

# THE FLINT RIVER OBSERVER

Newsletter of the FLINT RIVER  
ASTRONOMY CLUB  
(an affiliate of the Astronomical League)

**Vol. 11, No. 12** **February, 2008**

**Officers:** President/Alcor, **Curt Cole**; Vice President/Newsletter Editor: **Bill Warren**; Secretary-Treasurer: **Irene Cole**; Board of Directors: **Larry Higgins, Tom Danei** and **Felix Luciano**.

Webmasters, **David Ward** and **Tom Moore**; FRACgroups moderators: **Steve Knight** and **Tom Moore**; Ga. Sky View/Astronomy Day Coordinator, **Steve Knight**; Observing Chairman/Public Observing Coordinator, **Larry Higgins**; Program Co-Chairmen: **Larry Higgins** and **Bill Warren**; Publicity: **Curt Cole**; NASA contact: **Felix Luciano**; and Event Photographer, **Tom Danei**.

Club mailing address: 190 West James Circle, Hampton, GA 30228. Web page: [www.flintriverastronomy.org](http://www.flintriverastronomy.org); discussion group at [FRAC@yahoogroups.com](mailto:FRAC@yahoogroups.com).

Please notify **Curt Cole** (770-946-3405), [24e29d55c@speedfactory.net](mailto:24e29d55c@speedfactory.net), or **Bill Warren** (770-229-6108), [warren7804@bellsouth.net](mailto:warren7804@bellsouth.net), if you have a change of home address, telephone no. or e-mail address.

\* \* \*

**Club Calendar. Mon., Jan. 28:** home-schooling observing (6:00 p.m., Varner Field

in Newton Co.); **Thurs.-Fri., Feb. 1-2:** Cox Field observings (at dark); **Thurs.-Fri., Feb. 8-9:** Cox Field observings (at dark); **Fri., Feb. 15:** FRAC meeting (7:30 p.m., UGa-Griffin campus, Stuckey Bldg.); **Wed., Feb. 20:** public eclipse observing (7:45-whenver, front lawn, UGa-Griffin campus).

\* \* \*

**President's Message.** Recently I read a book titled *North to the Orient*, by **Anne Morrow Lindbergh**, that reminded me that we're all explorers to some degree. This book was about an exploratory trip to China in the summer of 1931 by Anne and her famous husband **Charles** in a plane that they named **Sirius**, after the Dog Star of *Canis Major*.

Flying at night was not a common practice in those early years, but the Lindberghs did it occasionally, undoubtedly admiring the stars as they flew or camped in the dark skies of Canada, Alaska, Japan and China. Once, when darkness overtook them far from their day's destination, they had to land on an isolated lake at night and sleep in their float-equipped plane. Anne didn't mention whether or not the sky was clear that night, but I like to think it was, out in the vast darkness of Alaska.

We amateur astronomers all explore the sky, searching ever deeper for interesting or challenging stars, galaxies & nebulae. When Lindbergh needed to cover longer distances, he got a bigger, more powerful plane. When astronomers need to cover longer distances, they get a bigger, more powerful telescope.

But let's not forget that if we just need to roam around in the neighborhood, say within our solar system, we don't need the telescopic

version of the Boeing 747. A small scope will often do just fine. The important thing is not the size plane or scope you travel to exciting and interesting places with. Remember the goal. It's to travel. To explore. To be amazed at the new discoveries we make. I hope you get to go to many interesting places this year, even if you never leave the ground.

**-Curt Cole**

\* \* \*

**Last Month's Meeting/Activities.** We forgot to mention it in last month's newsletter, but four FRACsters – **Curt, Tom Moore, Larry Higgins** and **yr. truly** – conducted a last-minute PTA observing for Beaverbrook Elementary School on Dec. 11<sup>th</sup>. The sky was lukewarm and the weather cold, but our presenters were red hot. Thanks, guys, for doing your customary splendid job of showing off the wonders of the night sky.

