

THE FAINT FUZZY

*The Official Newsletter of the West Kentucky Amateur Astronomers
May 2005*

UPCOMING MEETING:

The next meeting will be Saturday May 7th at 7 p.m. at Golden Pond Observatory. As always visitors are welcome to attend! If the sky is clear, we will view after the meeting.

LAST MEETING HIGHLIGHTS:

Fourteen people attended last month's meeting, including Chuck Martin from Philpot, KY near Owensboro. Chuck has been a club member for a while, but this is the first meeting he has been able to attend. Chuck's family also came and viewed with us after the meeting – we were glad to have them! **Star Party:**

The star party is only 6 months away! Ross Workman has already lined up the Country Cupboard to cater lunch on Saturday. He recommended that we have the registration form on the website by the first of July. He plans to ask Rolando Chavez again to give a presentation and encouraged club members to give informal talks. Carol Baltimore suggested posting times for the talks.

New Purchases:

The new microwave and bookcase have been purchased for \$83 and \$127 respectively. They work and look great! Thanks to Vince Medlock, Jim Hall and Ross Workman for arriving early and assembling the bookcase.

Aliens Among Us:

John McCubbin reported that the club has been invited to participate in the [Kelly Green Men Festival](#) on August 19th in Hopkinsville. After considerable discussion, we agreed to give a presentation promoting amateur astronomy (not UFOs!) and then hold a viewing session.

Club Bylaws & Mission Statement:

Vince proposed that we revise the club bylaws and develop a mission statement. The bylaws were written in the mid-1980s in order for the club to be admitted to the Astronomical League and haven't been revised since. The officers will review them first and then assemble a committee, if needed, to finalize them.

Summer Nights:

Jim Hall volunteered to coordinate club members for the Summer Nights program to ensure that 1) we have enough scopes and 2) people rotate so they don't get burned out. See Sidewalk Astronomy Events below for more information.

Websites:

The LBL Association (Friends of LBL) has added a journal page to their website and asked us to periodically write a short article for it. Topics include targets available for viewing at the time. Stop by the [LBLA website](#) and read the article that David Paessler wrote last month. John McCubbin said that he would also like to see something like that

on the WKAA website.

Possible New Club:

Chuck Martin is looking into forming a club in Owensboro in conjunction with WKAA. We gladly offered our support.

Miscellaneous:

John Holland reported that light shrouds have been installed on the snack shack and all lights around the administration building. Jonathon Rhodes, the volunteer coordinator at LBL, has asked us to help with a short summer nights-type program one night per week in March 2006.

Grand Finale:

The meeting broke up rather abruptly at dark when a small snake (thought at first to be a copperhead) slithered up beside John McCubbin! After some controversy over whether or not to kill the snake, it was captured and transplanted away from the observatory!

Viewing:

Several people set up their scopes and got in some pretty good viewing. Seeing wasn't great and there were a lot of hazy and cloudy patches, but overall viewing was decent until about midnight when the skies clouded up. This was the first time in about 5 or 6 months that the skies have been clear enough to view on a meeting night!

MEMBER NOTES:

New Members:

The club has another new member – Heather Sherbourne from Clarksville, Tennessee. Heather came and helped all day on Astronomy Day!

ASTRONOMICAL LEAGUE (AL) AWARDS:

Now that the skies are clearing, let's get going on those observing lists! Let us know how you are progressing in the astronomy forum on wkaa.net. The [WKAA website](#) also lists club members who have already earned observing club certificates and provides links to the Astronomical League website. [Contact David Paessler](#) if you have any questions.

TREASURER'S REPORT:

Balance (5/4/05): \$1843.56

Expenses: Microwave, bookcase, web hosting fees

SIDEWALK ASTRONOMY EVENTS:

Dawson Springs:

Some club members will be setting up their scopes this Friday night around 7:00 at the kickoff for the town's seasonal "First Friday" event. See the [WKAA Forum](#) for more information. [Contact Ross Workman](#) if you can help.

Summer Nights:

The 2005 Summer Nights Program is set to begin on May 28th and run through August. The program consists of an 8 p.m. planetarium show each Saturday night followed by

viewing (weather permitting) through the observatory's 12" scope. WKAA club members volunteer to provide additional telescopes for the public to look through. Crowds have ranged from as few as 30 to over 100. It is an enjoyable time and the public is always appreciative. At this Saturday's meeting Jim Hall will pass around a sign-up sheet for volunteers for the 5/28, 6/11, 6/18, and 6/25 sessions. For more information see the [WKAA website](#).

Astronomy Day:

Astronomy Day on April 16th was a great success! Throughout the day steady crowds enjoyed both the free planetarium shows and solar observing. Club members set up two hydrogen-alpha scopes for viewing solar prominences along with several other scopes with solar filters for viewing sunspots. Folks also viewed the moon during the day through a couple of other scopes and a few members of the public even came back after dark to view Saturn, Jupiter and several deep sky objects! In addition to the usual table of beginning astronomy literature, Jim Hall also set up a scale model of the solar system and a continuously-running video on the sun. Vince projected an image of the sun through his telescope as well as burned several pieces of cardboard (and himself!) demonstrating the hazards of viewing the sun through a scope without a solar filter. Both KFVS and WPSD TV stations covered the event on their evening news. Thanks to everyone who helped and especially to Jim Hall for coordinating it!

Cadiz:

A dozen or so people came and enjoyed viewing at Trigg County Elementary School April 14th. Thanks to Warren Wepking, Jim Hall, and Bill Albritton for making this happen.

OTHER EVENTS AND OPPORTUNITIES:

For Sale:

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

Club Website:

Check out recent posts in the astronomy forum and photo gallery at www.wkaa.net.

Club Library:

Carol Baltimore has agreed to coordinate the club library so if you would like to check out any books, see her after the meeting. 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. [Contact Vince Medlock](#) 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.

CLUB OFFICERS LIST:

President, Vince Medlock – Murray, KY

Vice President, Jim Hall – Paducah, KY

Treasurer/Astronomical League Coordinator, David Paessler – Kevil, KY 270-488-3784

Secretary, Dale & Carol Baltimore – Paducah, KY 270-554-6603

Star Party Chairman, Ross Workman – Dawson Springs, KY 270-797-8959

Website, John McCubbin - Hopkinsville, KY and John Holland - Hopkinsville, KY

Clear skies,

Dale & Carol Baltimore