

# SPECTRUM

Northern Cross Science Foundation Newsletter

May 2008

## LOOKING UP

### May 1, Thursday

#### General Meeting

7:00 p.m. Astronomy 101

7:30 p.m. Business Meeting

### May 9, Friday

#### Public Viewing

7:00 p.m.

Harrington Beach

### May 10, Saturday

#### National Astronomy Day

2:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m.

Harrington Beach

### May 15, Thursday

#### Board Meeting

7:30 p.m.

Home of Joyce Jentges

### May 17, Saturday

#### Sidewalk Observing

Setup by - 5:p.m.

Bayshore Shopping Center

### June 8, Sunday

#### Park Open House

#### Solar & Public Viewing

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

Harrington Beach

## National Astronomy Day

*By Jeff Setzer - Astronomy Day Coordinator*

National Astronomy Day is Saturday, May 10 and the NCSF will be celebrating with activities at the Jim & Gwen Plunkett Observatory. This is the first Astronomy Day we will be having with the observatory having been dedicated and in full operation, so let's make one for the books!

Friday night we will have a public viewing night. Saturday we will have activities beginning at 2:00pm, following this schedule:

2:00 PM

Sky-Q quiz contest begins

Solar system tours run throughout the day  
Sun viewing with specially-equipped telescopes

7:00 PM

Evening show begins

Astronomy Talk: "What's Out There"

8:00 PM

Sky is dark enough for telescope viewing  
Starlight Scavenger Hunt opens

9:00 PM

Binocular Tour Of The Universe

10:30 PM

Starlight Scavenger Hunt closes  
Sky-Q contest ends

11:00 PM

Evening show closes

We need volunteers for the information table, Solar System scale model tours, people with solar telescopes and people with regular telescopes. I would like to know who specifically will be out there and when, so we're not caught short-handed. I'm looking to have 3 people for the information table that can work in shifts, 3 solar telescopes and 8 telescopes for the evening show. Please let me know if you would like to volunteer and in what capacity. The best way to do that is email me at [astrosetz@hotmail.com](mailto:astrosetz@hotmail.com). Thanks in advance for making Astronomy Day 2008 a success!

## NCRAL 2008

*By Rick Kazmierski*

NCRAL 2008 is now history, but everyone who attended agreed it was a resounding success. One-hundred and fifteen people attended and we set the bar for future NCRAL Conferences.

The Conference began Friday night with a tour of the Jim and Gwen Plunkett Observatory. Although clouds and rain were forecast, nearly 40 people showed up and a lucky few were actually able to view Saturn when the clouds parted momentarily.

Saturday morning got underway when MC Jeff Setzer played a DVD produced by Jack

Horkheimer specifically for the Conference; welcoming everyone and setting an upbeat, festive tone for the day. Our speakers included Harold Schenk, Mike Bakich, Dave Oesper and Bob Manske and all were excellent! Our Banquet Speaker, Dave Eicher, Editor and Chief of Astronomy Magazine, concluded the event with his talk entitled, "Behind the Scenes at Astronomy Magazine".

Numerous door prizes were awarded throughout the day, including the grand prize, an Orion 8 inch telescope, which was  
*(Continued on Pg 4)*

## 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 Joyce Jentges opened the meeting at 7:38 pm and welcomed over 23 members. She then asked for standard reports.

Treasurer Gene DuPree reported \$5657 in the checking account. A We-Care check for \$69.69 was received. \$3355 remains in the savings account.

Secretary Kevin Bert informed the membership that an updated roster was enclosed in the Spectrum. There are now a total of 67 members. He encouraged members to look over the roster and to let him know if any corrections need to be made. The Alcon Expo National Convention is July 18-19 in Des Moines Iowa. 16 new member societies were added to the League roster recently.

