



The Faint Fuzzy

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The Official Newsletter of the West Kentucky Amateur Astronomers

March 2008

From the Editors:

It's election time once again and the club needs your input and participation. Please plan on joining us for the potluck dinner and the meeting this Saturday.

—Bob & Melissa

LAST MEETING HIGHLIGHTS: FEBRUARY 2ND

There were 14 people at the meeting, including newcomers Kevin and Angie from Vienna, IL, and Jeremiah, a student from Murray State. Club Treasurer David Paessler called the meeting to order.

Treasurer / Alcor Report

David Paessler presented the ALCor certificate and pin to Harold Meyers for his Messier Honorary Certificate.

Club membership fees are due at the March 8th meeting. They are \$25 for an individual or family membership plus \$5 for each additional family member who also wants to obtain an Astronomical League membership. If you have any questions contact David Paessler.

March Meeting

Club members briefly discussed the upcoming meeting and elections. See box below for full details.

Astronomy Day 2008

Jackie Mathis has volunteered to coordinate this year's Astronomy Day events on May 10. Be thinking of ideas and ways you can help make this year's celebration another success!

Summer Nights 2008

Harold Meyers has again volunteered to coordinate Summer Nights activities. These weekly observing sessions held on Saturday nights after planetarium shows are one of the major on-going public outreach programs for the club. This year, the Summer Nights program runs from May 24 through August 30. Look for more details in the months to come!

The meeting was adjourned early to take advantage of relatively clear viewing.

POTLUCK DINNER!

Join us at 6pm on Saturday, March 8, for our annual potluck dinner. Harold Meyers is coordinating this meal, so please let him know what dish you will be bringing. To date, we have enough desserts coming and could use some main or vegetable dishes. Contact Harold at: hambone10100[[@](mailto:hambone10100@yahoo.com)]yahoo.com.

UPCOMING MEETING:

**Next meeting: March 8.
Potluck supper at 6:00,
meeting starts at 7:00,
with observing afterwards
if it is clear. Visitors are
welcome to join us for the
entire evening!**

ELECTIONS!

Annual club officer elections will be held at the upcoming meeting at 7pm on March 8, following the potluck dinner at 6pm. All current officers are seeking reelection. If you would like to nominate yourself or someone else, please submit the nominee's name and office to John Holland at [yojohn_ng\[@\]newwavecomm.net](mailto:yojohn_ng[@]newwavecomm.net)

Nominations will be accepted up until the election takes place.

THE NIGHT SKY NATURALIST, by Bob Vickers**Fun on the Moon**

For beginning astronomers who ask me what they should observe first, I always recommend the Moon. It's big. It's bright. You can't miss it! It also has a very big WOW factor. All those craters and mountains and rilles can really stand out and show a lot of impressive detail. Aside from big craters and mountain ranges, however, the Moon also has some "fun" features, many of which can be seen even without a telescope. These are a sort of lunar equivalent of asterisms in deep sky observing. They are markings or features which form an unusual pattern or look like something else.

On the largest scale, almost everyone has seen the "[Man in the Moon](#)," a facial pattern visible at full Moon consisting of the dark Mares Serenitatis and Imbrium as the eyes, Mare Nubium as the mouth and a curved combination of Mare Vaporum and Sinus Medii as a button nose.

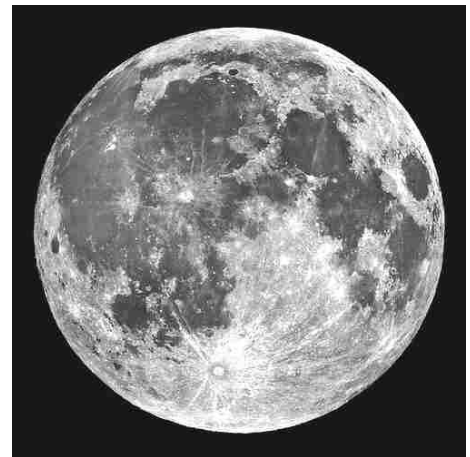
A little less obvious is the "[Lady in the Moon](#)." This is a woman's profile with the face made up of the light lunar highlands, while the hair, eyes and mouth consist of various dark mares.

My favorite large scale pattern is the "[Rabbit in the Moon](#)," which is made up of every dark mare visible. It forms a side view of a hopping rabbit complete with Mare Crisium as its cottontail.

The "[Lunar Crab](#)," in which Mares Fecunditatis and Nectaris form the left claw and Mares Humor and Nubium form the right claw, may require a little more imagination.

