

Cape Fear Skies

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

A Member Society of the Astronomical League

Volume (# pending) ★ February 2010

www.capefearastro.org



*This Month's Meeting –
Sunday, March 7, 2010*

*Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of
Wilmington*

4313 Lake Avenue

The business meeting of
the Cape Fear Astronomical Society
will begin at 7:00 pm.

The general meeting will begin at 7:45 pm.

Gastronomy!

Undecided at newsletter printing

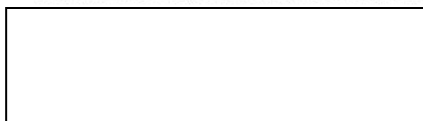


CAPE FEAR SKIES

Editor: Jonathan Guetta

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Wilmington, NC 28401



Letter from the Editor

Hello, I am attempting to bring the newsletter back into circulation after year long drought. First of all I would like to thank Ric Longren for all the excellent work on the previous newsletters and thank him again in advance for all of the pestering I am about to burden him with as I learn about putting the newsletter together. You will undoubtedly notice that this newsletter is a bit lean, that will be rectified as I find new sources of interesting astronomical news and information. On that note I am requesting help from all of the members. Please forward opinions, editorials, astronomical trivia questions/riddles, photos, etc to jguetta@ec.rr.com for inclusion in the monthly letter. I would also like to thank Thad Coin for continuing to keep the meeting minutes alive and for providing them to me for inclusion with the newsletter.

And on that note, I bring you the February 2010 Newsletter.

Jonathan Guetta

Cape Fear Astronomical Society

Meeting Minutes by Thad Coin - CFAS Secretary

Cape Fear Astronomical Society
Wilmington, NC

Minutes for the February 2010 CFAS Meeting

The business portion of the CFAS February meeting was commenced by a call to order by President Ronnie Hawes at 19:05 on January 31, 2009 in Dobkin Hall of the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Wilmington (UUFW). The February meeting was held slightly early due to conflicts with the 1st and 2nd Sundays of the month. Attending were 24 members and 8 guests (including the program speaker, his wife and son). One visitor, Stephen Erlewine, joined the club during the meeting.

Officer's Reports

Treasurer Ben Steelman reported on account balances and interest earned for 2009. He also listed collection of membership fees for new and renewing members.

Old Business

Member Tom Jacobs initiated a discussion regarding the Club's website. It was noted that the site had not been updated in some time. Member Rich Williams, the club's former webmaster, pointed out that we had been without a webmaster in about a year. Member Doug Hamerski volunteered to review the website files and prepare, along with his son, to take over the webmaster duties. Following a discussion regarding nametag production and roster maintenance, Associate Vice President Jonathan Guetta volunteered to look into taking over the position of Newsletter editor. President Ronnie Hawes reported continued contact with Halyburton Park director Andy Honeycutt regarding the "Astronomy in the Park" portion of the park's nature series featuring CFAS volunteers. Lectures and observing sessions have been led by CFAS members. Weather has caused cancellation of the last 2 scheduled events. Ronnie invited members to participate in future sessions to be arranged.

New Business

Member Bob Fetterman was joined by acclamation of the attendees to commend Treasurer Ben Steelman on his great article in the January 31 issue of the Wilmington Star-News announcing the club's meeting and Speaker. There is no doubt that his notice contributed to this best-attended meeting in the last 2-3 years.

Observing Report

President Ronnie Hawes reported a unique milestone: January 23rd marked the 50th anniversary of his observing career. Living in San Diego with his family in the Fall of 1959 he reports inspiration of his interest in Astronomy being sparked by the visit with his family to the 200 inch Hale telescope at Mt. Palomar. He reports being impressed that the observer's position was *within* the telescope itself! That Christmas his wish was granted with the gift of a Gilbert telescope. The first observing opportunity came on January 23, 1960 in the outskirts of San Diego. The views of the Moon and Venus through the humble scope were breathtaking for young Hawes. During that period he and his father observed a total eclipse of the moon. The rest is history.

At 7:45 PM President Ronnie Hawes adjourned the business portion of the meeting which was followed immediately by the evening's public program. Secretary Thad Coin introduced speaker, R. Todd Clancy, PhD, Senior Research Scientist of the Space Science Institute. Dr. Clancy's topic "The Cassini Mission Exploration of Saturn, its Rings and Moons" was well illustrated by original Cassini images with excellent description and discussion. Dr. Clancy graciously invited and accepted questions during and after the talk and after. Dr. Clancy left the appreciate audience with the promise to return at some future date to deliver a presentation on Mars.

