

# SPECTRUM

Northern Cross Science Foundation Newsletter

July 2008

## LOOKING UP

### July 3, Thursday

#### General Meeting

7:30 p.m. - Main Program  
Business Meeting to follow

### July 11, Friday

#### Public Viewing

Harrington Beach  
Telescope Training - 7:00 p.m.  
Public viewing to follow

### July 12, Saturday

#### Public Viewing

7:00 p.m.  
Harrington Beach

### July 17, Thursday

#### Board Meeting

7:30 p.m.  
Home of Joyce Jentges

### August 8 & 9 (Fri. & Sat.)

#### Public Viewing

7:30 p.m.  
Harrington Beach

### August 13, Wednesday

#### Public Viewing

7:00 p.m.  
Bayshore

## President's Corner

*By Joyce Jentges*

I arrived at Hartmann Creek State Park for WOW in the afternoon on Friday, June 6<sup>th</sup>. As usual, our group had taken over group site number 5. Rick and Georgine Poulin, Gene and Charlotte DuPree and Jeff Setzer were already there, as they had been up there all week for what we have called Pre-WOW for a couple of years. It sounds like they only had 1 clear night earlier in the week. The first thing I noticed was that it was incredibly windy, and because of the wind, there was a lot of pollen and junk blowing around. Rick had said that after a while it felt like he swallowed a dry cotton ball. I was only up there about a half hour and I told him he was right. The wind made it seem like you had severe allergies as we were all complaining of itchy eyes and throats. Later, Kevin and Dan Bert joined us, and we went out for our traditional Friday night fish fry. Awhile after we got back, the wind died down, and according to Jeff, who was keeping an eye on the weather, skies would clear.

They did, and we actually had a very good night of observing. We all set up on the pavement near the vehicles and waited for dark to come. We did get to see the ISS and Space Shuttle pass over, and we saw several Iridium flares. We were able to see Saturn and Jupiter. At one point later in the night, I looked at Jupiter through Rick's scope and we were keeping an eye on a tiny moon to the left of Jupiter. We don't know if it was disappearing behind Jupiter, or had just re-appeared, but it was interesting to look at. It was just above the tree-tops, so I wasn't able to see it in my scope. We looked at the Ring Nebula, M13, and most of the popular summer objects. I also was able to see the little galaxy near M13, which was interesting. I was trying out a new observing chair, and noticed that now that I could be comfortable, I found myself putting more power on objects. I was really enjoying that.

Being that skies were so nice, we got a good look at M51. We could see more detail in the arms than we've been able to see in a while. We took turns looking at our favorite objects in Jeff's 22 inch scope. He let us look at the Veil Nebula, and just scan across the nebula looking at all the detail in the filament. It was really cool. I think I finally went to bed after 2 a.m. But I think Jeff, and Kevin and Dan did an all nighter.

Storms were predicted for Saturday, so the traditional ice cream social was moved up to Noon because they knew people were wanting to leave. Door prizes were drawn and a few of our people won door prizes. Jeff won solar eclipse viewing glasses and an eye-piece case, Gene and Charlotte won a 50.00 gift certificate for a place called astrozap which carries dew zappers. Rick and Georgine won a gift certificate for 5% off their purchase for Woodland Hills. At the end of the door prizes, the ranger came by to say that there was a tornado watch. After this was over, it didn't take our group long to leave. When I got into the Oshkosh area, my brother called to say there were tornados in the Beaver Dam area, so I was glad when I finally got home. Just as I pulled in my parking spot, the tornado sirens went off.

I was also told that at the public viewing night for June 13 and 14<sup>th</sup>, 5 or 6 people showed up both nights besides our members. The Bayshore Public Night was very successful according to Jeff, as a lot of flyers were handed out. We hope that this will increase future attendance at the observatory the rest of this season. Just a reminder that even though the observatory is there, it is still nice to have other scopes set up out in the parking lot, or on the observatory grounds to help entertain the crowds. Clear skies!

## June Meeting Minutes

By Kevin Bert

The June business meeting of the Northern Cross Science Foundation was held at the Unitarian Church North in Mequon. President Joyce Jentges opened the meeting at 8:25 pm and welcomed over 12 members. She then asked for standard reports.

