

SPECTRUM

Northern Cross Science Foundation Newsletter

August 2023

Cocoon from the Plunkett - A joint effort by Don Woelz, Ernie Mastroianni and Mike Borchert resulted in this crisp capture of the Cocoon Nebula, taken through the club's 5" refractor and QHY color astrocamera earlier this month. The mount received some TLC with a new battery, some lubrication and re-alignment on the pole. If you want to learn more about astrophotography using NCSF equipment, contact Spectrum editor Ernie Mastroianni: ernie.mastroianni@gmail.com

NASA Technology In Your Life

Many people wonder why we spend so much money on spaceflight and the space program. This

presentation will give attendees a good idea of some of the

NASA technology that has ended up in our lives. - *Joyce Jengtes*

August Program

Clockwise: An emergency response device; ski goggles that cancel blue light; iDesign Refractive Studio, a device that makes a map of a person's eyes.



July General Meeting Minutes

President Jeff Setzer started the meeting with 13 members in attendance.

Jeff started out with a discussion that took place on [Slack](#) about lights at the shelter and bathrooms at Harrington Beach State Park. Bathroom lights now have a switch that we can use to turn off the bathroom lights. The shelter lights are normally off unless a group is using it. Some of our members were at the observatory doing maintenance on the

imaging scope and had noticed that the shelter lights were left on. The park has given us permission to add another switch for the shelter lights. Steve Schowalter will do the work, as he added the switch for the bathroom lights.

Jeff brought up about the smoky skies hampering viewing. Now past solstice, it will start getting dark earlier.

Public observing nights were [See page 2](#)

Coming Up

General Meeting

Thursday, August 3, 6pm
[Jackson Community Center](#)
N165 W20330 Hickory Lane
Jackson, WI 5303

Great Port Washington

[Campout](#) on Friday to
Saturday, August 4-5

Perseid Meteor Shower

Early morning, August 13
[See page 4](#)

Binocular Astronomy

by Jim Hahn
August 17, Thursday
[Schlitz Audubon Nature Center](#)

Northwoods Starfest 2023

August 18-20, 2023
Fall Creek, Wisconsin
Adults (13 and over) \$95 (on
or before Aug. 4), \$105 after.

[More events on page 2](#)

Public Viewing Nights for 2023

If you are available to lead or assist with this event please consider helping out and share your passion of the night sky with the campers and park visitors. Contact observatory director Dan Bert (dbert64@gmail.com) or any board member to sign up.

- August 4-5, Port Washington Campout
- August 12, Pike Lake, 8-11 pm
- August 25, Harrington Beach, 8-11 pm
- August 26, Ice Age Center, 7-11 pm
- September 9, Family Night, Pike Lake Beach area, 6-9
- September 8 & 9, Harrington Beach, 8-11 pm
- September 9, Pike Lake, 8-11 pm
- September 16, Pike Lake, 8-11 pm
- October 20 & 21, Harrington Beach, 8-11 pm



NCSF member Jerry Kohlmann observes through the Plunkett 5" refractor.

July Meeting Minutes

From page 1 July 21 and 22 and Harrington Beach. Jeff noted that we do still have events in August, September and October. See the latest Spectrum for upcoming dates, or check the website at www.NCSF.info.

Fall WOW will take place October 13 and 14 at Hartman Creek State Park. Jeff has site 1 at the group campsite reserved. See Jeff if interested.

Tim Burris noted that at EAA on July 24th there was a program called Artemis vs Apollo.

Joyce Jentges mentioned that [Northwoods Starfest](#) is August 18 to 20 at Beaver Creek Reserve in Fall Creek. The meeting was adjourned at 7:44 pm. - Joyce Jentges

Church Astronomy

My church, St. John's Lutheran in Jackson, is hosting a night of camping and meteor watching on August 12. I'll point out the summer constellations and help attendees find star clusters, nebulae, and double stars using their binoculars. When Saturn rises, we'll view through my 8-inch reflector. - Jim Hahn

NCSF Board Meeting Minutes, July 20

Members in attendance included Mark Zellner, Jeff Setzer, Joyce Jentges, Don Woelz and Mike Borchert. The meeting was held via Zoom.

Discussion on eclipse glasses started out the meeting. Basically, Rainbow Symphony and a few other companies make glasses capable of looking at the sun safely. A previous

quote of fifty cents a pair, or seventy-five cents a pair (customizable printing) had been obtained.

The Astronomical League though, is now offering them at thirty-five cents a pair, due to their large order and buying power. The board would like to start out selling them for two dollars a pair. The board then moved to purchase 1000 pair; the break-even point would then be 175 pairs sold. Jeff said he would order the glasses, (free shipping) ASAP.

The August 3rd meeting will spotlight a presentation by Joyce: NASA Spinoffs and NASA Technology In Your Life.

In September there will be some asteroid happenings. OSIRIS-Rex is scheduled to return with its mined asteroid material, September 24th. The Psyche mission, a journey to check out a unique metal rich asteroid is scheduled to launch October 5th. Keep your eyes and ears out for further developments.

Joyce mentioned that she had noticed (unknown to us until now) the NCSF involvement in the [Great Port Washington Campout](#) on Friday to Saturday, August 4 to 5.

Last year, member Jim Hahn had to bow out due to COVID, and this year it was re-scheduled without any notification to NCSF. Although the board is interested in supporting the event, it does take time to prepare, and to put it into our members calendars. Camping is not a necessity: telescopes and a simple explanation of the night sky are. The board apologizes for the late notice, anyone who can help out is welcome. Joyce will be in communication with the Port Washington Recreation Department on this.

There was discussion on the replacement of the real time battery on the 5" refractor out at the observatory.

