the EYEPIECE

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GENERAL MEETING

Visitors Welcome

Tuesday Evening, August 18, 7:30 PM

CONSTELLATIONS, their Names, their Myth

By BJ Harper

That's a good question. How did the Constellaion get it's name? Another. Who named it? And another. Why? Join us **at the Wayne High School Planetarium** as former Northrup Planetarium Director, BJ Harper respins the stories and meaning about the placement of the stars above. Lights out at 7:30.

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

A Map of the Sky

Constellations are a way to subdivide the globe of the sky into regions for the purpose of locating specific objects (stars, planets, etc.), much the same way that global maps divide the Earth into nations and states. The difference is that on a global map the boundaries are clearly drawn, so that it is relatively easy to recognize, say, Indiana from Rhode Island by its size, shape and location.

In the sky, however, there are no clear boundaries. Rather, there are asterisms, groupings of stars, that form patterns that can be recognized. It is like trying to locate Indiana on a Dark-Sky map by locating the lights of Indianapolis, Fort Wayne, and Gary. Yet, this is what our anscestors did in maping the sky.

Join our Vice-President, BJ Harper, as she explains ancient lore associated with the stars above us. Wayne High School is located at 9100 Winchester Road (see map on back cover). Park in the front lot and come in the front door.

A Society tradition of meeting at Pizza Hut after the regular general meeting has been going on for years. Join us there too.

Calendar Events Sep - Oct

Following are the scheduled events for the next two months:

September

Public star gazing at Fox Island Observatory every clear Saturday for 2 hours +, starting 1 hour after sunset.
General Meeting Tuesday, Sep 15
Deep Sky viewing at Pike's home, Sep 18 (see below)
Board Meeting Tuesday, Sep 22

October

Public star gazing at Fox Island Observatory every clear Saturday for 2 hours +, starting 1 hour after sunset.
General Meeting Tuesday, Oct 20
Deep Sky viewing at Pike's home, Oct 16 (see below)
Board Meeting Tuesday, Oct 27

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. 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 for this year are: **Sep 18, Oct 16.** Directions and a map to Greg's site are presented in the May issue of the Eyepiece, available as a download from our web site:
http://fortwayneastronomicalsociety.com

Star Party Requests

The following star parties are scheduled. Volunteers please check with Chris Highlen, 744-4623 for details:

USF Star Party @ Fox Island
Sunday, September 20 from 8:00 PM to 10:00 PM, 20-25 freshmen chemistry students. Help needed!

Friday, September 25 at Fox Isle, from 8:00 PM to 10:00 PM, Faith Baptist Church (Ron Kerr).

Friday, September 25, 2009 from 8:00 PM to 9:30 PM; ~50 Public, Little River Wetlands Project at Eagle Marsh on Engle Rd. near Smith Rd.

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Board Meeting Highlights

- The Board met on Tuesday, 25 Aug at 7:30 p.m. in Phil Hudson's office.
- Treasurer reports a total of $3,578
- S*Q total pledges $58,309
- Discussed the FWAS-ACPB lease agreement.
- The next board meeting will be on Tuesday, 22 Sep at 7:30 p.m. in Phil Hudson's office.

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IPFW Star Party backup @ Fox Island
Saturday, October 3 from 8:00 PM to 9:30 PM

Star Party @ Roush Reservouir, Little Turtle Area off of S.R. 5, Friday, October 23 from 7:00 PM to 9:00 PM, Scouts and Family + public, 50-75 total.

Star Party @ Ouabache State Park
Friday, October 30 from 7:00 PM to 9:00 PM. To get to Ouabache State Park take state road 1 south out of Fort Wayne to Bluffton. Turn left (east) onto SR124 at the last stoplight just before crossing the bridge downtown. Go about a mile and a half and look for signs to the park entrance. Tell the gate keeper you are with the FWAS and follow the road through the park to a T, turn left and then the next right. You are headed to the swimming pool area. Setup will be on the hill.

