

SPECTRUM

Northern Cross Science Foundation Newsletter

May 2007

LOOKING UP

May 3 Thursday

General Meeting

7:00 p.m. Astronomy 101

7:30 p.m. Business Meeting

May 7 Monday

NCRAL Planning Meeting

7:00 p.m.

Home of Jeff Setzer

May 17 Thursday

Board Meeting

7:30 p.m.

Home of Jeff Setzer

May 18 & 19 Friday & Saturday

Public Viewing Night

8:00 p.m.

Harrington Beach State Park

June 3 Sunday

Solar and Public Viewing

6:00—11:00 p.m.

June 7 Thursday

General Meeting

7:00 p.m. Astronomy 101

7:30 p.m. Business Meeting

June 11-13 Monday—Wednesday

Pre-WOW

June 14-17 Thursday—Sunday

Wisconsin Observers Wknd

Hartman Creek State Park

June 22 Friday

Public Viewing Night

9:00 p.m.

Harrington Beach State Park

June 23 Saturday

Public Viewing Night

6:00 p.m.

Spring National Astronomy Day

By Kevin Bert

There was a fantastic turnout of members for the first official public use of the Jim and Gwen Plunkett Observatory on Saturday April 21. It also coincided with the Spring National Astronomy Day. I opened up the Observatory at 1:30 to get a start on organizing things. Considering some past Astronomy Days, the weather was great. The only complaint would be the blustery wind. My estimate of the number of people from the public would be somewhere close to 80. Tony Marek gave a solar system walk and Jeff Setzer gave a PowerPoint presentation. My son Dan and I spent most of the time in the observatory running the Panarusky and 9 ¼ Celestron telescopes. It was nice to see a lot of families with children getting a chance to look through a scope, some for their first time. Seeing conditions were not the best for high power views of Saturn so low power was used on most subjects throughout the evening. There were about 15 telescopes in the parking lot in addition to the observatory scopes. I did not get a hydrogen alpha view of the sun but in white light it showed a blank face. With the sun still up most of the scopes turned to the Moon and at least one scope had Venus in the crosshairs too. The Moon displayed a nice crescent phase that allowed good views of other deep sky objects. Being the first major setup for the public at the observatory there are some bugs to work out for future events held there. Overall things went very well. Thanks to all that contributed to this specific event. We should all be proud of such a fine facility.

Editor's Note: According to statistics compiled by Jeff, we had 22 volunteers who were on hand to greet the public. They put in a total of 154 hours on Astronomy Day alone! Thank you for all your hard work!



A sampling of telescopes that were set up and ready for Astronomy Day.



A visitor looking through the Panarusky telescope while Jeff's talk was going on.

Pictures courtesy of Joyce Jentges

April Meeting Minutes

By Kevin Bert

The April business meeting of the Northern Cross Science Foundation was held at the Unitarian Church North in Mequon. President Jeff Setzer opened the meeting at 8:30 p.m. to 28 members and guests and thanked them all for attending. He then asked for standard reports.

Treasurer Gene DuPree reports a balance of \$1,900 in the club's checking account. He noted that \$62.00 was received from Pick & Save.

Secretary Kevin Bert said that members should have found a club roster in the last newsletter. New nametags and membership cards are available. Latest member Paul Gruener was recognized.

Under old business, Kevin said that the final formal training for running the observatory would be on April 14th. Other opportunities would come thorough the year at members nights. Kevin said that the director is waiting for calls from the operators to schedule usage. Kevin

noted a response from OMI and a number of Cassegrain secondary mirrors were starting up for production. Ours was at the top of the list. The PVN leader signup then made the rounds.

Rebecca Sher reminded members that monthly NCRAL meetings would be held on the first Monday of each month. May 7th is next up.

A lengthy review of how things went on the Messier Marathon came next.

Under new business Jeff Setzer informed the club that the park has modified and approved the changes we asked for and the agreement only needs to be signed. Kevin Bert and Jeff would take care of this within the next few weeks. The sidewalk would be in some time before that date.

Jeff announced that we are on course for dedication of the Jim & Gwen Plunkett Observatory on Saturday, July

21. Specifics about the event will be coming in the next few months. Rob Powell volunteered to help in the Observatory dedication details. Jeff ran down upcoming events including April 21st National Astronomy day.

Ernie Mastroianni will be donating an Apple computer for observatory use. It is loaded with a program called "The Sky." A special thanks to Ernie!

With no further new business, Jeff closed the business meeting at 9:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Kevin Bert, secretary



Things To See In the May Sky

By Don Miles

Venus: Brightest "star" in the West at the feet of Gemini for about 1-1/2 hours after sunset. On the 9th, Venus will pass a little less than 2 degrees (a little more than 2 fingers width held at on your outstretched arm) from the easy binocular object M35, which is at the feet of Gemini. It will also come within 3/4 of a degree below the crescent Moon at 9:30pm the evening of the 19th. On the 29th, Venus will pass 4 degrees south of bright Pollux (the bright "head" star on the left of the Gemini twin "head" Stars.

