

Current **Astronomy**

RIVER BEND ASTRONOMY CLUB NEWSLETTER

July/August 2023

NCRAL visits RBAC



RBAC Members gathered around telescopes inside Lookin' Up Optics in Vandalia, IL (Photo by Alan Scheidler)

Alan Scheidler, Chairman of the North Central Region of the Astronomical League, along with his wife, Sara, stopped by for a visit on their way down south for the ALCON meeting. A big day was planned for them starting with a meet and greet at Lookin' Up Optics in Vandalia. Our Club President owns and operates this store which offers a variety of optical equipment, specializing in telescopes. Alan and Sara were able to see first-hand the variety of equipment offered in this region and to share this with other Midwest clubs. Sharing information about our respective clubs provided insights into what other clubs are doing. We then met other members of the club at Los Amigos restaurant in

Carlyle for more discussion. Our day was not over!

Right across the street from the restaurant is the Carlyle Lake Visitor's Center with an outdoor classroom in the back. There we held a panel presentation on "Exploring the Night Sky." Randy Harrison shared information on when to observe, and what to look for. He spotlighted some excellent astrophotos of popular viewing targets. Cheryl Brinkmann explained the library telescope program and reviewed the list of participating local libraries. Spencer Chapman then explained how to take astrophotos with a cell phone, and had equipment on hand that can be used as well. Finally, Jeff Menz went over the basics of how eclipses happen and when we will see the next ones. After a Q & A period, RBAC's new eclipse bookmarks were handed out.



Randy Harrison discussing photo of the Moon (photo by Alan Scheidler)

Present for public telescope viewing were our panel as well as Kerry Brethauer and Lance Taylor. A demonstration table was set up where Terry Menz challenged visitors to distinguish Earth rocks from meteorites. With passersby, and our audience for the panel discussion, we were able to reach approximately 175 visitors of all ages! A big thanks goes out to Paige Laughhunn and Darren Murphy with the Army Corps of Engineers, and our own Cheryl Brinkmann for their assistance coordinating this evening's event.



A visitor views the Moon through a 15" Obsession at "Exploring the Night Sky" event at Carlyle Lake Visitor's Center. (Photo by Darren Murphy)

The River's Edge

Astronomy guide ASL:

"Introduction to Amateur Astronomy Guide" pamphlets have been ordered from Astronomical League. The guide covers basics of astronomy. ASL will invoice us for shipping costs only. These will be a great resource for beginning astronomers!

Sky Puppies Program: Students ages 8 to 10 and their parents are invited to learn about the Sky Puppies program at the Louis Latzer Memorial Public Library! Learn all about space, planets, stars, exploration and more. The course is led by Terry Menz and Jeff Menz. An informational meeting for parents will kick off the 7-month series

on Tuesday, September 19th, at 6:30 pm. A signup sheet is available at the library or by calling (618) 654-5066.

It's an Obsession:



Dennis Ripplemeyer on left discusses his telescope with visitor at Edwardsville Children's Museum. (Photo by Eric Young from May 2004 issue of Current Astronomy)

RBAC has accepted a generous donation from Dennis Ripplemeyer, a former member. "Years back I used to attend star gazing sessions in Gary Kronks' back yard as well as several public events sponsored by the club. Unfortunately, my health since has declined to the point where most of my hobbies have been put on the shelf."

Here is how Eric Young, one of RBAC's founding members, described this telescope in the November 2003 edition of Current Astronomy: "**HEAVY ARTILLERY** Yeah, it's an Obsession, alright: the need for more light answered by huge trusstube Dobsonians like those owned by Jace Perham and—new to the club, Dennis "Rip" Rippelmeyer. Rip's 18" telescope makes Jace's look like the runt of the litter by comparison (but we still love ya, Jace). Better put on sunglasses before viewing the Andromeda galaxy through Rip's Obsession—it's big and it's bright! Rip uses an Orion correct image right angle finderscope, a Telrad finder and a phone call to NORAD to get his Obsession pointed in the right direction. Performing just as well

as Jace's scope's mount, Rip's is so buttery smooth that it takes but a feathery touch to track an object in the eyepiece. It's a joy to use instruments of this caliber, and once again I'd like to say what talented, fascinating and handsome individuals are Jace and Rip. (Did I mention they have good taste?)"

