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RIVER~BEND \* ASTRONOMY \* CLUB

NEWSLETTER \* February 10, 2003

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"Where the skies are not cloudy all day."

Greetings, earthlings.

Valentine's Day is just around the corner. Remember your loved ones with gifts they'll treasure. Might I suggest a new wide-angle eyepiece? Battery-powered hand warmer? Or how about a cozy retreat at a dark observing site? The possibilities are endless. This year, think beyond that box of candy and reach for the stars!

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> NEXT MEETING

The next club meeting will be:

March 8, 2003  
Kronk Observatory Kitchen  
7 pm

We'll hope for clear skies this month.

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> MEETING DATES 2003

The suggestion was made to have monthly meetings around the dark of the moon. This proved a bit trickier to schedule than we first thought, but here's a list of the tentative dates.

- March 8
- April 5
- May 10—Astronomy Day Celebration
- June 7
- July 12
- August 9
- September 6
- October 4
- November 1
- December 6

We'll discuss this at the next meeting. Some clubs do not meet in the summertime, what with darkness falling so late, and vacations. Likewise, some groups skip December altogether, what with the busy holiday season. We look forward to hearing your input in March.

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> ASTRO DAY PLANNING

The event was discussed at the last meeting. Please give this some thought. It seems that the club has such great potential to put on a grand event, given the right venue. Jamie volunteered to check with the new Edwardsville Children's Museum, to discuss whether we could collaborate with them in planning an event.

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> FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT FOR AMATEUR ASTRONOMERS

Jace announced that he is seriously considering the purchase of a new Obsession, as if we all don't have enough obsessions already. But this is a big one, and Jace gave us the impression that summer stargazing could take on a whole new meaning for him this year. We anxiously await his possible new arrival. Jace...our new best friend.

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> COLUMBIA DISASTER

The shuttle tragedy has been much on our minds and in our e-mails this past week. Public commentary has been both poignant and inspiring. We continue to reflect upon what this means to the astronauts' families and to the human family.

For our next meeting, Mark has been urged to present the memorial that he put together following the disaster.

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> I SURVIVED ILLINOIS CAVERNS

Several club members were en route to Illinois Caverns the morning of Saturday, February 1, when we heard the news. We tried to shake off the sadness as we entered the cave, and perhaps it was a positive experience to lose contact with the outside world for several hours while--in a very small way--we felt the thrill of discovery and adventure that we live vicariously through the space program. Rooms in the cave looked like a 1950s moonscape, complete with weird formations and weird creatures (the way we were dressed...)

Some great memories and photographs came out of the experience. Ask Gary to show you his scar.

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> DIRECTORY COMING

Ed is compiling the club membership directory and will distribute it to members soon. We promise not to go public with this information,

that is unless we get a really, really good offer... ; - )

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> NEW USES FOR RED LIGHTS

Dousing neighborhood street lamps with a laser pointer aimed at the electronic light sensor? What will club members think of next?

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> THAT'S ALL, FOLKS

The groundhog saw his shadow, so does that mean more cloudy weather?

In any case, we'll see you in March. Keep those club e-mails coming, we sure enjoy them.

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Eric