



the EYEPIECE

the Fort Wayne Astronomical Society • PO Box 11093 • Fort Wayne, IN 46855

Volume: 50

Issue :6

June 2009

Editor: Gene Stringer, 9609 Colsons Hill, Fort Wayne, IN 46825, (260) 489-8135

E-Mail: genestringer@mac.com

FWAS Web page: <http://fortwayneastronomicalsociety.com>

GENERAL MEETING

Visitors Welcome

Tuesday Evening, June 16, 7:30 PM

God's

Grandchildren

by Dr. Kenneth Yoss

Stars can be considered God's children, and planets His grandchildren. Join us as Dr. Yoss revisits his previous talk about the likelihood of other civilizations and stresses separations of the stars and planets.

General Meetings are normally held at Fox Island "Nature Observatory" (Octagon Building), the third Tuesday of each month, 7:30pm.

Out of Cosmic Soup

Scientists tell us that we are the marvelous result of a process that began with primordial hydrogen and helium from the Big Bang, followed by the forging of heavier atoms in stars and heaviest atoms in nova/supernova explosions – the whole process occurring countless times over billions of years. From this cosmic soup we have emerged as a sentient race of beings. We are (as Carl Sagan has said) "a way that the Universe has of appreciating itself".

Is it any wonder, then, that we instinctively search for signs of intelligence beyond Earth? For the General meeting this month Dr. Yoss has said "I want to review some of the characteristics of planets, typically how many per star. The more interesting point is how many planets may have life as we know it, OR life as we don't know it!"

The general meeting this month promises to be a lively discussion among the members. You won't want to miss this one!

Space Place Postponed

NASA's Space Place has not disappeared. It was not available for download at publishing time this month, and will appear in its regular place in next month's Eyepiece.

Calendar Events June - July

This month we are changing the format for the FWAS calendar of events. Following are the scheduled events for the next two months:

June

Public star gazing at Fox Island Observatory every clear Saturday for 2 hours +, starting 1 hour after sunset.

General Meeting Tuesday, June 16

Deep Sky viewing at Pike's home, June 19 (see below)

Board Meeting Tuesday, June 23

July

Public star gazing at Fox Island Observatory every clear Saturday for 2 hours +, starting 1 hour after sunset.

General Meeting Tuesday, July 21

Deep Sky viewing at Pike's home, July 24 (see below)

Board Meeting Tuesday, July 28

Deep Sky Star Parties

Deep Sky observing events are scheduled for FWAS members and their guests to observe the fainter objects in the sky from a location away from city lights. These events are closed to the general public to allow members to plan observing and photography projects that will be undisturbed.

Greg Pike has again generously allowed the FWAS to use his property for deep sky observing this season. Observing times are scheduled for Fridays near the new moon each month. The remaining dates this year are: **June 19, July 24, Aug 21, Sep 18, Oct 16**. Directions and a map to Greg's site is presented in the May issue of the Eyepiece.

Observer's Star Chart

Observer's with access to the internet should check out the web site: <http://www.skymaps.com/>

They have the neatest 2-page star chart for the month.

The first page presents a sky chart for the month with the usual constellations and objects. The second page lists objects of note, grouped into the categories of Naked Eye, Binoculars, and Telescopes. The webmaster asked us not to print these in the Eyepiece, but you can download and print as many copies as you please for your personal use.

Observer's Corner

Looking for something besides the usual fair? Check out these unusual objects from Brent Watson's list of Overlooked Objects:

NGC6826 RA 19h 45m Dec +50.5d Mag 10 in Cygnus

Brent writes: "This planetary nebula is known as the Blinking Planetary. While looking directly at the nebula the nebulosity disappears because of the brightness of the central star. Using averted vision the nebulosity 'blinks' back into view. Most Amateurs switch viewing methods automatically, causing the nebula to blink on and off."

NGC4449 RA 12h 28m Dec +44d 6m Mag 10.1 Sze 6'x4'

"The Box Galaxy presents a view that most deep sky observers are not used to seeing. It's distinctly rectangular and has ... double nuclei! The northern edge is a bit more defined... a rectangular disk is visible by averted vision. "This galaxy can be seen with an 8 inch scope. Under good skies all of the above detail can be seen in a 12 incher."

