

THE FLINT RIVER OBSERVER

NEWSLETTER OF THE FLINT
RIVER ASTRONOMY CLUB

An Affiliate of the Astronomical League

Vol. 29, No. 10 **October 2025**

Officers: President, **Alfred McClure**;
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Social Media Coordinator: **Tom Partin**;
Webmaster: **Sean Neckel**;
Newsletter Editor: **Dawn Chappell**;
NASA Contact: **Felix Luciano**

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Club Calendar: **FRAC Meeting:**

Thursday, October 9, 2025, 7:30 pm at Griffin
Library.
Bring your Binoculars & Telescopes

Public Observing Events:

Oct. We will meet at Sprewell Bluff instead of at
JKWMA (because of Hunting season)
· 10/10/2025 7:00 pm — Indian Springs State Park
Public Observing Event, Flovilla, GA
· (In case of clouds, the event will be held the
following evening)
· 10/17/2025 7:30 pm — Fayette County Rec
Department Public Observing Event at Lake
Horton, Fayetteville, GA
· 10/24/2025 7:15 pm — Sprewell Bluff Park
Observing Event
· 11/7/2025 5:30 pm — Indian Springs State Park
Public Observing Event, Flovilla, GA (In case of

clouds, the event will be held the following
evening).

· 11/13/2025 7:30pm — Club meeting at the UGA
Research and Education Garden Building in Griffin,
GA and on Zoom.

· 11/14/2025 5:30 pm — Fayette County Rec
Department Public Observing Event at Lake
Horton, Fayetteville, GA

Please continue to check your email and the FRAC
Facebook group

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/2002160466558902>
for news updates.

FRAC Observing Events:

**“The stars we are given. The constellations we
make. That is to say, stars exist in the cosmos,
but constellations are the imaginary lines we
draw between them, the readings we give the sky,
the stories we tell.” — Rebecca Solnit, Storming
the Gates of Paradise: Landscapes for Politics**

President’s Message:

Question: Why does the Earth rotate but our moon
does not?

Ever since I was a wee lad in the second grade at
Fairview elementary school, I started thinking about
Halley’s comet and if I would still be alive when it
came back by again in 1986. That would mean that
I would be an old man by then, 34 years old.

Fairview was a one-room school with four grades
1-4 and one teacher, Mrs. Erma Mask.

My next taste of what is in the space adventure was
May 5, 1961 when Alan Sheppard boarded Freedom
7 and was launched into space. I was now at Fourth
Ward school in Griffin because the school board
had closed our community and made us go all the
way into Griffin to school. They said that 11
students in the four grades at Fairview was not
enough to keep the school open and it was a great
thing for me because this school had a black and
white TV, and we were able to watch Alan on this
historical day and listen to Walter Cronkite do an
exciting news reel of the event. Walter made it clear
that this was a live broadcast to the world and
explained why there was 7 seconds of silence
between his questions and the answers from Cape
Canaveral. To put things in perspective, at this time
my home address was Rt 1 Brooks, Ga even though
we lived in Spalding County, our home phone was
an 8-party line, and the phone number was
LY9-6801. To call into Griffin you first add 22 and

then the number you were calling and that way it wasn't a long-distance phone call, but for Griffin to call us on the Senoia exchange, there was a long-distance charge, and you had to go through the operator.

Bring this into the 21st century, Calling Dick Tracy, Calling Dick Tracy.

Do you know the difference between the words Astronaut and Cosmonaut besides, one is American and the other is Soviet?

One is a Star Sailor, and the other is a Universe Sailor.

Alfred

“It is lovely to live on a raft. We had the sky up there, all speckled with stars, and we used to lay on our backs and look up at them and discuss about whether they were made or only just happened.” — Mark Twain

FRAC T-Shirts

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

Club dues ---- Please turn in ASAP if you have not already done so. \$15 by cash, check or by Venmo to Mark Sutton. Make check out to Flint River Astronomy Club sent to Mark's address or at the meeting, or pay through Venmo@fracmoney24 (search for a business account)

Astronomy Trivia:

1. What is the name of the spacecraft that made the first landing on the Moon in 1969?
2. What is the name of the largest known star?
3. What is the name of the closest star to Earth, apart from the Sun?
4. What is the name of the first spacecraft to land on a comet?
5. What is the name of the first spacecraft to land on an asteroid?
6. What is the name of the first spacecraft to orbit Pluto?

