



The Eyepiece

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FEBRUARY AT A GLANCE

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NEW MEMBER WELCOME

MAT

We had several new people join the club in January.

First is Kelly Spurlock, 2615 University Avenue #8, Green Bay, WI 54311. Some of you may remember Kelly coming to Wisconsin Observers Weekend over the last two years. She owns a 6" Triple Axis Mount.

Next is the father-daughter combo of Bill and Becka La Plant, 2572 Van Beek Road, Green Bay WI 54311.

Welcome to the club Kelly, Bill and Becka!

FEBRUARY IN DETAIL

MONTHLY MEETING

Our February monthly meeting will be on Wednesday, February 11th from 7:00 PM to 9:00 PM at the Neville Public Museum. This month our topic is Astrophotography and the talk will be given by Tony Kroes. Hope to see you there.

NEWSTAR MONTHLY MEETING

The NEWSTAR monthly meeting will be on Wednesday, February 18th from 7:00 PM to 9:00 PM at the University of Wisconsin, Menasha Center. Call Don DeWitt at 405-8534 if you would like to

car pool down.

TOTAL SOLAR ECLIPSE

On Thursday, February 26th there will be a total solar eclipse. Unfortunately for most, the path runs through the Caribbean Sea. There are a few people from the club that are going to brave the elements to go down there to see it so we hope to have a report for next month's newsletter. See related article in the EYEPIECE FEATURES section on page 3.

A LOOK AT OUR PAST

CAMP U-NAH-LI-YA WEEKEND

Friday the skies were starting to clear and I thought "no it couldn't be, it might actually be clear for an astronomy event in the Wisconsin winter". When we arrived, my family and I first unloaded our van and picked our bunks. Already someone had started a nice fire in the fire place.

After getting settled in we joined everyone for dinner up at the lodge. A simple dinner of ham and cheese sandwiches and chicken soup, which for me really hit the spot. It was good to see everyone again. In the winter months we don't get to see everyone as much as in the summer when everyone gets out observing more.

After dinner it was still clear and I was looking forward to looking through the camp telescope that George McCourt and I re-built.

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I have never built a telescope before so it was quite a thrill to see images through something I had a part in building. Jeff Hermans had his telescope and so did Wayne Kuhn and we all enjoyed looking at images on a

seeing as he was just coming out side. I called him over and told him and he followed me to the site and he was amazed too!

So to rule out that it was stray light from somewhere, Wayne walked around it to see if

rare clear night.

Others that came up were Steve Wagner from NEWSTAR, his wife Christine and three nephews. Also, Ray Nancoz, George McCourt and his wife Kathy, Don(feather boy) and Katrina DeWitt, my wife Sue and my two girls Jenni and Tammy and Jenni's boyfriend Jeremy (Bob).

Maybe I should explain why Don was called "Feather boy" and Jeremy was called "Bob". While Don was checking the sauna he burned his new down-filled jacket and everyone kept forgetting Jeremy's name so we just started calling him "Bob".

The next day was another nice day. After breakfast we all decided to go sledding and for my money, I had more fun just watching Ray and Wayne fly down the hill over the bumps trying to get air borne. Even though Jenni and Jeremy tried to win by popping Katrina's snow tube on a particular run, the title of King of the Sled Hill was given to Ray. He also gets an honorable mention for knocking the wind out of himself to capture the award.

After cleaning up and changing into some dry clothes, we all went to a lunch of tomato soup and sloppy Joe's. After lunch everyone kinda did their own thing. Katrina, Jeff, Wayne and Don went ice skating, while the Wagner clan did some snow shoeing. Still others, including myself relaxed in front of the fireplace back at the cabin.

Before I knew it dinner time was upon us and a meal of roast chicken, potatoes and corn was served. When dinner was over, George talked me into playing the guitar and singing a few songs for our group which was fun. I guess I always was kind of a ham.

When we got back to the cabin some of us played board games. My daughter liked playing Mancala with Kathy McCourt and she told me she had fun playing too. I suppose I will be getting that game now.

When it got dark it was still clear. We were all pretty tired so instead of setting up our telescopes, Ray and I looked at objects with our binoculars. Then it happened I found a strange glowing light in the snow! At first I thought "gee do I tell everyone or will they all think I'm crazy"? So I thought I would just tell Wayne (it's better for one person to thing you are crazy than a whole bunch!)

he would block the light and he didn't. So he dug in the snow to see what it was and at the bottom of the snow was.....a GLOW STICK! Boy was I glad that was all it was. I guess I watched too much Twilight Zone when I was a kid.

