

THE FAINT FUZZY

The Official Newsletter of the West Kentucky Amateur Astronomers
August 2005

UPCOMING MEETING:

The next meeting will be Saturday August 6th at 7 p.m. at Golden Pond Observatory. As always visitors are welcome to attend! After the meeting, if the sky is clear, we will help Summer Nights participants view through our scopes (see the "Public Events" section for details).

LAST MEETING HIGHLIGHTS:

Warren and Sylvia Wepking brought their granddaughter and some of her friends to the meeting and John McCubbin brought a visitor from Romania!

Treasurer's Report: David Paessler reported a balance of \$1701.54. He also distributed copies of the WKAA Member List for 2005 and asked members to review and provide updates as required.

Star Party:

- Ross Workman reported that he needs suggestions for a shirt design by August. **Please be thinking about it for Saturday's meeting.**
- Jackie Mathis volunteered to help solicit door prizes. Thanks Jackie!
- Ross reported that the star party main field at Pennyryle is looking good but needs mowing and that there are signs of new construction in the vicinity of the old building. Plans appear to be to build a new admin building and pave the existing dirt/gravel parking lot.
- There are currently no speakers scheduled for star party presentations. **Please consider giving an informal talk on the topic of your choice.** Ross will schedule talks for the last Saturday of the star party.
- John Holland stated that *Astronomy* magazine has been updated with WKAA star party information that should appear in next month's (September/October) edition.

New Purchases: Ross reported that he had purchased two fans as authorized by the club, but went over the specified budget. The purchase price was \$68 for the two fans vs. \$50 authorized. The club voted to approve the purchase at \$68. Vince reported that cost for the TV stand also exceeded the authorized purchase value. He stated that the TV stand with DVD/VCR shelf was \$130. Club voted to approve the purchase at \$130.

Sidewalk Astronomy: There has been great support from club members for the Summer Nights program so far, but we really need members to **commit to specific dates in advance**. Please [contact Heather Sherbourne](#) to sign up. In addition, several past and upcoming public events were discussed. See the "Public Events" section below for details.

Member Notes: Warren thanked the club for the neck tie and also thanked whoever anonymously renewed his subscription to *Sky and Telescope* magazine. He also stated that his property in Kentucky is up for sale and they are currently building a new house out east. Everyone is invited when it is done! John McCubbin thanked Warren for all his efforts over the years with WKAA. Warren added that he had heard that Laura Dietrick had broken her foot. *[She also broke 3 toes on her other foot and both her parents are recovering from surgeries. You can contact her at laudiet@mchsi.com. She could probably use some encouragement.]* David Paessler stated that he had finished building a new scope, a 12.5 inch Dobsonian truss mount of his own design. Everyone blamed David for the poor weather of recent months – of course!

Miscellaneous: The electrical receptacle on the west end of the observatory pad has had a concrete buffer installed to try to help prevent any more bruised shins. Due to server problems with an ISP (VCI), several members did not receive the July newsletter. *[Oops – we meant to redistribute those to the appropriate folks already – you will have it soon.]*

Thanks: Thanks to Bill and Lynn Kassebaum for taking excellent notes at the meeting while we were on vacation!

NEW MEMBER:

The club has another new member – Jim Stiveson from the Madisonville area. Welcome!

ASTRONOMICAL LEAGUE (AL) AWARDS:

We had a good night last Saturday at Golden Pond with limiting magnitudes about midnight of 6.0 at the zenith. This is very clear and dark in the usual hazy humid days of July and August. David got about 16 Globular Cluster observations in after the public left. Bob Vickers spent some more time on his Herschel 400 list too. There are many members working on several lists, the weather is just holding them back from completing them. The [WKAA website](#) lists club members who have already earned observing club certificates and provides links to the Astronomical League website. [Contact David](#) if you have any questions.

TREASURER'S REPORT:

Balance (8/3/05): \$1706.54

Expenses: The club's Astronomical League dues have been paid and there are no foreseeable expenses in the short term (except the TV stand).

Star Party Registrations: We have two registrants as of the end of July. There should be many more in the coming two months.

PUBLIC EVENTS:

KY Sheriffs' Ranch, Gilbertsville: We completed the public viewings at the Sheriff's Ranch in Gilbertsville last Thursday night. They run the months of June and July. Many thanks go to David Paessler, Jim Hall and Dale Baltimore who made this project possible. (David organized it and took his scope to every session.) Thanks also go to Bill Kassebaum and Vince Medlock who came out and helped too. We averaged about 70 eager kids each Thursday night. They ranged in age from 8 to 11 years old. When we could, we showed them the Moon, Jupiter, Saturn, Venus and a few deep sky objects. Most nights all that we could see were Jupiter and Venus, but the kids didn't seem to mind. We got good feedback from the counselors that the kids really enjoyed the visits. Maybe we helped spark their interest in the skies. It was also a first for me (David) to have a scope dew up at the *beginning* of the observing session instead of the end. Air conditioned scopes and hot and humid air don't mix very well!

Summer Nights Program: The Summer Nights sessions have had good attendance from both the public and club members. The program runs every Saturday night from May 28th through September 3rd. It consists of an 8 p.m. planetarium show followed by viewing (weather permitting) through the observatory scope and/or club member scopes. Crowds range from as few as 30 to over 100. If you can, please come out and help with the public and enjoy some viewing yourself. Please [contact Heather](#) to sign up for a specific date. For more information see [wkaa.net](#).

Kelly Green Men Festival: On August 19th there will be a parade in downtown Hopkinsville. In addition, Ross Workman will present a talk on types of amateur scopes and John McCubbin will give a talk on general amateur astronomy. There will also be a third talk or open forum discussion. [Contact John McCubbin](#) if you can help.

General: Ross reminded everyone that Mars will be getting better as it gets closer to opposition and is always a good target for sidewalk astronomy sessions with the public.

OTHER EVENTS AND OPPORTUNITIES:

For Sale: 6" Criterion Dynascope. See the [WKAA Forum](#) for more information.

Club Website: Check out the astronomy forum, photo gallery, and other useful info at [www.wkaa.net](#). Perusing the website and conversing with fellow observers is a great way to spend those cloudy evenings.

Club Library: The book [Grand Tour](#) has been donated to the library. The publisher is also willing to sell it to members at a discounted price. If you would like to check something out, just remove the card from the book, complete the information, and leave the card in the "Checked Out Items" box. Also please consider donating or loaning books that you don't use frequently to the library (you can always check them out if you need them).

Loaner Scopes: The club has two Dobsonians (6" and 8") available for club members to borrow. Anyone who has been a club member for 6 months, completes a training/safety session, and signs a written agreement may borrow one of the scopes. Both scopes are currently available. [Contact Vince](#) in order to make arrangements.

Magazine Discounts: Club members who subscribe to *Sky and Telescope* or *Astronomy* magazines through the club receive a discount! Annually you can save \$10 on *Sky and Tel* and \$13 on *Astronomy*. Turn in your renewals to David Paessler in order to receive the discount

Clear skies,

Dale & Carol Baltimore