

SPECTRUM

Northern Cross Science Foundation Newsletter

October 2006

LOOKING UP

October 5 Thursday

General Meeting

6:30 p.m. Astronomy 101

7:30 p.m. Business Meeting

October 19 Thursday

Board Meeting

7:30 p.m.

Home of Jeff Setzer

October 27 Friday

Public Viewing Night

7:00 p.m.

Harrington Beach State Park

October 28 Saturday

Haunted Hike

7:00 p.m.

Harrington Beach State Park

November 2 Thursday

General Meeting

6:30 p.m. Astronomy 101

7:30 p.m. Business Meeting

November 8 Wednesday

Transit of Mercury

Afternoon

Harrington Beach State Park

Observatory Tool List

By Kevin Bert

It is an exciting time as final adjustments are made on the 20-Inch Panarusky Telescope and the Jim and Gwen Plunkett Observatory. We are truly fortunate that so many of you have generously given to the project and I personally will always be grateful for your support.

As a member of the board of directors it was a lot of fun prioritizing all of the support equipment that needed to be purchased for the observatory. As it is with projects in general, unforeseen expenses come up that tend to readjust those priorities and ours was no exception. The board of directors and I take the responsibility of directing your donations seriously. Hopefully other outside donations will take us deeper into our wish lists of things to purchase for the observatory.

There is one small group of items that was set aside and somewhat overlooked that I would like to bring to the members' attention. Having a variety of basic tools on site for maintenance and adjustments of the telescopes and observatory would make it handy to get things done promptly. It is especially true of the unexpected things that crop up from time to time on site.

Instead of giving our treasurer another bill, I am once more calling upon member's generosity in signing up to supply needed tools that are either gently used or new. Names of willing participants will be matched up with a particular tool or tools on a master list. Before you bring anything in, give me a call or check the list at a meeting to find out if that tool has already been spoken for. If the tool you are interested in supplying has not already been selected, you can then bring it to a meeting or drop it off at my house at your convenience. There are varieties

of tools available that run over a wide range of prices. Please consider helping out in this small but important endeavor.

Primary tool list

Medium sized, carrying tool box.

Screwdriver set. Phillips and Blade type.

Claw hammer. 16 oz.

Rubber Mallet or plastic faced hammer. Med. Size.

Pry bar. Med. Size.

Vice-Grip locking pliers. 10" curved jaw and 6" needle nose.

Slip joint pliers. Med. Size.

Needle nose pliers. Med. Size.

Adjustable wrenches. 6&10".

Allen wrench set. Individual English and metric.

Shop towels & paper towels

Duct tape and electrical tape.

Lens Pens. Small and standard sized.

Lens tissues & cleaning solution.

Jewelers' screwdriver set.

Utility knife. Retractable blade.

Ball pein hammer. 12 oz.

Punches & chisels. Variety

Diagonal cutting pliers. Med. Size.

Channel locks. Med. Size.

Combination open end and box wrench set. 1/4 to 1".

Nut driver set.

(Tool List continued on page 3)

September Meeting Minutes

By Kevin Bert

The September business meeting of the Northern Cross Science Foundation was held at the Unitarian Church North in Mequon. Vice President Joyce Jentges opened the meeting at 8:30 p.m. and thanked the 34 members and guests for attending. Joyce asked for standard reports.

Treasurer Rob Powell reports a balance of \$1,368 in the club's checking account and \$7,766 in the observatory account.

Secretary Kevin Bert made an additional note relating to the treasurers report, that he received a Pick & Save check for \$71.05 and would be forwarding it to Rob along with a bill from Carlson Tool for the final purchased expenses on the Panarusky Telescope. He had nothing to report on for the Astronomical League, and then recognized two new members from Hubertus, Harvey and Gail Sherman.

Kevin continued with a brief report on the 20-Panarusky Telescope. The telescope was set in place successfully and the Optical Tube Assembly was almost complete. Temporary weights are in place, (about 2 lbs. added to the upper tube section), unfortunately the secondary holder ran out of rotational adjustment and would be modified over the next week to continue with collimation. Final polar alignment would be

done the following week and if all goes well it could be used at the Sep. 29 & 30 PVN's. Kevin said that the large ladder is clumsy to move at first but gets better the more you use it. He says that a chair would be used for most public viewing nights once the Cassegrain secondary is installed. As of now he is still waiting for a word from OMI on its progress.

Kevin went on to say that most of the viewing through the scope would be done at group sessions for the remainder of this year. That will give the NCSF board and observatory director time to get things organized for full operation next year. It was hoped that training on how to run the Panarusky would be done late this year. It will take some effort on any interested members part to be responsible for opening up the observatory and running the telescope. For other members that don't want the extra work and would still like to view through the scope, there will be plenty of opportunities with public viewing nights, member's nights, and group nights.

Continuing on with the Jim & Gwen Plunkett Observatory topic it was noted that it was heard that Park Superintendent Andrew was not letting anyone from the public out to the observatory until a safe access path was available. And this was only going to take place when the power is brought to the build-

ing and a final grading completed. The date for a grand opening is still to be set by the park.

Under old business Joyce Jentges spoke about the August 26 Brat Fry at the West Bend Piggly Wiggly. \$135.00 was made and mostly with extra purchasing by club members. Joyce thanked all the members that helped and encouraged other members to lend a hand at the Sep. 30th Brat Fry at the Saukville Piggly wiggly. A sign-up list was made available.

Under new business, Rob Powell said that he sent out thank you notices to all the members that financially contributed to the Jim & Gwen Plunkett Observatory. They should contact him if there were any errors in the figures he recorded or if any members wished to give additional support.

Joyce Jentges ran down the upcoming events for the month. There was an additional night on Sep. 16 at the UW Field station by the Cedarburg Bog.

