

# SPECTRUM

Northern Cross Science Foundation Newsletter

October 2004

## LOOKING UP

October 7 Thursday  
Monthly Meeting  
7:00 p.m. 101 class  
8:00 p.m. Main Pgm  
Unitarian Church North

October 8—10  
Fall Observing Wknd  
Hartman Creek S. P.  
Waupaca

October 16 Saturday  
Members Night  
7:00 p.m.  
Nick and Jeannine  
Nichols—Richfield

October 27 Wednesday  
Lunar Eclipse  
Harrington Beach  
Begins around 8 p.m.  
Public Welcome

November 4 Thursday  
Monthly Meeting  
7:00 p.m. 101 class  
8:00 p.m. Main Pgm  
Unitarian Church North

November 6 Saturday  
Members Night  
6:30 p.m.  
Home of Kevin Bert

## NCSF Member Discovers Astronomical Delights in Chicago By Mark Hirschmann

There are many good reasons to travel to Chicago, but one of the best, for the likes of us, is the Adler Planetarium ([www.adlerplanetarium.org](http://www.adlerplanetarium.org)). This summer I had a free day and saw five shows in six hours. After the admission fee and one show at \$13, the remaining tickets were \$5 per show. I saw two shows in the fully digital Sky Rider Theatre depict Egyptian astronomy and the future evolution of life on earth. The traditional Sky Theatre is stunning with their 1995 Zeiss planetarium projector. The best of the shows, was a presentation on the Cassini mission, with the latest photographs of Saturn projected expansively on the inside of the dome.

I found the shows to be written for the general public, but were creative and very interesting. If you go to the Adler Planetarium be sure to take time to view their collections of astronomical instruments. I was impressed with the large number of stunning astrolabes from many parts of the world. The accompanying display describes in detail the methods for using astrolabes. By far my most interesting experience was a ride into the Atwood Sphere. Built in the early

part of last century, this 19 foot diameter metal sphere is a miniature planetarium. As a visitor you ride a small rail car into the dark sphere, where exterior room light illuminates holes in the metal skin accurately depicting the positions of 6000 stars. Once inside, the sphere rotates, mimicking the movement of the night sky. During the 1940's, military aviators learned celestial navigation using the Atwood Sphere. I was in awe with the utter ingenuity and simplicity of this truly unique instrument.

When I reached astronomical overload, I relaxed in the dining area, while viewing Chicago's magnificent skyline. The visit would not be complete without a slow meander through a huge astronomical gift shop. There you have it. Without a photon of star light, the

Adler Planetarium provides a world-class day of astronomy within driving distance of southeastern Wisconsin. By the way the Packers play close to the planetarium once a year with a team that I cannot quite remember.

## Astrofest 2004

### By Joyce Jentges

In September, I had the chance to go with a group of NCSF members to Astrofest. It has been about 8 or 9 years since my last Astrofest so I was very anxious to go again. But, I was also disappointed to find out that the location had been changed.

This year, Astrofest was held at Vana's Farm, just west of Kankakee, IL. Campers

were spread out across a field which was broken off into lanes, or "streets". The NCSF camp was set up on 7th street. At one point on Saturday, we walked to the end of the field where the last campers were set up, and that was 16th street! Some campers were set

*(Astrofest on page 4)*

## September Meeting Minutes By Kevin Bert

The September business meeting of the Northern Cross Science Foundation was held in the conference room of Carlson Tool & Mfg. Cedarburg. President Jeff Setzer opened the meeting at 8:00 p.m. to 31 members and guests.

Jeff welcomed all in attendance and reminded all the members that this would be the last regular meeting at Carlson Tool. The October meeting will be the first meeting at the Unitarian Church North. Directions will be posted on the club web site. Jeff then asked for standard reports.

Kevin Bert gave a brief treasurers re-

port. Only standard transactions for the newsletter were conducted.

Secretary Kevin Bert had no current Astronomical League information to report. He noted that a completed membership form for Christopher Grenda had been received. This would bring the membership up to 84.

Joyce Jentges talked about the upcoming order for T-shirts and sweat-shirts. She reminded members that orders should be in to her by the 8<sup>th</sup> of September accompanied with a check to cover the costs.