Another source of unusual objects is *Deep Sky Companions: The Messier Objects* by Steven James O'Meara. Yes, he covers all of Messier's 110 objects in depth. But in the back of his book he discusses 25 objects that Messier could-a, should-a included in his list. Many are too far south to be seen in Paris. But here are some that might serve you well:

NGC3242 RA 10h 24.8m Dec -18° 38m Mag 7.8 in Hydra

(Also Caldwell object C59)

Planetary Nebula *Ghost of Jupiter*

O'Meara writes "...one of the finest examples of a planetary nebula in the heavens. It shines a full magnitude brighter than M57 (the famous Ring Nebula in Lyra), has an 11.4-magnitude central star within range of the smallest of telescopes, and sports a pale blue disk that is about the same apparent size as Jupiter (thus the ...nickname)...". Its distance is 3,300 ly and the true diameter of its outer shell may be about 0.6 ly."

NGC6960 RA 20h 45.7m Dec +30° 43m in Cygnus and NGC6992, Mag 7 (but low surface brightness)

Supernova Remnant *The Veil Nebula*

O'Meara writes " ...the dual arcs of NGC 6960 and 6992 are among the most sought after sights at summer star parties....NGC6960, the brightest arc, can be seen easily in binoculars from a dark sky, and both of these NGC nebulae are within range of 7 x 35 binoculars. They appear ghostly in form, like pale images of fractured chicken bones. The Veil streamers are the detrius of a star that exploded some 40,000 years ago."

NGC4565 RA 12h 36.3m Dec +25° 59m Mag 9.6

size 14' x 1.8' in Coma Berenices Dist: 20 million ly

Spiral Galaxy

O'Meara writes "...the largest and most famous edge-on spiral galaxy in the night sky. In the 4-inch [telescope] it is not a stunning sight but an elegant one. Shining at 10th magnitude, the galaxy appears as a slim streak of light with a hazy central bulge that is punctuated by a starlike core. The challenge in small telescopes is to see and trace the dark dust lane that runs along the entire length of this spindle. In photographs taken with large aperture instruments this 90,000-light-year-long spiral, which is tilted a mere 4° from edge-on, displays dark arcing festoons of dust silhouetted against the bright central bulge. This material was ejected hundreds of light years out of the plane of the galaxy, but gravity is drawing it back in."

NGC 891 RA 02h 22.6m Dec +42° 21m Mag 9.9 in Andromeda

size 13' x 2.8' dist: 43 million ly

Spiral Galaxy

O'Meara writes " Seen exactly edge on, NGC 891 is the unequivocal rival of NGC 4565 in Coma Berenices (just described). However, the lower surface brightness of this 9.9 magnitude galaxy, which lies 3 1/2° east of the fine double star Gamma Andromedae, makes it a less attractive sight for small telescope users....Like NGC 4565, NGC 891 is disrupted by a thick lane of dark matter. In 1940 Carl Syfert (of *Syfert galaxy* fame) discovered that the galaxy's dark lane only *appears* dark because its light is up to a magnitude fainter than the surrounding brightness of the galaxy.

Collinder 399 RA 19h 25.4m Dec +20° 11m Mag 3.6

Size 90' Dist: 4,231 ly in Vulpecula

Open star cluster *The Coathanger*

O'Meara writes "Although Collinder 399 is visible to the naked eye as a 4th-magnitude fuzzy patch twice the diameter of the full moon, it looks best in binoculars. Finding it entails hopping just 4° northwest from Alpha Sagitta in the summer milky way. The shape of this possible open cluster's dozen or so brightest members looks irresistibly like a coathanger; it is one of the few stellar groupings in the sky that immediately looks like its nickname, The Coathanger. All told, this 200-million-year-old aggregation contains about 40 stars without a hint of concentration. Its brightest member shines at 5th magnitude and is visible to the naked eye. [Editor's note: Upon occasion I have seen this asterism upside-down, at which time it reminded me of a cannon]

If you have a favorite object for viewing in the summer or fall seasons let me know, and I will share it with our readers.

Gene Stringer



Fort Wayne Astronomical Society
P.O. Box 11093
Fort Wayne, IN 46855

**This Issue is Available in
color on the Web**