

Cape Fear Skies

*The Official Newsletter of the
Cape Fear Astronomical Society
Wilmington, North Carolina*

A Member Society of the Astronomical League

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www.capefearastro.org



*This Month's Meeting /
CFAS Annual Christmas Party
Sunday, December 7, 2008
At the Kidney Residence
1206 Beeston Court
Wilmington, NC*

The Cape Fear Astronomical Society
2006 Christmas Party will begin at 6:30 pm
with the general meeting to follow.

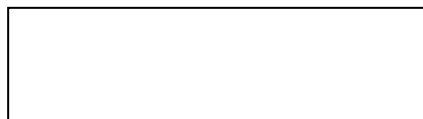
Directions to the Kidney Residence:

From College Road - Exit on to Gordon Rd 420A. At the bottom of the ramp turn right onto Gordon Rd. At the 1st traffic light make a left onto Harris Rd. Go 1.1 mile and make a right onto Shire Lane. Make your 2nd left onto Beeston Court.

From Market St. heading toward downtown - Make a right onto Gordon Road. Go to the 3rd traffic light and make a right onto Harris Rd. Go 1.1 mile and make a right onto Shire Lane. Make your 2nd left onto Beeston Court.

CAPE FEAR SKIES

Acting Editor: Ric Longren
6612 Shire Road
Wilmington, NC 28411



Cape Fear Astronomical Society

Minutes provided by Ben Steelman for Skip Hagar

President Ronnie Hawes convened the regular meeting of the Cape Fear Astronomical Society shortly after 7 p.m. on Sunday, Nov. 9, 2008 at the Wilmington Unitarian-Universalist Fellowship. Fourteen members and guests attended.

Officers Reports

Ronnie noted that he had been contacted by landowner Clint North about whether we would like to continue leasing the Yamacraw viewing site. By unanimous consent, the Society resolved to continue the lease for another year but to postpone payment until early next year.

Treasurer Ben Steelman reported that the Society's finances were in order, with no transactions in the previous month.

Old Business

Jonathan Guetta noted that a limited number of Society T-shirts are still available, in various sizes, for \$26.15 each. Anyone who wishes to order an extra shirt should contact Jon.

New Business

The main item of business was the nomination of officers for 2009. Ronnie Hawes (president), Terry Herrin (vice president) and Ben Steelman (treasurer) had been nominated at the October meeting.

Jonathan Guetta accepted nomination for associate vice president and Thad Coin accepted nomination as secretary.

No one volunteered for the post of editor of the Society newsletter, "Cape Fear Skies." The incumbent editor, Ric Longren, has been trying to retire for more than a year. There being no successful nominations, the office will be filled by a write-in during balloting at the December election.

The dilemma prompted an extensive debate about the post, generally agreed to be the hardest job in the Society. Various questions were posed: Do we need a newsletter? Is one required under the current constitution? (The answer seems to be, apparently not, according to Tom Jacobs.) Should the newsletter go to an all-electronic format (i.e., no more mailings)? Should it be issued quarterly, instead of monthly? No decision, however, was made, and the item was postponed for future meetings.

Bob Fetterman moved that the nominations be closed, which carried unanimously. All nominees will therefore run unopposed on the ballot to be cast at the December meeting/social. Ronnie noted that Billy Kidney had again volunteered to host the Society's annual Christmas party -- watch the skies (and the newsletter) for directions.

Observing Reports

During observing reports, Tom Jacobs described the annual Mid-Atlantic Star Party in Robbins, N.C., which ended Nov. 2. (The November meeting had been postponed since so many members were attending.) Tom said conditions were the coldest ever -- some RVs had their water freeze -- but offered six nights of clear viewing.

Miscellaneous

Bob Fetterman brought a Sears Diehard portable battery for "show and tell," which he said was ideal for powering telescopes and other viewing needs. The unit (which can also jump car batteries) has two AC plugs and an air compressor, perfect for inflating one's mattress. The list price is in the \$120 range, but Bob was able to obtain it on sale for \$79.

