



Volume 12 Issue 6, June 2000

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## **WHAT'S UP IN JUNE**

### **JUNE 2<sup>ND</sup> – 4<sup>TH</sup> WOW STAR PARTY**

One of the biggest highlights of the year for area amateur astronomers and their families is the Wisconsin Observers Weekend (WOW). Summer camping and observing at Hartman Creek State Park just west of Waupaca is the highlight of the weekend.

### **JUNE 9<sup>TH</sup> – 10<sup>TH</sup> COME TO THE MOON**

The second annual "Come to the Moon" Party is scheduled for this Friday and Saturday, June 9 and 10. The location will once again be at the Neville Public museum from 7:30 -10:00 p.m. both nights, weather permitting.

This is an opportunity for all members to come out and observe the moon with other members of the club. It's also an opportunity to start, or continue the A.L. Lunar Observing Program.

The idea for a "moon party" started as a trial to get all our members working on a league award and earning it as a group. Not to mention to have the club with the most "lunies" around. If last year's attendance was any indication of its success, then we are well on our way as a group.

So come on out and join your fellow members and begin your journey to the moon. You only need to bring your telescope and/or binoculars. The club will provide the A.L. list of objects to observe, a basic moon map for you to keep and other more detailed maps to use.

Hope to see you there!

### **JUNE 14<sup>TH</sup> MONTHLY MEETING**

Please join from 7:00 PM to 9:00PM at the Neville Public Museum. Our new meeting room is the auditorium on the first floor. This months talk is "Internet Astronomy" given by club member Tony Kroes. Tony will have a presentation with good web pages to go to, links and sites that have a variety of interests related to astronomy, research sites, data, etc.

Happy Joes to follow!

### **JUNE 30<sup>TH</sup> – JULY 2<sup>ND</sup> COW PART 1**

Now is the time to reserve some space on your calendar for a **Crivitz Observing Weekend** and the darkest skies Wisconsin has to offer. Club members are invited to camp out at our observing site on Dave Jorgenson's land west of Crivitz. The site offers several nice areas for camping as well as a couple of cabins that will house a few of those that are not quite interested in sleeping on the ground. Dave has cleared out an area for observing complete with parking and an electrical outlet for the telescopes!

A map to Dave Jorgenson's home is available from Wayne Kuhn. If you need additional directions or would like to let Dave know your coming, give him a call at 715-757-3296.



## **A LOOK BACK AT MAY**

## MAY 5<sup>TH</sup> – 6<sup>TH</sup> NCRAL CONVENTION "THE GREAT GATHERING"

By Gerry Kocken

I decided to attend the NCRAL 2000 Convention in LaCrosse on Friday and Saturday, May 5th - 6th. Since my daughter went to UW LaCrosse and is a senior, I thought I could kill two birds with one stone. I wanted to attend the convention but I also needed to bring my daughter home from college and all her belongings. On Friday, my wife and I left home and headed to LaCrosse at 11:00 am. I arrived at the Holiday Inn in downtown LaCrosse at 2:30. Since I had time we visited with my daughter and her boyfriend till it was time for me to go for the Friday night registration and the Planetarium Program.

I arrived at 6:30 in time for registration and snacks. I was somewhat disappointed that no one from our club was attending. I figured that at least I would know George McCourt, since he was the NCRAL Chair. I really didn't know if any other club members were attending. I bought a poster at the astronomy store prior to attending the planetarium program at 7:30 pm. The program *Journey To The Stars* was great.

After the program, we were supposed to do some rooftop observing, but it wasn't going to start until about 9:45 pm. At this point an individual from Iowa approached me to help him with his Meade ETX 90. His daughter received it as a gift for Christmas and they had spent hours trying to get it to work. I sat down and worked with it for about 45 minutes until I had it operational. He was appreciative of the help.

We went to the roof to do some observing with the rest of the group. They had 6 telescopes set up with an 12" LX200 being the largest. The moon was just at the western horizon. We did view M3, M5, and the moon. The sky was hazy with the university lights providing ample light pollution. All total it was a good time. I made it back to the hotel at about 11:00 pm.

The next day I took my wife Jean and daughter out for breakfast and then went back to the convention. I arrived at about 8:00 am. To my surprise, nine NPMAS members were there to greet me. Bob Allen, LCAAS President, gave the opening remarks with our own George McCourt, the NCRAL Chair. Following the opening remarks was a presentation given by Dr. Eric Wilcots on *Making Of Galaxies*. It was an interesting presentation with many slides. A group photo followed.