Four of us – **Steve & Aimee Mann, Larry H.** and **yr. editor** – were at Cox Field on Fri., Jan. 4<sup>th</sup>. Aimee was lovely as always, the rest of us stunningly handsome as usual, at least, until her upcoming eye surgery, after which she'll find that we look more like **Mr. Eds** than **Mr. Universes**). But the sky was generally good that night.

Unfortunately, that wasn't the case the following evening when **Curt Cole** met visitors **Mark & Amy Bird** at Cox Field. Still, Curt must have been persuasive during their hour at the field, since the Birds joined FRAC that same evening.

The 22 members and guests who attended our Jan. meeting were treated to one of the finest programs we've ever had: **Larry**

**Higgins**, talking about "Astronomy On a Shoestring."

Larry showed us at least a dozen cost-effective devices and techniques for saving money on equipment, eyepieces and telescopes. At the end of Larry's talk, **Tom Moore** pointed out that, in comparing what Larry put into his 'scopes, equipment, etc., and what Orion Telescopes charges for the same things in its catalog, the savings amounted to a healthy \$750.00.

Incidentally, Larry omitted at least three of his innovations in his talk: first, that his "favorite tool," the empty film canister, can also be used as a dust plug for your eyepiece hole. Second, that a used "Little Debbie" box fits nicely over your Telrad for use as a cheap dew shield. (In an emergency once upon a time, Larry simply folded and taped a piece of notebook paper over a Telrad.) And when **yr. editor's** telescope unexpectedly began overbalancing and tipping forward one evening, Larry suggested attaching car keys to the back of our 'scope with a rubber band. It worked so well that we still do it that way.

The 22 members and guests at the Jan. meeting included: **Curt & Irene Cole, Larry H., Felix Luciano, Joel & Eric Simmons, Alan & Sally Bolton, Ken Walburn, Steve Knight, Steve & Aimee Mann, Joe Auriemma** (who rejoined the club at the meeting), **Charles, Erica & Jeffrey Anstey, Dwight Harness, Tom Moore, Mike Stuart, yr. editor** and visitors **Jerry & Beverly Williams**. (And No, he's *not* the same Jerry Williams who used to be in FRAC.)

We had seven at Cox Field on Jan. 11<sup>th</sup>, including visitors **Israel, Autumn, Amara & Seneca Baryeshua**, FRAC co-founder and telescope maker par excellence **Ken**

**Walburn**, his friend **Raymond Hughes**, and **yr. editor**. The sky cooperated very nicely until around 8 p.m., at which time the clouds rolled in.

Attendance was better the following evening: in addition to the **Baryeshuas**, who came back for more (and wound up joining the club), we also had **Mike Stuart, Larry Higgins, Curt Cole, Tom Moore**, visitors **Jerry & Beverly Williams**, and **yrs. truly**. The sky was as clear as a maiden's conscience, and everyone in attendance had a splendid time looking at things like **Comet 8P/Tuttle** and **Hubble's Variable Nebula (NGC 2261)**, a nebula that looks like a smaller, fainter version of **Comet Hale-Bopp**).

In all, we had 25 members and guests at Cox Field in January.

\* \* \*

**This 'n That**. When told about the Jan. meeting that he'd missed due to bad weather in his area, **Steve Bentley** replied, "I'm sure **Larry** put on a good show. He's a genius at stuff like that. **Betty** and I were gonna come, but she couldn't get her mud pack off."

Since there wasn't a chance in ten thousand that **yr. editor** was gonna let that comment slide by unnoticed, we replied, "Here's a 'Household Hint From **Heloise**': Remind **Betty** that, when applying her mud pack, she shouldn't use Super Glue to hold it in place."

\*Speaking of the **Bentleys**, we received the following message just before midnight on Mon., Jan. 14<sup>th</sup>: "Well, after our granddaughter was in labor for nearly 19 hours, they had to do a C-section, but **Betty** and I are officially great-grandparents now.

**Eathon Bradley Porter** was born at about 11:30 p.m. He weighed 8 lbs., 5 oz., and was 19 in. long. They use some kind of scale to describe the baby's condition at birth, and Eathon was 9.9 on a scale of 10. I hope that's good.

"I haven't seen him yet, but **Betty** says that he's pretty. It'll probably be a week before I get to see him, so all that matters now is going to bed and getting some sleep."

