

Newsletter of
The Black River Astronomical Society

Guidescope

Lorain County, Ohio

March 2016

Website: blackriverastro.org

Newsletter submissions: [Editor](#)

Wednesday, March 2, 7 p.m., Regular meeting, Carlisle Reservation Visitors Center. Program: Solar topic TBA, by John O'Neal

Friday, March 4, 7-9 p.m., Public observing, Nielsen Observatory (cloud backup date Saturday, March 5) *

Thursday, March 10, 7 p.m., Board meeting, Blue Sky Restaurant, Amherst, Ohio

Friday, March 11, 7-9 p.m., Public observing, Nielsen Observatory (cloud backup date Saturday, March 12) *

Travel Travail Avoidance Reminder

Before planning to drive to a regular meeting or to a club observing session in this upcoming fun stretch of northern Ohio winter and post-winter, please check the club website [blog](#) before you leave to make sure that the meeting or session has not been canceled due to hazardous driving conditions.

Observing sessions may also be cancelled due to either hazardous driving conditions or to really crummy sky conditions, so please--save yourself an unnecessary trip or unnecessary risk to life and limb, and check that [blog](#) first. Updates are posted an hour or three prior to the scheduled event.

Wanted: Contributions to the *Guidescope*

If you have anything you'd like to share with the local amateur astronomy community via this newsletter please send it my way for inclusion in upcoming editions. Anything astronomy-related is welcome, and either objective or subjective content is fine. An e-mail link for submissions is [here](#).

Has anyone has ever removed a Meade LX200 series scope from its fork mount? If so, please email me (dabodzash at gmail dot com). I bought a good scope with a fried mount. Thanks. ~Denny Bodzash

BOARD SUMMARY

February 11, 2016

The February Board of Directors meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. with 10 Directors present. The minutes from the January meeting were read and approved as was the Treasurer's report. Committee reports came next with Bill Ruth, the *Guidescope* editor, reporting that all was well. As always, he would like submissions from members. Lee Lumpkin, our webmaster, reported that the epheremis on the website was not updating as it should and that he would troubleshoot it. There was no instrumentation report as no-one has been to the observatory due to the weather. The OTAA committee reported that they were ready to start soliciting door prizes for our convention in September. Jeff Walsh would start the process of mailing requests. The MetroParks Liaison had no report. Programming is set through September, as follows:

March	John O'Neal	Solar topic
April	John Reising	Mars Opposition and observing Mars
May	Rich Thompson	Iridium satellites
June	Len Jezior	Understanding R.A.
July	Denny Bodzash	Ten Unsolved Mysteries of Astronomy and Cosmology
August	Barb Hubal	Spectroscopy
September	Dave Lengyel	Member photos of the Transit of Mercury
October	Annual Meeting of the Members and Elections with a short program.	
November	Open	
December	Annual Christmas party	

Under Old Business came a discussion of preparations for the Avon Lake “Dark Skies, Bright Kids” outreach program. Dan Walker, Jeff Walsh, Greg Zmina and Len Jezior were planning to attend. Steve Schauer will also attend if it is too cloudy to run our scheduled Public Observing session at the observatory which is scheduled for the same night. Len will bring a display on astrophotography, Greg will bring astronomy books and astrophotos, Jeff will bring a telescope and help with presentations and club literature, and Dan will bring the one-meter Sun and a solar system model that is to scale with the one-meter Sun. We will also do the Birthday Star and the “Your Weight on Other Planets” program.

Next came a discussion about where to observe the transit of Mercury on Monday, May 9th. Dave Lengyel is going to set up on Tappan Square for the Oberlin College student observing program and has invited us to join him. The other alternative is one of the MetroParks facilities like Lakeview Park. Normally, a MetroParks location would be preferable due to our long partnership with the Parks, and because of the publicity the event would get by being in the *Arrowhead*. However, since the transit starts at 7:30 a.m. on a Monday, it is felt there will be more people shopping in Oberlin and crossing the square than there would be in a MetroPark facility, so we have chosen to set up on the south side of Tappan Square in Oberlin. We will set up telescopes with solar filters and we will have club information and handouts. All members are invited to help out, and to enjoy an unusual event.