NCRAL Report from Jeff Setzer said that we are on the home stretch. Vender 20/20 will be bringing all kinds

of goodies to sell. Keynote speaker David Eicher and all other speakers are confirmed. Friday night the Observatory will be open for inspection. Saturday will have paper sessions, Astrophoto contest, Astro-trivia contest, Door Prizes, Business meeting and Banquet at the Country Inn & Suites. Signup sheets are available for those that would like to help. All are encouraged to attend.

Jeff Setzer gave a recap of the Superfest event. With the exception of a poor turnout, things went well. There was a genuine interest in our presence there and you can be sure that we will be asked again.

Observatory Director Dan Bert reported that Steve Showalter would have the three exterior red lights wired up, to go on with an inside dimmer switch. Interior cleaning will be done prior to the convention. The next training session will be April 5<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 pm.

Note that construction has begun for a camping site south of Puckett's Pond at Harrington Beach.

Under new business Joyce went over upcoming events. Four nights were scheduled at Bay Shore for this year. The first is on April 12<sup>th</sup> at 5:00 pm. This coincides with the International Sidewalk Astronomy Night. Members willing to attend should contact her for free parking pass details. National Astronomy Day is May 10<sup>th</sup>. Activities will be the same as last year and volunteers can sign up at next month's meeting. Keep WOW (Wisconsin Observers Weekend), on your schedule for June 5-8 held in Waupaca's Hartman Creek State Park. The group camping is limited to 130. The Sheboygan Astronomical Society swap night is on Tuesday May 6<sup>th</sup> starting at 7:00 pm.

With no further new business, Joyce closed the business meeting at 8:15 p.m.

## Things to See In the May Night Sky

By Don Miles

*Mercury:* Look for Mercury a little below and to the left of the Pleiades cluster the first three days of May. The group will be behind (above and to the left) the setting sun. Mercury will also have a close pairing with a very new moon (1.6 days old) on the 6<sup>th</sup>. The moon will be above Mercury by about 2.5 degrees. After the moon pairing on the 6<sup>th</sup>, Mercury will continue to climb to its highest point in the sky for the year on the 12<sup>th</sup>. It will continue to fade throughout the month, being virtually invisible by the end of the month.

*Neptune:* Will be just visible using a telescope in the southeast at sunrise. Use a finder chart and look in Capricornus.

*Uranus & Venus:* Both very low in the southeast at sunrise, and are mostly lost in the sun's glare this month. Venus will not emerge until mid-late July when it will trail the sun as it's setting.

*Jupiter:* Begins to rise in the southeast around 1:30am early in the month, but rises around 11:30pm by the end of the month. Look for Jupiter above and to the left of Sagittarius in the southern sky. Look at Jupiter early in the morning (4am to 5am) for your best view, as the atmosphere is at its steadiest.

*Mars:* Is high in the southwestern sky at sunset, and sets around 1:00am. Look for the orange/yellow "star" near the "shoulder" of the eastern twin of Gemini. Mars will continue to move to the left out of Gemini and eventually into the Beehive cluster in Cancer on the 24<sup>th</sup>.

*Saturn:* Still to the left of Regulus (the bottom star of the "backwards question mark" that forms the head of Leo, and will remain there throughout the month. Saturn will be up most of the night, already high at sunset, and sets around 2am. The tilt of the rings will be at their maxi-

mum at the beginning of the month, and will gradually close to almost edge-on by December.

*Moon:*

May 5th: New Moon  
May 12th: First Quarter  
May 20th: Full Moon  
May 28th: Last Quarter

-General Challenge-  
Try using a pair of ordinary binoculars to view the larger planets (Saturn and Jupiter). If you focus very sharply, you'll be able to see that they are round instead of just points of light (as stars appear). And if you can get comfortable and hold still by leaning against something, you'll be able to make out the rings on Saturn, and some of the moons of both planets. Try it before the mosquitoes make it impossible.