\*From **David O'Keeffe**: "Hello and happy new year. I was eager to see what **Isaiah** (the youngster on David's bus route) had to say about his telescope from 'Santa'. He said he got a *big* telescope, and it's in safe keeping in his Dad's closet. We will have to wait and see what transpires. When Dad received the 'scope, he was very grateful. And once again I thank all who helped in this endeavor."

\*We hasten to extend a hearty welcome to new members **Mark & Amy Bird** of Sharpsburg, Ga.; **Israel, Autumn, Amara & Seneca Baryeshua** of Williamson, Ga.; **Charles Boils** of Thomaston, Ga.; and returnees **Joe & Martha Auriemma** of Senoia, Ga.

Mark & Amy, Israel & Autumn, and Charles, please let us know what we can do to help make your membership worthwhile and enjoyable.

Joe and Martha – well, welcome back to FRAC. We've missed you muchly, and it feels like old times seeing you at our meetings and observings.

\*On Jan. 12<sup>th</sup>, **Israel Baryeshua** became the first and only person ever to arrive at a Cox Field observing by bicycle. (The

Baryeshuas are the Coxses' next door neighbors, so it wasn't a very long ride.)

\*Finally, we should note that, sometime during the next couple of months, **Ken "Twinkletoes" Walburn** will have hip replacement surgery, after which it'll just be a matter of time before we expect to see him performing on "Dancing With the Stars."

\* \* \*

**Upcoming Events.** **Larry H.** has scheduled an observing for a home-schooling group from Jackson, Ga., at 6:00 p.m. on **Mon., Jan. 28<sup>th</sup>**. The coordinator told Larry to expect about 75 students and parents, so we hope you'll be able to attend. The site will be Varner Field, Newton Co.'s RC Flyers' Club Field.

To get there from, say, Jonesboro, take I-75 S to the Ga. Hwy. 20/81 exit, then go E on 20/81 to the square in downtown McDonough. From there, follow Hwy. 81 until it intersects with Ga. Hwy. 212. Turn right at 212, and stay on that highway for 7.9 mi., then turn left at Ga. Hwy. 36. Go 5.2 mi. on 36 and turn right at Lackey Rd. Go 0.2 mi. to the 1<sup>st</sup> road on the left, Johnson Terrace, and turn right. Go 0.4 mi. to the end of the road, and the site will be on the left.

To get there from Griffin, take Ga. Hwy. 16 E to Jackson. Turn left at Ga. Hwy. 36. Stay on Hwy. 36 for approximately 18 mi. until you reach Lackey Rd. Turn right at Lackey Rd., and follow the directions from there in the previous paragraph.

(Thanks to **Tom Moore** for supplying those directions. –Ed.)

Our Feb. Cox Field observing weekends will be **Fri.-Sat., Feb. 1st-2<sup>nd</sup>** and **Fri.-Sat., Feb. 8th-9<sup>th</sup>**.

*Please note the following carefully and mark it on your calendar:* Since our regular club meeting date falls on Valentine's Day this year, *we're changing our February meeting date to the following day, Fri., Feb. 15<sup>th</sup>*. We will, however, meet at our usual time (7:30 p.m.) and location on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor of the Stuckey Bldg. on the UGa-Griffin campus. Our Feb. speaker, **Steve Bentley**, will talk about "Power Sources for Your Telescope."

On **Wed., Feb. 20<sup>th</sup>**, FRAC will conduct a **total lunar eclipse** observing on the front lawn of the UGa-Griffin campus where we hold our meetings. (The lawn in question is the area between the parking lot and the street.)

Technically, it's a UGa-Griffin event and part of our ongoing commitment to that group in return for allowing us to conduct our meetings on their campus. In real terms, though, our eclipse observing will be open to the community and publicized beforehand in the *Griffin Daily News*. So we need your help on that evening.

Virtually all you'll need to know about eclipses is that (a) Lunar eclipses occur when the Earth moves between the **Moon** and the **Sun**, casting our planet's shadow on the Moon's surface; (b) The next total lunar eclipse we'll be able to see will be about 3 years from now; and, if you want to get fancy, (c) The other kind of eclipses, called **solar eclipses**, occur in the daytime when the Moon moves between the Earth and the Sun.

