

THE FLINT RIVER OBSERVER

NEWSLETTER OF THE FLINT
RIVER ASTRONOMY CLUB

An Affiliate of the Astronomical League

Vol. 25, No. 2 February 2021

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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Club Calendar:

KAS Remote Observing: Another remote observing event, hosted by KAS (Kalamazoo Astronomical Society), will take place on February 6, 2021 at 9:00pm EST. Register at this link: [2/6/2021 Registration Link](#)

Check out KAS' schedule of events for February. They have some very interesting online activities that are open to the public.
[KAS Schedule](#)

FRAC Meeting: Thursday, February 11, 2021, 7:30pm on Zoom.

- Officer elections will take place during the February 2021 meeting. If you would like to nominate yourself or someone else for an officer position, you can email me at stneckel@gmail.com. More information on the responsibilities of each office can be found in the club charter [here](#).
- There is not currently a planned presentation, but if time allows after officer elections there may be a video to share.

A meeting invitation will be sent out in early February for the meeting. If you do not get an invite to the meeting, please email me at stneckel@gmail.com and I will reply with the invite.

Meetings will continue to be virtual going forward in 2021 until we have use of the UGA Experimental Garden in Griffin again.

FRAC Observing: Club observing weekend, Friday and Saturday February 12-13, 2021 at Joe Kurz WMA, sunset until whenever.

No other events are scheduled for February 2021.

Please keep checking your email for updates regarding club events.

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Trivia:

1. What is the coldest known place in the universe?
2. What is the fastest planet in the Solar System? What is the speed?
3. The planets make up what percentage of the mass in our solar system?
4. What are the only two planets in our solar system without moons?
5. The hottest place in the universe is in which constellation?

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President's Message:

Hello FRAC Members,

It is February, so club membership dues are now being accepted. Please send your \$15 renewal to me at the address below:

Sean Neckel
788 Rising Star Rd.
Brooks, GA 30205

If paying by check, please make the check out to 'FRAC' or 'Flint River Astronomy Club'. If you would prefer to pay by another means (PayPal, etc.) please contact me at stneckel@gmail.com to arrange payment.

In other news, we have been contacted by the Fayette County Rec Department, and by the staff at

Sprewell Bluff Park regarding public observing events. The tentative plan is to schedule events starting in August 2021. This will be dependent on the status of the COVID situation at that time and may change. The safety of our members and our guests is paramount, and we will only engage in public outreach when it is safe for everyone.

Sean

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Welcome!

Welcome new member Scott Powell, and welcome back Alfred McClure!

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Previous Meetings/Activities:

FRAC Meeting - January 14, 2021 - 7:30pm on zoom.us

- 16 members attended our virtual meeting. Sean and Chelsea Neckel, Katie Nagy, George Ruff, Doyne Tallman, Steven Hollander, Alfred McClure, Jeff Baldwin, Tom Moore, Dawn Chappell, Bill Evans, Dwight Harness, Felix Luciano, Elaine Stachowiak, John Cruickshank, and Terry Morgan.
- Katie Nagy gave a fantastic presentation on the history of sunspot observation. Thank you from all of us, Katie!
- For some great images of the sun, including what the sun looks like today, check out the Solar Dynamics Observatory.
<https://sdo.gsfc.nasa.gov/>

FRAC Observings:

Doyne Tallman was the lone FRAC member to go to Joe Kurz WMA on Friday January 15, 2021. He reported that he was imaging the Horsehead Nebula.

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Solar System Observing - January 2021

Mercury Is approaching inferior solar conjunction and will not be visible.

Venus is beginning to pass behind the sun and will not be visible.

Earth looks pretty good, considering its age.

Mars will be visible at dusk, setting after midnight.

Jupiter and Saturn both just passed solar conjunction and are not visible.

Uranus is visible with a telescope early evening until just after midnight.

Neptune is visible with a telescope early evening until about 3 hours after sunset.

Moon: LQ 2/4 New: 2/11 FQ: 2/19 Full: 2/27

<https://in-the-sky.org/>

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Classifieds:

If you have something you would like to buy, sell, or trade, email the specifics, including your contact information to stneckel@gmail.com

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NGC 633 Open Cluster in Cassiopeia Courtesy of Felix Luciano

Details:

AP 130GT @ FL 819mm

ST8300M @ -20C,

Exposures:

RGB: 8 subs X 300 sec

Full size photo here: [NGC 663](https://www.in-the-sky.org/NGC633.html)

Additional information:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/NGC_663

4. Mercury and Venus.

5. Virgo

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M33, The Triangulum Galaxy

Photo courtesy of Alan Pryor

About this photo:

This photo of Messier 33 was taken from my pasture 17 miles west of Atlanta on November 13th. It was taken with a 14" Planewave telescope and an FLI 16803 camera. All the frames were 5-minute exposures. There were 20 luminescent, 9 red, 8 green and 8 blue exposures. That is only 3.75 hours of exposure, but it took most of the night to get them.

Messier 33 is the third largest galaxy in our local group with a diameter of about 60,000 lightyears, and it is only 2.7 million lightyears away. It is sometimes known as the Triangulum Galaxy. Some call it the Pinwheel Galaxy, but that name is also used on Messier 101. It has well defined spiral arms and a lot of H II regions. Some say it can be seen with the naked eye, but the first time I saw it was about 10 years ago through my 20" telescope. The naked eye could not get past the light pollution.
- Alan Pryor

The full-size photo is located here:

[M33](#)

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Trivia Answers:

1. Boomerang Nebula -458 degrees F
2. Mercury. 45 km/second
3. 0.135%