Mercury:

Begins its best showing for 2007 very early in the month.. Look for it right "behind" the sun as the sun is setting.

It will slowly climb in the sky throughout the month, but gradually fades as it does.

Saturn: Yellow-orange "star" to the right of the sickle of LEO. Rises in the east as the sky gets dark, and stays up all night.

Jupiter: Rises about 11pm early in the month, but around sunset by the end of the month. Look for it above and to the left of Antares in SCORPIUS.

Mars: Rises before sunrise towards in AQUARIUS/PISCES. Will be below and to the left of the last-quarter moon on May 12th.

Moon:

May 2nd: Full Moon

May 10th: Last Quarter

May 16th: New Moon

May 23th: First Quarter

May 31st: Second Full Moon

Note: One location for a free printable sky chart (and other current info) is telescope.com. Pick the "In The Sky" box on the right side of the page for info for the current month.

Astronomy 101

By Kevin Bert

The Astronomy 101 class for May is entitled "How To Use a Planisphere" by Kevin Bert. Knowing what is above the horizon and when, is something all stargazers occasionally need to know. If you don't have access to a computer program a simple planisphere does the job. See some of these handy devices and learn how to use one.

The featured constellation will be Hydra.

Main Program: Introduction To Model Rocketry by Jeff Setzer

Rockets are the transport vehicle of space scientists, but did you know that you can fly your own? Model rockets are great for learning real-world physics, and they're a lot of fun too! We'll go over how rockets work and the things you can do with them.

CURRENT CLACK

Welcome to new member Justin Modra of Milwaukee. Justin used to be a member of the club when he was in high school.

Mark your calendars: The official observatory dedication will be July 21st.

Please note: the deadline for submission of items for the newsletter is the 20th of the month. Please get your items to me no later than May20th.



I am happy to announce that NCSF merchandise is now available online! Go to our website (www.ncsf.info) and follow the link. All merchandise is being done through cafepress.com. If you have anything in particular you would like to see, let me know. If you want to order items but don't have Internet access, let me know too and we'll arrange something.

President's Chatter

By Jeff Setzer

Hello Friends,

Spring is finally here, and with it, our first season of public events at the new observatory. In case you missed it, we had 22 members on Astronomy Day entertain and educate about 100 members of the public. The skies were clear, everything went smoothly, and a great time was had by all. A big THANK YOU to all the volunteers who made this one of our most successful

Astronomy Day celebrations in recent history.

Speaking of history, be sure to mark your calendars for the Observatory Dedication ceremony on Saturday, July 21. We will have several members of the DNR in attendance, as well as other local dignitaries and press. The Board is working out the details and we are still looking for input. No idea is too small (or big).

From The Editor

By Joyce Jentges

Our public viewing season is off and running, with two clear nights so far! I was at the observatory on both Friday and Saturday of Astronomy Day weekend. Friday night brought a group of maybe 24 people out to look through our scopes. I was certainly impressed with Saturn in my scope and the Panarusky. If you haven't had a chance to look through the Panarusky telescope yet, you don't know what you are missing! Please consider joining us for an upcoming public viewing, or members night.

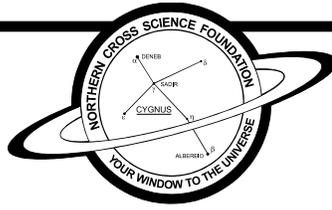
Don't forget to check in on our Google site periodically to check the calendar for the observatory, look at pictures members have posted, and engage in discussion with other members. To access the group, go to www.ncsf.info, and click the link for the Google group from the welcome page. You will need to create a Google account.

Do you have a topic you would like to see for an Astronomy 101 or Main Program? Speak with a board mem-

ber to share your ideas. Also, if you have something interesting to share, we are always looking for members to present programs at our general meetings.

Check out the link that Jeff Setzer has created on our website for NCSF merchandise on our website. This is your opportunity to get a variety of cool merchandise sporting the NCSF logo.

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

Astronomical Stuff For Sale

Submitted by Don Miles

ETX-125:

Includes UHTC, Deluxe Field Tripod, Deluxe Autostar Controller, factory 26mm Plossl eyepiece, remote focus cable, remote power supply adapter, SLR/digital camera adapter, Custom Solid Oak Case.

--Excellent Condition--

\$750 or (unfinished/finished primary mirror?).

Interested? Want more info? Call me.

Don Miles

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Editors Note:

Have some astronomical goodies to part with? Send me an email by the 20th of the month, and space permitting, I will include them in the next newsletter.

SPECTRUM

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