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RIVER ~ BEND \* ASTRONOMY \* CLUB

NEWSLETTER \* March 17, 2003

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Ah, Spring. And you know what that means--tornado season! Stay off the road if you see one coming, because that means Mark Brown may be careening down the highway chasing after it. Yes, sudden downdrafts are not the only danger of turbulent weather. Safer to stay inside and watch the Weather Channel while flipping through an astronomy magazine.

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> NEXT MEETING

The next club meeting will be:

Saturday  
April 5, 2003  
Kronk Observatory Kitchen  
7 pm

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> ASTRO DAY PLANNING

We talked at length about Astronomy Day preparations. Here is the breakdown of who volunteered to do what. Please note what you agreed to do, and do some more if you can:

We need: A table, rocks for paperweights  
Stuff to bring: Gary's tent, Jamie's long power cords, Jace's crayons  
Scopes to bring: We'll firm this up at next meeting  
Solar viewing: Gary's handout on the sun, Gary's scope and TV monitor, Mark's 8-inch, Eric's 80 mm  
Mega-Sundial: Jamie  
Planet Walk: Gary and Mark will visit museum to see the space available  
Sky Map: Jamie will print out the Orion sky map for May  
Handouts: Jamie and Gary will photocopy  
Computer displays: Mark and Kurt will bring systems  
Telescope help clinic: Do we have a volunteer for this?  
Photographers: (will take pictures of crowds and especially prize winners)

Jamie and Kurt

Membership certificate: We volunteered Ed to make a nice membership certificate for a door prize

St. Jacob observing: Not sure if we've nailed down who will man the scopes

Please contact Mark with further questions and ideas.

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> ASTRO DAY DOOR PRIZES

Wow! Mark has lined up some great prizes to give away during Astro Day. (I plan to wear a disguise during the drawings, just in case I win something.) These prizes should make many local kids--and adults--very happy.

The Planetary Society: 4 Posters (Door Prizes)

- 200 Planetary Reports
- 200 Planetary Society Book Markers
- 200 Mars Red Rover Fact Sheets

Sky Publishing: 10 Skywatch 2003 Magazines (Door Prizes)

- 200 How to Start Right in Astronomy Booklets
- Good Neighbor Outdoor Lighting Flier - (authorized to make as many copies as we need to)
- 5 Astronomy Day Advertisement Posters

Astronomy.com

- Welcome to Astronomy Booklets
- Miscellaneous Handouts

Kalmbach Publishing: Complimentary 1 year subscription to Astronomy magazine (Door Prize)

- Fire Fly Books LTD: 2 Astronomy Books (Door Prizes)
- Splendors of the Universe
- NightWatch

River Bend Astronomy Club: Complimentary 1 year Club Membership (Door Prize)

Marvin's Camera: Two (2) 35mm Single Use Cameras (Door Prize)

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> SPEAKING OF ASTRONOMY DAY

Our listing on the Planetary Society web site:

<http://www.planetary.org/html/society/calendar.html>

Our listing on the Astronomical League web site:

<http://www.astroleague.org/al/astroday/adactiv03.htm>

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> THANKS, MARK

Mark Brown has done a bang-up job planning Astronomy Day. We are grateful. Uh-oh--now the rest of us must get to work.

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> MEMBER OF THE MONTH CLUB

Ed Cunnius sent the club copies of NASA's "Planet Earth" calendar, featuring "The View from NASA's Earth-Orbiting Satellites." The beautiful images take on a kind of abstract-art quality. (Except for the satellite photo of Gary skinny-dipping in his backyard pool--ugh!)

Ed, we salute your generosity. We name you member of the month, entitling you to 30 days of respect and admiration. (Not valid with other offers. Void where prohibited.)

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> TOY STORY

Wow--a new Meade ETX 90 was quite the conversation piece at our last meeting. Kurt has taken advantage of awesome deals offered by Meade celebrating their anniversary in the business. Got those eyepieces yet, Kurt? He said he likes the portability of the thing as well as the go-to features. Even his Celestron 8-inch is jealous.

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> BUT CAN YOU SIT ON IT AND SPIN?

Those observing chairs from Orion sure are great--if only it was possible to build something just as nice for a whole lot less money. Jamie has the answer. His new wooden chair is really neat, easily adjustable when you need to peer through the eyepiece of that really big Dob, and was inexpensive to make. Watch out for splinters, though...

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> MIRROR, MIRROR

The last report from River Bend East had Ed "Rock-Steady" Cunnius grinding an 8-inch mirror for a new homemade reflector. Some 30 hours or so will go into this mirror-making endeavor. If all goes well and

he doesn't drop the damn thing he'll be admiring his parabolic reflection for years to come.

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> HATE TO BRING THIS UP, BUT...

Is your scope insured? Kurt said that you may be able to attach it to your homeowner's policy if you call it "camera equipment" (one hell of a long lens...?) The possibility of your equipment getting broken or stolen at a public event is an unsavory but real possibility. Please be advised.

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> THAT'S ALL, FOLKS

Kiss the blarney stone, will ya? (Or an Irish woman if no stones are available.)

See you in March. Keep those club e-mails coming.

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Eric