“Those shining stars, he liked to point out, were one of the special treats for people like us who lived out in the wilderness. Rich city folks, he'd say, lived in fancy apartments, but their air was so polluted they couldn't even see the stars. We'd have to be out of our minds to want to trade places with any of them.” — Jeannette Walls, *The Glass Castle*

At the October meeting at the Griffin Library, please bring your binoculars and telescopes.

Books for Astronomy:

Back Yard Astronomer's Guide

Turn Left at Orion

Astronomy, a self-teaching guide

Star Mentor by Daniel Barth

Night Watch by Terence Dickinson

“Look at the stars. It won't fix the economy. It won't stop wars. It won't give you flat abs or even help you figure out your relationship. But it's important. It helps you to remember that you and your problems are both infinitesimally small and conversely, that you are a piece of an amazing and vast universe.” — Kate Bartolotta

Members Corner:

Messier 27, Dumbbell Nebula

Photographed 10/9/2010.

Alan Pryor

Messier 27 is an ideal visual target in October. At a magnitude of 7.4 it is observable with telescopes in the 4" to 6" range. It is also known as the Dumbbell Nebula, the Apple Core Nebula or NGC 6853. It is in the constellation of Vulpecula. If you draw a line from Altair (in Aquila) and Deneb (brightest star in Cygnus) then Messier 27 is 1/3 of the way from Altair toward Deneb. Messier 27 is a large planetary nebula with a white dwarf at its core. It was the first planetary nebula ever discovered. It is 1360 light-years away. As with all planetary nebula, the shell of gas being illuminated by a central star will expand out into space. In another 20,000 years or so, the shell of gas will no longer be visible. The full size image can be viewed by pasting the following address into your browser:

https://photos.google.com/share/AF1QipPHM-e11TX3CD5ZO2Pvjzbz4K3xkq-ZTqCwCJXv020FQQatVSzoKchd0d_rMFzSamg/photo/AF1QipMdlVOnltR0YfrFIFKBhyd18e9RnqhhdGO6gpDv?key=RldwVku0TkZOQkxGa0JvcGNzSDNhcjF5T1VYQXVn



Eugene Rush

IC 5070 (Pelican Nebula) is an H II region associated with the North American Nebula in the constellation of Cygnus. The Pelican is much studied because it has a particularly active mix of star formation and evolving gas clouds. Millions of years from now this nebula might no longer be known as the Pelican, as the balance and placement of stars and gas will leave something that appears completely different.

The image was made using a Sharpstar 94EDPH refractor with a ZWO ASI071MC pro camera with a Svbony dual-band filter. The image consists of 15, 120-second subs and 20, 180-second subs taken from Sharpsburg, GA.

We had a great time at JKWMA in September. On Friday night we had 6 members present: myself (plus 3 surprise visitors, my dermatologist and her husband and son), Wade Simmons, Ann Angelheart, Aaron Calhoun, David Stone, and Carlos. Plus, Cortney the Game Warden came by twice to visit with us. The sky was great all night. I did not go on Saturday night because there were clouds here in Griffin and those that went were disappointed in the sky conditions. Those present were Wade, Carlos, Tom Partin, David & Rosanne.

October 2 at Crescent School was a fantastic event. George Ruff did a fantastic job with the kids in the Planetarium and then back down on the field with his binoculars. King did a fantastic job documenting the event with his photographic skills. Ann Angelheart helped with her thoughtfulness of bringing several stools for the short ones to look through the telescopes.

David and Rosanne Stone, Tom Partin and I set up telescopes, and the kids and adults really enjoyed the opportunity to have a look at the stars. Plans are already being worked on for next year's event. To see great pictures of the event, Check out King Davis FB page.

This is the starting of the Meteor season. There should be a shower nearly every 2 weeks through the end of the year.

We have quite a show in the heavens of two comets, well one for sure and the other one may be the mother ship, Hale-Bopp, that was supposed to pick up its passengers back in 1995, they may have gotten the date wrong, just kidding. 3i/Atlas is still a mystery, "Ride Captain Ride", or Space Oddity, but if it's going to be a long journey, settle back with "Celestial Soda Pop" by Ray Lynch (this is my choice)

Please join us at the Sprewell Bluff viewing. It's great fellowship and a time to relax, lean back and the skies are the best you will find for darkness for miles around.

Hope to see you there!

Trivia answers

1. Apollo 11.
2. UY Scuti, largest known star
3. Proxima Centauri.
4. Rosetta
5. Hayabusa2
6. New Horizons

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