Jeff thanked Ernie Mastroianni, Don Woelz, and Mike Borchert for their efforts, and was happy to see at the scope could image the Cocoon Nebula as well as it did.

Don commented that the scope was an excellent set up and offered many possibilities to future imagers. The club would work to set up a new procedure for imaging, to encourage interest for new imagers well as those looking for more experience.

Jeff Setzer has a reservation for Hartman Creek State Park on Friday and Saturday, October 13-14. It's a great place for observing as well as camping.

If you are interested, let Jeff know, on Slack or via email.

The meeting agenda was met and the meeting was adjourned. - Mike Borchert.



Public Observing in July

July 22, Harrington Beach

The weather forecast for our Saturday, July 22 public observing session at Harrington Beach was rather poor and, unfortunately, ended up being accurate. Rob Powell was the leader, Jim Macak and Rick Sell were the assistants.

The crescent Moon was visible when the session began and was viewed with a 31mm Televue Nagler eyepiece on the Panarusky telescope. Given the early twilight sky and the high clouds, the contrast of the view of the Moon was less than optimal, but we heard many “oohs” and “ahhs” nevertheless.

Rick Sell also set up his refractor in the grass just west of the observatory.

After about an hour, a bank of clouds incoming from the west overtook the Moon and it was effectively obscured. However, a few stars were visible overhead and to the east, so we aligned the Panarusky on Vega and observed it with a medium-power eyepiece. Rob used a green laser penlight to point out a few bright stars.

After Vega we presented the colorful and crowd-pleasing Abireo double star.

Despite the poor transparency, we then moved on to M57, the Ring Nebula. However, even with its high altitude, M57 remained barely discernible and we didn't even bother to try to present it to the people remaining in the observatory.

A few drops of rain started about 10:00 PM and the last couple of bright stars became obscured so we closed up the observatory a bit early.

Signed-in attendance was about 35-40 people.

- Jim Macak

July 21, Harrington Beach

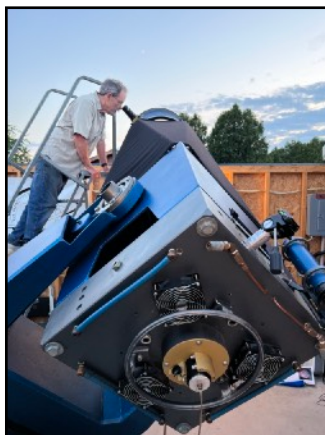
We had 39 people signed up for the Friday public observing session at Harrington Beach State Park. Even more than the official number were likely.

Visitors began appearing shortly after sunset, and the crescent moon and Venus were viewed through skies with broken clouds. Some viewers mistakenly thought they were viewing the moon when the crescent Venus was centered in

the refractor, offering the opportunity for an impromptu lesson in how planets inside the Earth's orbit will show phases just like the moon.

We had both the 20" reflector and 5" refractor in use, which proved handy while some watched the Moon and Albireo while others viewed the usual showpiece deep sky objects including the Ring Nebula, the Dumbbell Nebula and M13. Ernie Mastroianni and Chris Fuchs were the leader and assistant.

Outside the observatory, a contingent of other stargazers shared views through their respective telescopes. Among the



Clockwise from top: A visitor checks out the view through the Panarusky telescope on July 22. A young girl takes in the moon that was visible through broken clouds on July 21. Chris Fuchs centers the Panarusky on the moon in early twilight. Photos by Rick Sell (top) and

crowd were NCSF members Gene and Charlotte DuPree, Rick and Susan Sell, and Joyce Jentges.

Although we played tag with the clouds, there were often times when the sky was nearly clear. We were sharing views right up to the 11 pm closing. - Ernie Mastroianni

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NCSF is a member of the [North-Central Region of the Astronomical League](#).



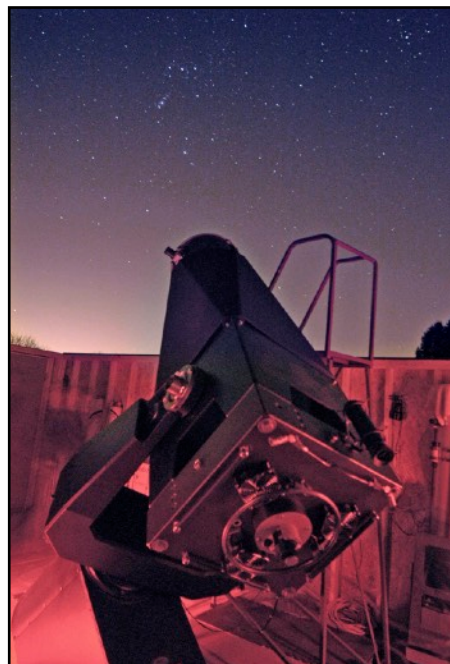
NCSF supports the [International Dark Sky Association](#)

Ideal Conditions for Perseids

This wide-angle composite image shows many Perseid meteors radiating from a point just below the Double Cluster in the constellation Perseus. The best-known meteor shower of the year will be visible in the early hours of August 13 under favorable conditions this year, with the moon just a waning 8-percent crescent. If the smoke and clouds stay away, you could see up to 90 meteors per hour under a dark sky.
- NASA/JPL photo

**Pike Lake Observing: Cloudy and Smoke**

The clouds and heavy smoke descended on the Pike Lake telescope viewing event on Saturday, July 15 and negatively affected most targets. However, Al Steinberg got a look at Epsilon Lyra, the double-double star near Vega, before the end of the night. About a couple dozen visitors attended. - *Charlotte DuPree*

**Spectrum newsletter**

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