Ben Steelman noted that Learning Express (where his wife works) is selling a \$9.99 "telescope card" from SLOOH. The card bears a 20-digit password which will give the user "live access:" for 50 minutes, via Internet Explorer to a real, high-powered telescope. The program has companion audio segments, allows users to take and store photos, and targets planets, galaxies, nebulas and other intriguing objects. It seems ideal for a bright student without access to a regular 'scope.

The night's program was an episode on space travel from the cable-TV series "The Universe," covering such topics as the NASA ARES program, the potential for a space elevator and the possibility of using "wormholes" for long-distance flights.

Respectfully submitted,

Ben Steelman, acting secretary

Event Calendar for December 2008

Dec 1	Crescent Moon lies next to Venus & Jupiter
Dec 5	First quarter Moon, 4:26 pm
Dec 5	Mars is in conjunction with the Sun, 5 pm
Dec 6	Moon passes 4° north of Uranus, 4 am
Dec 7	CFAS Annual Christmas Party, 6:30 pm
Dec 12	Full Moon, 11:37 am
	Moon at perigee, 4:39 pm, 221,560 miles
Dec 13	Geminid meteor shower peaks
Dec 19	Last quarter Moon, 5:29 am
	Winter solstice occurs, 7:04 am
Dec 22	Ursid meteor shower peaks
Dec 25	Merry Christmas
	Moon passes 0.09° north of Antares, 2 am
Dec 26	Moon at apogee, 12:46 pm, 252,650 miles
	Venus passes 1.5° south of Neptune, 9 pm
Dec 26/27	CFAS Viewing Sessions
Dec 27	New Moon, 7:22 am
Dec 28	Moon passes 0.7° north of Mercury, 11 pm
Dec 29	Moon passes 0.6° south of Jupiter, 4 am
Dec 30	Venus passes 2° south of Jupiter, 8 pm
Dec 31	Mercury passes 1.3° south of Jupiter, after sunset

All times are EST unless otherwise noted



► The CFAS annual Christmas Party will be hosted for the 5th year in a row by Billy and Kristy Kidney on December 7 starting at 6:30 pm. (directions on the front of Newsletter). Bring your family and a covered dish. Please email Billy and let him know if you and your family will be attending and if possible what you are bringing. Billy will be serving ham for all to enjoy.

► During the party there will be a short meeting to elect the 2008 CFAS Officers. Nominations are as follows:

- President Ronnie Hawes
- Vice President Terry Herrin
- Associate Vice President Jonathon Guetta
- Secretary Thad Coin
- Treasurer Ben Steelman
- Newsletter Editor ?

Write-in votes will be accepted on the ballot provided.



News from Our Sister Society Down Under
Astronomical Society of Albury - Wodonga

For the latest news from down under, check out our sister society's web site at www.asaw.org.au.

Photo Gallery

More photos from Billy Kidney:



Christmas Tree & Conus Nebula



M46 with the nebula. Taken at MASP, it is a stack of 40-20 sec exposures with a C-11 and Canon DSLR.

Sun & Planets in December 2008						
Planet	Dec	Elong.	Mag.	Dia.	Illum.	Dist.
Sun	1 st	---	-26.8	32' 26"	---	0.986
	1 st	---	-26.8	32' 32"	---	0.983
Mercury	1 st	3 ^o Ev	-1.1	4.6"	100%	1.448
	11 th	9 ^o Ev	-0.8	4.8"	97%	1.400
	21 st	14 ^o Ev	-0.7	5.2"	91%	1.289
Venus	31 st	19 ^o Ev	-0.7	6.1"	74%	1.101
	1 st	43 ^o Ev	-4.2	16.5"	70%	1.009
	11 th	44 ^o Ev	-4.2	17.8"	66%	0.939
	21 st	46 ^o Ev	-4.3	19.2"	62%	0.868
Mars	31 st	46 ^o Ev	-4.4	21.0"	58%	0.795
	1 st	1 ^o Ev	+1.3	3.8"	97%	2.483
	16 th	3 ^o Mo	+1.3	3.8"	100%	2.460
Jupiter	31 st	7 ^o Mo	+1.3	3.9"	100%	2.431
	1 st	43 ^o Ev	-2.0	34.0"	100%	5.802
	31 st	19 ^o Ev	-1.9	32.7"	100%	6.034
Saturn	1 st	78 ^o Mo	+1.0	17.5"	100%	9.509
	31 st	108 ^o Mo	+0.9	18.4"	100%	9.018
Uranus	16 th	84 ^o Ev	+5.8	3.5"	100%	20.170
Neptune	16 th	58 ^o Ev	+7.9	2.2"	100%	30.550
Pluto	16 th	8 ^o Ev	+14.1	0.1"	100%	32.542

