



The Faint Fuzzy

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The Official Newsletter of the West Kentucky Amateur Astronomers *September 2008*

From the Editors:

The newsletter is a week early this month because we wanted to make sure everyone is aware that the last non-meeting Summer Nights session is this Saturday, August 30th. We may have a large turnout for this holiday weekend and we need your help. See below for more information.

Also, the deadline for ordering a TLSP t-shirt is Monday, September 1st. They are beautiful this year, with a full-color picture of NGC 3132, the "Eight Burst Nebula." See below for a picture.

—Bob & Melissa

UPCOMING MEETING:

**Next meeting: September 6.
The meeting starts at 7:00pm,
with Summer Nights observing
afterwards if it is clear.
Visitors are welcome (as
always).**

LAST MEETING HIGHLIGHTS: August 2nd

Thirteen people were at the meeting, including Planetarium Director Don Partain and Forest Service Environmental Education Specialist Darrin Samborski. Club President Dale Baltimore opened the meeting.

Treasurer Report

David Paessler reported that the club has a new 2 inch Barlow lens for use on the dome scope, and that it works well.

David reminded members of the club discount for *Astronomy Magazine*: \$34 for one year, or \$60 for two years. We need at least 5 subscriptions in order to get this price for the club. Right now, only one person has subscribed. If you are interested in subscribing to either *Astronomy* or *Sky and Telescope* through the club, contact David at [dcpaessler\[@\]comcast.net](mailto:dcpaessler[@]comcast.net).

Summer Nights Update

Summer Nights Coordinator Harold Meyers reported that the Summer Nights program is going well, and that volunteers are still needed for the remaining sessions through September 6th (the next club meeting night).

Don Partain thanked the club for helping with the Summer Nights, saying, "It makes the show!" He talked to the club about plans for next summer and asked that we consider doing club presentations as part of the planetarium program. He suggested doing two in June and two in July on topics such as "Getting Started in Astronomy" or "CCD Imaging." On these nights the club speaker would talk for 30 minutes, followed by Don's abbreviated "Kentucky Skies" planetarium show, and then the regular observing session on the field. He needs to know speakers and topics by the end of January in order to get it into the park brochures. These talks could be advertised on the Murray radio station.

Darrin added that if he had a brief outline of the topic, he could create a press release to send out as well.

This would fit in nicely with the International Year of Astronomy.

Observatory Upgrades

The club had a discussion with Don and Darrin about possible upgrades to the observatory telescope. A club committee has been formed to study various possibilities. This project will require the cooperation of WKAA, the Forest Service, and the Land Between the Lakes Association. [Thanks to Don and Darrin for taking the time to talk with the club.]

Ham Radio for Public Viewing Nights?

Don Partain and Harold Meyers have both recently gotten their ham radio technician licenses. They talked about trying to communicate with astronauts on the ISS as it flies over.

Twin Lakes Star Party Update

Star Party Coordinator David Paessler gave us an update on TLSP plans:

- He needs club members to be on site Saturday morning, September 27th, to help with registration and setup, and would like help with registration all week.
- David has opted to spend \$300 to rent a 20 foot dumpster for the week to make trash collection and disposal easier.
- T-shirt orders must be in by September 1 to guarantee that you get the size and color you want. A few extra t-shirts will be available for purchase at the party. (see below)
- David sent around a signup sheet for volunteers to help with various jobs to make the week go smoothly again. If you have not signed up yet, you can do so at the next meeting or when you arrive at Pennyrile.
- John Holland will do name badges for registrants again. [Thanks, John!]
- If you have suggestions for daytime or rainy day/night activities, or would like to give a talk during the star party, contact David.

Dale Baltimore thanked David for his hard work on the Star Party.

A club photo was taken in front of the observatory, and the meeting adjourned.

SUMMER NIGHTS REPORTS

August 2: After the club meeting, the skies were clear for viewing, and a good crowd of 55 people from the planetarium show joined us on the field. Club members who set up scopes included John Holland, Harold Meyers, Dale Baltimore, Alan Dudenhofer, Vyron Mitchell, and Bob Vickers. In addition to a brief spotting of the ISS, other objects viewed that evening included M13, Mizar and Alcor, North America Nebula, the Veil Nebula, the Coat Hanger asterism, the ET cluster, Neptune and Jupiter.

