

THE FLINT RIVER OBSERVER

NEWSLETTER OF THE FLINT
RIVER ASTRONOMY CLUB

An Affiliate of the Astronomical League

Vol. 26, No. 2 February 2022

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, February 26, and Saturday February 27, 2022, at Joe Kurz WMA, sunset until whenever.

FRAC Meeting: Thursday, February 10 on Zoom. Look for the invite in your email during the second week in February.

Public Observing Events:

None scheduled for February. We have an event in March at Sprewell Bluff Park in Thomaston scheduled for Friday 3/11/22, with a weather date of 3/12/22.

Please keep checking your email for updates regarding club events.

Dues Reminder: Club dues collection will start in March. More info to come.

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President's Message:

Hello FRAC Members,

Second reminder: Club officer elections will take place during the February meeting. If you would like to participate in the club as an officer or board member, or would like to nominate someone else, please let me know before the February 10 club meeting.

If you are a current officer or board member and have not already communicated your preference for serving in 2022, please let me know ASAP.

Thanks,
Sean

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Astronomy Trivia:

1. In what year did the 'Crab Nebula' go supernova?
2. What is the closest star cluster to Earth?
3. In what year was the first planet outside our solar system found?
4. What is the brightest star in the sky, other than the sun?

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Previous Meetings/Activities:

FRAC Meeting - January 13, 2021 - 7:30pm on Zoom.

- 12 club members joined us on Zoom for our meeting: Sean Neckel, George Ruff, Wade Simmons, Alan Pryor, Steve Hollander, Dawn Chappell, Bill Evans, David Stone, Dave Mandell, Katie Nagy, Elaine Stachowiak, and John Cruickshank.
- 1 guest attended, Candra Cherry. We hope to see you back with us, Candra!
- Public observing events were discussed, and it was agreed we would start scheduling for March.
- Tom Moore will be stepping down as Webmaster after the February meeting. Chelsea Neckel has agreed to fill in temporarily until a permanent replacement can be found. If you are interested in the position, please send an email to Sean at stneckel@gmail.com.
- Officer elections will be held during the February meeting. Nominations are being accepted for all positions. If you would like to serve as an officer or would like to know more about the positions send an email to Sean at stneckel@gmail.com.

- George Ruff presented his idea for a scale model of the solar system. Several ideas and locations were discussed. A committee was formed, with George, Sean, Elaine, Dawn, and Katie volunteering. If you would like to join as well, contact either George gsruffsr@gmail.com or Sean stneckel@gmail.com and we will let you know when we meet to discuss the project.
- Dwight Harness let us know that he plans to renew our NPC registration for another year. This was done to facilitate construction of an observatory. We will discuss the observatory project further at a future meeting.

FRAC Observings:

The club observing weekend was snowy for Friday night 1/28, and very cold but clear for Saturday 1/29. No one contacted me to say they were there.

Public Observing Events:

No events were scheduled for January.

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Solar System Observing – February 2022

Mercury is visible as a morning object low on the eastern horizon. It will be about 15° above the horizon at sunrise on 2/9/22.

Venus is clearly visible in the morning sky starting about 2 hours before sunrise.

Earth is still here.

Mars is visible low on the eastern horizon before dawn. It rises about 2 hours before the sun and reaches 15° above the horizon at sunrise.

Jupiter becomes visible before sunset and will be visible low on the western horizon until about 8pm.

Saturn is close to the sun and not observable.

Uranus is visible with a telescope from after sunset until about 1am

Neptune is visible with a telescope from after sunset, about 23° above the western horizon until around 9pm.

Moon: New: 2/1 FQ: 2/8 Full: 2/16 LQ: 2/23

<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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M42, The Orion Nebula - Courtesy of Alan Pryor.

The Orion Nebula is bright enough to be seen with the naked eye. It is a prominent object for observers (with or without telescopes) in January and February. If one looks at the Belt of Orion and moves down to the 3 stars of Orion's Scabbard, then you will see the nebula. The nebula is 1350 lightyears from the Earth, and it is a star forming region surrounded by dust clouds. Objects in the photo going from the middle to the left are: the Orion Nebula, then Messier 43 slightly to the left and farther to the left is the Running Man Nebula. You can also see the dust clouds that permeate the entire area. The 4 stars of the Trapezium are visible if you look at the full-size image and zoom in. You may have to download the image to zoom in far enough to get the 4 individual stars. The full-size image is located at the link below. For beginning astrophotographers the challenge will be dealing with the extremely bright central region while preserving the details of the faint regions.

See the full-size image here:

[The Orion Nebula](#)

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Trivia Answers:

1. 1054 on July 4th!
2. The Hyades at 153 ly distant.
3. 1991. Around a pulsar!
4. Sirius. It is 8.58 ly away, 26.1 times as bright as the Sun, and a A1v main sequence star.

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