

September/October 2023

## Okie-Tex Star Party



*The viewing field and open clear sky at Okie-Tex. (Photo by Randy Harrison)*

### By Randy Harrison

My trip to the Okie Tex Star Party, September 8th thru 16th. Leaving Thursday morning for our 13-hour drive, Mark Jones and I arrived at 3:30 am Friday, at the gate of Camp Billy Joe. Within an hour of our arrival several more fellow star gazers arrived at which time we were all outside are vehicles enjoying the incredible Bortle 1 skies. We viewed Comet Nishimara through Binoculars.

The Gates opened at 7:00 AM. We rolled in and set up Camp. This was Okie Tex Star Parties 40th year. For being out in no man's land, they do provide you with some creature comforts. You have electricity and WIFI

on the field. But if you have Verizon Cell service you have none. There are four buildings on the Property, Bunk houses, shower house, Cafeteria, and Speakers Room.

They serve three great meals a day, which you preorder through a catering service. Also, they offer the Cosmic Café from 10:00PM to 2:00AM every night.

Day time activities included scheduled Speakers, Educational Classes, Swap Meets and Vendors at Camp. There are hiking and historical sites. Mark and I hiked a Creek Bed to view Dinosaur tracks, also went to New Mexico to hike the Rim of the Capulin Volcano and we went to the location of the Santa Fe Trail Cimarron Route.

Now let get to the real reason you go there—Bortle 1 skies. As Friday night approached at dawn two men climbed to the top of the Mesa and placed the Two Pink Flamingos which signal the Beginning of Okie Tex Star Party. After that night fell my first night under these amazing skies started as I sat looking at the sky in awe. That night Mark and I went back and forth between our two 12-inch telescopes (mine being a Dob and Marks a SCT), viewing objects and structures in objects we just can't see around here. The Milky Way was breath-taking visually and through a

telescope it was like a silvery sheet sparkling, there were so many stars. Believe it or not when Jupiter rose in the sky it was so bright you could hear people saying it was annoying, and it was.

I went out there with a list of targets to take astrophotos of. All I got was my first night test shot. This night was a learning curve how to do photos and let out no white light (after dark that is forbidden). At this time the weather forecast said we had two more good nights, which never came about.

But there is always next Year!

## The River's Edge

**Sky Puppies Program:** The first session of this program for students ages 8 to 10 met at the Louis Latzer Memorial Public Library on November 3. The first session focused on circumpolar constellations, the moon, and star charts and planispheres. Students in attendance were excited and had fun making moon phase cookies and moon craters. They cannot wait to put their new planispheres and observation logs to use at viewing events!

### 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 17<sup>th</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> from 5:30pm to 7:30pm. For more information, or to enroll, contact Kaskaskia College at 618-545-3445.

**Cheryl Brinkmann** is excited since the **Case Halstead Library in Carlyle** just received their shipment of 500 eclipse glasses! Carlyle is in the path of totality in April so they are set!

**First Quarter Moon Days:** RBAC offers monthly outreach near the first quarter moon at the Northtown Parking Lot in Highland. The session held on September 25 was a success with 45 visitors and lots of new fans eager to see what we were looking at! Information on the Annular Eclipse was available thanks to the NASA Eclipse Ambassadors and Night Sky Network. Details of the event being held at Carlyle Lake on October 14 were shared along with complimentary eclipse glasses. The next scheduled date is International Observe the Moon Night, Sat, Oct 21, 7 to 10 pm.

**Eclipse Shirts:** Order forms for the 2024 Solar Eclipse are available from Jeff Menz. 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. Orders and payment are due at the December 2 meeting.



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### Eclipse Give-a-Ways:

Thanks to the Night Sky Network, and - NASA Eclipse Ambassadors, we have additional eclipse freebies to give away at our events.

## By the Way

**Alan Scheidler, NCRAL Chair**, who visited our club on July 22, was very complimentary in his recent article in the Autumn 2023 issue of "Northern Lights". Highlights of his article included: "I am very impressed with this club. They are very well organized and work well together. They have much to be proud of and are an excellent example of how to conduct public outreach." Kudos to all our members for earning such outstanding praise!

## Gallery

**Ballard Nature Center, Altamont**



*Grandma steadies grandson as he takes a look at the setting sun. (Photo by Terry Menz)*



*Karen Fajardo with young visitor, while Jeff talks with adult visitors. (Photo by Terry Menz)*



*Dan Brandon (l) and Dave Kirsch (r) getting set up before dusk. (Photo by Terry Menz)*



*A young visitor pauses to compare the view in the telescope with what she sees with just her own eyes. (Photo by Terry Menz)*



*Brandon Runyon steadies the stool while a young visitor looks through giant binoculars. (Photo by Terry Menz)*

## Dobfest, Defiance, MO



*Cheryl Brinkmann, (far right) waiting to show visitors about meteorites. (Photo by Jeff Menz)*



*Jeff Menz snaps a photo of ASEM's 36" Dob parked just outside it's "hanger" at Dobfest '23. (Photo by Randy Harrison).*



*Jeff's 10" Dob and Randy's 15" Dob patiently waiting for skies to clear! (photo by Jeff Menz)*