Seriously, folks, that's all there is to it. Anything you tell them beyond those basics will be icing on the cake. This will be a great opportunity to talk with a lot of potential members living in the Griffin area, and you can help us spread the word about astronomy and FRAC.

Of course, you might also want to tell our visitors that "If you want to join FRAC, our dues are \$15 a year and that big guy over there (**Curt Cole**) will be happy to give you a membership application and take your check."

The visible part of the eclipse will begin at 8:43 p.m., but those with telescopes to set up might want to arrive at 7:45 or earlier in order to get a parking space near the lawn. The eclipse will last for four hours. Stay as long as you like.

\* \* \*

**The Sky in February.** **Mars** will begin evenings high in the sky in *Taurus* in Feb., and **Saturn** will rise at sunset and be visible all night throughout the month. On **Feb. 20<sup>th</sup>**, the evening of our **total lunar eclipse observing** at UGa-Griffin, Saturn will be to the lower left of the **Moon** as you face east. (**Regulus [Alpha Leonis]** will be the bright star above the Moon when our observing begins.)

On **Feb. 1<sup>st</sup>**, **Venus** and **Jupiter** will be "morning stars" lying less than  $1/2^\circ$  apart in the SE sky in *Taurus* at 5:30 a.m. (**Ken Walburn**, who wouldn't get up that early for a bikini-clad **Jessica Simpson** knocking at his front door, insists that 5:30 a.m. is an urban legend, like alligators in the sewers.)

The star of February's night show is, of course, the total lunar eclipse on the 20<sup>th</sup>. At 8:43 that evening, Earth's shadow will begin

to glide ever so slowly across the Moon's surface, changing its color to a dark red, orange, copper, or something similar. The dark shadow – called the **umbra** – will reach totality at 10:00, and that phase will last 52 min., after which the shadow will recede until 12:09 a.m. on Feb. 21<sup>st</sup>.

For more on the eclipse, see **Alan MacRoberts's** article, "February's Ideal Eclipse of the Moon" (*Sky & Telescope* [Feb. 2008], pp. 68-71.

\* \* \*

## LOVE AND ASTRONOMY

### article by **Curt Cole**

February, the month of love by virtue of Valentine's Day, is upon us. Astronomers down through the ages must have been romantics, judging by the number of celestial features associated with love.

**Venus** is one of those heavenly bodies. Venus was a roman goddess of beauty. Her Greek counterpart was the goddess **Aphrodite**, who was the goddess of not just sensual love, but love of one's family, friends, and country. The fun loving Romans came to view Venus more in the light of sexual love. The bright planet Venus is visible in the morning sky shortly before dawn this month. Look low in the southeast as the sky begins to brighten.

Another heavenly body associated with love is the asteroid **433 Eros**. Eros was the Greek god of love. We get the word erotic from him. This asteroid, about 8 miles in diameter and 21 miles long, is the second largest known Near Earth Object, and has an

orbital period of 1.76 years. NASA landed the spacecraft NEAR Shoemaker on Eros on Feb. 12, 2001. It sent back many photos while there. The IAU has used a love theme to name craters on Eros. They include Cupid, Casanova, Don Juan and Valentine.

The body with the most romantically named features is probably the **Moon**, which will be totally eclipsed this month on the 20<sup>th</sup>. Some of these features should be resolvable in binoculars.

The lunar feature most deserving on Valentine's Day may be Sinus Amoris, or Bay of Love. Put on **Dean Martin's** "That's Amore" and show your beloved this indentation on the northeastern edge of Mare Tranquilitatis (Sea of Tranquility). Amoris is roughly 90 miles wide and 150 miles long. You should be able to make it out in binoculars. The Italian Jesuit priest **Riccioli** named it and many other lunar features in 1651, and his chart formed the basis for the lunar nomenclature we use today.

Sinus is Latin for "curving part or recess", and when found on a seashore, we refer to it as a bay or gulf. Many of the lunar sinuses in particular can be said to have romantic names.