Volunteers are needed to run the dome at Fox Isle for: November 7, 21. Please sign up with Chris.

Jupiter Events Shine

Last month Jupiter reached opposition, increasing it's apparent size to 49 arc-seconds and shining at -2.9 magnetude. From now through December it will dominate our evening skies as a favorite telescopic target for public viewing. On the night of September 2-3 a rare event occured with Jupiter's moons – they appeared to have vanished! This event is described in detail in the September issues of Astronomy (p45) and Sky&Telescope (p48) magazines.

The FWAS imaging group has seized the opportunity to image Jupiter during this closest approach of the year. The following images show some of their results so far.

Dave Wilkins combined a stack of 14 images taken through his 11" Celestron Schmidt=Cass telescope to get this image (right).

Phil Hudson used his Sony Digital Handicam shooting afocal through the 32mm eyepiece of the 16" f8 Johnston Telescope at Fox Island. The image at left is a registered stack of 70 images selected from a 6 minute movie at 30fps, showing the Great Red Spot (yellow oval in upper right quadrant). Phil comments "I used a lot of smart sharpening, smart surface blurring, unsharp mask sharpening, and some level adjusting in Photoshop".

Ken Zook used a similar technique to create a movie of the transit event of September 2-3. Ken hand graded 39,600 images over the Labor Day weekend to capture the transit of Europa and Ganymede and their shadows across the disk of Jupiter. The image below is a single frame from the movie. It shows Europa leaving the disk (dimple near the equator on the right limb), Europa's shadow to the left of that. The dark image of Ganymeade is below/left of Europa's shadow, and the shadow of Ganymede is just starting across Jupiter's disk (dark spot on equator at left limb). Ken writes "..Notice..how much further Ganymede is from its shadow than Europa is from its". You can ask Ken for a copy of this wmv movie via e-mail at webhead@zookland.com.

You can also view the images that Gedas Vysniauskas has posted on his web site at http://gedas.me. Better still, join the FWAS imaging group by contacting:
Gedas at w8bya@mchsi.com
Gene Stringer at genestringer@mac.com
Dave Wilkins at wiljug15@verizon.net
Phil Hudson at graphicad1@mac.com

A Planet Named Easterbunny?

You know Uranus, Neptune, and Pluto. But how about their smaller cousins Eris, Ceres, Orcus, and Makemake? How about Easterbunny?

These are all names given to relatively large "planet-like" objects recently found in the outer reaches of our solar system. Some were just temporary nicknames, others are now official and permanent. Each has a unique story.

"The names we chose are important," says Caltech astronomer Mike Brown, who had a hand in many of the discoveries. "These objects are a part of our solar system; they're in our neighborhood. We 'gravitate' to them more if they have real names, instead of technical names like 2003 UB313."

Nearby planets such as Venus and Mars have been known since antiquity and were named by the ancient Romans after their gods. In modern times, though, who gets to name newly discovered dwarf planets and other important solar-system bodies?

In short, whoever finds it names it. For example, a few days after Easter 2005, Brown and his colleagues discovered a bright dwarf planet orbiting in the Kuiper belt. The team's informal nickname for this new object quickly became Easterbunny.

However, ever since its formation in 1919, the International Astronomical Union (IAU) ultimately decides whether to accept or reject the name suggested by an object's discoverers. "Easterbunny" probably wouldn't be approved.

According to IAU guidelines, comets are named after whoever discovered them—such as comet Hale-Bopp, named after its discoverers Alan Hale and Thomas Bopp. Asteroids can be named almost anything. IAU rules state that objects in the Kuiper belt should be given mythological names related to creation.

So Brown's team started brainstorming. They considered several Easter-esque names: Eostre, the pagan mythological figure that may be Easter's namesake; Manabozho, the Algonquin rabbit trickster god.