## Okie-Tex



*And yes, they have tarantulas out there (Photo by Randy Harrison)*



*And the flamingos (Photo by Randy Harrison)*

## Sky Puppies, Highland

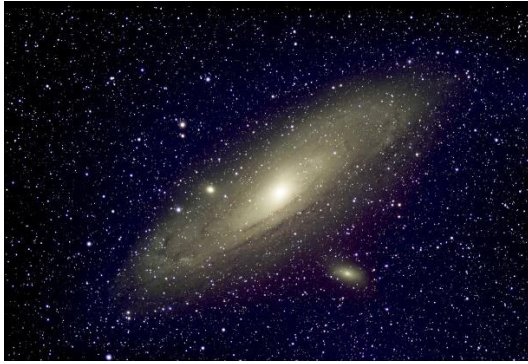


*Max, one of the Sky Puppies participants, creating Moon phases out of Oreo cookies. (Photo by Terry Menz)*

## ASTROPHOTOS



*Photo of the Sun, taken at Oki-Tek, 2023 (Photo by Randy Harrison)*



*M31 Andromeda Galaxy, Sky Watcher 62mm, Sky Watcher GTI Mount, ASI 294 MC PRO, 1 hour 45 minutes. My one Astro photo my test shot setting up my rig for the following nights that never happened (Photo by Randy Harrison)*

**New Members:** Todd White and Justin Novak

**Upcoming Events:**

- Edwardsville Library. Eclipse Talk, Tues, Oct 10, 7 to 9 pm.
- Effingham High School, Thurs Oct 12, 7:30 to 3pm. Jeff (and Terry)
- Annular Eclipse, Saturday, Oct 14, 10am to 2pm, Carlyle Lake. Dam East Boat Ramp
- Hamel Boy Scouts, Wed Oct 18, 6 to 8 pm. Hamel Community Center. Activities and viewing
- 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.
- Girl Scouts at Horner Park, 11113 Widicus Rd, Lebanon, Oct. 27th, 6 to 9pm. Activities and viewing.
- Highland Cub Scouts, Nov 6, 6:30 to 7:30pm, Salem UCC, 2520 Poplar, Highland. Badge activities and viewing.

- RBAC Meeting, Sat, Nov 11, 7pm, Salem UCC
- Brownie Troop #953, Thurs, Nov 16, 3:30 to 4:30 pm, Marie Schaefer Elementary, 505 S Cherry St, O'Fallon, Activities and viewing.
- First Quarter Moon Day, Mon, Nov 20, 7 to 10pm, Highland.
- RBAC Christmas Potluck, Sat. Dec 2, 6pm, Salem UCC. BRING FOOD!



**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.

## Francis Park Stargazing

Enjoy Wednesday night stargazing sessions at Francis Park!

All are welcome to join us! Stop by and look at the Moon or bring your observing gear.

**Location:** We set up in Francis Park in south St. Louis city, at Tamm Ave. & Itaska St.

**Date:** Wednesday, 10/18/2023

**Time:** 7:00 PM - 9:30 PM Central

Events will be canceled for unfavorable weather or sky conditions.

Visit [www.slasonline.org](http://www.slasonline.org), and click Event Calendar for up-to-date information.

## SLSC Solar Public Telescope Viewing

SLSC Solar Public Telescope Viewing at McDonnell Planetarium, weather permitting, the [St Louis Astronomical Society](http://www.slasonline.org) 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 direct you. Telescope viewing runs from 11am to 3pm.

Check the SLAS website for dates: [slasonline.org](http://slasonline.org)

## First Friday Telescope Viewing at St Louis Science Center

First Fridays at McDonnell Planetarium, weather permitting, the St Louis 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](http://slasonline.org)



**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 site tour, training on how to read a star map, library telescope and binocular training, a meteorite exhibit, live 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 1,300 sq ft observatory patio 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: 10:23 am  
Eclipse end time: 1:27 pm

**LOCATION**

The observatory site is located south of the Jefferson College Hillsboro campus (on Hwy 100) near the Hillside Park. There is a gravel parking lot. Making the site accessible, wheelchair accommodations have been made to the extent that the location is within the recommended 50-foot zone and the associated light shield.

**DIRECTIONS**

From I-64, travel south on I-64 to the Jefferson College (Hwy 100) exit. Turn right onto Highway 100 and travel north to Jefferson College. From Hwy 100, turn right onto Highway 100 and travel north to the observatory. (1/4 mile to the right)

1800 Waring Dr., Hillsboro, MO 63050  
[www.jco.edu/observatory](http://www.jco.edu/observatory)

## Kalamazoo Astronomical Society's ECLIPSE SERIES

Get ready for the April 8, 2024 Great North American Eclipse!



November 3<sup>rd</sup> @ 7:00 pm ET | KAMSC & Zoom

**Sun Moon Earth: Solar Eclipses from Omens to Awe**

presented via Zoom by Dr. Tyler Nordgren



November 17<sup>th</sup> @ 8:00 pm ET | Zoom Only

**Part One: How to Photograph the Eclipse**

presented by Alan Dyer



December 15<sup>th</sup> @ 8:00 pm ET | Zoom Only

**Part Two: How to Process Eclipse Images**

presented by Alan Dyer



January 12<sup>th</sup> @ 7:00 pm ET | KAMSC & Zoom

**Moonshadow Madness and Eclipse Journeys**

presented by Jay Anderson



January 19<sup>th</sup> @ 8:00 pm ET | Zoom Only

**Automated Imaging of the 2024 Eclipse**

presented by Fred Bruenjes & Xavier Jubier



February 2<sup>nd</sup> @ 7:00 pm ET | KAMSC & Zoom

**A Tour of the April 8, 2024 Total Solar Eclipse**

presented by Michael Zeller



March 1<sup>st</sup> @ 7:00 pm ET | KAMSC & Zoom

**Experiencing Totality - The Great Eclipse of 2024**

presented via Zoom by "Mr. Eclipse" Fred Espenak

— Learn more and register for Zoom at: <https://www.kassonline.org/eclipse.html> —