Dennis explains in his email, "I have an 18" Obsession Classic that's been sitting in my garage for 10 years seeing nothing but a blanket I use to keep it covered. I toyed with the idea of putting it up for sale on Astromart but I really would rather give it to the River Bend Astronomy Club to be used by anyone who wants to view with larger glass (looking into M13 is nothing but spectacular, in my opinion). It's in good shape with what I would call normal battle scars. The mirror looks very good. It's been stored in my attached garage with a constant heat source beneath it and shows no evidence of condensation. The mirror had a foggy area about the size of a silver dollar but the fog has dissipated over the years and only a barely visible outline ring remains. (This was caused by me using canned air after a cleaning). To my eyes, the performance never suffered - even when it was fully fogged.

It has a Telrad and a standard optical finder along with a Sky Commander electronic finder. I also have several other accessories I can include if wanted."

This telescope will be stored at the home of a frequent outreach attendee and showcased at future events.



Center telescope is 18" Obsession. (Photo by Eric Young from May 2004 issue of Current Astronomy)

Around town

Our own **Randy Harrison** will be offering an adult education course called "**Introduction to Astrophotography**" at Kaskaskia College—Vandalia site. The course will be held on October 17th and 24th from 5:30pm to 7:30pm. For more information, or to enroll, contact Kaskaskia College at 618-545-3445.

There is always that one child that makes it all worthwhile! **Cheryl Brinkmann** held a **Moon Watch** on August 1st at the **Case Halstead Library in Carlyle** recently. She showcased the library's new telescope to provide views of the moon. She also brought a pair of her own binoculars as well which proved so popular, they are now acquiring a pair of library binoculars as well! She hopes to use them not only for astronomy, but also for bird-watching events at Carlyle Lake. The highlight of the Moon Watch was a young girl who was fascinated with all things astronomy

and became quite adept at using the binoculars!

First Quarter Moon Days: We are excited to announce that starting on Monday, August 21st from 7 to 10, RBAC will be offering monthly outreach near the first quarter moon at the Northtown Parking Lot in Highland. Thanks to **Jeff Menz** for organizing this series!

Artemis Excitement: For those of us who grew up with the Apollo Missions, we recall the anticipation and excitement seeing the first Moon landing and first manned space walk. The newer generations now have another exciting Moon mission to look forward to. To inform the public about this mission, **Terry Menz** has prepared an **Artemis** presentation that will debut Tuesday, October 24th at the Latzer Memorial Public Library in Highland starting at 6:30pm.

Dobfest Plans: The Dobsonian telescope is one of the most popular models on the market today. Astronomy clubs in Eastern Missouri and Metro East Illinois work together to honor its inventor, John Dobson. Dobfest is an opportunity to showcase Dobsonians and other telescopes for the public. We provide an opportunity for those interested in acquiring a telescope to see some examples and to learn what to look for. Having problems with your telescope? This is also an opportunity to get assistance from the many expert astronomers on hand. The Library Telescope and Binocular Program will be showcased. Solar and night viewing will be available as well as kid's activities. Volunteers from all four area clubs are needed to staff the various tables and to provide telescopes for

public viewing. A food truck will be available. This year's event is hosted by the Astronomical Society of Eastern Missouri and will be held on Saturday, September 16th from 4 to 9 PM at Broemmelsiek Park Astronomy Site, 611 Schwede Rd, Wentzville, MO, 63385.

T-shirts have been designed and a preliminary order has been submitted for committee members. They will be long white t-shirts with the logo in the front.

Pricing (without tax) is

G200 S-XL \$8.50 XXL \$10.50

G200T S-XL \$10.95 XXL \$12.95



Annular Eclipse: RBAC is gearing up for a public event to showcase the annular eclipse on October 14th. The site selected has a large open viewing area, a pavilion, and rest rooms. For members only, Cheryl Brinkmann has offered to provide some light sandwiches. Please bring a side dish. The event will be held on Saturday, Oct 14th, 10am to 2pm, Carlyle Lake. Dam East Boat Ramp.