The next day we ate breakfast and it was time for my family and I to leave early. I am told that the others continued to veg. out in front of the fireplace. My family and I sure had a great time!

Steve Wicker

DOWN THE ROAD

MESSIER MARATHON

March 28th and the 10th Annual Messier Marathon are fast approaching. If you haven't done so already, mark your calendars and start dusting off your eyepieces.

The Messier Marathon is our first scheduled group observing session of the year and we hope that everyone can make it out.

I suppose I should back up just a bit for our new members. The Messier Marathon is a dusk to dawn observing party in which it is possible to see all 109 Messier objects-which consist of galaxies, nebula and clusters.

All members of the NPMAS, NEWSTAR and Sheboygan Astronomical Society are invited. It is a "potluck" party and everyone is encouraged to bring something to eat.

You don't need to own a telescope and you don't have to stay all night to come to the Messier Marathon. In fact, new people are encouraged to come out and check out the variety of telescopes and eyepieces that will be there. We will even have the club's 10-Inch dobsonian out there for you to try out.

If you are going to observe in a marathon fashion, you should be there, set up and ready to observe by 6:15 to 6:30 p.m. The NPMAS will provide an observing form for your use.

Stay tuned to next month's newsletter for another reminder as well as rules if you are competing in a marathon style. Also next month we will have a map to Neshota park.

Remember, this is a party so come on out even if it is cloudy. The date once again is Saturday, March 28th. The place is Neshota Park.

ASTRONOMY DAY UPDATE

We held our first Astronomy Day planning meeting on January 28th. Keeping in mind that our theme this year is "Interactive Astronomy" we have come up with some new displays as well as improvements to previous ones.

As always, we will need as much help from club members as possible so as you read, keep in mind which area you would like to help in. We have included the person in charge of the project and their phone number, so you can call them directly to

10. Binocular Display-add books for binocular observing as well as Astronomical League sponsored binocular clubs. Permanently manned. Contact Wayne Kuhn at 468-0765 for details.

11. Mirror Grinding-demo of grinding a mirror for telescope use. Contact Ray Nancoz at 920-746-0428 for more details.

12. Debunking Astrology- a spin off of the January meeting topic. Contact Steve Mofle at 866-3523 for details.

13. Light Pollution display. Gary Baier is

volunteer. Or you can call Katrina DeWitt and she will add you to the list.

1. Club Booth-Variou pictures of club events, benefits of membership and added ability to sign up new members. Booth to be permanently manned. Contact Don DeWitt at 405-8534 for details.

2. Books Display-Miscellaneous astronomical books. Books will be divided by category and a list of books available at the local library will be available as well as recommended beginner books. Contact Katrina DeWitt at 405-8534 for details.

3. Meteorite Display-assorted meteorites in display cases for people to look at. Contact Ted Kordes at 336-5878 for details.

4. Pictures and Posters Display-designed to give the whole event an "astronomical feel". Need more pictures from club members. Contact George McCourt at 468-9296 for more details.

5. Computer Demo's, open to suggestions. Last year Jon Kruse had a nice program. Would like more computers and programs. Open.

6. Crater formation-demo of crater impacts using flour and rocks. Used too large of rocks last year and got kind of messy. Solution: less flour and smaller rocks. Contact Mike Monfils at 435-7350 for details.

7. Moon Phases-learning moon phases by holding ball and rotating around in circles. Needs location that is more noticeable and less distracting. Contact Jeff Hermans at 432-1916 for details.

8. Children's Activity Center-various activities and cut outs designed to teach kids some astronomy basics. Open

9. Telescope Display-spread out a bit more and labeled better. Include everything that one brings out when observing, chair, charts, flashlights, etc. to give a better feel of what goes on. Also, focus on small picture of a planet on other end of room and have people draw what they see. Contact Steve Wicker at 496-0288 for details.

getting high school students to record visible magnitudes all around the city of Green Bay on a particular night. The results will be plotted out and a "Green Bay Light Pollution Map" will be made. Contact Gary Baier at 391-9654 for details.

14. Planetary Distance Scale. Several ideas are in the works for this including one that starts with the entrance gate being the sun. Contact George McCourt at 468-9296 for details.

