

THE FLINT RIVER OBSERVER

NEWSLETTER OF THE FLINT
RIVER ASTRONOMY CLUB

An Affiliate of the Astronomical League

Vol. 25, No. 12 **December 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 Observing: Club observing weekend, Friday, and Saturday December 3-4, 2021, at Joe Kurz WMA, sunset until whenever.

FRAC Meeting: Thursday, December 9, 2021, 7:30pm at the UGA Experimental Gardens in Griffin, GA. We will have our holiday party with snacks and a gift exchange. Please bring a dessert to share and a wrapped gift to exchange.

Public Observing Events:

None scheduled for December.

Please keep checking your email for updates regarding club events.

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President's Message:

Hello FRAC Members,

On November 13th, FRAC founding member, former President and Vice President Bill Warren passed away in Florida at the age of 79. Bill was a great man, a fantastic

astronomer, and the reason that I am with the Flint River Astronomy Club.

When I first joined, he immediately made me feel like I was amongst friends. Bill was the first and only person who asked me what my scope's 'first light' was, and he told me why it was important to remember (it was Rigel). He taught me how to star-hop. Bill told me it did not matter that my sketches were not any good, but that it was important to keep trying. Bill showed me how useful a laser pointer can be, and why you need one at an outreach event. And he showed me how fulfilling showing the stars to the public can be.

He treated my daughter like his own, helping her with observing, and even giving her a meteorite as a gift.

He encouraged me to become more involved in the club and made sure I didn't make a mess of things. I only had the privilege to know him for a few years, and I wish I had known him longer. Below I've included the thoughts sent to me from those who knew him much better than I. Thank you all for your words.

Thanks, Bill. You are missed.

Sean



Alan Pryor:

When I first joined the club, I had a “Push-to Dobsonian.” When we went to Cox Field Bill would help me find interesting targets. He introduced me to Hind’s Crimson Star, the Sombrero Galaxy, and the Swan Nebula just to name a few. He was so helpful while I was learning my way around the sky. He helped make it fun.

Of course, Bill spent a lot of time putting together the monthly newsletter. He had so many topics that he wrote about each month which were very interesting. I know that took a lot of work.

Felix was already doing astrophotography in those early days, and I finally decided to give astrophotography a try. Bill would suggest targets for me to shoot. Then he would put my photo in the newsletter along with Felix’s photos. He always had an interesting paragraph about the objects in the photographs. Interestingly he had already observed the object years earlier, and he had kept notes about his observations. His observation notes usually found their way into the paragraphs about the objects being presented.

Bill encouraged Felix and I to contribute our photos to the newsletter each month, and we did if the weather allowed it. It is something we have continued even after Bill left for Florida. I thank Bill for that. He was a great friend.

Dr. Richard Schmude:

Bill was a great man. He helped me a lot during the late 1990s and early 2000s. As recently as a few years ago he would organize our Christmas party at Ryans (now Bryans). He will be missed.

Dwight Harness:

It's hard to put into words the story about someone that you've spent countless hours with, in the dark staring up at the sky. I met Bill about 15 years ago when I joined the club, and he spent countless hours with me, teaching me as he has most members of the club. He loved FRAC and spent countless hours working almost full-time to better the club.

He loved getting achievements for himself and others and encouraged all of us to try for the Astronomical League Awards. I would guess about 99% of the Outreach Awards were accomplished by Bill’s record keeping and sending all the information to the AL.

He loved young people in the club and had patience teaching them that was unsurpassed by anyone. He made great observers out of several people including my daughter Laura, who he treated as a daughter or granddaughter.

I know many more people could say the same thing about people in their family and about themselves. He and Phil became Master Observers at almost the same time. I'm not sure of who was first, but it was just the two of them for many years until Art Zorka became a Master Observer, and then Georgia had three.

The last communication I had with Bill was him asking about the Club. The club has done well the last two years during the pandemic, but I would encourage everyone to help honor Bill by continuing to do outreach, get Astronomical League certificates, and putting time into the Club. He knew what a treasure the Club was.

