

# THE FLINT RIVER OBSERVER

NEWSLETTER OF THE FLINT  
RIVER ASTRONOMY CLUB

An Affiliate of the Astronomical League

Vol. 28, No. 5 May 2024

**Officers:** President, **Sean Neckel**;  
Vice President, **Alfred McClure**;  
Secretary / ALCOR **Mark Grizzaffi**;  
Treasurer, **Mark Sutton**;  
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**and George Ruff**; Program/Observing Coordinator:  
**Dave and Rosanne Stone**;  
Facebook Coordinator: **Aaron Calhoun**;  
Webmaster: **Carmen Simmons**;  
Newsletter Editor: **Dawn Chappell**;  
NASA Contact: **Felix Luciano**

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## Club Calendar:

### FRAC Meeting:

Thursday, May 9, 2024, 7:30pm at the UGA Gardens in Griffin and on Zoom Carlos Flores will give a presentation about astrophotography with a DSLR camera, and we will share more eclipse photos.

### Public Observing Events:

On Friday, May 10<sup>th</sup>, we have a public event at Indian Springs in Flovilla, Ga. with a weather makeup date on Saturday, May 11th.

On Friday, May 24<sup>th</sup>, we have a public event at Lake Horton in Fayetteville, Ga. with a weather makeup date on Saturday, May 25th.

### FRAC Observing Events:

We have our monthly event at Joe Kurz on Friday, May 3rd and Saturday, May 4th.

The gate is now locked, so please be sure to lock our combination lock on to the other keyed lock on the chain when the last person leaves for the night.

The lock code is 9321.

Please keep checking your email for updates regarding club events.

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### President's Message:

Hello FRAC Members,

Well, I don't know about you, but my personal experience of the eclipse was a bit of a letdown. I traveled to Kerrville, TX, a 14-hour trip each way from Brooks. Clouds obscured the majority of the eclipse, giving me just the occasional glimpse for a second or two during all phases of the event. Despite the clouds, I did get the occasional peak at totality.

Everything was not a loss, though. I got to hang out with some really cool people who fed us a great breakfast and lunch, go for a hike in the hills after the eclipse, and this happened:



Yep. That's Chelsea and I. On Segways. At the Alamo.

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## Club Projects:

### Globe at Night

This month's campaign is April 28 to May 7, and will use the constellation [Leo](#).

Details of the process are here:

<https://globeatnight.org/6-steps.php>

This will be the second year we are participating in the Globe at Night project. Keep those observations coming and help us show the effects of increasing light pollution year to year.

### FRAC T-Shirts

More T-shirts are in!! They are \$20 at all FRAC gatherings.

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### April Events:

FRAC meeting – April 11, 2024, 7:30pm on Zoom.

17 FRAC members attended our monthly meeting on Zoom: Sean and Chelsea Neckel, Alan Pryor, David and Rosanne Stone, Bill Evans, Wade and Carmen Simmons, Larry and Twila Dove, John Cruickshank, David Pendergast, Mark Austin, Mark Sutton, Kevin Yang, Ben Barker, and Brent Summers.

- We discussed our eclipse experiences and shared photos from the eclipse.

### FRAC Observings:

On the weekend of April 5th and 6th we had our club observation at Joe Kurz. Friday was a beautiful night. Members who showed up were Bill Evans, Kevin Yang, and David Stone.

### Public Observing Events:

On April 26th we took a chance and decided to go for it and hold the event at Sprewell Bluff. The clouds did not cooperate. Members who showed up were Wade Simmons, Carmen Simmons, Susan Crawford, King Davis, George Ruff, Rosanne Stone, and David Stone. As soon as everybody left, the skies cleared, and it ended up being a beautiful night. Around thirty people showed up.

### Welcome New Members!

Vincent, Artia, Aiden, and Jeanette Richmond joined the club in April. Welcome to FRAC!

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## Solar System Observing – May 2024

**Mercury** is very low on the horizon at sunrise and not observable.

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

**Earth** is my second favorite planet.

**Mars** rises around 5am and is observable at 13° above the horizon at sunrise.

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

**Saturn** rises around 4:30am and reaches 19° above the horizon at sunrise.

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

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

**Moon:** LQ: 5/1 New: 5/7 FQ: 5/15 Full: 5/23

<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](mailto:stneckel@gmail.com)

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M63, The Sunflower Galaxy, Courtesy of Alan Pryor

Messier 63 is also known as the Sunflower Galaxy. It is a flocculent spiral galaxy in the constellation of Canes Venatici. At a magnitude of 9.3 it should be visible in 8-to-10-inch scopes. It is about 13 degrees south of the middle star in the Big Dipper's handle, Mizar. It is observable from spring through mid-summer. In June it is almost overhead after sunset. The galaxy is 29 million light-years away, and it has about 400 billion stars or 4 times that of the Milky Way. The galaxy has a large number of short spiral arms intermixed with dust clouds. A full sized image of this galaxy can be seen at [M63](#).

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