

SPECTRUM

Northern Cross Science Foundation Newsletter

September 2008

LOOKING UP

September 4, Thursday

General Meeting

7:00 p.m. - Astronomy 101
7:30 p.m. - Main Program
Business Meeting to follow

September 5 & 6 (Fri & Sat)

Public Viewing

7:00 p.m.
Harrington Beach

September 10, Wednesday

Sidewalk Observing

Setup by 7 p.m.
Bayshore Shopping Center

September 13, Saturday

Community Campfire

7:00 p.m. - 11:00
Pike Lake State Park

September 18, Thursday

Board Meeting

7:30 p.m.
Home of Joyce Jentges

September 20, Saturday

Moonlight Hike

"With Public Viewing"
6:00 p.m.- 11:00
Harrington Beach

October 4, Saturday

Members Night (Dusk)

Home of Gene and Charlotte
Dupree



2009 IYA Update

By Jeff Setzer

Next year is the International Year of Astronomy, otherwise known as IYA2009. This will be a global celebration of astronomy and its contributions to society and culture, highlighted by the 400th anniversary of the first use of an astronomical telescope by Galileo Galilei. The aim of the Year is to stimulate worldwide interest, especially among young people, in astronomy and science under the central theme "The Universe, Yours to Discover". IYA2009 events and activities will promote a greater appreciation of the inspirational aspects of astronomy that embody an invaluable shared resource for all nations.

Those of you who were at recent membership meetings know we have been discussing our participation in this historic year-long global celebration of astronomy. I am pleased to announce that the NCSF will be celebrating and supporting IYA2009 in a variety of ways. The first bit of that support was manifest in the official NCSF Resolution of Support which appeared in last month's newsletter.

One of the eleven Cornerstone Projects of IYA2009 is 100 Hours of Astronomy. This is an event running April 2-5, which features

sidewalk astronomy, observatory open houses, school night watches and similar activities. On the night of April 4/5, there will be an effort to have 24 hours of observing for the public, coupled with 24 hours of live webcasts from professional observatories around the world as night falls around the globe. The idea is to get as many people as possible to look through a telescope while at the same time giving a glimpse into what the "pros" do. The NCSF has pledged to support 100 Hours of Astronomy by having the observatory open every night from April 2-5, in addition to having sidewalk astronomy events at locations such as Bayshore Town Center.

Another highly-visible Cornerstone Project of IYA2009 is the Galileoscope. The goal of the Galileoscope program is to empower youngsters to follow in Galileo's exploration of the universe 400 years ago. The vehicle for this project is the 50mm Galileoscope kit, with high-quality plastic lenses that provide 45x with a 1.5 degree field of view. The kits will be \$10 each and will come with supporting material for assembly and observation in an informal classroom setting. The NCSF will purchase 100 of these kits for use in outreach programs; the funding will come from outside donations.

To support our daytime outreach and solar observing during IYA2009 and beyond, the NCSF Board of Directors -- with the consul of the membership at last month's meeting -- has approved the purchase of a Coronado Solarmax 90T. This 90mm hydrogen-alpha photo-visual instrument will be mated to an Orion SkyView Pro German equatorial mount with a basic clock drive. This package will be funded mostly by a generous donation from Bayshore Town Center, with the remaining portion being covered by the modest profit we realized by hosting the NCRAL 2008 convention earlier this year.

Are we done yet? Absolutely not! As IYA2009 draws near, watch for more announcements and opportunities to partici

(Continued on Pg 4)

August Meeting Minutes

By Don Miles

The August business meeting of the Northern Cross Science Foundation was held at the Unitarian Church North in Mequon. President Joyce Jentges opened the meeting at 7:30 p.m. and thanked 17 members for attending. Joyce asked for standard reports.

Treasurer Gene DuPree reported a balance of \$1,704 in the clubs' checking account. This included money made (even after splitting the profit) from hosting the NCRA convention.

Secretary Kevin Bert wasn't able to attend the meeting, but indicated that he had nothing new to pass along regarding the Astronomical League or other issues at that time.

Jeff recapped the events of the Northwoods Star Party in Fall Creek WI that was held August 1st thru the 3rd. A few members were able to enjoy the weekend as beautiful skies made for very little movie watching. Jeff mentioned that this would be a nice "First Star Party" to attend, as the skies are

usually pretty dark, the accommodations are ample, Fall Creek is fairly local, this event is very reasonably priced, and best of all...the hosts are very friendly.