Searching for harmony in your love life? Try Sinus Concordiae, Bay of Harmony, a 60 x 100 mile feature on the eastern edge of Mare Tranquilitatis.

I have it on good authority through a friend of a friend of an acquaintance that in the good old days before women's lib, a groom could look forward to the part of the wedding ceremony where the bride promised to "Love, honor and obey." We've already found the first two connections to these promises, but where to look for "obey"? Well, an old lunar cartographer had just penciled it in on his

chart, Sinus Sequi, meaning "to follow", when he felt his independently minded wife breathing down his neck. He turned around and saw her angry stare, so he quickly erased it. Later, when she wasn't looking, he named that feature with her in mind. You'll find it on the southern edge of Mare Imbrium (Sea of Showers). It's about 140 miles in diameter and is called Sinus Aestuum, or Seething Bay.

An important aspect of any romantic relationship is faithfulness. All Marines are familiar with the motto Semper Fidelis, so they should easily decipher the meaning of Sinus Fidei, on the northern edge of Mare Vaporum, Sea of Vapors. This bay is about 30 x 40 miles. Fidei means faith or trust.

I'm told that in every relationship a little rain must fall. After a fight, most lovers want to make up and see a beautiful rainbow. You can find your rainbow on the northwest edge of Mare Imbrium (Sea of Rains or Showers) as Sinus Iridium, Bay of Rainbows. It's about 240 x 160 miles. An easy binocular target.

As mentioned above, sometimes romantic partners find themselves at extremes. To get back on track, try meeting in the middle at Sinus Medii, a 200 mile diameter area in the very middle of the moon's disk, hence the name.

The final goal for many in the search for romance is to successfully start a family. That sometimes takes years of practice, which nobody I know seems to object to. Train your scope or binos on the northeastern edge of Mare Fecunditatis, Sea of Fertility, where you'll find 60 mile wide Sinus Successus. By the time most couples celebrate their 50<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary, their wrinkled bodies probably resemble the lunar surface. So we'll conclude this romantic lunar interlude by

observing a bay on the southern edge of Mare Tranquilatis. It's an easy binocular object about 110 x 230 miles. It's known as Sinus Asperitatis, or Bay of Roughness.

\* \* \*

## Why GEORGIA SKY VIEW Should

### Be Your First Star Party

by Charles Anstey

If you have never attended a star party, you might be uneasy about doing so. Thoughts of upsetting other astronomers or breaking some unwritten rule can dampen your enthusiasm. You may have heard horror stories about unfriendly observers yelling at others about white lights, noise, or ruining their time under the stars. Such stories are rare, and they tend to be highly exaggerated.

**Georgia Sky View 2007** was my first official star party, and I found it exceptionally enjoyable. I am a member of FRAC, the host club, so I already knew many of those in attendance, but it didn't matter. **Ga. Sky View** makes attending a star party very easy and natural.

**The Site.** Common first timer concerns are: where you will set up, how you will get around, where you will eat, what happens if it rains, and will the experience be worth the effort?

The setup at GSV is very simple. There is one large observing/parking/camping field, and a smaller one beside the dining hall. You can park your car on the large field and then set up your telescope and tent right next to it.

Those with RVs or travel trailers normally set up along the edge of the tree-lined field to keep their large vehicles from blocking the view of others on the field, and to minimize generator noise.

During the daytime hours, you can drive on and off the field all you want, whether to get something to eat or to go on a day excursion. Some people bring food with them, but most seem to head out to the local restaurants for their meals. I brought food last time, but I think this year I will eat out.

The facilities at Camp McIntosh are excellent. There is a very large meeting hall/dining room/kitchen where presentations and the Saturday potluck dinner are held. You'll almost always find a few people there at any time, day or night. Drinks, coffee and snacks are available for \$0.50 - \$1.00 on the honor system. If it rains, the dining hall is more than large enough to accommodate everyone.

