

THE FLINT RIVER OBSERVER

NEWSLETTER OF THE FLINT
RIVER ASTRONOMY CLUB

An Affiliate of the Astronomical League

Vol. 24, No. 1 **March 2020**

Officers: President, **Sean Neckel**; Vice President, **Aaron Calhoun**; Secretary / ALCOR **Mark Grizzaffi**; Treasurer, **Steve Hollander**; Board of Directors: **Dwight Harness, Felix Luciano, and George Ruff**; Program/Observing Coordinator: **Sean Neckel**; Facebook Coordinator: **Aaron Calhoun**; Webmaster: **Tom Moore**; Newsletter Editor: **Dawn Chappell**; NASA Contact: **Felix Luciano**

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DUES REMINDER:

If you have not already paid your yearly dues, please turn them in by 4/1/2020. Dues are \$15. Pay at the next meeting, or send to Sean Neckel at 788 Rising Star Rd. Brooks, GA 30205

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Club Calendar:

Thursday March 12, 7:30pm
FRAC Meeting @ the Garden in Griffin
Program: Aaron Calhoun will teach us how to calculate the distances between stars.

Saturday March 14, 7:45pm
Astronomy in the Park
High Falls State Park, Jackson, GA

Friday and Saturday, March 20-21, at dark
Club observing weekend
Joe Kurz Wildlife Management Area

Friday March 27, 8-11pm
Fayette County Rec. Dept. Public observing
Lake Horton County Park, Fayetteville

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President's Message:

Hello FRAC Members, and welcome to the 24th year of the Flint River Astronomy Club. I do not have a topic for this month, just a few thoughts and observations.

- After a couple month hiatus, the Flint River Observer is back, thanks to the efforts of Dawn Chappell and Aaron Calhoun, who have both volunteered to help put out our monthly newsletter.
- This year, one of my goals is to have more interactive monthly meetings. Recently, I have gotten several great ideas about programs for our meetings from members. I will work to get these put on the agenda each month. If you have an idea for a meeting activity, workshop, lecture, etc. please let me know!
- Last year, George Huff suggested that we make a scale model of the solar system. If anyone would like to help with the planning and execution of this project, or have any ideas for it, bring them to the March meeting. Getting started on this project will be on the meeting agenda!
- Finally, I want to thank everyone who has participated in our public outreach events over the past year. Guests at our events really do appreciate the opportunity that we give them. Remember that you do not need a scope to participate in observing events.

-Sean Neckel

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This 'n That:

Trivia

1. What planet has the most moons?
2. How many Earth's can fit inside Jupiter?
3. How far is the closest star after the sun?

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Previous Meetings/Activities:

The February club meeting had 9 attendees: Sean Neckel, Tom Moore, Dawn Chappell, David Clay, Aaron Morris, Mark Grizzaffi, Dwight Harness, Steve Hollander and Aaron Calhoun.

Elections were held during the meeting with the following results: Sean Neckel, President; Aaron Calhoun, Vice President; Mark Grizzaffi, Secretary / ALCOR; Steve Hollander, Treasurer; Dawn Chappell, Newsletter Editor
Board Members: Dwight Harness, Felix Luciano, George Ruff

During the meeting we also celebrated FRAC's 23rd Birthday with some wonderful snacks.

Special welcome to our newest members, Terry Morgan and Russell Lamb.

Sprewell Bluff Park Public Observing

February 15th

Thomaston, GA

Club Members: Sean and Chelsea Neckel, George Ruff, Bill Honea, Steve Knight. New member joined - Terry Morgan

Clear dark skies and a beautiful observing site on the banks of the Flint River. The event started with the brilliant appearance of Venus to start the evening at sunset. Once dark, the evening was perfect to view some deep sky objects such as the Orion Nebula (M42), the Beehive Cluster (M44), the Andromeda Galaxy (M31) and its satellite galaxy (M32), and the Owl Cluster (NGC457).
Attendees: Approximately 125 guests attended the observing event, which lasted from 6:30pm until 9pm.

FRAC Observing Weekend:

Friday, February 21st: Cold and clear, the night started with a beautiful view of Venus shining bright in the western sky before sunset and well into the night. 4 club members attended, Sean Neckel, Bill Honea, Steve Knight, and new club member Russell Lamb. The evening concluded around 10pm when it was cold enough that dew heaters could no longer keep up, and our optics began frosting over.

Saturday, February 22nd: The weather was warmer than Friday (barely), but the skies were hazy, so attendance was light. Steve Knight was there with club guest and High Falls State Park manager Adrianna Basterdash.

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The March Sky:

March 2nd - First Quarter moon

March 9th - Venus will be 2 degrees north of Uranus. Look for a blue dot for Uranus. You will need binoculars.

March 9th - Full moon

March 16th - Last Quarter moon

March 18th - around 5:30 am look for Mars and Jupiter above the moon low in the east. Saturn is to the lower left about 2 degrees away.

March 19th - First Quarter moon

March 24th - New moon. Best day to do the Messier marathon!

March 26th - moon will be close to Uranus.

Evening planets:

Venus and Uranus will be visible to the west.

Morning planets:

Mercury will be visible to the east. Mars, Jupiter and Saturn to the southeast.

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Trivia Answers:

1. Saturn with 82!
2. 1300 Earth's!
3. 4.2 light years away. Proxima Centauri. A red dwarf.

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