



# The Faint Fuzzy

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*The Official Newsletter of the West Kentucky Amateur Astronomers*

*October 2008*

## From the Editors:

The TLSP is less than a week away! We hope you are *all* planning on attending this year. Preliminary weather reports look good for at least the first part of the week.

See below for last minute details about the Star Party.

—Bob & Melissa

## **LAST MEETING HIGHLIGHTS: September 6**

Fourteen people attended the meeting, including 2 new members: Mila and Kevin Abbott (who joined at the meeting), from Providence, KY. The meeting was called to order by club Vice President Jim Phfistner. It was great to see Jim and Sandy again. It was also good to see Jackie Mathis.

Jim thanked everyone for all the good wishes, cards, and potted plant.

## **Treasurer's Report**

David Paessler reported on the treasury and the various Star Party expenses to date, including t-shirt orders. David is very satisfied with the new company who did the shirts this time. We won't know final income/expense figures till the end of the Star Party.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

### **Summer Nights—**

This was the last Summer Nights program for 2008. Coordinator Harold Meyers reported that over the course of the summer, we had 315 attendees, and collectively put in over 344 volunteer hours (not including this last one). He thanked all who helped and said it was a successful summer. The only problem was getting people to commit to signing up ahead of time, in particular the full moon weekends between the meetings. Often more people showed up than signed up, but it would have helped to know ahead of time. It generally works well to spread out the help if everybody signs up for at least one week in between the club nights.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **Observatory Upgrade Project**

Bob Vickers reported that Club President Dale Baltimore put a committee together to come up with a proposal that would first be put to the club for consideration, and then to the Land Between the Lakes Association and finally to the Forest Service. Astronomy Day (May 2, 2009) would make a good (though ambitious) Grand Opening target.

David had talked to Ross Workman, who suggested we consider getting a classical 10-12" F15 Achromat refractor. The Achromat might not be all that expensive since the newer

### **UPCOMING MEETING:**

**There will be no October meeting (because of the Star Party). The next meeting will be our annual covered dish Chilli Supper on November 1. Dinner starts at 6:00pm, and the meeting starts at 7:00pm. Visitors are welcome (as always).**

Apochromatic has become more popular now. This type of scope would keep the eyepiece low, and have a "classical look." It would be ideal for high power planetary and lunar viewing. The dome size might be a limiting factor.

### **Lacy Thomas**

Former club member Lacy Thomas has been diagnosed with cancer. We are sorry to hear this and wish him well.

### **Sonya Wood-Mahler**

Planetarium Assistant Sonya Wood-Mahler announced that the LBLA Volunteer Recognition Dinner will be held on November 15 at Brandon Spring Group Camp. Club members who participated in Astronomy Day and/or Summer Nights programs will get an invitation later this fall. Sonya encouraged club members to attend, wear club shirts, and sit together. This is LBLA's annual opportunity to thank LBL volunteers.

Sonya also mentioned that she has a guide to the International Year of Astronomy that lists projects planned for year and will share that information with the club.

### **Astronomy Calendars**

David announced that we can order 2009 *Astronomy* magazine calendars at 50% off the regular price of \$12.95. He will order a dozen for club members to purchase, and suggested that one (or more) could be used for a door prize at the Star Party.

### **Star Party Update**

Star Party Coordinators David Paessler and Bill Kassebaum gave the following updates on the Star Party:

- ★ The observing field, portapotties, and a trash dumpster have been reserved and confirmed.
- ★ Saturday's lunch on October 4th has been reserved. We'll be enjoying pork chops and chicken again this year!
- ★ Bill reported that we have 23 door prizes from 10 donors.
- ★ John Holland has designed a nifty new TLSP name button for attendees.
- ★ The T-shirts will be beautiful this year. The company worked with David and suggested adding gold metal flake and iridescent green to the image, as well as a 3D WKAA lettering effect. Once again, we'll be using good quality Haynes Beefy Ts. If you haven't preordered a shirt, additional shirts will be available at the Star Party.
- ★ Registrations are a little slow this year. The registration form went up in March, and we had our first registration that month. As of the meeting, only 15 had preregistered, down from a usual 30-35 by this time. Because of the high gas prices, people may be waiting to see how the weather looks before deciding to come. David sent out a mass email to past Star Party participants.
- ★ Sandy Phfistner has made a lovely signature quilt for everybody to sign at the TLSP. We'll have a drawing to give it away at the end of the Party. Club members are eligible for this drawing. Thanks, Sandy!
- ★ David needs people to sign up to help at the Star Party. You can do this when you arrive.
- ★ It was suggested that we take a group picture at the Saturday meal this year.