Our next Astronomy Day planning meeting will be on March 3rd at Don & Katrina DeWitt's house. All club members are invited to come and offer ideas and suggestions. Hope to see you there.

EYEPIECE FEATURES

BOOK CORNER

by Wayne Kuhn

Turn Left At Orion

by Guy Consolmagno and Andy M. Davis
205 pages, 9x11 inches hard cover
Sky Publishing \$22.46 through NPMAS

Turn Left At Orion is a guidebook for beginning amateur astronomers. The Moon, planets and nearly a hundred deep sky objects visible in the Northern Hemisphere are shown exactly as they appear in a small telescope (50-100 mm or 2-4 inches in aperture).

The book gives all the information you need to find these and other objects in the night sky. All are arranged by season with plenty of maps to get you located by using the brightest stars and constellations as guideposts. Three large format drawings are used to depict each object: the naked eye view, the finderscope view and the telescope view. Each view is accompanied by text that walks you through the process of star-hopping to identify the object.

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The authors also provide personal comments as well as statistical information and where to find other interesting objects in the neighborhood.

Turn Left At Orion is the most user friendly field guide I have ever come across. No previous knowledge of astronomy is needed. Since the descriptions are non-technical, skywatchers of all ages and backgrounds can use and enjoy it. I agree with the statement on the back cover that it "should be packaged with every first telescope".

Next month's meeting presentation will be about some unique gadgets and stuff for observing.

Editors note: If you would like to try before you buy, the Brown County Library as two copies of Turn Left At Orion.

GETTING READY TO STAND IN THE SHADOW

The safest way to observe the sun with the unaided eye is to project an image of the sun onto another surface-the projection method. This guarantees that at no time is the eye exposed directly to solar radiation.

To use this method, simply mount your binoculars or telescope on a tripod. Then mount a piece of cardboard or poster board in front of the eyepiece. Be careful to mount the cardboard close enough to the eyepiece so that somebody can't accidentally look at the sun.

The next safest way to observe the sun is with the proper solar filter. One that mounts on the front of a telescope and diffuses the sun's light before it enters the telescope.

If you have a solar filter that screws onto your eyepiece-throw it out! The intense light from the sun will focus on the filter and burn it up-along with your eye.

There are many different ways to photograph

February 26 is fast approaching and that means only one thing, TOTAL SOLAR ECLIPSE! Unfortunately for most-the eclipse goes through the Caribbean and will not be visible from up here. However you can catch about 3 minutes of a partial eclipse if you venture down to Milwaukee.

So you are bummed out that you can't go on this eclipse? Well then start planning for one of the next ones. Here is a list of dates and places for upcoming solar eclipses.

August 11, 1999: North Atlantic, Europe, Asia, Indian Ocean

June 21, 2001: South Atlantic, Africa, Indian Ocean

December 4, 2002: South America, Africa, Indian Ocean, Australia

November 11 2003: Indian Ocean, Antarctica

If you want to stay on mainland United States, you will have to wait until August 21, 2017 to see the next total solar eclipse. What better excuse do you need to do some traveling?

There are several ways to observe an eclipse and let me start out by stressing the following point: **THE ONLY TIME IT IS SAFE TO LOOK DIRECTLY AT THE SUN WITHOUT ANY FILTERED PROTECTION IS DURING TOTALITY.**

In other words, **NEVER LOOK AT THE SUN WITHOUT A PROPER SOLAR FILTER, EVEN DURING A PARTIAL ECLIPSE.** Our eyes are very sensitive to infrared, ultraviolet and intense visual solar radiation, and can easily temporary or permanent damage, even blindness from staring at the Sun.

an eclipse depending on your equipment. The main thing to consider is the film you use and it is recommended that you get something in the "Professional Grade" film. It can be found at any camera shop and is usually kept refrigerated.

There is a group of people from the club heading down to the Caribbean for the February 26th eclipse. We hope to have some good photographs for next months newsletter so stay tuned for more details.

COMING NEXT MONTH

- More information on the Messier Marathon plus a map on how to get there.
- The NEWSTAR Field Trip to the Fermi Lab and the Shedd Aquarium is the weekend of April 18-19. We will have car pooling and hotel information available by then.
- More Information from the March 3rd Astronomy Day Planning Meeting.
- Reviews and pictures from the total solar eclipse in the Caribbean.