

SPECTRUM

Northern Cross Science Foundation Newsletter

October 2007

LOOKING UP

October 4 Thursday

General Meeting
7:00 p.m. Astronomy 101
7:30 p.m. Business Meeting

October 12-13 Friday—Saturday

Always Looking Up CampOut
Hartman Creek State Park

October 13 Saturday

Members Night
Dusk
Harrington Beach State Park

October 18 Thursday

Board Meeting
7:30 p.m.
Location TBD

October 19 & 20 Friday & Sat.

Public Viewing Nights
7:00 p.m.
Harrington Beach State Park

October 27 Saturday

Haunted Hike
6:00 p.m.
Harrington Beach State Park

November 1 Thursday

General Meeting
7:00 p.m. Astronomy 101
7:30 p.m. Business Meeting

November 10 Saturday

Members Night
Dusk
Harrington Beach State Park

Fall Astronomy Day 2007

By Don Miles

The afternoon was clear and mostly calm. Unfortunately, the sun spot gods didn't cooperate as I saw no visible spots. Kevin and Dan Bert had the clubs' sun scope trained on the sun for the folks that showed up early in the afternoon. Kevin and Dan had also set up a "handout table" which worked out well. Quite a few people stopped by to see what the sun "looked like", and were excited to get the tour of the observatory. Rudy Zarling and family also stopped by to take the tour, and had nothing but compliments about the setup.

As the sun sank in the sky, more and more members showed up to help with the large numbers of visitors that were getting anxious to "see something". The 4-day old moon was the first target as it was still up while the sun was setting. Close behind that, Jupiter was the first object that WOW'd the waiting crowd. The one-star alignment worked great especially considering it's rough to find one alignment star, much less two early in the evening. There were quite a few scopes set up in the parking lot and a few around the entrance of the observatory itself, which kept most people satisfied while waiting in line to look thru the Panarusky. As people patiently waited their turn at the base of the ladder, I asked what they had seen already. Most

could recite every object by name, not just "some fuzzy thing" or "some stars", but actually give its name. Vince Condella's name was mentioned more than once when people talked about hearing about the event. Everybody seemed to be paying attention to everything that was being explained, and had many excellent questions.

Around 9:00, Kevin gave a "tour of the constellations" with the laser pointer, and had the undivided attention of the largest group of people I've ever seen at a Public event.

Guests started to taper off after about 10:00, but considering we were treated to relatively warm weather and beautifully clear skies, I'm confident that they stayed longer than they originally planned, and I've got a feeling that we'll be seeing many of them again.

Rough estimates of guests were 150+. (People were lined around the inside of the observatory, outside the doorway, and around the walkway for almost 2 hours).

I would call the event a huge success.

Thanks to all the members for donating your time and the use of your equipment, and being willing to answer questions.

Candlelight Hike Viewing

By Joyce Jentges

Charlotte and Gene DuPree went out to Harrington Beach the night of September 22nd. We were not scheduled to be out there, but they felt that the observatory should be open being that there was a candlelight hike. They had an estimated 75—100 people visit the observatory that evening. They looked at Jupiter, Andro-

meda Galaxy, M13, and other deep sky objects. Thanks to them for going out of their way to make our site available even when we weren't scheduled to be there.

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 7:50 p.m. to 20 members and guests and thanked them all for attending. She then asked for standard reports.

Treasurer Gene DuPree said standard transactions took place last month and the club's checkbook balance was \$1594.00.

Secretary Kevin Bert informed that Tammy Plotner had been elected Executive Secretary of the Astronomical League. He then welcomed Uldis Ciniitis to the NCSF as the latest new member.

Joyce Jentges reported that people continue to sign up for the 2008 NCRAL convention. Monthly meetings will continue to organize the event. The club website has all the details on all the speakers and more.

Observatory Director Dan Bert reports that a detailed inventory of observatory items was nearly complete and that the Panarusky cooling unit is operational. Dan stated that a Sep. 8th training session would take place at 8:00 pm. for those that would like to operate the Observatory.

There was no old business to report. Under new business, it was noted that no brat fry's were scheduled this year. Joyce said that resources to organize one were preoccupied with other club activity. She noted that anyone with a

passion to organize a fry could still do so and would be supported by club members.

Joyce gave a report on upcoming events. Sep. 14 and 15 were public viewing nights with the 15th being the Fall National Astronomy Day.

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

Respectfully submitted,
Kevin Bert, secretary

October Things to See

By Don Miles

Venus: Is the brightest light in the Southeast before sunrise. Venus will be at its highest position in the morning sky this month. Look for Venus, Saturn, and Regulus (the bottom star in the "backwards question mark" of Leo) to make a "squatty" triangle around the 5th. Saturn will be the lower left point, Venus the lower right, and Regulus making the top point. Watch for the moon to crash the party the night of the 7th, as it will pass right thru the triangle. The moon will get close about 9:00, and continue thru the group shortly after sunrise.

Jupiter: Look for the brightest point of light in the Southwest even before the sun sets. It will set about 7:00, but it will get dark earlier later in the month for some earlier viewing.

Mars: Rises late in the evening (about 2am) just east of the bottom of the "V" shape of Taurus in the beginning of the month. Look for the color difference to give away it's location. It will have an Orange-yellow hue to it. On the 3rd, Mars will pass slightly below

the easy binocular object M35 in Gemini and continue its eastward movement throughout the month.
Uranus & Neptune: Best viewed around 9pm and later. Look for Uranus in Eastern Aquarius, and Neptune in Eastern Capricornus. Use a finder chart and a small telescope or even steadily held binoculars. (One place for the finder charts for Neptune & Uranus is the July 2007 Issue of *Sky & Telescope* magazine (page 60). If you would be interested in a copy of this chart, please contact a board member, or ask at the next meeting).

