

THE FLINT RIVER OBSERVER

NEWSLETTER OF THE FLINT
RIVER ASTRONOMY CLUB

An Affiliate of the Astronomical League

Vol. 29, No. 3 March 2025

Officers: President, **Alfred McClure**;
Vice President, **Sean Neckel**;
Secretary / ALCOR **Terri Sutton**;
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: **Sean Neckel**;
Newsletter Editor: **Dawn Chappell**;
NASA Contact: **Felix Luciano**

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Club Calendar:

FRAC Meeting:

We will have our club meeting on Thursday, March 13, 2024, 7:30pm at the UGA Gardens in Griffin and on Zoom.

For the March meeting, Larry Dove will give a presentation about the Parker Solar Probe.

Public Observing Events:

In March, we have two public events. We will be at Indian Springs on Friday, March 7th and in case of clouds we will have a weather make-up date for Saturday, March 8th. The event starts at 6:30pm.

On Friday, March 21st we have a public event at Sprewell Bluff in Thomaston, GA. There is no weather make-up date for this event. This event starts at 7:30pm.

On Thursday, April 3rd, we will have an educational event at Griffin Crescent Elementary

School. We will give further details later in the month.

FRAC Observing Events:

Our club observing weekend at Joe Kurz will be on March 28th and March 29th 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:

I am greatly honored to have the trust and backing to be the President of FRAC for 2025. There will be a tremendous learning curve for me to even come close to the example history of leadership excellence that has brought this club to where it is today.

I will be asking for input from each one as to where you want the club to be headed this year. This is not MY CLUB; it is YOUR CLUB and I desire your input. I don't wish for any members to be left out, no matter the level of abilities you may have in the hobby of Astronomy. Mentorship can go a long way in bringing and keeping new members.

I believe in a hands-on approach (keep in mind that I am a blacksmith and that is a very hands-on hobby) to learning along with a personal desire to reach your very own goals in astronomy.

On February 28th, I was in Macon and stopped by the Museum of Arts and Sciences and by chance met with the Executive Director, Mark Walhimer. He was very open and said that he would be interested in hosting a meeting there and if weather permitting, open up the observatory for us. That is something that I cannot make a decision on but will need the input from the body and direction from the Board.

One final note. Last night, February 28, was a great turnout at Joe Kurz Wildlife Management Area. There were 11 in attendance with scopes and

cameras pointing to the heavens and gathering memories. The comradery was beautiful. People helping others with setup, questions being answered by many helpful members and a beautiful clear night sky that God supplied for us.

Thanks again for your support

Alfred McClure

Club Projects:

This month's campaign is March 21-30, and will use the constellation [Orion](#) and [Leo](#).

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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FRAC meeting:

February 13, 2025, at 7:30pm at the UGA Gardens in Griffin and on Zoom.

21 club members and 4 guests were present at the UGA Garden for the February meeting: Sean and Chelsea Neckel, Carmen and Wade Simmons, Mark and Terri Sutton, Alfred McClure, Mark Grizzaffi, Tom Partin, Carlos Flores, Mark Austin, Tome Moore, David Pendergrast, Don Clemons, George Ruff, John Cruickshank, Ben Barker, David and Rosanne Stone, and Brent and Denise Summers.

4 club members and one guest joined us on Zoom: Bill Evans, Alan Pryor, Dave Mandell, and Doayne Tallman.

Topics Discussed:

- Alfred mentioned lunar eclipse coming up in March
- Mark Sutton gave the Treasurer's report. \$5,790 in bank. Dues for 2025 are now due. Can be mailed to the Treasurer, given at meeting, or via Venmo.

- Officers for 2025 are:
 - President - Alfred McClure
 - Vice President - Sean Neckel
 - Secretary - Terri Sutton
 - Treasurer - Mark Sutton
- Board members are returning for another term.
- Sean will take over the website from Chelsea.
- Suggestion to have a club budget.
- Suggestion to look into some sort of microphone device for the room that would allow Zoom attendees to hear from attending members.
- Sean was presented with a Seestar 50 telescope for his 5 years as president.
- Members discussed using the Seestar type scopes and showed photos taken by the scopes.

FRAC Observings:

We had a great turnout this weekend at JKWMA. On Friday, February 28, conditions were perfect. Many pictures were taken, and telescopes were in use everywhere. We had 11 members come out; Alfred McClure, David and Rosanne Stone, Tom and Brittney Partin, Chris and Brennan Czock, Clayton Wilson, Carlos Flores, Wade Simmons and Rhonda Dyer.