Just to lighten the mood and put a smile on your face, remember Bill at mealtime. He loved to have a good meal, whether at the Waffle House, the Varsity, a club picnic or at any restaurant, he could make you proud.

He will be greatly missed; the world lost an amazing mind and one of the most generous people I've ever met. None of us will know all the things he did for people, and that was the way he wanted it. He now knows the secrets of the universe and for that I am happy. We had many talks about it, knowing we didn't have a clue how it happened but that someday we would.

Godspeed my friend.

Felix Luciano:

Bill always greeted you with a big smile and a firm handshake. He opened his home and welcomed club members to come celebrate the club’s anniversary.

Out in the observing field he would help you find your way around the skies and or engaged in a nice, lively conversation. He would share his love and knowledge of the skies.

When you’re mourning a friend, take the time to remember all the great memories you have of them.

May you rest among the stars.

Dawn Chappell:

I met Bill back in the 90's when we first joined FRAC. He was a wealth of knowledge and will be sorely missed. I always enjoyed our chats and sharing observing notes (it's always interesting to see things through the eyes of another person).

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Previous Meetings/Activities:

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

- 10 club members and one guest joined us through Zoom: Sean Neckel, Alan Pryor, John Cruickshank, David Stone, Aaron Calhoun, Wade Simmons, Steve Hollander, Richard Thomas, Bill Evans, Mark Grizzaffi, and Theresa Fairchild.
- 5 guests also joined us: Greg Love, Clement Smetana, Debbie, Scott Hasson, and Chris Glover.
- Club Vice President Aaron Calhoun gave a presentation on exoplanets.
- New member Theresa Fairchild asked if any member could help her with astrophotography. Alan Pryor volunteered. Other members expressed an interest in Alan's help. Sean will connect those interested via email.

FRAC Observings:

No information about attendance at the November club observing event on 11/5 and 11/6.

Public Observing Events:

Rock Springs Christian Academy in Milner, GA, Tuesday November 30th, 6pm. FRAC members Wade Simmons, Mike Stuart, Sean Neckel, and Mark Grizzaffi, along with former member Truman Boyle showed Jupiter, Saturn, and Venus to around 60 students, parents, and faculty from Rock Springs Christian Academy. The event was hosted by teacher Clement Smetana and his wife Debbie.

Welcome!

Please welcome new member Theresa Fairchild to the club. She joined just before our last meeting and is very interested in astrophotography.

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Solar System Observing – December 2021

Mercury is passing behind the sun and not observable.

Venus is visible in the evening sky starting around 5:45 until around 8pm.

Earth is not the center of the universe, but it sure feels like it sometimes.

Mars is close to the sun and not observable.

Jupiter rises before sunset and will be visible until about 10:30pm.

Saturn rises before sunset and will be visible until about 9pm.

Uranus is visible with a telescope from after sunset until about 2:30am

Neptune is visible with a telescope from after sunset until midnight.

Moon: New: 12/4 FQ: 12/10 Full: 12/18 LQ: 12/26
<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

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NGC 6910, Courtesy of Felix Luciano

Details:

AP130GT @ FL 819mm

ST8300 @ -20C

RGB: 10 subs X 300 sec

Estimated distance from Earth: 3.710 ly

Full size image:

[NGC 6910](#)



NGC 281, Courtesy of Alan Pryor

I took this photo of NGC 281 on October 8 which was one of the few clear nights we have had lately.

NGC 281, also known as the Pacman Nebula, is an emission nebula in the constellation of Cassiopeia. High energy radiation from the star is hitting the hydrogen atoms in the nebula, and the red light is emitted as the hydrogen falls to a lower energy state. It is also in one of the Milky Way's arms. This nebula is very large with a diameter of about 95 lightyears. It is about 9500 lightyears from earth. The small dark globs are areas of concentrated dust and gas which contain enough material to form a star. It is theorized that many structures like that do form stars. One could see it with scopes of the 14" to 18" size if the skies are dark and if using an O-III filter or a UHC filter.

The full-size photo can be seen at the link below.

[NGC 281](#)

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