Eclipse Shirts: Order forms for the 2024 Solar Eclipse will be distributed at the next meeting. Prices for the t-shirts start at \$15 for sizes S to XL. We can order up to a 5XL tee. The price would be \$2 more for 2XL, \$3 more for 3XL, \$4 more for 4XL and \$5 more for a

5XL. The coloring may be slightly lighter or darker on a sport grey due to ordering different brands for anything over a 2XL. Talls are offered in XLT, 2XLT, 3XLT. Additional costs for tall will be on the order form.



Front



Back

Eclipse Give-a-Ways:

We are excited to have an eclipse give-a-way to share at outreach events. Dan Brandon designed an awesome bookmark using his footage from the 2017 eclipse. We handed out many of them at the Carlyle Lake event on July 22nd. The club also voted to purchase eclipse glasses to be distributed at outreach events. There will be a limit per family and donations for the glasses will be taken to offset the cost.

By the Way

How to RSVP and Find the Address for Events

We always try to ensure we have adequate members on hand for our outreach events. The best way to find out who can attend is if everyone enters an RSVP. How to do this: scroll down the announcement email and locate the words in blue and underlined. These are Internet links. The first link asks you to RSVP as to whether you are attending or not. *Yes Probably No*. Click on the appropriate response.

The second link prompts you to find out More Details. To find the address of a

location, click on this link which links to the original post. The address of the location is listed. Scroll down and click on Get Directions, to see a map showing where the location is. You can zoom in or out using the + or - arrows. To get directions from a specific location, such as your home, scroll further and click on Get Directions and it provides a spot for you to enter your starting location. It then gives you a map of your route as well as turn by turn directions. You can also enter the address into your favorite GPS map program such as Google Maps.

Online dues payments: Thanks Spencer Chapman for setting up online dues payment through Zelle. Contact Spencer if you have questions.

Gallery

Girl Scouts, Waterloo



RBAC members set up for solar viewing. L to R: Dennis Latinette, Kerry Brethauer, Jeff Menz, and Jim Reagan. (Photo by Terry Menz)



Dennis Latinette and Kerry Brethauer make final adjustments (Photo by Terry Menz)

VBS, Aviston



Jeff Menz "cooking up a comet" (Photo by Terry Menz)



The finished comet is displayed. (Photo by Terry Menz)

Carlyle Lake



Jeff Menz explaining how eclipses happen. (Photo by Alan Scheidler)



Cheryl Brinkmann describes the Library Telescope (Photo by Alan Scheidler)



Spencer Chapman explains how to take photos with cell phone (Photo by Alan Scheidler)



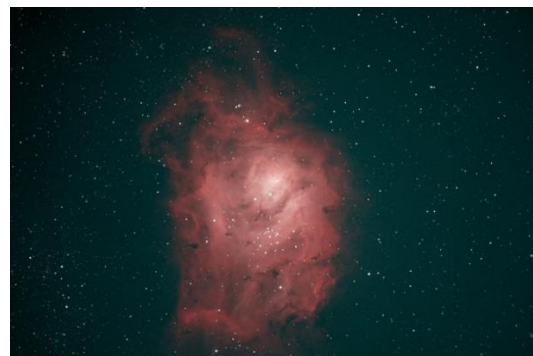
Randy Harrison lines up his 15" Obsession to show the Sun to a visitor. (Photo by Alan Scheidler)

Main Street Community Center, Edwardsville, IL



Jeff Menz explains why we do not have eclipses every month (Photo by Carissa Hess)

ASTROPHOTOS



M8, Lagoon Nebula using 140 mm refractor with a narrow band filter; five-minute exposure, post-processed in GIMP 2.10 (Photo by Spencer Chapman)

New Members: Nick Pendergrass



Upcoming Events:

