

SPECTRUM

Northern Cross Science Foundation Newsletter

June 2008

LOOKING UP

June 5, Thursday

General Meeting

7:00 p.m. Astronomy 101

7:30 p.m. Business Meeting

June 8, Sunday

Park Open House

Solar & Public Viewing

1:00 to 5:00 p.m..

Harrington Beach

June 11, Wednesday

Sidewalk Observing

Setup by - 7 p.m.

Bayshore Shopping Center

June 13 & 14 (Fri & Sat)

Solar and Public Viewing

6:00 p.m .

Harrington Beach

June 19, Thursday

Board Meeting

7:30 p.m.

Home of Joyce Jentges

June 21, Saturday

Sunday on Saturday

2:00 p.m.

Home of Kevin Bert

Better Night Vision

By Jack Kramer

At an observing session, we all use red-lensed flashlights for illumination; this is to preserve our night vision. The ability of our eyes to become dark-adapted varies to some extent for each individual, but the rule of thumb seems to be that it takes about a half hour to become dark-adapted. Since our eyes don't perceive red light as strongly as other colors, it doesn't affect our low light sensitivity as much as do the other colors. But in addition to using a red flashlight, here are a few more tricks.

One technique to speed up dark adaptation was suggested by Vic Stryker, who was a planetarium director in Arizona. This suggestion was originally published in the AAVSO Journal. Says Vic...

While standing up, look down at your feet and blink your eyes as hard and as rapidly as you can for a count of fifteen seconds. If there is no stray white-light contamination about, you will become totally dark-adapted in this time...Note this technique works for approximately 40% to 60% of those who try it, and in some cases the level of dark-adaptation can improve with practice. A word of caution to contact lens wearers: be careful not to dislodge your lenses...

A red flashlight still has an adverse affect on our night vision...just to a lesser extent than white light. The problem becomes especially acute when you're searching for some faint object and are constantly going back and forth between your eyepiece and the charts. Each time you return to the telescope, you'll often note a loss of acuity for a short time. Since I use my right eye to peer into the eyepiece, I've gotten into the habit of closing my right eye while looking at charts or notes, then opening it again after I've turned off the flashlight. This works very well.

Many observers report improved visual acuity if they leave *both* eyes open. We tend to squint with the unused eye while looking

through an eyepiece; as I understand it, this tenses the eye muscles and adversely affects the eye that you're using. To make this easier, some use eye patches to cover the unused eye. I can't say that I note an improvement in acuity, but it is more relaxing to keep both eyes open. If you use an eye patch, get one with a convex surface; your eyelids may rub annoyingly on a flat eye patch.

I've noted that a number of observers (especially out West) wear sunglasses during the day and into twilight; I don't think they're doing that just to be cool. We've all heard about the dangers of ultraviolet radiation from the Sun and its effect on our vision. When you come indoors on a sunny day, there's a noticeable loss of sensitivity - the room looks so dark! It seems logical that the effects of lengthy exposure to very bright light would linger perhaps longer than the normal dark adaptation period. Regular use of sunglasses should help.

Under the heading of dark-adaptation is the simple expedient of installing a cutoff switch for the dome lights in your car or van. This way, if you have to get something from your vehicle, the dome light won't come on and flood your eye with all that nasty white light...not to mention bothering other observers. (Astrophotographers tend to become especially testy about this.)

...portion of an article published in the October 1994 issue of the NightTimes

Editor's Note:

Red observing goggles can be creatively used to establish night vision before a viewing session begins, or maintaining night vision while performing other tasks requiring exposure to light during a viewing session

May Meeting Minutes

By Kevin Bert

The May business meeting of the Northern Cross Science Foundation was held at the Unitarian Church North in Mequon. President Joyce Jentges opened the meeting at 7:50 pm and welcomed over 24 members. She then asked for standard reports.

Treasurer Gene DuPree reported \$6290 collected from the NCRAL convention. After paying out \$4184 and returning the \$500 advanced to us from the League, the remaining \$1606 will be split with the Astronomical League. \$3644 is the balance in the savings account.

Secretary Kevin had nothing to report on the membership or Astronomical League.