Last of the large scale patterns is the "[Cow jumping over the Moon](#)." This is really just the rabbit again but viewed about three days before full Moon, when the head is covered by shadow.

In addition to these naked eye curiosities, there are also quite a few telescopic ones. Along the northwestern edge of Mare Imbrium lies very large ruined crater which forms a "bay" called Sinus Iridum (Bay of Rainbows). The southwestern cape of this easy to find half-circle is called Promontorium Heraclides and under the proper lighting conditions such as those at about 10.6 days after new Moon, it takes on the appearance of another woman's profile. This one has been dubbed the "[Moon Maiden](#)." The entire cape forms her head and she faces to the northeast.



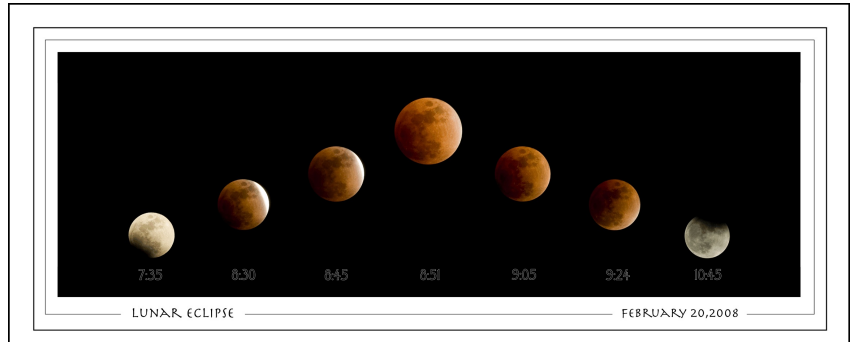
Courtesy of NASA

The “Moon Maiden” is only one example of many lunar telescopic curiosities, but I will save them for future columns. Get a good Moon atlas such as *The Hatfield Photographic Lunar Atlas* edited by Jeremy Cook, or Antonin Rukl’s *Atlas of the Moon*, or even Moon software such as *Lunar Map Pro* and see what you can discover for yourself!

If you have any comments or questions, I would be happy to hear from you at [cosmosbob\[@\]hotmail.com](mailto:cosmosbob[@]hotmail.com).

Lunar Eclipse March 20, 2008

Did you see the lunar eclipse? This photo courtesy of Nashville photographer, Michael Thompson, shows it in all its glory. To see a larger version of this image, [click here](#).



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Club Member Art Pallone is Named NASA Solar System Ambassador

WKAA is fortunate to have among its members one of only seven Solar System Ambassadors chosen by NASA to represent Kentucky. Art Pallone is an assistant professor of engineering and physics at Murray State University, and teaches classes in astronomy.

The Solar System Ambassadors Program of NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory offers information and excitement about real missions that explore our solar system. Volunteer ambassadors in communities throughout the country are selected by JPL based on their backgrounds and on their plans for public outreach activities. JPL provides ambassadors with educational materials and training.

Art took advantage of the lunar eclipse to schedule a public outreach activity at MSU. For more details on this program, check out the story in the [Murray Ledger and Times](#).

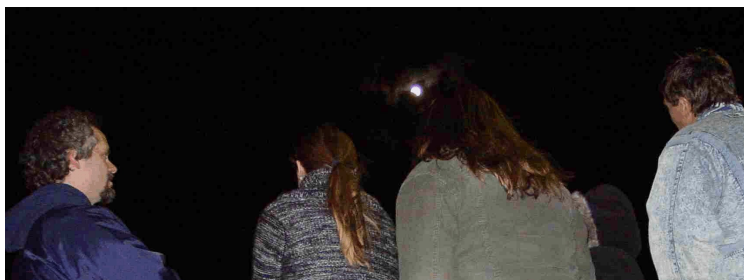


Photo by Jacque Day

Art explains the progression of the eclipse to MSU students and area residents while the moon hangs high in the sky overhead.

CLUB RESOURCES

Loaner Scopes/Imager

The club has two Dobsonians (6", 8") and a Meade Deep Sky Imager available for club members to borrow. Anyone who has been a club member for six months, completes a training/safety session, and signs a written agreement may borrow one of the scopes or the imager.

Library

The club has several books and magazines available to members for reference or checkout. Take a look and see what we have at the next club meeting.

Magazine Discounts

Club members who subscribe to *Sky & Telescope* or *Astronomy* magazines through the club receive a discount! Annually you can save \$10 on *Sky & Telescope* and \$9 on *Astronomy*. Contact David Paessler for more information.

CLUB OFFICERS

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