Saturn: See the Venus section above for location. Saturn will appear dimmer than it has in the last 10 years as the rings continue to tip more edge-on. It's still beautiful to see.

Moon:

October 3rd: Last Quarter
October 11th: New Moon
October 19th: First Quarter

October 26th: Full Moon
(Watch for the Moon to pass thru the Pleiades star cluster the night of the 27th beginning about 5pm till 8pm).

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 about the current month.



Astronomy 101 and Main Program

By Kevin Bert and Paul Gruener

The October 101 class is entitled "Uranus and Neptune," by Kevin Bert. Each planet is visible early in the evening and can be spotted in binoculars if you know where to look. Learn more about these distant planets and what they have to offer telescopically.

The featured constellation will be Pisces.

This month Paul Gruener will provide an overview of his trip to the Midwest Astro-Imaging Conference

held this summer in Indiana. Nationally known speakers from around the country presented many image capture and image processing topics. Paul will provide an overview of the key techniques and methods covered during this two day event. In addition, Paul will touch on his experiences attending the EPOC 2007 star party held in conjunction with the conference.

Celestial Images Museum Exhibit

By Joyce Jentges

The Villa Terrace Museum in Shorewood is sponsoring a show The museum is located at 2220 Terrace Dr. Milwaukee. The exhibit is called:

Celestial Images: Antiquarian Astronomical Charts and Maps and runs until November 11, 2007. The exhibit showcases star charts such as, Johann Bayer's *Uranometria*, and John Flamsteed's *Atlas Coelestis*. One important concept is that this

show's man's changing relationship and perception of the universe. The museum is part of the Milwaukee County War Memorial complex and a partner of the Charles Allis Art Museum, 1801 North Prospect Avenue. Open hours for both museums are Wednesday through Sunday, 1-5 p.m. General admission is \$5 for Adults, \$3 for Seniors, Military

CURRENT CLACK

Please welcome Richard Sauve from Glendale, David Windorski of Whitefish Bay, and Tom Schmidtkunz of Milwaukee as new members!

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 20th.

The October 6th public viewing at the Bog in Saukville has been cancelled. It will be rescheduled next year.

and Students with a valid ID, and FREE for Museum Members and children 12 and under. The phone number for the museum is 414-271-3656.

Editor's Note: Thanks to Justin Modra for providing the information on this.

From the Editor

By Joyce Jentges

Please notice that I have moved up the time of the Haunted Hike on October 27th. The Haunted Hike actually begins at 6 p.m., so we will start at that time as well. One thing to note, is that this is right after full moon, so most deep sky objects will be lost in the glare of the moon. But still, it's kind of nice to be able to capitalize on the built in crowd that shows up for the Hike. And please remember, that some of us are out of town this weekend, and we sure could use other people besides the "regulars" to show up.

October brings with it the end to another public observing season. I am very pleased with what we have seen so far this year regarding attendance.

The weekend of October 12 and 13, is the first Always Looking Up camp out, at Hartmann Creek State Park in Waupaca. Hopefully campers will have good weather and dark skies.

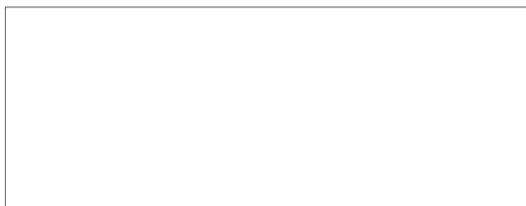
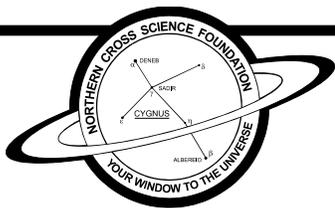
It looks like we will have an opportunity to host stargazing events for several boy/girl scout troops. More information to come.

A host is needed for the 2 remaining members nights on October 13 and November 10th. Please see Kevin Bert if you are interested.

I would like to wish Jeff Setzer and Becca Sher best wishes on their upcoming marriage. I will be running the October and November meetings while they are away.



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Monthly Meeting Location
Unitarian Church North
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Observatory Training

By Kevin Bert

On September 8th, two more members received training on how to run the Jim & Gwen Plunkett Observatory. The total has been slowly climbing and is now at 21 members. There is another opportunity for other members to get the training they need to explore the night sky with the 20-Inch Panarusky Telescope. It will be on Saturday, October 20 at 5:30 pm. and is prior to a public viewing night later in the evening. This will take place rain or shine.

The Observatory Director Dan Bert would like to remind all members attending a Public Viewing Night or private group night at the Observatory to sign in on the member's clipboard before they leave for the evening. It is a detail that the park superintendent needs to keep track of. It is set out by the nights Observatory leader and will be located on the red rolling tool cart along the north Observatory wall. It will ask for how much time you spent driving to and from the park along with the time spent at the park. Even if you do not set up a telescope and are out to help out and support the event take the time to sign in. The Observatory Log Book will be there as well for all members to sign in. Dan hopes it will become one of those things that members will do automatically.

For Sale: 2008 Astronomy Calendars from Kalmbach Publishing. \$7.00—See Gene DuPree if interested.

SPECTRUM

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