- RBAC Meeting, Sat, August 12, 7-9pm, Salem UCC, Alhambra
- Public Viewing, Ballard Nature Center, Sat, Aug 19, Altamont
- First Quarter Moon Day, Monday, Aug 21, 7 to 10pm, Northtown Parking lot, Highland
- RBAC Meeting, Sat, Sept 9, 7pm, Salem UCC, Alhambra
- Dobfest, September 16th, 4 to 9 pm. Brommelsiek Park Astronomy Area, Wentzville, MO
- Sky Puppies Introductory Meeting, Latzer Library, Highland, Sept 19, 6:30 to 7:30 pm.
- Eclipse Presentation and viewing, September 23, 6 to 8 pm, Watershed Nature Center, Edwardsville
- First Quarter Moon Day, Sept 25. 7 to 10 pm, Northtown Parking lot, Highland
- Glen Carbon Library, Sept 27, 7 – 9 pm Eclipse Talk and Our Magnetic Sun
- RBAC Meeting, Sat, Oct 7, 7pm, Location TBD
- Edwardsville Library. Eclipse Talk, Tues, Oct 10, 7 to 9 pm.
- Annular Eclipse, Saturday, Oct 14, 10am to 2pm, Carlyle Lake. Dam East Boat Ramp
- Tri-Township Library, Troy, Greek Stories in the Stars plus viewing, Oct 19, 6:30 to 7:30 pm.
- International Observe the Moon Night, Sat, Oct 21, 7 to 10 pm Northtown Parking Lot Highland.
- Latzer Library, Highland, Tues, Oct 24, 6 to 8 pm. Talk on Artemis Mission and viewing.

First Quarter Moon Days

Join the River Bend Astronomy Club for our monthly telescope viewing. Enjoy close views of the craters on our Moon and other night sky objects. Amateur astronomers will have a variety of telescopes, and welcome questions about astronomy!

Where? Glik's Northtown parking lot to the south of Mazzio's in Highland

When? (All dates are Mondays except 10/21/23, International Observe the Moon Night)

8/21/23	7-10 PM	2/19/24	7-9 PM
9/25/23	7-10 PM	3/18/24	7-9 PM
10/21/23	7-10 PM IOMN	4/15/24	7-10 PM
11/20/23	7-9 PM	5/13/24	7-10 PM
12/18/23	7-9 PM	6/17/24	7-10 PM
1/15/24	7-9 PM	7/15/24	7-10 PM

What if? Cancelled when cloudy or weather prohibits.



HELP WANTED: In recent meetings, suggestions have been made for using social media and additional news outlets to market our events to the public. The board agreed that expanding our reach is a great idea. For this to be successful, we are looking for a member to volunteer for the role of monitoring these outlets and posting our events. For more information on what this position includes, please contact Terry Menz at outreach@riverbendastro.org.



**A free event,
View the Moon,
Saturn, Star
Clusters, Nebulas**

**Prizes
Food Trucks
Family Friendly**

**Broemmelsiek
Park Astronomy
Site
1611 Schwede Rd
Wentzville, MO
63385**

**ASTRONOMICAL
SOCIETY OF EASTERN
MISSOURI**

**QUESTIONS? EMAIL
QUESTIONS@
ASEMONLINE.ORG**



SCAN ME

**SATURDAY, SEP. 16, 2023
4PM-9PM
JOHN DOBSON'S
BIRTHDAY
CELEBRATION**

John Dobson taught how to make inexpensive large telescopes, accessible to everyone.

Would you like help using or setting up your telescope?
Bring it along and ASEM pros can help you with it.

direct you. Telescope viewing runs from 11am to 3pm.

Check the SLAS website for dates:
slasonline.org

First Friday Telescope Viewing at St Louis Science Center

First Fridays at McDonnell Planetarium, weather permitting, the [St randy Astronomical Society](#) and the Science Center will set up a number of telescopes outdoors and be on-hand to answer your questions.

The telescopes will be set up right outside the McDonnell Planetarium building. Visitors should enter from the Science Center building on Oakland and take walkway across I64 to Planetarium signs and staff should be there to direct you. Telescope viewing begins once it is dark. and will end about 9 pm around the Planetarium grounds. Regardless of the weather. You can also join them indoors in the Planetarium theater for "The Sky Tonight". Showtimes are normally at 7 p.m.

Check the SLAS website for dates:
slasonline.org

Francis Park Stargazing 2023 Schedule

Presented by the St. Louis Astronomical Society

Enjoy Wednesday night stargazing sessions at Francis Park!