More information regarding Dr. Clancy and his work within the Space Science Institute can be found through the following links. He pointed out that the images he showed are freely available to the public through the Cassini Mission site.

http://www.spacescience.org/about_ssi/staff/clancy.html

<http://www.spacescience.org/index.php>



News Cluster

► The next meeting of the Cape Fear Astronomical Society is March 7, 2010 starting at 7:00 pm. The meeting will be held at the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Wilmington (UUFW for short).



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.

Sky Calendar -- March 2010

- 3 **Moon near Spica** (morning sky) at 18h UT.
- 7 **Moon near Antares** (morning sky) at 1h UT.
- 7 **Last Quarter Moon** at 15:42 UT.
- 11 **Mars stationary** at 9h UT. The red planet ends its retrograde motion and resumes direct (eastward) motion towards a mid-April encounter with M44. Mag. -0.3.
- 12 **Moon at apogee** (farthest from Earth) at 10h UT (distance 406,008 km; angular size 29.4').
- 15 **New Moon** at 21:01 UT. Start of lunation 1079.
 - [Lunation Number](#) (
- 17 **Moon near Venus** (evening sky, 16° from Sun) at 5h UT. Mag. -3.9. Best view from northern hemisphere.
- 20 **Vernal equinox** at 17:33 UT. The time when the Sun reaches the point along the ecliptic where it crosses into the northern celestial hemisphere marking the start of spring in the Northern Hemisphere and autumn in the Southern Hemisphere.
 - [Vernal Equinox](#)
- 21 **Moon very near the Pleiades** (evening sky) at 0h UT. Occultation visible from Mexico, Central America, and South America.
 - [Occultations of the Pleiades](#) (IOTA)
 - [The Pleiades](#)
- 22 **Saturn at opposition** (opposite the Sun) at 0h UT. Visible all night long, the ringed planet is at its brightest (mag. +0.5) and closest all year (disk diameter 19.5"). Saturn's rings are near edge-on but still appear magnificent even in a small telescope.
 - [Opposition](#)
- 23 **First Quarter Moon** at 11:00 UT.
- 24 **Moon near Pollux** (evening sky) at 22h UT.
- 25 **Moon near Mars** (evening sky) at 11h UT. Mag. +0.0.
- 25 **Moon near Beehive cluster (M44)** (evening sky) at 22h UT.
- 27 **Moon near Regulus** (evening sky) at 10h UT.
- 28 **Moon at perigee** (closest to Earth) at 5h UT (361,876 km; 33.0').
- 29 **Moon near Saturn** (midnight sky) at 12h UT. Mag. +0.6.
- 30 **Full Moon** at 2:25 UT.
 - [Full Moon Names](#)
- 31 **Moon near Spica** (morning sky) at 2h UT.

All times Universal Time (UT). USA Eastern Standard Time = UT - 5 hours.

This Months Trivia Questions

1. How many men have walked on the moon?
2. How many stars are there in the entire solar system?
3. Which planet has the most moons?
4. How many constellations are there?
5. Who cataloged clusters, nebulae, and galaxies to sort them from comets?
6. What is the distance in miles in 1 AU?

Answers to be discussed openly at the next meeting and published in the next newsletter.

I would like club members to submit trivia questions to me at: jguetta@ec.rr.com

CFAS Membership List

TO BE UPDATED SOON

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

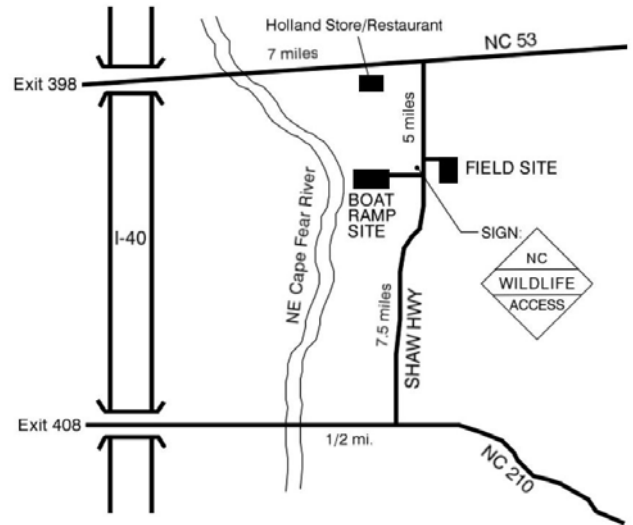
Call Ron Hawes at 762-1033 or check our email list to
confirm a formal viewing session. Listed below are
moonless nights so you can schedule a good viewing. All
group viewing sessions will be at the Holly Shelter boat ramp
site, unless otherwise specified. Time: Dusk until ?