August 9: Stan Sprei sent in the following report:

"Well, it was sort of a wacky night weather-wise, but still fun for the participants (Vyron with his 8", the club's 6" run by Sonya or whoever had a spare moment, and me with the 3-1/2" Questar) and the 25 or so audience people from the planetarium. The night started with a clear sky with some high cirrus clouds; then gradually became hazy in the south while cirrocumulus moved in from the north. The sort of sky where you'd hear, "Jupiter's

covered! Let's go for the moon!" And then "The moon's covered! Let's go for Jupiter!" The crowd started trickling in well before the planetarium show ended, and even after the show ended, Sonya kept the crowd (seated on chairs which had been thoughtfully set up) entertained with genesis stories from various cultures, so that there was never a stampede for the scopes. This allowed more time for each individual to observe objects including the moon (navigating to the Alpine Valley and nearby crater, Plato, just the top of its mountainous rim illuminated by the sun), Jupiter, Albireo, and M13. We tend to forget how exciting the moon is to first-time observers. At one point there was a clearly seen "moon ring" or "moon halo," and sooner or later everyone saw a meteor (Perseid's).

By 10:30 the crowd had gone and the sky was getting more socked in so we broke up. The final joke was that when I got home around midnight the sky was clear, moonless, and about as good as it gets."



August 16: Bob Vickers reported:

"This was a full moon night so we had one big strike against us. Despite that, we were able to see the standard double stars (Mizar/Alcor and Albireo), Jupiter, and I even managed to find the ring nebula. Of course, there was also the full moon. We estimated there were about 60 people from the Planetarium. Other club members included Alan Dudenhofer, who ran the dome scope; John Holland, who was set up with the 8" club Dobsonian on the full moon; and Vyron Mitchell. The weather cooperated nicely--cool and clear, but the moon washed almost everything out."

August 23: Harold Meyers reported:

"I went to fill in the gap last night and am glad I did. When I left the house here in Martin we were socked in with clouds and I thought it was a waste of time. But I knew if the clouds broke up someone else would need to be there if we had a good crowd, so I decided to go. It was cloudy when I got there but the clouds were much thinner than when I left the house, and we had bands coming through from the tropical storm. I decided not to set up my scope but to use the dome scope. Dale and Carol Baltimore were there and set up. Shortly after dark the clouds broke up and we could see the Milky Way all the way through Cassiopeia. It turned out to be a good night, and I wished I had set up my scope to view after the public left. We only had around 25 people attend the show so we had enough club members to handle them."



From the WKAA Summer Nights Coordinator, Harold Meyers:

Another successful Summer Nights program is coming to a close again. Despite the economy and record gas prices, we have had good attendance from the public, although member support was down a bit. We only filled the signup sheet six out of twelve Saturday nights this year on the non-meeting nights, and three of those nights we only had one person signed up. There were three members who stepped up to help fill these spots. These members are John Holland, Vyron Mitchell, and Stanley Sprei. Any time I needed someone to fill in a spot at least one of them would step up and sometimes all three would come! Summer Nights might not have been as successful if it wasn't for the support of these three members. For this I want to say thank you!

We have two more Saturday nights to go. This weekend could be our biggest one yet if it is anything like last year's Labor Day weekend. We need as many scopes on the field as we can get. If you can help out, let me know

☆☆☆☆ STAR PARTY: SEPTEMBER 27-OCTOBER 4 ☆☆☆☆

Once again, the Twin Lakes Star Party will be held at Pennyryle State Park near Dawson Springs. Our observing field has been nicknamed "Pleasant Valley" by a regular TLSP attendee--both because of its scenic beauty and WKAA's famous hospitality.

The WKAA website has a wealth of information about the Star Party. Please check this site frequently for updates: <http://www.wkaa.net/article.php?articleid=56&cat=SE&ret=index.php> Registration forms are available on the website. The cost is \$35 for an individual; \$45 for family. Club members are entitled to free registration for the Star Party, but are not eligible for door prizes. Preregistration guarantees a catered meal on Saturday the 4th. Club members should let David Paessler know if they plan to attend.