The treasurer was not in attendance.

Secretary Kevin Bert acknowledged new member Dan Raasch. Elections for the Astronomical League Vice President and President were conducted by a show of hands. Unanimous votes were cast for Carroll Iorg and Terry Mann, both running unopposed. A proposed League bylaw

amendment for clarification of treasurer duties was voted on and unanimously accepted.

Observatory Director Dan Bert reported that the north door keypad lock was now opening properly thanks to Don Miles. Don also painted the trim around the doors. Dan said that Ernie Mastroianni would lead the June 13<sup>th</sup> Public Viewing Night. June 14<sup>th</sup> was still in need of a leader.

Kevin Bert reminded members of the Sun-Day on Saturday at his home in Grafton on June 21st. Activities would start at 2:00 pm and sub sandwiches would be ordered for interested members close to 5:30 pm. Members were

encouraged to come even if the weather was cloudy.

Under new business Joyce gave a list of upcoming events. Members were asked to contact her for parking passes for the June 11<sup>th</sup> Bay Shore viewing night. Joyce concluded her events list by asking members for help with telescopes on June 28<sup>th</sup> for a private viewing for school children and their parents at Kohler-Andrae State Park.

With no further new business, Joyce closed the business meeting at 8:55 p.m.

## Things to See In the July Night Sky

By Don Miles

**Mercury:** Look for Mercury "ahead" of the Sun just before sunrise early in the month, before it gets lost in the glare by month's end. Look below and to the left of Aldebaran (the "eye" of Taurus the bull... And as a reminder... Taurus is rotated over 90 degrees CCW at this time of the season). Mercury will continue to move away from the "eye" and work its way towards the tip of the eastern horn, and eventually get too close to the sun to see.

**Venus:** Is still mostly on the back side of the Sun, so it also is lost in the glare all month.

**Mars:** Is at its highest in the southwestern sky at sunset, and sets before 11pm early in July, and sets even earlier as the month progresses. Look for an orange/yellow "star" just above Regulus (the "dot" at the bottom of the backwards question mark shape in Leo) early in the month, but Mars will continue its eastward movement past Regulus and ultimately pass Saturn. By mid-month, they will both be lost in the glare of the setting sun.

**Jupiter:** Rises in the southeast around 10pm early in the month, and

stays up thru the night as it is at opposition on the 9th (opposite the sun as we see it from here on earth). Jupiter is at its highest about midnight early in the month to about 1:30am towards the end of the month. Look up and slightly to the left of the "handle" in the teapot of Sagittarius (lower in the southern sky) which is now tipped to appear to be "pouring" its contents towards the southwestern horizon. It shines the brightest it'll be all year (mag. -2.7), and is brighter than even the brightest star.

**Saturn:** Still to the left of Regulus, and will slowly drift to the east throughout the month. Saturn will be already highest at sunset, and sets around 11pm early in the month, and lost on the glare by mid-month, and remain there until mid-fall.

**Uranus & Neptune:** Still both visible using a telescope and a good finder chart highest in the south at sunrise. Look for Uranus in Aquarius, and Neptune in Capricornus (they're in relatively the same position as last month, and will be in the same relative position next month).

**Moon:**

July 2nd: New Moon  
July 10th: First Quarter  
July 18th: Full Moon  
July 25th: Last Quarter

Reminder: You don't need a telescope to see most of the planets (Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter, & Saturn). If you do have a telescope, verify you're seeing the correct target. If you don't have a telescope, and aren't able to find them using the tips mentioned above, stop out at one of the members nights or public events, and somebody will be more than glad to point them out for you. Once you find them in a telescope, try them with binoculars. Once you find them in binoculars, look with the naked eye. You'll be surprised how easy they are to see.



## 101 Class/Main Program

with Kevin Bert

There is no 101 class for July. The main program will start at 7:30 pm and consist of a chapter from the DVD "The Universe," called "The Planets." It is a continuation of last months program and starts with Mercury and works its way through the planets of the solar system. The July "Tonight's Sky" will be shown at the conclusion.