There are two bunkhouses, one for each gender, with bathrooms, showers and hot water. (Restrooms are also located in the dining hall.) The bunkhouses are located a short walk from the observing field, and you may prefer to sleep in a temperature-moderated bunkhouse instead of on the field for a small additional fee. Each bunkhouse has about 20 top-bottom bunk beds on either side of the building, with bathrooms and showers centrally located between them.

**GSV At Night.** You shouldn't drive on or off the field after dark unless there is an emergency. If you are really nervous about that issue (or if you have chosen to stay off-site), you can park in front of the dining hall and come and go as you please. I don't think

anyone at GSV 2007 needed or wanted to drive after dark.

At night, most everyone will be observing, or simply wandering around between the observing field and meeting house. You do not need a light to get around but if you use one, it should be red. If you accidentally turn on a white light, no one is going to yell at you to turn it off or demand angrily that you be thrown off the premises. At worst, someone will kindly remind you to use a red light. I found GSV '07 to be primarily a socially interactive event rather than a bunch of serious observers hunkered down at their scopes.

Regarding GSV and maybe star parties in general: I think you get out of it what you put into it. Star parties are not organized for people meet each other, or to have experts specifically teach novices. Everyone is free to do as they will.

Normally, I am not a gregarious person, but at GSV '07 I went out of my way to introduce myself to others and see what they were doing. By doing so I met many people and learned quite a bit. I was able to view through a large 20" Obsession 'scope, and also a solar PST. I had never looked at the **Sun** that way before, and it was quite a treat.

There are always observers willing to help you in setting up, or in answering any questions you might have. You need only to introduce yourself and ask.

As with most unfamiliar situations, your imagination of all the bad things that could happen is far worse than the reality. Georgia Sky View has a very simple layout, great facilities, and friendly people that make it an

excellent choice as your first star party or your 100<sup>th</sup>.

*(Editor's Note: For more information about Ga. Sky View 2008, including a registration form with price list, see the GSV link on our website,*

*<[www.flintriverastronomy.org](http://www.flintriverastronomy.org)> . And follow our "Downloads" link to "FRAC Observing Rules and Guidelines," the last section of which deals specifically with star parties.)*

\* \* \*

## **Our Upcoming Elections: Some**

### **Thoughts and a Glitch**

**by Bill Warren**

As most of you probably know, shortly after **Curt** announced that he wouldn't be seeking reelection this year after two terms as FRAC's president, I decided to throw my size 7-1/4 hat into the ring. In doing so, however, I encountered a glitch in FRAC's bylaws that requires a bit of explanation and back-tracking.

**Back to The Past.** In Jan., 1997, when **Larry Higgins, Ken Walburn** and I met to form an astronomy club in the Flint River area, one of our first orders of business was to devise a simple set of bylaws. I wrote those bylaws, basing them largely on an example suggested by the A.L. in its "Observing Notes" series.

Those early bylaws stated that "The elected officers...shall be: President; Vice President; and Secretary/Treasurer" (Art. 3, Sect. 1), and that "Their election shall be contingent upon a majority vote at a general club meeting." (Art.

6, Sect. 1) We saw no need for more than that, since at that time we foresaw FRAC's growth maybe extending to as many as 10-12 members in the next 5-10 years.

Eighteen people showed up for our inaugural club meeting in Feb., 1997. Most of them joined FRAC that night. So much for our fears that no one would be interested in our new club.

FRAC continued to grow after that, and several years later its enrollment leveled off at about 35 members. The club also grew more complex during that period, including modifications such as adding a Board of Directors in Feb., 2003.

In June, 1994, **Smitty** suggested that we needed to amend the bylaws to provide for a single annual date when members' dues should be paid. (Previously, members paid every year on the anniversary of their joining date.) I spent two weeks editing, revising and expanding our original bylaws to their present form. Those revisions and additions were passed unanimously at the next meeting.

**Back to the Future.** As Curt and FRAC's other, past presidents will tell you, it hasn't always been easy to find candidates for elected offices in FRAC. As a result, our amended bylaws call for the formation of a nominating committee to identify members who are willing to serve as officers and board members. That system served us well in the past.