At 10:45 am Dr. Frank Barmore gave a presentation on The Earth's Climate: *The Last Four Gigayears and the Next Four Gigayears* (4 billion years, Ron) (4 to the ninth power). It was an excellent presentation followed by lunch. After lunch we had the NCRAL Business Meeting with George chairing the event. Don Dewitt had a short discussion on the standards of qualifications for awards. This was tabled for further investigation and next year's meeting. Katrina Dewitt gave a nice short presentation on the upcoming 2001 NCRAL Convention in Green Bay next year.

The meeting was quite short and we moved on to Dr. R. A. Greiner's presentation on the role of CCD cameras in amateur astronomy. I skipped this one to spend some time with my family. I did make it back to the next presentation that was given by Paul Castle. This one I found very interesting: *The Popular Astronomy Club's Mobile Observatory*. It was an enclosed trailer converted to an observatory on wheels. It had a 6' Home Dome with a 12" LX 200.

The best presentation for me was the next presentation by Greg Gonia: *The Legend of Carl Elias*. This had special meaning for me, since I have Carl Elias's 8" scope, with the opportunity to get the dome also. I have to thank Ron Parmentier for making sure I attend that presentation, and introducing me to Greg. I gave him another chapter in his presentation.

At this point there was a two-hour break, prior to the banquet. I again spent time with my family

I arrived back at 6:15 pm for the social hour and banquet. The salads and dinner and salads and salads were excellent. (right Ron?) I left the convention after the dinner, but not before witnessing the NPMAS member's lighter side with Katrina taking the brunt of the abuse. I didn't stay for the presentation of Dr. Peter Chen. (*Ultralite Optics*). I wish I had.

For those who did not attend, you missed a great time. Maybe next year?

## MONTHLY MEETING – MAY 10<sup>TH</sup>

Thirty-two people attended the May club meeting, which was held for the first time in the first floor auditorium (the extra space and padded seats were a welcome change). Club business dominated the first hour. Gary Baier passed out a sign-up sheet for the Northwoods Starfest being held on August 4 - 6. Space is available for about 130 people on a first come first serve basis but they have reserved 30 spaces for NPMAS members. Please contact Gary if you want to go but didn't sign-up. The event will be held at the Hobbs Observatory about 10 miles east of Eau Claire, WI. More information will be forthcoming.

The second hour featured a talk on "Drawing at the Eyepiece" by club president Katrina De Witt. Her presentation included tips on how to draw various astronomical objects, examples of drawings, and some hands-on experience. Everyone gave a try at drawing both Mars and Jupiter. Great job Kat!

## 2001 CONVENTION PLANNING – MAY 24<sup>TH</sup>

More planning and organizing was accomplished at the latest meeting for the 2001 NCRAL Convention we are hosting next year. Those in attendance included Tom Cashman, Katrina DeWitt, Don DeWitt, Jacob DeWitt, Jill Last, Steve Mofle, Wayne Kuhn (host), Ted Kordes, George McCourt, Gary Baier, Gerry Kocken, and Ron Parmentier.

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, July 26<sup>th</sup> at the DeWitt residence. The meeting will start at 7:00 pm sharp. Call Katrina DeWitt at 405-8534 if you need directions. We can use your help in making next years convention a success!



## **NEW MEMBER WELCOME MAT**

We had two new members join this past month. The first is a family membership - John & Jennifer Balma, 1702 Ruby Lane, Manitowoc, WI 54220. Phone: 920-683-9112 Email: jbalma@powercom.net

I emailed John and asked him to tell us a little about themselves. Here is his response:

"We have a baby due in Sept. (Name yet to be determined). My wife found out about the club when visiting the Neville museum with a teenager she mentors. It's kind of a Big Sister/Brother program."

"My interested in Astronomy stems from my interested in a Grand Unified Theory of everything. I have an interest in the infinitely small and the infinitely large. Astronomy, I believe, is key to understanding who we are, where we came from, and where we are going. We are novices to Astronomy, but look forward to learning from more experienced members and taking advantage of some the opportunities our club provides."

"I am operational planner at the Point Beach Nuclear Plant. I spent 6 years as a nuclear power plant operator in the Navy on board the aircraft carrier Eisenhower. I then went to work for Wisconsin Electric in 1991. I am 34. My wife has a degree in chemistry with a minor in biology and French. She also has some post graduate work in Natural resources. She is 30."