- ★ We're sure it won't rain all week long, but just in case, bring DVDs or other rainy day activities. Dale will bring the projector.

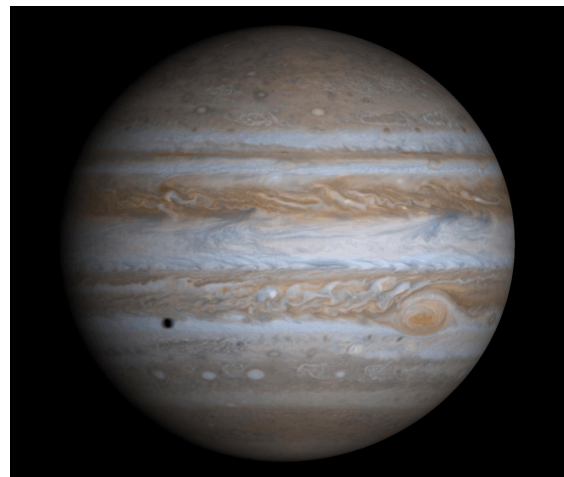
For all the details about the Twin Lakes Star Party, including the list of door prizes, observing field rules, etc, see the [WKAA website](#). John Holland has posted directions to the observing field and accompanying maps. To see them, [click here](#).

## Chili Supper

Harold Meyers asked about the annual chili supper. We need someone to coordinate it. If you would like to take on this job, please contact a club officer. See the next issue of the *Faint Fuzzy* for more details.

## Summer Nights

We had a good night for viewing with about 25 people. We viewed a nice bright Iridium flare early in the evening, plus the ever-popular Jupiter, M11 (the Wild Duck Cluster), M57 (the Ring Nebula), and NGC 457 (the ET Cluster). Thanks to Sonya for entertaining folks with astronomical stories, myths, and ghost stories. The night was good so a few members stayed till the wee hours of the morning.



Jupiter has been a favorite target for Summer Nights viewers this year. (Photo courtesy of NASA--Cassini mission)

## Why We Do Summer Nights

In case you've wondered why club members enjoy participating in the Summer Nights programs, here's a tale by Vyron Mitchell:

I have been to nearly all of the Summer Nights this summer and there have been countless oooohs and aaaaaws and wows. I think all of them were sincere and that's why we do the programs.

But last week was the most rewarding ever.

Everyone was viewing different objects and I usually pick M13 as my target. But for some reason I decided to go with something John Holland had showed me earlier, the E T cluster (NGC 457).

A few people looked and thought it was cute and they got a good laugh.

Then along came a little boy about six or seven. He wanted to know what I was looking at and I told him, "It's E T, and he's going home."

"Can I look?" he asked.

He climbed up on my seat and peered in the eyepiece. I didn't have to ask if he found him.

"It's E T, it's really E T!" he shouted as he jumped down and went running for his mother.

"Look, look, I saw E T!" he said and grabbed her hand and urged her to take a look.

But before she did he climbed up and took another peep. "See, he's right there."

Before he left, he turned and--even though it was dark--I could see the grin on his face from ear to ear. "Thanks, mister."

As they were leaving I could still hear him talking to his parents, "I saw E T going home."

That night I could have seen the American Flag on the moon, but E T was the highlight.

Thanks

Vyron

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## **UPCOMING EVENTS**

### **Cumberland Astronomical Society (CAS)'s Tennessee Fall Star Gaze**

CAS newsletter editor, Scott Smith, shares his newsletter with us each month and has put a plug in the latest issue for the TLSP (thanks, Scott!). We'd like to reciprocate and encourage our club members to attend their Fall Star Gaze, to be held at Fall Creek Falls State Park, October 31-November 2. The park is in east central Tennessee, approximately 25 miles east of McMinnville, TN. For more details, visit the [CAS website](#).

### **Journey to Palomar**

As mentioned in the recent *Reflector*, a new PBS program called "Journey to Palomar" airs November 10. This program will tell the story of George Ellery Hale, who designed and built the 200" telescope on Palomar mountain in California. Check your local listings for date and time.

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## **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.

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