This year, however, the situation has changed and, I felt, merits a different approach. Since Curt isn't running for president and I am, I decided to emulate our political parties and select a slate of candidates to serve with me if elected. I feel very

strongly that that slate – **Larry Higgins**, Vice President; **Steve Bentley**, Secretary/Treasurer; and **Tom Moore, Felix Luciano** and **Tom Danei**, Board Members – offers excellent leadership for FRAC in the coming year. Our club is growing by leaps and bounds, and with the election of those fine gentlemen I am confident that FRAC will continue to grow larger and stronger.

That's not to say, of course, that no positions will go unchallenged at the March election meeting. Curt indicated at the Jan. meeting that he will nominate **Charles Anstey** for a Board position, and I'm sure that Charles will, like the others, do a fine job if elected. The same holds true for any other as-yet undeclared candidates for any position who may arise at the Feb. meeting when nominees are officially designated. (We do it that way in order to have all of the nominees' names appear on the voting ballot for the March election meeting, so members using absentee ballots will know who's running for office.)

So here's the little “glitch” referred to in the title: the nominating committee (as required by our bylaws) is composed of me, **Felix, Tom D., Larry H.** and **Curt**, all of whom (except Curt) hope to be elected at the Mar. meeting. The bylaws do not state who should select members to serve on the nominating committee; rather, they simply state that “a nominating committee shall be selected...” and that the total number of officer/board positions must be limited to six or seven members.

If it appears somewhat self-serving for me to have named a slate of nominees – well, as I stated earlier, I certainly am not implying or suggesting that only my nominees are capable of leading FRAC – or, for that matter, that I am the only one who might lead the club

capably. Like you, I will support to the fullest anyone and everyone who is elected.

If elected, one of my projects will be a further review and update of the bylaws. For example, while we once needed a nominating committee to find candidates for elected office, it's likely that we no longer need it because we now have greater member involvement than was formerly the case, and more members who are willing to serve in an elected capacity.

Another priority in such a review of the bylaws will be to strengthen the responsibilities of the Board of Directors, who, under our existing bylaws, function primarily in an advisory capacity. I also want to prepare written job descriptions for all FRAC elected positions. (Presently, the only position with a written job description is vice president, and that only if **Larry Fallin** still has the one I prepared for him prior to his becoming v.p. when I stepped down in 2003.)

As for my own qualifications for FRAC's presidency, I presently serve as your vice president, newsletter editor and co-chairman of the Program Committee. I was FRAC's vice president from 1997-2003, during which time I also served as newsletter editor and chairman of the Program and Observing Committees.

**Larry Higgins**, another of FRAC's co-founders and candidate for vice president in 2008, was the club's first president. Before that, Larry served as vice president and observing chairman of the Atlanta Astronomy Club. He presently serves as a Board member of FRAC, and as Observing Chairman and Co-Program Chairman as well. To know Larry at all is to know that he is an extremely

capable astronomer and highly effective leader who will make an excellent vice president.

**Steve Bentley**, a relative newcomer to FRAC and candidate for the combined office of secretary/treasurer, was secretary of the 125-member Macon Rifle and Pistol Club. As a member of FRAC, Steve has proven himself to be one of our hardest and most dedicated workers, having spearheaded our recent calendar sale to raise money for the club. He also donated two calendars to be used as door prizes at our Christmas party; he paid his and wife **Betty's** 20 dues with a \$50 check for one year's dues and a \$35 donation to the club; and at his own expense, Steve spent more than \$300 preparing a much-needed slide show that we have since used in several FRAC public presentations. So it's not just whistling in the dark to say that Steve is a capable candidate for treasurer.

Although relatively newly returned to FRAC after a 1-1/2 year sabbatical, **Tom Moore**, a board nominee, has already made his presence and the quality of his work known in his recent work on our website. Previously, Tom has served as FRAC's Alcor and club librarian, and took those roles very seriously.

**Felix Luciano** and **Tom Danei** presently are board members seeking reelection. Felix has served in a variety of other roles in FRAC during his years with the club, those roles ranging from NASA contact to public observing liaison to, of course, board member. Tom, experienced in video productions, is the one who prepared the cd extolling FRAC's virtues; it's a lovely work that will go far in expanding the club's outreach efforts.

##