Bill Kassebaum continues to solicit donations for this year's door prizes. The growing list now includes eyepieces, filters, binoculars, software, gift certificates and an assortment of other goodies. For a complete list and links to these generous sponsors, see: <http://wkaa.net/article.php?articleid=81&ret=articlelist.php&cat=IN>

T-Shirts! Order by September 1st!

If you'd like to guarantee having a t-shirt in your size and color, then pre-order through David Paessler (dcpaessler[[@](mailto:dcpaessler@comcast.net)]comcast.net). The shirts have a gorgeous full-color picture on the back of NGC 3132, the "Eight Burst" planetary ring nebula in the constellation Vela. Some shirts will be available for purchase at the Star Party, but we recommend pre-ordering today! For a mere \$20, one of these one-of-a-kind t-shirts can be yours--and you help the club as well. T-shirt sales are a primary fundraiser for the Star Party.



To see a larger image, click [here](#).

LBLA Annual Volunteer Recognition Dinner

Land Between The Lakes Association is having their annual Volunteer Recognition Dinner on Saturday, November 15th, at Brandon Springs Group Camp (near the south end of LBL). There will be a reception at 5:00pm followed by dinner at 6:00pm. We would love to have a great turn-out of participants from WKAA. You have all been so supportive and enthusiastic with Astronomy Day and the Summer Nights programs. We could sit together at the dinner and wear our matching shirts. The event is free of course and each person will be recognized for their volunteer efforts this year. It is a good opportunity to meet other LBL volunteers as well.

If you have completed a volunteer form at the planetarium, you will be receiving a formal invitation to the Volunteer Recognition Dinner. For now, I just wanted you to save the date. Contact me if you have questions or suggestions.

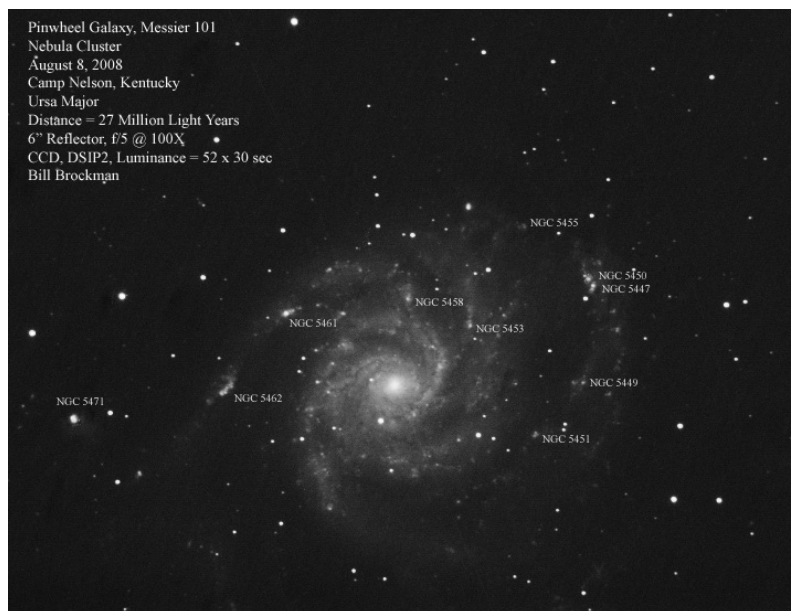
Sonya Wood Mahler

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More Bill Brockman Photography

Bill has provided us another beautiful deep sky image, this time of M101 in Ursa Major. Be sure to use the "Increase Page Magnification" feature of Adobe Reader to see all of the NGC nebulae in the picture.

Thanks again, Bill!



Faint Fuzzy Survey Reminder

Last month we included a link to a survey to find out your thoughts about the *Faint Fuzzy*. We've had about 13 responses so far and would love to have more. If you have not yet taken the survey and have 3 minutes to spare, click on:

http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=pW_2b9S3A_2bvpYh_2biY70laqhA_3d_3d

ASTRONOMEDIA

Astronomical League Announces Two New Observing Clubs

The [Astronomical League](#) has announced that a Dark Nebula Observing club and a Dark Sky Advocate (DSA) program will be introduced in 2009. According to the latest *Reflector*, "Although not a traditional observer club, the DSA will be an ideal way to effectively promote dark skies in your area."

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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