Under old business Jeff Setzer gave a follow up report on the NCRAL convention and said that it was a big success. It was the first profit made in 3 years for a convention. Total paid attendance was 113 and there were a lot of favorable comments received. Ven-

dor 2020 had favorable sales and all of the speakers were well received. Dan Bert was congratulated on his production of a video that documented the construction of the 20-Inch Panarusky Telescope and Jim & Gwen Plunkett Observatory for the convention. It was replayed at the meeting along with the special Jack Horkheimer video segment and both will be made available to club members as a DVD in the near future. The Friday night program at the Observatory had a brief shower but an opening in the clouds allowed for some viewing through the 20-Inch. Member Bob Mason won the main door prize, an 8 inch Dobsonian, and will be donating it to a young girl in his neighborhood that has a genuine interest in astronomy. A special thank you to all those members who helped to organize this event. A final wrap-up meeting will be scheduled soon to exchange photos and information to create an on line scrap book on the convention. Thanks to Mickey Kazmierski for putting together that great newsletter insert on the convention.

Observatory Director Dan Bert reported that the north door keypad lock was not opening. Operators will need to see him for a key to access the observatory until the lock is repaired. He said that the May 9th Public Viewing Night was in need of a leader. Rob Powell tentatively agreed to step in.

Kevin Bert and Nolan Zadra described the new color solar system 640x480 CCD imager, purchased by the club from The Imaging Source. It is a step above the web cam imagers people have been using for years to produce amazing photos of the planets. It will allow high resolution imaging of the planets when used in conjunction with special imaging software that picks the best frames of recorded AVI files then stacks those images to produce a clear final image. It requires the use of the clubs laptop computer for image acquisition until a suitable computer can be found to stay out in the observatory. It will have to be coordinated with the observatory director. Training sessions will be held in the near future once the camera is put through its

(continued on page 3)

Things to See In the June Night Sky

By Don Miles

Mercury: Passes between the Earth and the Sun this month, but will be possible to see later in the month low in the east-northeast before sunrise.

Neptune & Uranus: Both visible using a telescope and a good finder chart in the southeast at sunrise. Look for Neptune in Capricornus, and Uranus in Aquarius.

Venus: Is now on the back side of the Sun, so is lost in the glare all month.

Jupiter: Rises in the southeast around 11:15pm early in the month, but rises around 9:00pm by the end of the month. Look for Jupiter slightly above and to the left of the handle in the teapot of Sagittarius in the southern sky. Jupiter stays high in the sky thru the night for most of the month.

Mars: Is highest in the southwestern sky at sunset, and sets around mid-

night. Look for the orange/yellow "star" to the lower-left of the Beehive cluster in Cancer early in the month. Mars leaves Cancer, and moves east to just above Regulus (the "dot" at the bottom of the backwards question mark shape in Leo) by the end of the month, and end up within 5 degrees of Saturn (see below).

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 1am early in the month, but by about 11:30 by the end of the month.

Moon:

June 3rd: New Moon
June 10th: First Quarter
June 18th: Full Moon

June 26th: Last Quarter

One Additional note: If you've been intimidated by the infamous Virgo cluster (15 of the brighter galaxies in Virgo), they are still placed fairly high in the sky, but will be lower and lower as the month progresses. If you're interested in skating thru this cluster at the next Messier Marathon without apprehension...print out, or ask somebody in the club to print out, some charts that match your view in the eyepiece (field of view, rotated, mirrored, etc.). Get familiar with the cluster while it's still comfortable viewing, and there's no pressure. Doing the Marathon without worrying about "getting lost" will make it much more enjoyable. You may even learn to like it.

June Meeting

101 Class

with Kevin Bert

The June 101 class is entitled, "Our Nearest Star." See what can be observed with modest equipment. (Weather permitting there will be actual solar viewing through member telescopes in the church parking lot.)

"Tonight's Sky," for June will be explored.

Main Program

Nothing is currently scheduled for this month.

(May Meeting Minutes cont'd)

paces and the trainers feel comfortable with its operation. The camera will only be used at the observatory.

Under new business Joyce went over upcoming events. She reported that the next event for Bay Shore is on May 17th at 5:00 pm. This coincides with the International Sidewalk Astronomy Night. Members willing to attend should contact her for free parking pass details.

Jeff solicited for members to sign-up for National Astronomy Day activities on May 10th. He said that activities would be the same as last year and run from 2:00 to 11:00 pm. He is specifically looking for help at, the welcome table; solar system walk; solar scopes and evening scopes. All members are encouraged to attend.

Joyce asked for any volunteers to be leaders for organizing a Brat Fry fundraiser some time this summer. Interested members should contact her.