Friday, January 4 Saturday, January 5

Friday, January 11 Saturday, January 12

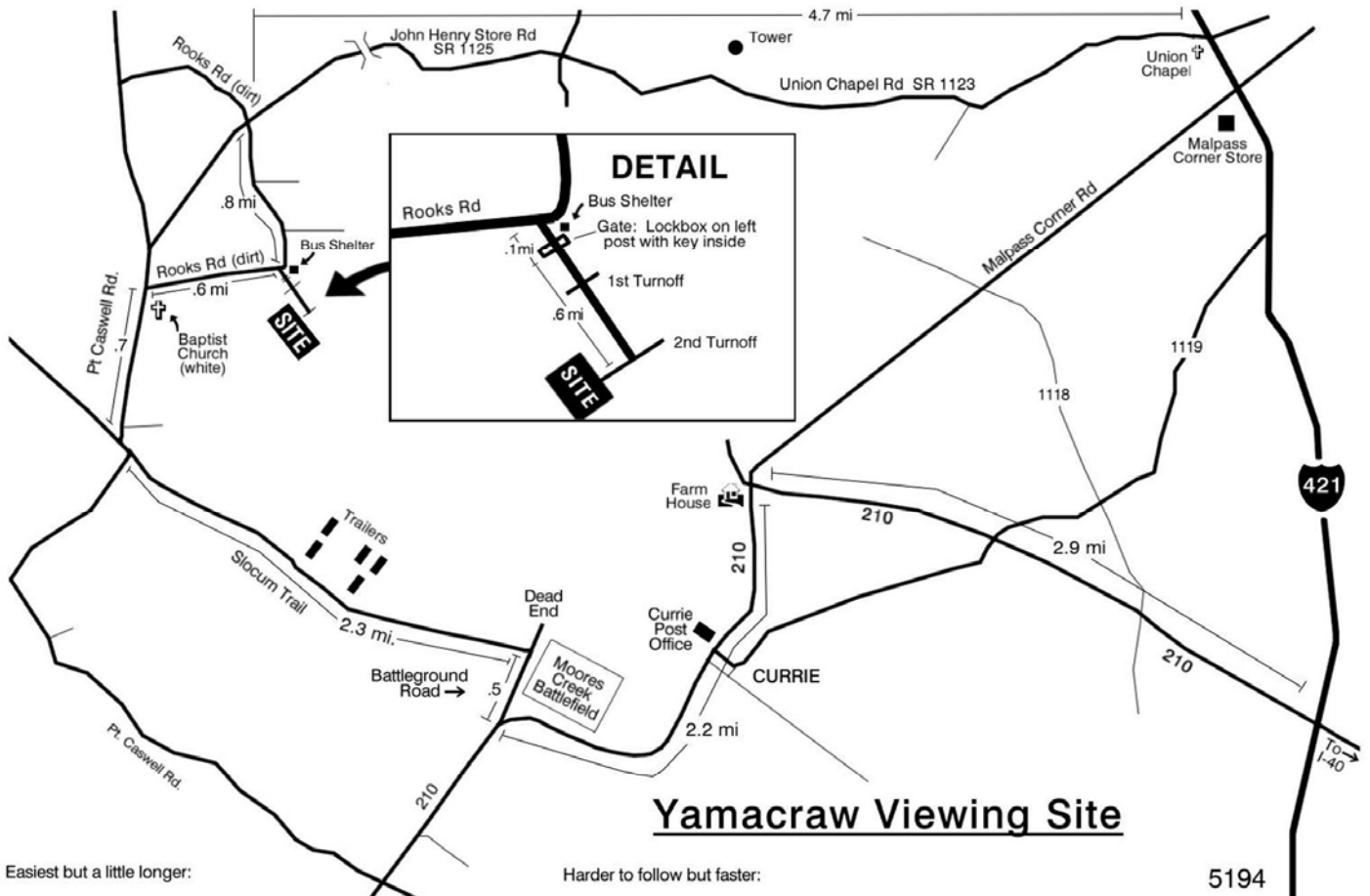
*Please be cautious of unusual wildlife behavior while observing. A golf
club or stick could be useful to keep nearby.*

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 Battleground, 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 .8 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.