeting at 9:20 p.m

Laws of Infernal Dynamics

- 1) An object in motion will always be headed in the wrong direction.
- 2) An object at rest will be in the wrong place.



**Jim and Gwen Plunkett
Observatory**



Observatory Director:
Dan Bert: 262-375-2239

Observatory Notes:

Harrington Beach Updates

Andy has located a shield for the pole mounted fixture by the woodshed that is currently casting glare at the observing field. He has agreed to go ahead and order/install the shield. Concerns over fire glow/light and the smoke created from a rumored group fire ring for the upper picnic area was also discussed. Andy assured any such fire ring would be placed far away from the observatory and closer to the pond on the west end. Andy also inquired if any more public observing nights could be offered especially with camping ongoing. In years past on average 2 per month were scheduled. He understands that it depends on how many in our group are available to help. It has been decided this year we will try one additional PVN near new moon providing a darker sky. Finally, the woodshed lights will be on for the Feb 6th Ski & Hike event until the office closes at 9pm. Andy does not expect to have the shield installed by this event.

CURRENT CLACK

New Members

NCSF welcomes New Club Members

George Kasica
Aris Penikis



Leaders for Public Viewing

February 6

Candlelight Ski & Hike
Gene & Charlotte DuPree

February 10

Horicon Marsh
Gene & Charlotte DuPree

February 13

Candlelight Ski & Hike
Gene & Charlotte DuPree

Star Parties

NCRAL Convention

April 16 -18
Bloomington - Normal, IL
www.ncral2010.org

Wisconsin Observers Weekend

July 8 -10
Hartman Creek State Park, WB
www.new-star.org

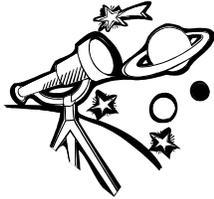
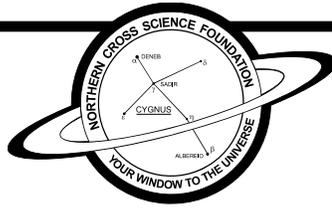
Northwoods Starfest

August 13 - 15
www.cvastro.org

Prairie Skies

September 30 - October 3
Kankakee, IL
www.prairieskies.org

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Did you Know???

Partial content, Courtesy of CNN



A moon of Uranus was discovered by Mark R. Showalter and Jack J. Lissauer using the Hubble Space Telescope on August 25, 2003. "Cupid" is also designated as "Uranus XXVII" and "S/2003 U2".

Astronomer Mark Showalter of the SETI Institute and his colleagues were not looking for new moons or rings when they submitted a proposal to take deep exposures of the planet with Hubble's most advanced optical camera. Rather, they planned to study the 11 previously known rings and several moons embedded within them.

"Sometimes you find things you aren't looking for," Showalter said. "No one thought this region of Uranus was very interesting."

As it turns out, that region has turned out to be very interesting, because the orbits of the moons within it are chaotic. The system is so unstable that Showalter thinks the moons will collide and smash each other to bits one day, though probably not for a million years or so.

Many moons of Uranus are named after characters in Shakespeare. Cupid is a character in one of Shakespeare's plays... "Love looks not with the eyes but with the mind".

Happy Valentines Day!

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

SPECTRUM

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