

THE FAINT FUZZY

The Official Newsletter of the West Kentucky Amateur Astronomers
January 2006

UPCOMING MEETING:

Our next meeting will be Saturday January 28th at 7 p.m. at Golden Pond Observatory. It has been almost two months since our last meeting – it will be great to see everyone! As always visitors are welcome to attend. If the sky is clear, we will view after the meeting.

LAST MEETING HIGHLIGHTS:

About 12 people attended the last meeting on December 3rd.

Secretary's Report: Dale Baltimore reviewed the highlights of the newsletter. John Holland suggested that we remove e-mail addresses from newsletters published on the website.

Treasurer's Report: David Paessler reported that almost all of the star party profit came from T-shirt sales. David also noted that only 4 people are subscribing to *Astronomy* magazine through WKAA. If you subscribe to *Astronomy*, please see David about renewing through the club. We may lose the \$9 discount if at least one more person doesn't come on board.

Officer Elections: Elections will be held at the March meeting. Are you well organized? Do you have new ideas? Then consider nominating yourself for an office. The positions are: President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, Star Party Coordinator, and Assistant Star Party Coordinator. Please submit nominations to [Ross Workman](#).

Star Party: Ross reported that the new building at Pennyriple has been started. It looks to be about 2200-2500 square feet. The club voted to create the new elected position of Assistant Star Party Coordinator. This person will handle issues at the observing field when the Star Party Chairman can't be on-site. Having this position will also allow other club members to learn how to run the star party.

2006 Activities Schedule: The meeting & activities schedule is complete. See the WKAA [Schedule of Events](#) for details.

Donations: Warren Wepking plans to donate a couple of planispheres to the club.

Learning Opportunity: Following the meeting, David demonstrated his handcrafted Foucault tester. This device determines the shape of a mirror's surface to a few tens of nanometers

Viewing: We weren't able to view. The sky was cloudy and it actually started *thundering and lightning* during the meeting.

ASTRONOMICAL LEAGUE (AL) AWARDS:

Member Certificates: At the December meeting, Ross presented David with his globular cluster certificate. Bob Vickers has completed the Lunar observing club and will be awarded his certificate at the next meeting.

New Observing Clubs: Have you earned all of the observing club certificates? (Ha!) Or are you bored or frustrated with the ones you are working on? The Astronomical League has created three new observing clubs: Lunar II, Planetary Nebula, and Open Cluster. See www.astroleague.org for more information. [Contact David](#) if you have any questions.

TREASURER'S REPORT:

Balance (1/23/06): \$2164.54

Dues: 2006 membership dues are \$25 and are due at the March meeting.

TLSP T-Shirt: There is one 2005 star party T-shirt still available (black, size large). See David at the meeting if you want it. The cost is \$20.

OTHER EVENTS AND OPPORTUNITIES:

New Equipment? Did anyone get any new viewing equipment for Christmas? If so tell us about it on the forum or bring it to the meeting so we can all have a look see!

New Library Book: Dale is donating *The New CCD Astronomy* by Ron Wodaski to the library. This book covers how a CCD camera works, how to achieve critical focus, how to choose the right equipment, how to autoguide, color imaging, noise reduction, many image processing techniques, and specialized techniques for planets, nebulae, galaxies, etc. It will be available for check-out following the club meeting.

Viewing: Let us know on the WKAA forum if you have been lucky enough to catch a clear night and get some viewing in. It looks like Ross just decided to view Venus on a clear *day*. One of his photos is attached.

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

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. [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 \$9 on *Astronomy*. Turn in your renewals to David Paessler in order to receive the discount.

2005 YEAR-IN-REVIEW

It has been a good year for WKAA!

- The star party was an all-around success – good viewing conditions, great weather, and high attendance.
- We beefed up the website with weather and solar conditions pages and an astronomy discussion forum and we created a club library.
- Club members hosted 15-20 sidewalk astronomy sessions *in addition to* Astronomy Day and Summer Nights.
- We improved the warm room with a new microwave, bookcase, and fans and we installed a concrete buffer around an outdoor outlet.
- Our treasury has over \$400 more than this time last year.
- While five people joined the club throughout the year, we had a net loss of four members. That's pretty good considering we increased our annual dues from \$15 to \$25 this year.
- Club members earned two AL observing club certificates. There likely would have been more but viewing conditions have been terrible most of the year.

It has also been a good year for the field of astronomy. A few of the highlights are:

- Cassini provided fabulous pictures & data from Saturn and its moons.
- Huygens landed on Titan.
- A 10th planet Zena and its moon Gabrielle were discovered.
- Discovery completed the first shuttle mission since the Columbia disaster.
- Spirit and Opportunity – the only two machines in the universe that will last longer than the Energizer Bunny - continued to send back data from Mars.

CLUB OFFICERS LIST:

[See WKAA Contact Information.](#)

Clear skies,

Dale & Carol Baltimore