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

Respectfully submitted,
Kevin Bert, secretary

Giant, But Lousy Binoculars for Sale

By Rob Powell

Yes, I made a mistake when I bought a pair of used 20x100 Apogee Astro-Vue Binoculars with Built-In Nebular Filter. The built-in Dark-Sky™ nebula filters flip-in or out with the flick of your thumb.

When purchased, the right telescope had astigmatism and could not focus stars to a point. The left telescope was fine. I sent the unit to Apogee for repair,

and they did fix the issue. What's still wrong? The right telescope's quality is such that there is considerable focus fall-off, compared to the left telescope.

In my opinion, these binocs are marginally useful even for daytime use. Sold as-is and without warranty of any kind. Caveat emptor. If you want these still, I'm asking \$150 (negotiable).

- Includes lens caps and padded aluminum case (locking).

If I can locate them, I'll throw in a pair of Orion dew shields (1 for each telescope)

Astronomy 101

By Kevin Bert

The October 101 class is entitled "Camera/Tripod Astrophotography," by Kevin Bert. One of the simplest ways to get started in astrophotography is to take timed exposures with a camera on a tripod. Get the details on what things

you need to consider to get started.

The featured constellation will be Andromeda.

Welcome new members:

Ann Torrenez of Shorewood, and Harvey and Gail Sherman of Hubertus.

Now showing...

The New Solar System

UW-Milwaukee public planetarium shows will resume in mid-September and are presented on Friday nights at 7:00 pm and last approximately 55 minutes.

Featuring:

A tour of the new 12-member solar system and a description of the most impressive fall constellations.

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 October 20.

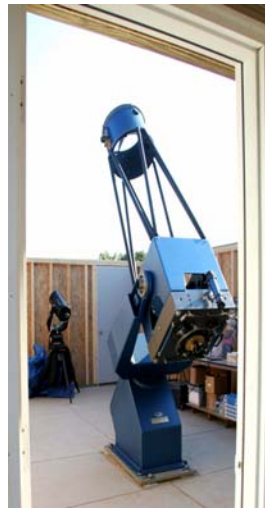
(Tool List continued from page 1)

C-clamps. Variety of sizes up to 6".

Pipe wrench. 12" or 14".

Tape measure. 12'

One additional item that we are in need of is a small-med sized shop-vac with accessories.



(Pictures courtesy of Rob Powell)



From The Editor

By Joyce Jentges

The community campfire at Pike Lake on September 16 turned out clear. Al Steinberg, the Poulin's and myself attended. We had a crowd of about 40-50 people. Word of the observatory is certainly getting out, as we had several people ask about it. Skies were pretty light polluted, but we were able to find enough deep sky objects to satisfy the guests.

Last night I was at Harrington Beach for the public viewing night. It was clear, with some clouds from time to time, but over all, a decent night. The moon was pretty bright, but still nice to look at. We had a good crowd of guests, maybe 30 people. Some had seen us at the brat

fry earlier in the day.

Speaking of the September 30 brat fry, I would like to thank the folks who came out to help with this endeavor. Without the manpower of the membership, we could not continue to do these. This one certainly went better than the one we did in West Bend as we brought in about \$237.00.

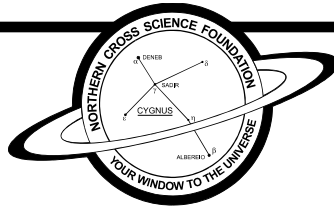
It is hard to believe that after this month is over, our observing season is pretty well wrapped up, unless weather cooperates.

If you have memories of a wonderful observing session, I'd love to have you share them with the membership

by sending me an article for the newsletter. I'm always looking for more member submissions. If you just read the latest new astronomy book, write up a review and send it to me. I'll be glad to publish it.

For one of the next newsletters, I'd like to do an article about how our members got their start in astronomy, or what got them interested. Please send me just a couple of lines on either of these topics, and I will compile them for an article. You can email me your information, or give them to me at the general meeting. I look forward to seeing what got you interested in astronomy!

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

Candlelight Hike

By Rob Powell

It was a dark and gloomy night on Saturday September 23, 2006. The only bright spot was the warmth and hospitality within the Ansay Welcome Center, at Harrington Beach State Park. With overcast and sometimes drizzling skies at the Jim and Gwen Plunkett Observatory, a decision was made to set up the NCSF shop down by the Welcome Center, where all the people would be gathering.

Inside the Center, a roaring fire was ablaze, with hot dogs and marshmallows waiting to be roasted. I set out our literature and assembled my telescope. It served as quite the conversation piece as the hikers came inside for snacks, before & after their hike. At around 9 PM, the clouds parted. To the 15 children and adults present, I moved the telescope outside and offered an impromptu tour of the night sky. The Friends turned off the sodium vapor lamps. We spoke of stars (how Polaris is really a double star), asterisms (how the Big Dipper makes up a part of Ursa Major, one of the largest constellations in the sky, and how the Northern Cross is a part of Cygnus), constellations (among them, Andromeda, Pegasus, and Lyra), galaxies, and how to find objects such as the Ring Nebula and the Andromeda Galaxy. A few of the children were able to see M31 before the clouds, like a blanket, rolled back over the sleeping earth. It was enjoyable for all, and the children (and their parents) were saying thank-you for the time they had spent under the stars.

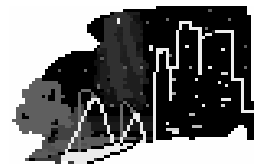
I was pleasantly surprised at how many deep-space objects were visible, despite the tall trees that ring the small clearing down by the Welcome Center. Setting up in the parking lot, a few feet from the building, offered a view of many constellations and favorite deep-space objects, above.

SPECTRUM

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