## May Meeting

### 101 Class

with Kevin Bert

The May 101 class is a brief multimedia show from NASA's Hubble site entitled "Piercing The Sky." As telescopes advance, so does our picture of the universe. Follow the leaps in understanding propelled by new technology. The planet Mars and the Whirlpool galaxy M51 will be toured for details as well.

"Tonight's Sky," for May will be explored

### NCRAL Convention:

#### Observatory Open House

By Dan Bert

The skies were overcast as the NCRAL convention visitors arrived for the open house on Friday April 18th. Light drizzle forced the roof to be closed early on. Discussion and video presentation on the scope/observatory took place. Thankfully the roof was later reopened to the satisfaction of visitors and views of the Moon and Saturn were seen thru patches of clouds using the recently cleaned 20" optics.

Newly installed exterior lights by Steve Schowalter and display tables made by Don Miles were used for the first time. Additional club and solar scopes were on display.

Continuing presentations took place outside under the roof utilizing new ceiling mounted projector provisions and speakers. The transit of Venus by Paul Kamikawa from 2004 was also shown.

Overall, visitors enjoyed the open house and many positive comments were received. An estimated 35-40 visitors and members attended the event.

## Main Program

Nothing is currently scheduled for this month.



## April Events

### Sidewalk Observing

This event scheduled at the Bayshore Shopping Center April 12 was cancelled due to inclement weather.

### Messier Marathon

There was no information provided on Friday night's event, but the skies were clear. Jeff Setzer reported clouds becoming an issue Saturday night, but not before he had logged 71 objects.

### Jim and Gwen Plunkett Observatory



Observatory Director:  
Dan Bert: 262-375-2239

### Observatory Note:

The keypad for entry to the observatory has been reported to be malfunctioning. Please contact me to borrow a key until the keypad can be fixed.

Dan Bert - Observatory Director

## CURRENT CLACK

Please welcome Ronald Fintak Jr. from Milwaukee as a new Club member.

### Leaders for Public Viewings

May 9 - Leader - Open

May 10 - Astronomy Day - Jeff Setzer

Additional volunteers needed

June 8 - Park Open House

Leaders - Gene & Charlotte  
DuPree

### Swap Night, May 6 - 7:00 p.m.

The first Sheboygan Astronomical Society Swap Night will be held on Tuesday evening, May 6th on the UW - Sheboygan Campus, Science Building, Rm 6101. Parking in the East parking lot puts you almost in front of the building. A map will be available on the NCSF website.

## Star Parties

### Wisconsin Observers Weekend

June 5- 8

Hartman Creek State Park, WI

[www.new-star.org](http://www.new-star.org)

### Nebraska Star Party

July 27 - August 1

Merritt Reservoir, Nebraska

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

### Northwoods Starfest

August 1 - 3

Fall Creek, WI

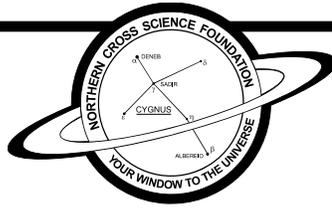
[www.cvastro.org](http://www.cvastro.org)

## FOR TRADE:

Looking to trade a Vintage 1986 Meade 10" Schmidt - Cassegrain with "Star Master" encoders for a smaller scope of similar quality and condition.

Contact: Ted 262-783-6443

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*(NCRAL 2008 Continued)*

donated by 20/20 Telescopes, was won by Club member Robert Mason. After winning, Bob announced he was gifting the scope to a young astronomer he has been tutoring in Astronomy for several years now.

The Astro Photo Contest run by Kevin Bert, was a big hit and Club members Gene DuPree and “Yours Truly” placed in several categories. The Astro Trivia Contest proved a real challenge for all who took it and I won’t tell you my score, but will say it wouldn’t have been a passing grade in High School. Oh well.

Many thanks to Committee Chairperson, Becca Setzer and all the Committee members for doing NCSF Proud!



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

## SPECTRUM

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