

THE FAINT FUZZY

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

UPCOMING MEETING:

The next meeting will be Saturday September 3rd 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. This is the *last* Summer Nights session for the year. ***This is the last meeting before the star party.*** Can you *believe* it? There will NOT be a regular meeting in October.

LAST MEETING HIGHLIGHTS:

About 20 people attended the August meeting, including 2 visitors from Murray – David Herring and his son David.

Secretary's Report: Dale Baltimore reviewed the highlights of the last newsletter.

Treasurer's Report: David Paessler reported that we have 3 star party preregistrations so far. [Update: It is up to 9 now.] He anticipates fewer preregistrations this year due to the bad weather at the 2004 star party. *Astronomy* magazine discounted subscription prices have gone up from \$29 to \$34. David also showed a calendar that *Astronomy* magazine is selling to clubs for use as a fund raiser.

Star Party: The 16th annual Twin Lakes Star Party is just around the corner! It will be October 1st – 9th at Pennyryle Forest State Park. There was a lot of discussion about the star party at the last meeting. See the “Twin Lakes Star Party” section below for the details and also see wkaa.net for more information.

Public Viewing: The Sheriff's Ranch sent a nice thank you letter and certificate for the club's support in June and July. September 3rd will be the last Summer Nights session this year. Jonathon Rhodes with the LBL Association requested a viewing session during August 28th - September 2nd. No one could commit to any of those nights since they are during the week. See the “Public Events” section below for information on other public events.

Miscellaneous: Vince Medlock reported that he has purchased the TV stand with DVD/VCR shelf. David reported that AL observing books are not currently available for purchase. Some are available for check-out from the library if you need one.

Viewing: It was cloudy so we didn't get any viewing in. We did have some entertainment however. Bill & Lynn Kassebaum did an impromptu slideshow of their recent trip out west. They visited several observatories and a couple of astronomy villages in Arizona and New Mexico in addition to the more typical attractions like the Grand Canyon and White Sands, NM.

TWIN LAKES STAR PARTY

Advertisement: Ross reported that he has notified *Sky & Telescope*, *Astronomy*, and astromart.com about the star party.

Door Prizes: Jackie Mathis has sent out e-mails to solicit vendors for door prizes. Herb at Astromart has promised to send us some T-shirts for door prizes.

Speakers: Ross encouraged club members to give informal talks. Bob Vickers volunteered to give a talk on sketching. Ross has contacted Rolando Chavez about speaking on Saturday, but has not received a response so far. Heather Sherbourne suggested contacting Mike Brown, a high school teacher from Clarksville, who was one of the first people to observe the recent supernova in M51.

Field & Facilities: Ross plans to start mowing the observing field in September. By Friday September 30th the field will be ready and the porta-potties will be on site, so people can set up Friday if they want. We will clean the building on Saturday October 1st, the first official day of the star party. If you can help, please [contact Ross](#).

Daytime & Rain Ideas: John Holland will once again bring an LCD projector for use by speakers and to show movies on cloudy evenings. Jackie Mathis will bring a projection screen, so we won't have to use an old sheet this time! Jim Phistner said that he would bring some astronomy videos. Melissa Vickers suggested bringing favorite books for discussion. Sandy Phistner suggested having topical discussion groups. Ross said that during one star party, he and John Holland took a group on a "walkabout" of the observing field asking each attendee to describe their scopes for them.

T-Shirts: John Holland showed a potential design for the front of the shirt. Jackie Mathis suggested using the Ring Nebula for the back of the shirt with TLSP and WKAA spelled out in a circle around it. The club adopted these suggestions. *[Update: Bill Kassebaum and David Paessler completed the T-shirt design. They used the Helix instead of the Ring Nebula because the Helix looked much better when converted to black and white with the T-shirt background.]*

David Paessler needs club member orders for T-shirts by the September 3rd meeting. If you can't come to the meeting, you can email your order to David at dcpaessler@wkaa.net.

Shirts cost \$20 each and are available in navy or black.

Miscellaneous: We decided not to include red pens or other such items in the registration packets this time. John Holland passed around sample name badges for comments on the design. Ross plans to require that computer monitors on the observing field have a red filter.

Future Changes: Ross reported that a new building is being built next to the forestry building at Pennyrile. The Forest Service plans to move their offices there from Madisonville. The forestry building that we have been using for star parties will remain in place. None of this will affect this year's star party and Ross does not anticipate any problems using the forestry building for future star parties.

ASTRONOMICAL LEAGUE (AL) AWARDS:

Several members are working on observing lists (globular cluster, Hershel 400, Messier, and lunar), however none have been completed recently. Maybe one day it will clear up during new moon and we can observe. 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 (8/30/05): \$1894.26 (\$300 is star party revenue)

Expenses: Our last expenses were for the 2 fans and TV support mount for the observatory.

Star Party Registrations: We have 9 out of town preregistrants as of 8/29/05.

PUBLIC EVENTS:

Kelly Green Men Festival: John McCubbin reported that the event went well overall. About 60-70 interested people attended the talks and viewed through several club members' scopes. (This was a small crowd considering the 1500+ that came next night of the festival.) And... there weren't any UFO questions! John M. gave a 40-minute talk on amateur astronomy and Ross Workman gave a 20-minute talk on choosing your first telescope. (Ross's talk would have been longer, but both projectors failed before he could finish.) Ross, Vince Medlock, John Holland, Steve Burke, and John M. and his son Gregory all set up scopes. They showed folks the full moon (yawn), Jupiter briefly, the ring, M13, M27, and a few double stars. They also pointed out many constellations using green lasers, demonstrated the use of a planisphere, and showed the differences in the scopes. Probably 20 or so people stayed for some prolonged talking afterwards. Both club members and attendees had a great time!

Murray Middle School: Vince did a solar viewing session in August for the daycare program at Murray Middle School. They really liked his "index card torching" demonstrations!

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: O'Reilly Publishers sent us the book *Astronomy Hacks: Tips & Tools for Observing the Night Sky*. 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.

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

Clear skies,

Dale & Carol Baltimore