Elong. – elongation from the Sun: morning (Mo) and evening (Ev)
Dist. – distance from Earth in astronomical units

*Meetings of the CFAS are held on the first Sunday of
The month (if holiday weekend or special event, second Sunday)
at*

**7:00pm – Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of
Wilmington**

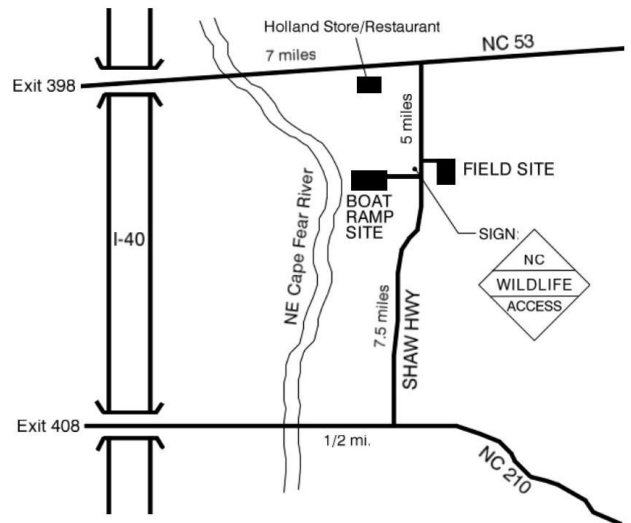
Group Viewing Sessions 5194

Call Ron Hawes at 762-1033 or check our email list to confirm a formal viewing session. Listed below are moonless nights so you can schedule a good viewing. All group viewing sessions will be at the Holly Shelter boat ramp site, unless otherwise specified. Time: Dusk until ?