All are welcome to join us! Stop by and take a look at the Moon, or bring your observing gear. This event is scheduled near the First Quarter Moon each month. We provide views of craters, mountains, and shadows on the Lunar surface. Members of the St. Louis Astronomical Society also share telescope views of planets when they are visible. The Red Planet Mars will be visible this spring and summer, and you may be able to observe a distant double star!

Date	Time	Moon Age	Planets we can Observe	Mars Apparent Diameter
Wednesday, April 26	7:00-9:30PM	6 days (first quarter)	Mercury, Venus, Mars.	5.5"
Wednesday, May 24	7:00-9:30PM	5 days (waxing cres.)	Venus, Mars.	4.8"
Wednesday, June 21	7:00-9:30PM	3 days (waxing cres.)	Venus, Mars.	4.4"
Wednesday, July 26	7:00-9:30PM	8 days (first quarter)	Mercury, Venus, Mars.	4.0"
Wednesday, Aug. 23	7:00-9:30PM	7 days (first quarter)	Mercury, Mars.	3.8"
Wednesday, Sept. 20	7:00-9:30PM	5 days (waxing cres.)	Saturn.	n/a
Wednesday, Oct. 18	7:00-9:30PM	4 days (waxing cres.)	Saturn, Neptune.	n/a

We set up in Francis Park in south St. Louis city, at Tamm Ave. & Itaska St. Events will be canceled for unfavorable weather or sky conditions.

Visit www.slasonline.org, and click Event Calendar for up-to-date information.

The St. Louis Astronomical Society (SLAS) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit established in 1936. SLAS is devoted to the interest and advancement of the science of astronomy.

With over 250 members, SLAS is the largest astronomical society in the metro St. Louis area.

SLSC Solar Public Telescope Viewing

SLSC Solar Public Telescope Viewing at McDonnell Planetarium, weather permitting, the [St Louis Astronomical Society](#) and the Science Center will set up telescopes outdoors to view the Sun and be on-hand to answer your questions.

The telescopes will be set up right outside the McDonnell Planetarium building. Visitors should enter from the Science Center building on Oakland and take walkway across I-64 to Planetarium signs and staff should be there to



JEFFERSON COLLEGE OBSERVATORY

Jefferson College has partnered with the St. Louis Astronomical Society to build an observatory on the Hillsboro campus!

If you and your family love stargazing, you will want to learn more about this exciting new project in Jefferson County.

Open to all ages!

AIM FOR THE STARS EVENTS

Designed to appeal to community members of all ages, the "Aim for the Stars" events provide an overview of plans for the Jefferson College Observatory including a walk tour, training on how to read a star map, library telescopes and binocular viewing, a telescope display. See telescope viewing, laser guided constellation tours, and previews of upcoming astronomy events of interest. Each observation night will be held in person at the observatory site depending on weather.

During each event, the dome and 16-inch telescopes will be used for public viewing of planets and stars. The 2,800 sq-ft observatory path will be available to those who want to bring their own telescopes and binoculars for family viewing.

2023 SCHEDULE*

February 5	May 7	August 6	November 5
March 5	June 4	September 3	December 2
April 2	July 2	October 1	

* All events will be held on Sunday evenings beginning of sunset, weather permitting. In case of inclement weather, programs will be postponed to the following month.

Special Eclipse Event
Saturday, October 14
Eclipse start time 10:31 am
Eclipse end time 1:27 pm

LOCATION

The observatory site is located north of the Jefferson College Hillsboro campus on Farm Road near the Hillside Park. It features a paved parking lot, making the site especially attractive to astronomers from across the region due to its location outside the immediate St. Louis area and the associated city taxes.

DIRECTIONS

From St. Louis, travel south on I-64 to the Jefferson College Hillsboro Exit. Turn right and travel the short distance to Jefferson College. A road sign will be approximately 1/2 mile on the right.

1300 Wing Dr., Hillsboro, MO 63055
www.jco.edu/observatory

For additional information contact Associate Dean Maylene Anglin: 636-462-5222 or manglin@jco.edu