With no further new business, Joyce closed the business meeting at 8:35 p.m.

Sunday on Saturday

by Kevin Bert

Our normal focus of astronomical objects shifts from evening to daytime with Sunday on Saturday on June 21 starting at 2:00 pm. Dan and I are hosting the event at my house in Grafton. Spend a relaxing afternoon looking at our sun

through a variety of telescopes. Members are encouraged to bring their own telescopes for sun viewing, or just stop in to talk astronomy and see what's going on. For people that plan to stay around 6:00 pm we will all chip in and order sub sandwiches. I will provide beverages and snacks. Viewing will continue into the evening if there remains an interest. The event will take

May Events

Astronomy Day Review by Jeff Setzer

National Astronomy Day activities were met with mixed weather. Friday night the skies were mostly clear. A dozen visitors got their first look at Saturn, the Moon, the globular cluster M3 in Bootes and the pair of galaxies M65 & M66 in Leo.

Saturday was cold, grey and it threatened to rain all afternoon. We had about half a dozen visitors show up anyway, and we had some good discussions with some interested folks about telescopes and the club. We shut the observatory down and left just after supper because it began to rain. Thanks to everyone who volunteered! Let's hope for better weather next year.

Jim and Gwen Plunkett Observatory



Observatory Director:
Dan Bert: 262-375-2239

Observatory Note:

The keypad for entry to the observatory is still out of service. Please contact me to borrow a key until the keypad can be fixed.

Dan Bert - Observatory Director

CURRENT CLACK

Please welcome Dan Raasch from Wauwatosa as a new club member!

Leaders for Public Viewings

June 8 - Park Open House

Leaders - Gene & Charlotte DuPree

June 13 & 14

Solar & Public Viewing
Leaders Needed

St. Mary's Star Party

Looking for volunteers with telescopes to attend a star party at Kohler Andre State Park in Sheboygan for St. Mary School where I work. The date is June 28, and set up time is approximately 8:30 p.m. The event is over before 11 p.m. There are approximately 50-75 adults and kids. If you can attend or need more information, please contact Joyce Jentges at (920)-467-6291.

Astronomical League Notes

The membership will be voting for League President and Vice President at the next meeting. At this point Terry Mann and Carroll Iorg are running unopposed. A bylaws change is proposed too.

Star Parties

Wisconsin Observers Weekend

June 5- 8

Hartman Creek State Park, WI

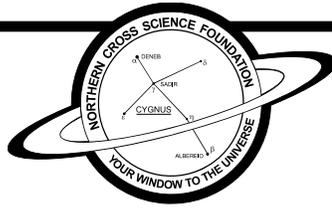
www.new-star.org.

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

SPECTRUM
5327 Cascade Drive
West Bend, WI 53095



2008 OFFICERS

President—Joyce Jentges
102 N. Montgomery St. Apt #1
Port Washington, WI 53074
920-254-6705
joycejentges@hotmail.com

Vice President - Jeff Setzer
1418 Trillium CT
West Bend, WI 53095
262-338-8614
astrosetz@hotmail.com

Secretary - Kevin Bert
2292 Ridgewood Road
Grafton, WI 53024
262-375-2239
kevin.bert@hotmail.com

Treasurer - Gene DuPree
6219 Jay St.
Myra, WI 53095
262-675-0941
grdupree@charter.net

Other Board Members:

Rick Kazmierski
262-675-0488

Don Miles
262-675-2796

Al Steinberg
262-644-8089

Newsletter Editor & Publisher

Rick & Mickey Kazmierski
262 675-0488 / rickkaz@charter.net

May Swap-n-sell

By Diane Van Minsel

- President of the Sheboygan Astronomical Society

This was a fun evening, and on behalf of the Sheboygan Astronomical Society, I thank everyone for coming! Attendance was estimated to be over 3 dozen attendees, and it was fun to see all the different items on sale. Next year this will be held on a Saturday, so more can attend.

To see the photo slide-show, you can go to: http://web.mac.com/orionsas/iWeb/Sell_n_Swap_2008/



NCSF members attending the Swap-n-sell

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

SPECTRUM

Is published by the Northern Cross Science Foundation, Inc. A nonprofit organization based the state of southeastern Wisconsin and is a Member of the North-Central Region of the Astronomical League.



The NCSF supports the International Dark sky association.



Send inquiries to:
SPECTRUM
5327 Cascade Drive
West Bend, WI 53095

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