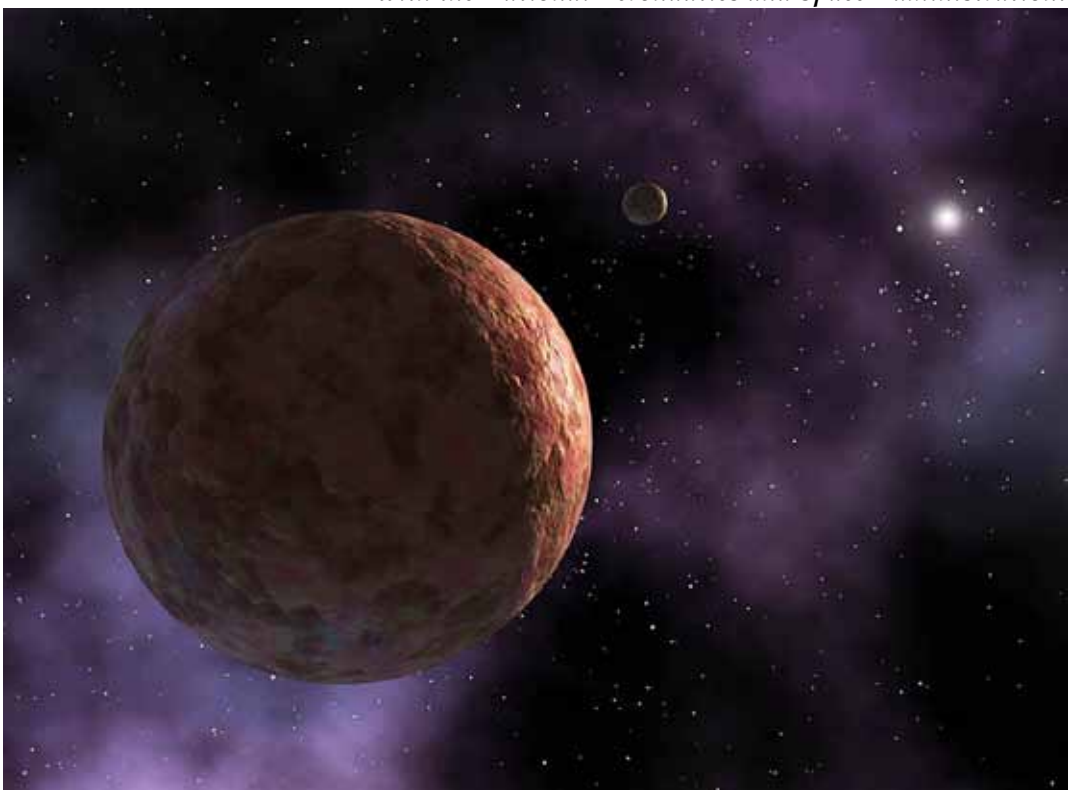
In the end, they settled on Makemake (pronounced MAH-kay MAH-kay), the creator of humanity in the mythology of Easter Island, so named because Europeans first arrived there on Easter 1722.

Other names have other rationales. The dwarf planet discovered in 2005 that triggered a fierce debate over Pluto's status was named Eris, for the Greek goddess of strife and discord. Another dwarf planet with an orbit that mirrors Pluto's was dubbed Orcus, a god in Etruscan mythology that, like Pluto, ruled the underworld.

Brown says he takes "this naming business" very seriously and probably spends too much time on it. "But I enjoy it." More tales of discovery and naming may be found in Brown's blog MikeBrownsPlanets.com.

Constellations have also been named after ancient gods, human figures, and animals. Kids can start to learn their constellations by making a Star Finder for this month at spaceplace.nasa.gov/en/kids/st6starfinder/st6starfinder.shtml. There you will also find a handy explanation of why astrology has no place in science.

This article was provided by the Jet Propulsion Laboratory, California Institute of Technology, under a contract with the National Aeronautics and Space Administration.



Artist's rendering of dwarf planet MakeMake, discovered around Easter 2005. Unlikely to gain acceptance their nickname Easterbunny, the discoverers named it for the god of humanity in the mythology of Easter Island

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