Our second new member is Kent Olson, 988 Honey Creek Road, Oshkosh, WI 54904 Phone: 920-231-0695 Email: cj570@hotmail.com

Kent has had an interest in astronomy all his life. On a recent visit to the Neville Public Museum he picked up one of our fliers and decided to join. He is 53, married, and has three children.

Currently he owns a pair of 7x50 binoculars and looks forward to possibly using the club's 10" loner telescope. His main interest at this point is looking at the planets and their various moons.

Welcome John, Jennifer, and Kent!



## **FROM THE MEMBERSHIP**

### **FROM THE EDITOR**

*By Wayne Kuhn*

It's nice to have the warm weather back again. Winter is too cold for me to get any real observing done – just call me a fair-weather astronomer.

But now that it's here I look forward to every chance I get to observe. Recently I assisted club member Dick Oliver with his new Meade ETX125 telescope. This is Dick's first telescope so he asked for a little help to learn how to use it. Our first night out we set it up at his house in De Pere and familiarized ourselves with it. We sighted in the finderscope and manually found the double star Mizar in the Big Dipper. The ETX's fine optics gave us a sharp view of the double with separation to spare. Dick and his wife were amazed that they were looking at a binary system - two suns revolving around a common center of gravity.

The next time out we tackled setting up his Autostar computer control. After an hour or so of frustration we finally figured out our mistakes and were off and running. I see now the big attraction that GOTO type telescopes have on their owners. With minimal setup you can be observing objects at a phenomenal pace. It is amazing how far technology has advanced and how affordable it is.

I really enjoyed working with Dick and look forward to doing similar activities with other new members. I think Dick would tell you that he benefited from it by getting the type of help he needed from a member of the club. I will be bringing up the Mentor program I proposed a few months ago to the NPMAS board of directors and hopefully get an "okay" to go forward with it. I feel we are big enough and organized enough to offer this service. If you have an opinion on this subject please let a board member know.

On a similar note, I have recently put together a "Welcome Package" for new members. This package consists of a brightly colored folder with the NPMAS logo on the front and the following items inside:

- Welcome letter
- Club flier with calendar of events
- Latest issue of *The Eyepiece*
- Glossary of astronomical terms
- Current membership list
- Parmentier Observatory map
- Crivitz map
- "Choosing your first telescope" brochure
- "Binoculars for astronomy" handout

AL observing programs brochure  
Kalambach books flier

Most of these have been published in the newsletter and/or given out at club meetings. A few are new. If you would like a copy of any of these items please let me know. I felt it was just natural to put everything together instead of handing it out separately and by chance. This should not only make a good impression on the new member but allow them to "hit the ground with their feet running", so to speak.

Two more items – both concerning the latest issue of the Astronomical League newsletter *Reflector*. Pages four and five are a fascinating look into astronomy clubs and how they function. If you haven't already please take some time and read it.

On page 19 is a list of the latest recipients of AL observing program certificates. The Astronomical League has 18,000 members in 250 clubs. Out of that 18,000, 72 received an observing program certificate this quarter. Out of that 72, 7 were NPMAS members! That's 10 percent of all the certificates given out over the past three months! A very large **CONGRATULATIONS** to those NPMAS members and to the club as a whole. We are setting the standard for the rest of the nation.

#### **MORE ON THE A.L. REFLECTOR**

*By Tony Kroes*

The only other thing I wanted to comment on was how bad the *Thanks But No Thanks* article made so many clubs sound, yet here we are with 7 separate members receiving awards in 5 different programs! I feel we have a really great club and much more than the "10%" or the "one guy" mentioned in the articles (on pages 4 & 5) is active and assists in the different functions and activities. Even the club meetings get an above-average attendance percentage compared to a "normal" club.

Well Done NPMAS!

#### **DOINGS AT PARMENTIER OBSERVATORY**

*By Gary Baier*

Tony Kroes, Dan Sheber and myself were out at Parmentier observatory on Sunday May 28. It was very wet with a slight hint of fog and aurora. The long grass added to the water problems. Future help in maintaining the observatory is needed. Tony was without his motorized telescope and was starhopping to find objects. I was learning the field of view on my 8" Celestron so we encouraged each other. Dan provided moral support. If clear the next few weekends some of us will be out there.