

THE FLINT RIVER OBSERVER

NEWSLETTER OF THE FLINT
RIVER ASTRONOMY CLUB

An Affiliate of the Astronomical League

Vol. 29, No. 2 **February 2025**

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:**

We will have our club meeting on Thursday,
February 13, 2025, 7:30pm at the UGA Gardens in
Griffin and on Zoom.

For the February meeting, we will hold officer
elections for 2025, and have a demo of our club
members' SeeStar (and similar) astrophotography
telescopes.

Details for both of these activities will be sent out in
an email this week.

Public Observing Events:

In February, we have one public event scheduled.
The public event is scheduled for Friday, February
7th from 6:30 till 9 at Lake Horton and in case of
clouds we will move the event to Saturday,
February 8th.

FRAC Observing Events:

Our club observing weekend at Joe Kurz will be on
February 28th and March 1st from sunset until
whenever.

The gate is now closed, so please be sure to leave
the gate as you find it 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,

Here it is, my last 'President's Message'.

I guess there's an odd finality to that statement. I'm
still going to be an active club member but, now it's
time for other people to take the reins and lead our
club.

'Our Club'. I really like that short sentence. I think
that it really says a lot about who we are as a group,
and how much we have changed over the past
several years. We have more members on our roster
than at any time since I've been with the club. With
that has come a lot of new ideas and perspectives,
and the level of participation is at an all-time high.

As a case in point, the discussion we had in January
about what we would do for our meetings and
activities during 2025 was fantastic. Everyone had
a chance to contribute to the direction the club will
take in the coming year. It was one of my all-time
favorite discussions, and we should all be proud of
what we accomplished.

My hope is that we all continue to participate,
direct, and shape the Flint River Astronomy Club
into something that we are all proud to be a part of.

Thanks,
Sean

Club Projects: **Globe at Night**

This month's campaign is February 19-28, and will
use the constellation [Orion](#).

Details of the process are here:

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

We are going on 4 years 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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January Events:

FRAC meeting January 9, 2025, at 7:30pm at the UGA Gardens in Griffin and on Zoom.

10 club members and 4 guests were present at the UGA Garden for the January meeting: Sean Neckel, Alfred McClure, Carmen and Wade Simmons, Mark and Terri Sutton, Harry, Sally, and Tucker Heintz, Dallas Benton, Larry Dove, Mark Grizzaffi, Jim Heidman, and Dave and Rosanne Stone.

9 club members and one guest joined us on Zoom: Bill Evans, Brian Kennedy, Dave Mandell, Aaron Calhoun, John Cruickshank, Angela Suave, Brent Summers, Ben Barker, Ronda Dyer, and Carlos Flores.

Topics Discussed:

- Club officer nominations for 2025. Election will be held during the February meeting.
- Mark G. will submit roster to AL for 4th quarter 2024.
- Mark S. reports \$5,895.44 in bank.
- Discussed sponsors for Solar System model in Gardens. Club itself may be a sponsor. Sean may sponsor. One other club member, Brian Kennedy, will sponsor. A sponsorship is \$300.
- Dave will no longer send out directions to Joe Kurz. They are on the website.
- There was discussion about members attending public outreach events. Sean will set up a digital signup sheet on Google forms.
- Dave will look into getting red lights for the viewing sites.

- Larry Dove talked about the AL partnering with NASA for additional observing programs.
- This month's presentation/discussion was suggestions for meeting presentations for the year. Sean made a list of presentations with presenter and date of presentation. Also included possible field trips.
- Discussed presenting an astrophotograph from the club to the ranger office at Joe Kurz. This is in appreciation for allowing us to use JK as our dark site. Carlos will supply a photo.

FRAC Observings:

We had one club event at Joe Kurz. The skies on both nights were close to perfect. Club members who attended on Friday night were Mark Sutton, Terri Sutton, and Carlos Flores.

On Saturday night, club members who attended were Carlos Flores, David Stone, Rosanne Stone and Tom Partin. It was darn cold, but we were rewarded with great skies.

Public Observing Events:

In January we had one public event scheduled that was cancelled due to clouds and rain at Lake Horton.

Welcome New Members!

Tom Partin joined the club in January. Welcome to FRAC Tom!

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Astronomy Trivia

1. Which major planet in our solar system was discovered last?
2. What was the name of the last manned mission to the moon?
3. When was the final Space Shuttle mission?
4. What was the last supernova that could be observed naked-eye?
5. What is the last object on the Messier List (numerically)?

Solar System Observing – January 2025

Mercury is close to the sun and not observable.

Venus is visible around 6:30pm until it sets around 9:40pm.

Earth has the best coffee in the universe. Probably.

Mars rises just after 6:30pm and will be visible until 6am.

Jupiter is visible starting at 6:30pm until 3am.

Saturn is visible around 6:45pm until it sets at 8:45pm.

Uranus becomes visible in a telescope at 7pm, and sets around midnight.

Neptune is visible in a telescope around 7pm until it sets at 9:40pm

Moon: FQ: 2/5 Full: 2/12 LQ: 2/20 New: 2/27

<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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IC 342 as it appears due to the dust lane, courtesy of Alan Pryor.



IC 342 as it might appear if not behind the dust lane, courtesy of Alan Pryor.

IC342

Alan Pryor

“The Hidden Galaxy”, IC 342 is also known as Caldwell 5. IC 342 is a spiral galaxy in the constellation of Camelopardalis. It appears very unusual because its location in the sky puts it behind a dusty region of the Milky Way. The dust acts like a red filter and causes it to appear with a very uncharacteristic red color when photographed. Because it is behind this cloud of dust it is also known as “The Hidden Galaxy”. However, it is bright enough to be detected by binoculars with a magnitude of 9.1.

Due to the dust cloud a good distance measurement is not possible, but it is thought to be 7 million to 11 million light-years away. It is about 75,000 light-years in width with about 100 billion stars. It has a large angular size. In fact, only the Andromeda Galaxy and the Triangulum Galaxy have larger angular sizes.

Binoculars can reveal the cores of the galaxy, and a 12” scope will reveal the halo around the core, but the arms will not be distinguishable. It is about 5 degrees south of Gamma Camelopardalis which is the northernmost bright star in that constellation, but that star shines at a magnitude 4.5 which is not that bright.

I have included two images of the galaxy. The reddish image is how it actually appears when photographed. The bluish image is my best guess at

how it would appear if it were not behind the dust cloud of the Milky Way.

Full-size images may be seen at [DustyImageof_IC342](#) and [IC342 if not behind dustlane](#).

Answers:

1. Neptune was first visually observed in 1846.
2. Apollo 17's lander left the moon on December 14, 1972.
3. STS-135, the final flight of Atlantis was in 2011.
4. SN 1987A reached a peak apparent magnitude of +3 in May 1987.
5. M110 is a satellite dwarf galaxy near the Andromeda galaxy, and the last object on the Messier List.

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