Jeff Setzer said that Harrington Beach activity was slow while drawings for the observatory make their way through channels.

Jeff gave a rundown of upcoming events and told the membership to be on the lookout for information about participating in public activities as an outreach from Nasa and Concordia.

With no new business, Jeff closed the business meeting at 8:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Kevin Bert, secretary

## Northwoods Starfest 2004 By Kevin Bert

By spending most of the morning packing, everything was ready for the long ride to the Beaver Creek Reserve near Eau Claire. My son Dan freed his schedule so he could attend this year too. It was mostly cloudy throughout the drive but things started to break the farther we were from home just as the forecast predicted. Dan spent part of the time during the drive studying some of the objects we would hopefully see that evening. We rolled into the Hobbs Observatory parking lot just after 5:30 and took a survey of the surrounding area from the top of the berm adjacent to the parking lot. It was apparent that this would be a record year for the number of telescopes on site.

Dan and I hooked up with Jeff Setzer after registering and selecting a cabin. We decided to take in a fish fry a short distance down the road. Upon returning we were happy to see more and more clearing and started to get ready for the evening. This year I brought the Cave 8-inch Newtonian. As Dan gave me a hand setting up, Jeff prepared his 22-inch StarMaster. We saw Gene and Charlotte DuPree and Rick and Georgine Poulin returning from the talk at the nature center. They made camp earlier in the day and had their scopes

ready for action. Another member Mark Hirschmann was seen walking over the berm carrying his 10-inch Dob over his shoulder. He weaved his way through the field of equipment to a small clearing and set it up. All that was left to do was wait for it to be dark enough to start viewing.

Dew presented itself early and made things a bit soggy and uncomfortable so we covered equipment on our table. I interested Dan in starting the Astronomical League's telescope Messier program. He already has a good background in tracking down objects by star hopping from completing the binocular Messier certificate and has been out numerous times with me using the telescope too. This being the first official night of this endeavor he spent the majority of the evening finding and logging objects with the 8-inch scope and getting an occasional high detail view through Jeff's 22-inch. The Milky Way was prominent in the sky high above and leftovers of the Perseids meteors still brought out numerous ooohs and aaahs throughout the night. With only a brief break in the observatory for midnight snacks we continued on until 3:30 am. When we finished with a view of Venus between the trees. Jeff, Dan

and I utilized the cabins this year to avoid the hassle of camping.

After a late Saturday brunch in the dining hall we made the rounds checking out some of the telescopes in the field and took pictures of some that had their covers off. Afternoon came with an opportunity to listen to paper sessions at the nature center. Jeff's presentation on collimation was well received. At least four people took him up on his offer to help collimate their scopes with special tools. Some telescope making equipment was being demonstrated in the observatory while the flea market took place. A well-built grinding machine caught my eye near the corner and was working on an 8-inch mirror with a tool coated with ceramic tiles. Overall the market looked pretty weak but it didn't keep me from picking up another cheap military eyepiece.

After food and door prizes the skies again were clear and it was time to get ready for another night of viewing. The game plan was for Dan to pick up a few more of the early southern Messier objects missed the previous night and spend most of the evening meandering through the field of telescopes getting a

(See **Starfest** page 3)

**Astronomy 101  
By Kevin Bert**

The 101 class for October is part two of "Micrometeorites" by Kevin Bert. Part one given in August set the groundwork for an interesting experiment. It is time to show the results from the collection devices. Those participating should bring what material you col-

lected. Extra microscopes or magnifiers would be appreciated. The constellation of the month will be Aries.

Look to have an observing night for the 101 class for November if the weather permits.



**Main Program  
Submitted by Rob Powell**

NASA DVD titled: **Challenger - Disaster and Investigation**

This was the flight that exposed the real dangers of space exploration. Millions of people watched in disbelief as the Space Shuttle Challenger (flight 51-L) exploded, in January 1986. Video (DVD) from the 51-L Data and Design Analysis Task Force provides concise, technical explanation of the cause of the Challenger accident." The video will run about 30 minutes.