Saturday night March 1 was another well attended evening. It was windy and mostly clear, but clouds did come and go. We had Alfred McClure, Wade Simmons, Carlos Flores, David Stone, Rhonda Dyer, Aaron Calhoun, and Tom Partin.

Public Observing Events:

In February we had one public event. We met at Lake Horton in Fayetteville Ga, on February 7th. We were met with cloudy skies but got lucky as enough clouds cleared to share the night sky with around twenty guests. We had ten club members show up. They were George Ruff, Brannan Czock, Jeff Doyle, Larry Dove, Twila Dove, Susan Crawford, Wade Simmons, Scott Hasson, Rosanne Stone, and David Stone.

Welcome New Members!

Rodney and Pernille Funk joined the club in February. Welcome to FRAC!

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Solar System Observing – March 2025

Mercury is observable just after sunset at around 6:50pm.

Venus is visible around 6:45pm until it sets around 9pm.

Earth has a warm, gooey center.

Mars rises just after 7pm and will be visible until 3am.

Jupiter is visible starting at 7pm until 3am.

Saturn is visible around 6:45pm until it sets at 1:40am.

Uranus becomes visible in a telescope at 7:30pm, and sets around midnight.

Neptune is close to the sun and not observable.

Moon: FQ: 3/6 Full: 3/14 LQ 3/22 New: 3/29

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

March 14, 2025 Lunar Eclipse

From the [NASA Science website](#):

Friday morning, March 14: Full Moon After Next
The full moon after next will be at 2:55 a.m. EDT. This will be on Thursday evening from Pacific Daylight Time and Mountain Standard Time westward to the international date line in the mid Pacific. The Moon will appear full for about three days around this time, from Wednesday evening into Saturday morning.

Total Lunar Eclipse:

As the Moon passes opposite the Sun on March 14, it will move through Earth's shadow, creating a total eclipse of the Moon. The Moon will begin entering the partial shadow Thursday night at 11:57 p.m., but the gradual dimming of the Moon will not be noticeable until it starts to enter the full shadow Friday morning at 1:09 a.m. The round shadow of Earth will gradually shift across the face of the Moon (from lower left to upper right) until the Moon is fully shaded beginning at 2:26 a.m.

The period of full shadow, or total eclipse, will last about 65 minutes, reaching the greatest eclipse at 2:59 a.m. and ending at 3:31 a.m. Even though it will be in full shadow, the Moon will still be visible. The glow of all of the sunrises and sunsets on Earth will give the Moon a reddish-brown hue, sometimes called a "blood" Moon (although this name is also used for one of the full moons near the start of fall). From 3:31 until 4:48 a.m., the Moon will exit the

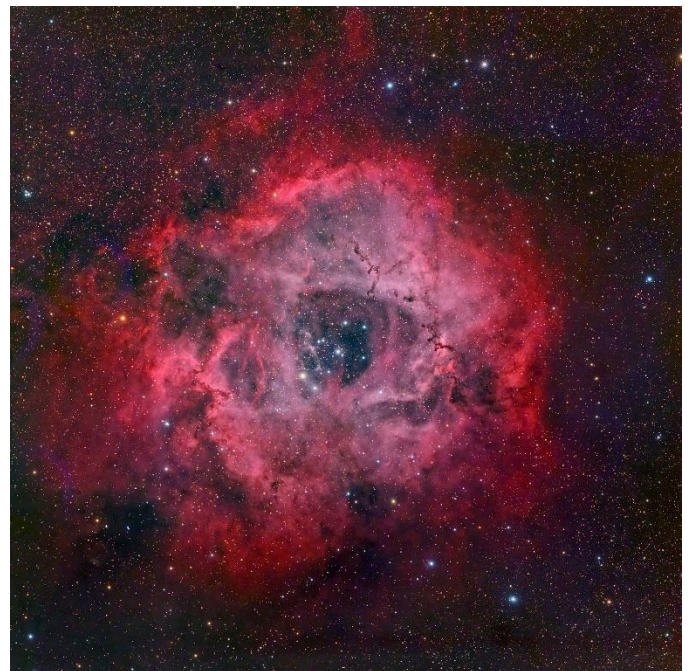
full shadow of Earth, with the round shadow of Earth again shifting across the face of the Moon (from upper left to lower right). The Moon will leave the last of the partial shadow at 6 a.m. ending this eclipse.