Joyce mentioned a couple of upcoming events, and asked for volunteers from the general membership to help out where possible. The events will be listed on the Yahoo site club calendar, and on the cover of the newsletter. Joyce also represented the NCSF (and amateur astronomers in general) on Milwaukee's WTMJ-4's Morning Blend program on the morning of the 7th. Jeff played the clip showing Joyce answering questions about her telescope and promoting local astronomy by inviting people to come to free events, while offering the NCSF web site as a source of reference for upcoming events. With the exposure generated by the interview, Joyce asked for any available help for the public viewing nights Friday (08/07) & Saturday (08/08). Leaders were also urged to sign up for the public viewing at HBSP on the Sunday night of Labor Day weekend.

Jeff presented a preliminary overview of the "2009 International Year of Astronomy" itinerary. There are (11) Cornerstone projects and Jeff briefly

touched on each, with a promise of putting links to the information on the NCSF website as details emerge. As the name suggests, it is an international effort, but the focus would be what local clubs could do to promote amateur astronomy. The plan was well received by the attendees.

Jeff also mentioned that there was an opportunity to purchase a Hydrogen-Alpha solar telescope for the club at a greatly reduced price. Jeff mentioned the manufacturer (Coronado) was offering basically half price for a limited time, and the board of directors decided to let the general membership make the decision before anything was purchased. Jeff also suggested a sturdy mount would be needed, and had done some preliminary research so it could be mounted right away. After a short discussion, the attendees unanimously voted to purchase them. The board suggested that if the assembly was approved, the club should use the generous unsolicited donation (that had been given to the NCSF by Marypat Theriault of the Bay Shore Shopping Center) as the bulk of the purchasing dollars, and to order them before Labor Day. Jeff volunteered to follow up, and get the package ordered.

With no more new business, Joyce closed the meeting at 9:25 p.m.

Things to See In the September Night Sky

By Don Miles



Mercury, Mars & Venus: The trio will form a tight group for the first three weeks, and then slowly separate towards the end of the month. Look for them right after sunset behind the setting sun. Venus (the brightest of the three) will continue to "fall behind" the sun making it easier to pick out in the sky.

Saturn: Is behind the sun for the earlier part of the month, but will be visible around mid-month as it rises just ahead of the sun. Saturn will still be in Leo, but continues moving eastward away from Regulus.

Jupiter: Will be about as high as the sun is setting and will set earlier and earlier as the month passes. Look up and slightly to the left of the "handle" in the teapot of Sagittarius (lower in the southern sky). Watch for a special event the night of the 7th as two of its planets shadows will cross

the face of the planet at the same time. The first shadow is already on the face, but watch for the second shadow to begin crossing at 7:12pm. The first shadow will leave at 7:38pm (local time) as the second shadow continues to cross.

Uranus & Neptune: Both visible using binoculars and good finder charts. Both rise around sunset, are highest in the sky around midnight, and set around sunrise. Uranus is still in Aquarius, and Neptune is still in Capricornus. Uranus, at (mag 5.7), is just within the lower limit of naked eye visibility under dark skies, but easy in binoculars. Neptune is even dimmer (mag 7.8), but still easy in binoculars. If you're interested, check the internet (or ask a fellow NCSF member) for a detailed chart of each area. Software is also available to customize viewing charts. Just ask one of the board members, and they'll point you in

the right direction. Either way, mark the charts periodically to track their progress (they'll be noticeable over the course of a month).

Moon:

September 7th: First Quarter
September 15th: Full Moon
September 22nd: Last Quarter
September 29th: New Moon

Occultation: Just after midnight of the evening of the 11th (12:30a.m. local time), (in the early minutes of the 12th), an asteroid named Metis will occult (block the light) of an almost naked eye brightness star (HIP14764) for almost 50 seconds. All the action happens above the head of the constellation Cetus, which will be high in the southeastern sky at that time. S&T has an article in the September issue including a map of where to look. Good Luck.

September Meeting

Editor

101 Class

The 101 Class for September will be presented by Kevin Bert, followed by the Constellation of the Month.

Main Program

The Main Program will be presented by Paul Gruener and is entitled.

The German Equatorial Mount Set-up & Use

(With the end of the vacation season upon us, NCSF begins the school year with an exciting list of Monthly Meeting speakers and 101 Classes. Support your Club and attend and/or participate in the monthly Member Meetings, Public viewing, or other scheduled programs. Watch for monthly updates on the IYA activities.)