## Sidewalk Astronomy

By Vice-President Jeff Setzer

Our "sidewalk astronomy" outreach events at Bayshore Town Center have been very successful. Although the weather didn't cooperate on the first few nights, our event Wednesday night, June 11, had excellent weather. Mark Hirschman, Robert Radke and I set up our telescopes right outside the Rotunda, and Paul Gruener helped with the crowd management. We were there from 7:00pm until well past 11:00pm, with a steady stream of visitors. I'd say we had a well over a hundred people come by, with about 10% of the people being very interested in the NCSF. That's outstanding! Since we had special parking spaces right in front of the Rotunda reserved for our use, even set up and take down was a breeze.

Our sidewalk astronomy event at Bayshore is on Wednesday, August 13. The start time is 7:00pm but setup is whenever you get there. If you'd like to get involved in this very rewarding activity, give me a call or email me.

## Sun-Day on Saturday

### Follow-up

by Kevin Bert

The June 21 Sun-Day on Saturday started out with partly clear skies but had one brief shower sending members scattering to cover their telescopes. Clearing continued throughout twilight and into the night. Nine Northern Cross members attended throughout the event. The sun was visible more often than not and displayed one small spot near its center. It was seen in a variety of equipment with a variety of methods. From simple projection on paper to Hydrogen-Alpha. In addition to sun talk and viewing, a number of interesting conversations came up throughout the day from bird watching to photography and time passed quickly. Mosquitoes were the only problem, especially after sunset. Viewing continued into dark with views of Saturn, Globular clusters and Double stars. The last diehards watched the shadow of Jupiter's moon Io drift across the planet in transit till after midnight. Several minutes later the moon re-emerged from Jupiter's disc and it was time to pack things up. Dan and I were happy overall on how things worked out and hope that next year even more members would stop in for at least a little while to see the sun and get acquainted with other members of the Northern Cross. Bringing your own telescope is not required. A special thanks goes to my wife Kathy, who saw to it that all of us were well fed.

### Open House—June 8

Gene and Charlotte DuPree reported that the Open House was rained out.

### Public Viewing—June 14th

Gene & Charlotte DuPree reported a successful event with clear skies and five people in attendance.

### FOR SALE:

We have access to some Braader (yes 2 a's) solar film for anyone interested in making their own solar filter or two. It is .10 a square inch including instructions on how to make the holder for any size 'scope.

Contact Gene and Charlotte DuPree : 262 -675-0941

## CURRENT CLACK

### Leaders for Public Viewings

July 11

Leaders: Kevin & Dan Bert

July 12

Leaders Needed

### Star Parties

#### Nebraska Star Party

July 27th - August 1

Merritt Reservoir, Nebraska

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

#### Northwoods Starfest

August 1 - 3

Fall Creek, WI

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

#### Astrofest

September 5 - 7

Vana's - Kankakee, IL

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

### Jim and Gwen Plunkett Observatory

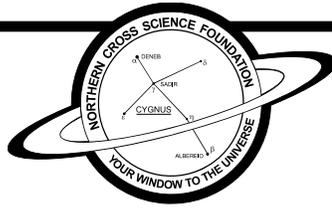


Observatory Director:  
Dan Bert: 262-375-2239

Observatory Note:

The keypad for entry to the observatory was repaired this past month by Don Miles. The same password is still in use.

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### *This month in history:*



#### **A Celestial Fireworks! “The Crab Nebulae”**

It was the magnificent explosion of a supernova, the death of a star that may have been as much as 10 times more massive than our Sun. In July of 1054 c.e. Chinese astronomers saw and recorded the end of this star. Appearing in the sky above the southern horn of the constellation Taurus was a star the Chinese described as six times brighter than Venus and about as brilliant as a full moon. The remains of this star were later christened the Crab Nebula, a cloudy, glowing mass of gas and dust about 6,300 light-years away from Earth.

By Chinese accounts, the supernova must have been an incredible display as the star remained visible for a year. Chinese astronomers described the star as having pointed rays in all four directions and a reddish-white color.

The American Indians in northern Arizona may also have acknowledged this event. Two pictographs have been found, one in a cave at White Mesa and the other on a wall of Navajo Canyon. Both show a crescent moon with a large star nearby. Scientists have calculated that on the morning of July 5, 1054, the Moon was located just 2 degrees north of the Crab Nebula's current position.



## SPECTRUM

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