

# THE FLINT RIVER OBSERVER

NEWSLETTER OF THE FLINT  
RIVER ASTRONOMY CLUB

An Affiliate of the Astronomical League

**Vol. 25, No. 4** April 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:

**FRAC Meeting:** Thursday, April 8, 2021, 7:30pm on Zoom.

For our April meeting, Scott Harris, a planetary geologist from the Fernbank Science Center and Jim Cherry Memorial Planetarium will be presenting, "The Frequency of Asteroid and Comet Impacts in the Earth-Moon System". It should be a smashing good time, and it's sure to leave a big impression!! Sorry, I couldn't help myself, my fingers refused to NOT type that.

Scott has set up a Zoom call for us starting at 7:15pm, and the meeting will start promptly at 7:30pm. A meeting invitation will be sent out in early April for the meeting. If you do not get an invite to the meeting, please email me at [stneckel@gmail.com](mailto: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 April 9-10, 2021 at Joe Kurz WMA, sunset until whenever.

No other events are scheduled for April 2021.

Please keep checking your email for updates regarding club events.

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## Trivia:

1. How big is the Milky Way?
2. What type of galaxy is the Milky Way?
3. How far are we from the center of the galaxy?
4. In our part of the galaxy how thick is it?
5. How many stars does the Milky Way have?

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## President's Message:

Hello FRAC Members,

So far this year we have had a pair of really great presentations, and I'd like to say thanks to Katie for her presentation on the history of sunspot observing in January, and to Felix for getting me in contact with comet hunter Don Machholz. It actually inspired me a bit to try and find a presenter for this month, and I'm really excited that Scott Harris from the Fernbank Science center will be joining us to discuss asteroid impacts.

Let's keep those ideas rolling in, everyone. If you have something you'd like to share with the club, an idea you would like to pitch, or have someone in mind that might want to speak to us, let me know and let's talk about it!

Sean

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## Club Dues:

Reminder that if you have not yet paid club dues, please do so as soon as possible. \$15 payable by check or cash sent to Sean Neckel, 788 Rising Star Rd., Brooks, GA 30205. Or you can send by PayPal, please email me for details at [stneckel@gmail.com](mailto:stneckel@gmail.com).

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## Previous Meetings/Activities:

FRAC Meeting - March 11, 2021 - 7:30pm on zoom.us

- 17 members attended our virtual meeting. Sean and Chelsea Neckel, Katie Nagy, Scott Powell, John Cruickshank, George Ruff, Dwight Harness, Mark Grizzaffi, Tom Moore, Alfred McClure, Dawn Chappell, Carlos Flores, Doyne Tallman, Aaron Calhoun, Steve Hollander, Alan Pryor, and Felix Luciano. We were also joined by 2 guests.
- Our guest speaker, Don Machholz gave an amazing presentation about his career as a comet hunter. If you missed this presentation, you can check out his achievements at <https://donmachholz.com/>. Don also has an astronomy podcast, "Looking Up with Don" that you can listen to on his site.

## FRAC Observings:

The March observing weekend of 3/12 and 3/13 was a cloudy mess.

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## Solar System Observing – April 2021

**Mercury** is very close to the sun and not observable.

**Venus** is very close to the sun and not observable.

**Earth** cannot take your call right now but leave a message and it will get back to you after the solstice.

**Mars** will be visible at dusk, setting after midnight.

**Jupiter** will be visible before sunrise for most of April, rising 2 hours before the Sun.

**Saturn** will also be visible before sunrise, rising about 3 hours before the Sun.

**Uranus** is approaching solar conjunction and is very close to the horizon at sunset.

**Neptune** is very close to the sun and not observable.

**Moon:** LQ 4/4 New: 4/11 FQ: 4/20 Full: 4/26

<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](mailto:stneckel@gmail.com)

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Open clusters M35 and NGC 2158 in the constellation Gemini.

Courtesy of Felix Luciano

TAK TOA 130 @ FL1000mm ST8300M, Baader RGB filters Exposures:  
RGB: 10 subs X 300 sec

Full size image: [M35 and NGC 2158](#)



NGC 3628

Courtesy of Alan Pryor

NGC 3628, also known as The Hamburger Galaxy is a spiral galaxy 35 million light years from Earth in the constellation Leo.

[NGC 3628](#)

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**Trivia Answers:**

1. Around 100,000 light years wide
2. Spiral
3. 25,000 to 26,000 light years away
4. Around 1000 light years thick
5. 200 billion to 400 billion stars.

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