**Don't forget: The October meeting will be held at a new location. It is at the Unitarian Church North on Port Washington Road, Mequon!**

Welcome new members: Christopher Grenda of Grafton, and Phil Schumacher and Pauline Beck of Greenfield! Welcome!

Does anyone have a screen from a slide projector to donate to the club? This would be helpful for doing presentations at our new meeting location.

*(Starfest from page 2)*

look through them if possible. Dan and I made our way to a huge 10-inch refractor on an altazimuth mount that towered over the field. It moved well and gave impressive views of the Dumbbell Nebula for being only an achromat. We made our way back to the observatory for the midnight snack and gave a few other people a look through the 8-inch Cave scope. After checking out some eyepieces we looked up a couple more objects and finished the evening with a few looks through Jeff's StarMaster.

Dan and I skipped the breakfast and decided to sleep late on Sunday. We were almost the last to leave. Jeff and I caravanned part of the way home. Dan checked his notes and was pleased to have a total of 48 entries. That was a good start for only two nights.

**From the Editor  
By Joyce Jentges**

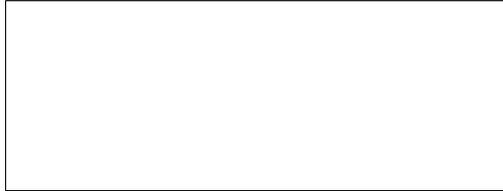
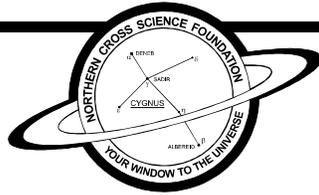
After all of the fun observing outings I've been on this year, I sure hate to see the weather getting colder. The skies this fall seem to have been pretty clear. Hopefully the clear spell will hold through next weekend. I hope you can join us for the very first Fall Observers Weekend (FOG!) at Hartman Creek State Park in Waupaca, on October 8—10th. The NCSF will be set up on group site #3. See Jeff Setzer for more information. With the scheduling of this weekend, the members night at Kevin Bert's house (originally for October 9th) has been rescheduled to November 6th at 6:30 p.m.

An update on the merchandise order we have placed. I have placed the order—for 41 items!!! At this time, it does not look like I will have any of the t-shirts or sweatshirts in time for the October meeting. InfiniTees was out of the office for just over 2 weeks in September, to attend two star parties in Illinois. We got to meet them at Astrofest. I am still waiting for a quote for the hats we are interested in ordering. We will need a minimum order of 24 hats. At this point, I'm not sure there is are enough interested parties to make the 24 minimum order, but I would like to discuss the prices at the October meeting.

At the October business meeting, the board of Directors approved an increase in membership dues. Look for more information at the October meeting. The increase will take effect in January 2005.

Also, the Board is considering moving up the start time for the monthly meeting to 6:30 instead of 7:00. Would this pose a problem for anyone? The reason for moving the starting time is that some members with young children are not able to stay for all of the meeting because the children need to get home to bed. Be prepared to discuss at the meeting.

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**Monthly Meeting Location**  
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**556190**

*(Astrofest from page 1)*

up in "Mars Square" which was another camping area. The vendors were all set up near the front of property. Several major vendors such as Astrosystems, 20/20 Telescopes, and Hands On Optics were there to peddle their wares. We spend quite a bit of time looking at all the goodies offered for sale.

They did have some talks going on Friday and Saturday. Bob Berman of Astronomy Magazine gave the Saturday night presentation. It was very good and funny.

We did fight clouds every night that we were there, and skies are not very dark, but that is not a surprise. Dark skies are not the reason most people go to this star party. Although, for people in the Chicago area, this site would be considered dark for them.

A new group of people ran Astrofest this year. It was somewhat disorganized from what I had witnessed previous years, so hopefully after this they will get some of the kinks worked out.

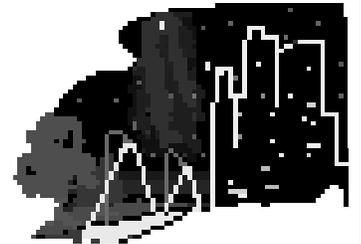


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<http://www.ncsf.info>