

THE FLINT RIVER OBSERVER

NEWSLETTER OF THE FLINT
RIVER ASTRONOMY CLUB

An Affiliate of the Astronomical League

Vol. 28, No. 6 June 2024

Officers: President, **Sean Neckel**;
Vice President, **Alfred McClure**;
Secretary / ALCOR **Mark Grizzaffi**;
Treasurer, **Mark Sutton**;
Board of Directors: **Aaron Calhoun, Bill Evans,**
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, June 13, 2023, 7:30pm at the UGA
Gardens in Griffin and on Zoom. We will hold a
vote to fill out the Astronomical League officer
election ballot.

Public Observing Events:

On June 14th at 8:45pm, we have a public event at
Indian Springs State Park in Flovilla with a weather
make-up date for June 15th.

On June 28th at 8:45pm, we have a public event at
Lake Horton with a weather make-up date on June
29th.

FRAC Observing Events:

Our monthly club event at Joe Kurz in June will be
on June 7th and June 8th.

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.

President's Message:

Hello FRAC Members,

May and June are typically busy months for me, as
I'm planning my annual motorcycle trip. As such, I
really do not have a plan for this month's meeting
other than filling out the ballot for the Astronomical
League officer elections.

If you have any ideas about what we can do at the
meeting, or topics we can discuss, please let me
know sometime in the next couple weeks. I'm
looking for some help from our members during a
very busy time for me.

Sean

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Club Projects:

Globe at Night

This month's campaign is May 28 to June 6, and
will use the constellation [Bootes](#).

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

FRAC T-shirts are still available!! They are \$20 at
all FRAC gatherings.

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Astronomy Trivia - Solar System Weirdness Edition

1. Which planet has mountains capped in
metallic 'snow'?
2. Which moon is nicknamed the 'Death Star
Moon'?
3. What is the only large moon in the Solar
System with a retrograde orbit?
4. What is the only object in the inner Solar
System that shows signs of cryovolcanism?

5. What is the most geologically active object in the Solar System?

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May Events:

FRAC meeting - May 9, 2023- 7:30pm at the UGA Gardens in Griffin and on Zoom.

15 FRAC members joined us in person at the Gardens: Sean and Chelsea Neckel, George Ruff, Larry and Twila Dove, Aaron Calhoun, Carmen and Wade Simmons, Bill Evans, Alfred McClure, Brian Kennedy, Carlos Flores, Dave and Rosanne Stone, and Ben Barker.

7 FRAC members attended our monthly meeting on Zoom: Mark Grizzaffi, Mark Sutton, Scott Hasson, David Pendergast, Alfredo Martinez, John Cruickshank, and King Davis.

- Mark S. reported \$5,912 in the bank and no disbursements this month.
- Alfred will take Sean's place on the Solar System model committee.
- George showed an example of signage that can be used in the Solar System model.
- Chelsea N. received AL Outreach Award - Stellar level.
- Carlos Flores did a presentation on Basic Astrophotography.

FRAC Observings:

On the weekend of May 3rd and 4th we had our club observation at Joe Kurz.

Public Observing Events:

In May, we had two public events. On May 11th, we had to utilize our weather make-up date at Indian Springs State Park. It was a clear night. The club members who came out to share the night sky were Sean Neckel, Chelsea Neckel, George Ruff, Wade Simmons, Carmen Simmons, Brian Kennedy, David Stone and Rosanne Stone.

The event scheduled for the weekend of May 24th at Lake Horton had to be canceled due to clouds.

Welcome New Members!

Sumanth and Viji Ramachandran joined the club in May. Welcome to FRAC!!

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Solar System Observing – June 2024

Mercury rises around 5:45am, about 45 minutes before sunrise.

Venus is close to the sun and not observable.

Earth would not let me access in-the-sky this month so these are my best guesses. Good luck!

Mars rises around 3:45am and will be visible until sunrise

Jupiter may be visible on the horizon just before sunrise.

Saturn rises around 2:30am and will be visible until dawn.

Uranus rises about an hour before sunrise, and may be visible with a telescope.

Neptune rises around 2:50am and is visible with a telescope until dawn.

Moon: New: 6/6 FQ: 6/14 Full: 6/21 LQ 6/28

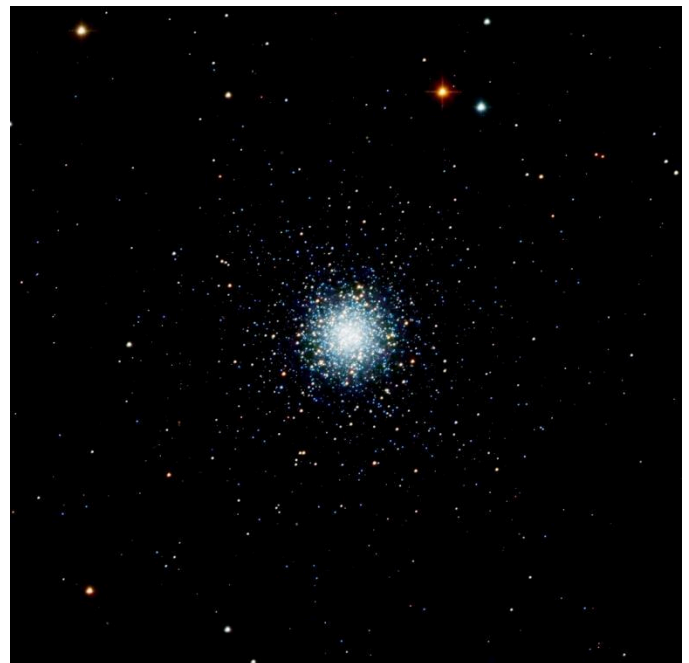
<https://in-the-sky.org/>

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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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Messier 53, Courtesy of Alan Pryor

Messier 53 is a globular cluster in the constellation of Coma Berenices. It is estimated to be 58 thousand light-years from Earth. There are about 150 known globular clusters in the Milky Way. Globular clusters are some of the oldest structures

around. This cluster is very metal poor. This suggests that its second-generation stars were created from dust and gas from the Big Bang as well as from dust and gasses from first generation supernova debris. The cluster is estimated to be 12.7 billion years old.

Messier 53 is fairly bright at a magnitude of 7.7. It should be visible through relatively small telescopes. It is about 15 degrees west of the bright star Arcturus.

A full size image of M53 can be seen at [Messier 53](#).

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Answers:

1. Venus. The metallic snow consists of galena (a lead ore) and bismuthinite.
2. Saturn's moon Mimas was given this nickname because of the large crater in its northern hemisphere that resembles the Death Star's planet destroying laser.
3. Neptune's moon Triton. It is likely a captured Kuiper Belt object.
4. The dwarf planet Ceres has several features (observed by the NASA probe *Dawn*) that appear to be cryovolcanic in origin.
5. Jupiter's moon Io has over 400 active volcanoes and over 100 uplifted mountains.

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