August Events

Public Viewing

By Ernie Mastroianni

Only a few clouds hugged the horizon as I opened the roof of the Jim and Gwen Plunkett observatory on Friday, August 8 at 7:30 pm for public viewing. Assisting was member Dave Windorski and president Joyce Jentges. Twenty-five non-member visitors signed the log book, and there may have been more. A few families stayed the entire evening, choosing to enjoy the night sky over the opening ceremonies of the Summer Olympics. I closed the roof at about 12:45 am on August 9.

By Joyce Jentges

The public viewing night on August 9th was lead by Rob Powell and Bob Rad-

tko, There were several members set up in the parking lot with their scopes. There were not as many visitors as the previous night, which was probably due to the bone-chilling cold weather. Before the night was over, we were checking the cars for hats, gloves and extra layers (in August!!!). The moon was pretty bright, so many of the dimmer objects were washed out.

Sidewalk Astronomy

Seven members of our club showed up at Bayshore Town Center on August 13th for the public viewing despite the rain. One brave member set up outside after the threat of rain was gone, while the rest of us set up in the rotunda area. Being inside reduced the amount of people we were able to reach, but the event was still a success. We handed out flyers and invited people to come out to our future events at the observatory. The kids had fun looking at the murals on the walls and the interesting light fixture near the cinema with our scopes.

Ice Age Center

Members of the NCSF made the trek up to the Ice Age Center in Dundee. I know this is an out of the way spot, but if skies are good, they are pretty dark. We entertained a crowd of about 75 people that evening. Popular objects were Jupiter, the Andromeda Galaxy, M13, the Ring Nebula, Double Cluster, NGC 457 (hoot, hoot!!!), and the Coathanger. If you don't know where to find the Coathanger, ask Gene DuPree, he can find this easily in his Astroscan. Guests were full of questions. I've learned over the years that it helps to have answers to some questions ready, or a resource that you can use to look up the information. It was finally after 11:30 when we were packing up to go home.

Jim and Gwen Plunkett Observatory



Observatory Director:
Dan Bert: 262-375-2239

CURRENT CLACK

Leaders for Public Viewings

September 5 & 6

Leaders Needed

September 13

Community Campfire

Leaders: Gene & Charlotte DuPree

September 20

Moonlight Hike

Leaders Needed

Members Night

October 4

Home of Gene and Charlotte Dupree

6219 Jay Street

Myra, WI 53095

Star Parties

Astrofest

September 5 & 6

Vana's - Kankakee, IL

www.chicagoastro.org

Twin Lakes Star Party

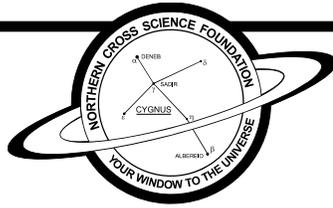
September 27- October 5

Dawson Springs, Kentucky

For Sale

An order will be placed for t-shirts with the IYA (International Year of Astronomy) 2009 logo. If you are interested in ordering a shirt, please contact Charlotte DuPree at 262-675-0941 or grdupree@charter.net. The shirts will cost approximately \$20 - \$22 including shipping.

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Northwoods Starfest 2008

By Mickey Kazmierski

Kudos to the Chippewa Valley Astronomical Society for putting on another terrific Northwoods Starfest!

Northern Cross attendees were Gene and Charlotte Dupree, Jeff and Becca Setzer, Tony Marek and Rick and Mickey Kazmierski. Friday night's speaker Dr. Jennifer L. B. Anderson gave an in depth talk on making Impact Craters in the Laboratory. Enthusiastic observers were then treated to dark, clear skies. Saturday's featured speaker, Jim Elbert gave an interesting talk on the design and operation of space vehicles. Our own Jeff Setzer spoke regarding the IYA and Telescope Collimation at the afternoon session. Although the night started out cloudy, it soon gave way to yet another beautiful clear night! Ask our own Jeff Setzer, as he was up both nights until dawn! In addition to the absolutely delicious meals there was a swap meet, dealers, and door prizes. Picture it; the Hobbs Observatory, a field filled with telescopes of all sizes, fellow astronomer camaraderie and clear skies, what more could you ask for.

(continued from Pg 1)

pate in this truly once-in-a-lifetime global celebration of astronomy. If you would like to get more information, have ideas, or want to sign up for activities, please let me know -- my contact information is on the back of each newsletter.



SPECTRUM

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