Friday, December 26 Saturday, December 27

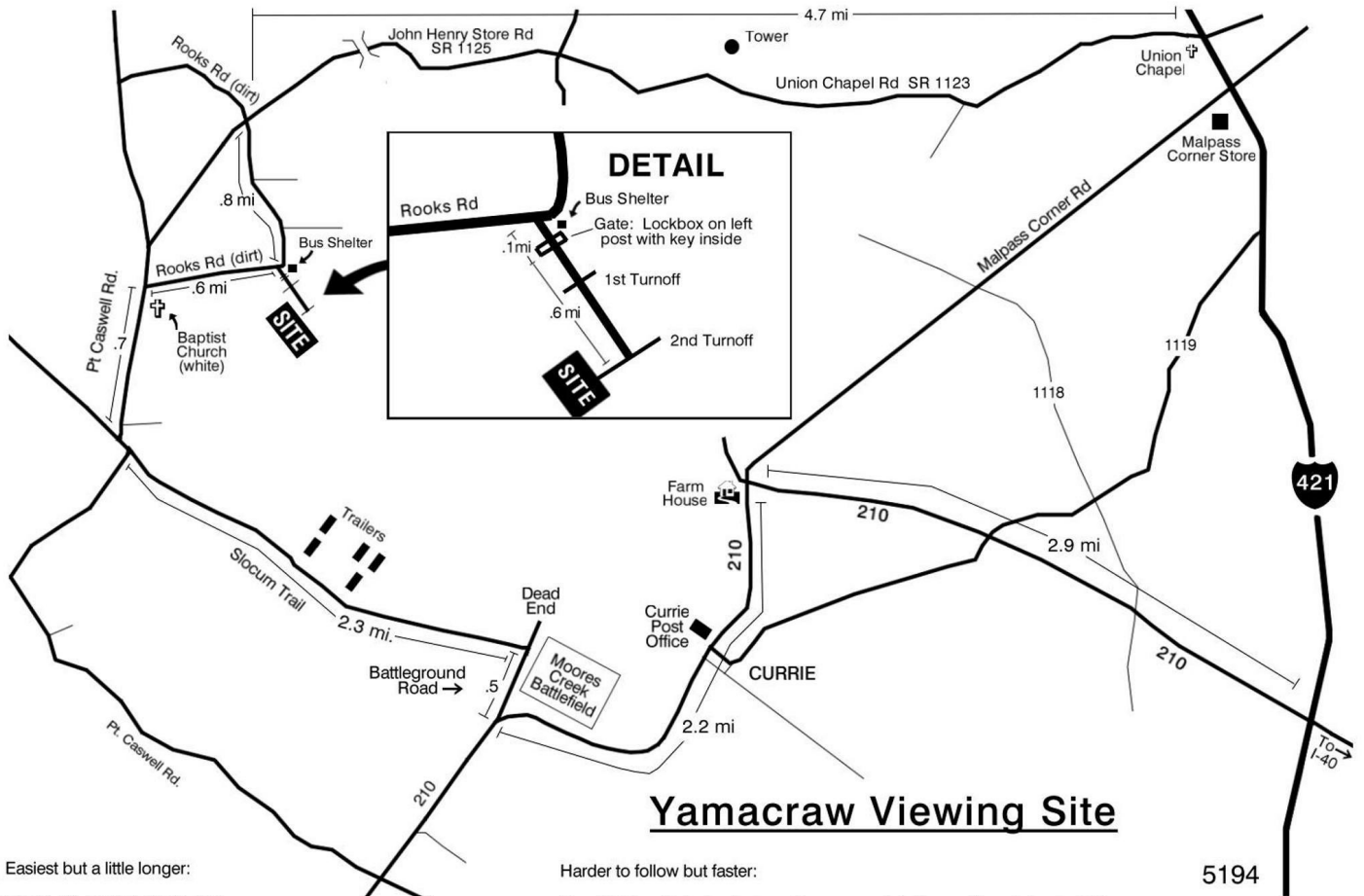
Please be cautious of unusual wildlife behavior while observing. A golf club or stick could be useful to keep nearby.

Holly Shelter Viewing Sites



Field Site Gate Open:
September 1 - February 29 and April 7 - May 14.

Please have your Holly Shelter Permit with you at the site.



Yamacraw Viewing Site

5194

Easiest but a little longer:

Travel 421 north to truck stop.
Go approx. 20.5 miles and turn left onto Union Chapel Road.
Follow for 4.7 miles (becomes John Henry Store Road) and take left onto Rooks Road (dirt).
Follow Rooks Road .8 miles around curve, pass bus shelter and take left onto our site's road.
Travel .1 mile, unlock/relock gate, travel .6 miles, take 2nd right.

Harder to follow but faster:

Travel 421 north to truck stop. Go approx. 17 miles and turn left onto 210.
Follow 210 for 2.9 miles to intersection (stop sign and big white farm house), turn left onto 210 W.
Follow 210 W past Currie Post Office and Battlefield, turn right onto Battleground Rd.
Follow Battleground Rd .5 miles, take sharp left onto Slocum Rd, follow for 2.3 miles.
Take a right onto Pt. Caswell Rd, follow .7 miles past Church, take right onto Rooks Road (dirt).
Follow Rooks Rd .6 miles, turn right onto our site's road. (If you see the bus shelter, you've gone too far.)
Travel .1 miles, unlock/relock gate, travel .6 miles, take the 2nd road on the right to our site.