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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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Caldwell 49, The Rosette Nebula (from 1/10/2011) courtesy of Alan Pryor

The Rosette Nebula, also known as Caldwell 49, is an emission nebula in the constellation of Monoceros. The surface brightness of the nebula is low, and the nebula is large at about 1 degree in width. The nebula has a total brightness of magnitude 6.5, and it contains several star clusters. It is about 5000 light-years away. You may be able to observe it with binoculars if you have dark skies. Using a telescope with a low power wide field of view lens combined with an O-III or Ultra High Contrast filter should bring out the nebula too.

To find it look at the head star of Orion, Meissa, and then Betelgeuse. Follow that line down about 1.3 times the distance between those 2 stars. You will see the star, Epsilon Monoceros. The Rosette Nebula is 2 degrees east of Epsilon Monoceros.

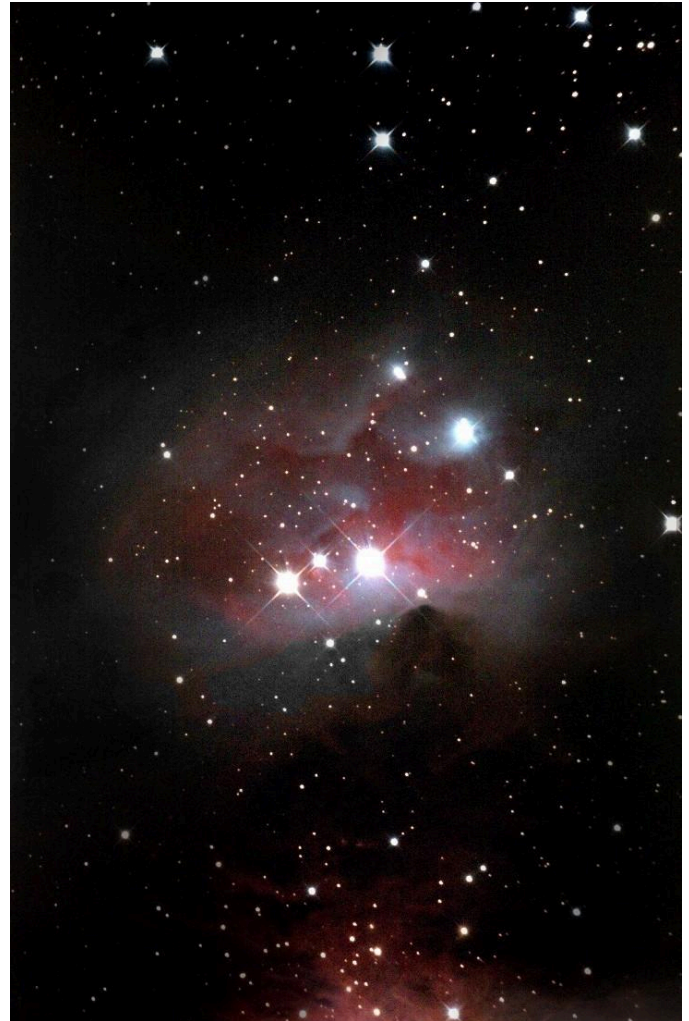
Many people photograph this nebula using narrow band filters (Ha, O-III and S-II filters) to make a false color image. In my case, I used red, green, blue, luminance and Ha. A full-size image of the Rosette Nebula may be seen at [Rosette Nebula](#).

This image was taken in Suches, GA on February 28, 2025 using approximately 80 10-second exposures. I did my best to post-process, but I have a lot to learn. I'm looking forward to Carlos' presentation on AP photo processing techniques in June, so that I can get better final images.



M81 Bode's Galaxy and M82 The Cigar Galaxy courtesy of Sean Neckel

This is one of the first deep-sky photos I've taken with my new SeeStar 50. The spiral galaxy is Bode's Galaxy (M81), and the Cigar galaxy (M82) is in the lower left corner. M81 and M82 are about 12 million light years from Earth, located in the constellation Ursa Major. M82 is gravitationally influenced by M81.



NGC 1977 Nebula in Orion by Eugene Rush

This image shows the Running Man Nebula which is a reflection nebula imbedded in the larger region of Sh-279 in the constellation Orion. The image was made using an 8-inch Ritchey-Chretien telescope with a ZWO ASI071MC pro camera. The image consists of 6, 180-second subs and taken from Sharpsburg, GA on January 29, 2024.

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