Under New Business, we may need to provide a speaker for the Nord Middle School Hobby Day program in Amherst. Denny Bodzash usually does this for us, but may have a conflict depending on the date which is not set yet. If Denny is unavailable, we will provide someone.

Next came the very pleasant duty of voting four new members into the club. We welcome Bob Vlcek, Gene Henderson, Edward Swonger, and Raymond Sajka into our ranks!

Dan Walker next requested a vote on whether to renew our membership in the International Dark Sky Association. The Directors voted unanimously to do so.

One new suggestion was made to hold a session or two at the observatory for new members to introduce star hopping as a method of finding objects in the sky when using a telescope. The suggestion is to have these sessions during warm weather months and

to star hop in the constellation that was most recently presented as the constellation of the month at our monthly meetings. We usually hold Public Observing on a Friday night with Saturday night as a backup if Friday is cloudy. If Friday is clear, we cancel Saturday. For these star hopping sessions, the suggestion is to find a weekend when we can have Public Observing on a Friday, then cancel observing on Saturday for the public as usual, but use Saturday as a training session for new observers. We will try to implement this during the summer.

The last item of New Business is a continuation of the discussion held in January about having an alternative program for when monthly observing is cancelled, or for other uses. The suggestion is to create four seasonal PowerPoint-type presentations on “What's Up in the Sky” that would highlight observing for spring, summer, winter, and fall. These could also be made available for download on the website. We will continue this discussion.

Dates were set, and the meeting was adjourned at 8:32 p.m.

~Steve Schauer

Dark Skies, Bright Kids

Endeavoring to fulfill the Black River Astronomical Society's continuing mission of providing public outreach to residents of Lorain County, club members Steve Schauer, Greg Zmina, Dan Walker, Len Jezior and Jeff Walsh represented BRAS at the City of Avon Lake's “Dark Skies, Bright Kids” event which took place Friday evening, February 12th at the Avon Lake Community Center (the old firehouse). Safe to say, the program was an unqualified success with over 140 attendees, according to Nicole Haas, Avon Lake's Recreation Program Coordinator and the event's creator and mastermind. Also contributing to the proceedings was Marty Mullet, President of the Chagrin Valley Astronomical Society, and a contingent from NASA, among others. Unfortunately, the weather did not cooperate (to say the least!) to allow for observing the night sky, but no one seemed to mind.

~Jeff Walsh



Steve Schauer and a few bright kids, above. Greg Zmina staffing a display, below.





Len Jezior at atrophotography display, above. Dan Walker at One-Meter Sun, below.



Jeff Walsh at a display, perhaps dreaming of clear skies and warmer weather, below.



Photo by Len Jezior

Photos by Jeff Walsh except as otherwise noted.

Gravity Waves Oberlin Connection

Professors Rob Owen and Dan Stinebring have also been working on gravity wave detection. Read the whole story here:

<http://news.oberlin.edu/articles/professors-break-down-importance-gravitational-wave-detection/>

A Brief History of Daylight Savings Time

On the second Sunday of the month, we will spring forward 1 hour as Daylight Savings Time will arrive at 2 a.m. on Sunday, March 13. For astronomers, this is a dreaded yearly ritual because, with the spring forward, one now has to stay up an hour later to view the sky. While not a chore as of yet for most, come May, the story will be different.

So, how did Daylight Savings Time come about, anyway?

To trace the origins of DST, one must travel back to France of the 1700s. At that time Benjamin Franklin was serving as an envoy to the French government. Now, France is at a higher latitude than most of the United States, which means that the length variances of day and night are more extreme thanks to the higher latitude. In France, Franklin was somewhat disturbed by what he considered people living out of sync with nature and paying for it, literally, in candles. When most people got up, the Sun had already been up for several hours thanks to France's higher latitude. However, instead of people adjusting their schedules to the natural sunlight, they merely got up at the same time they always did and, as a result, stayed up well into the night, burning untold numbers of candles.

Franklin's solution? People should get up earlier (and thus go to bed earlier) during the summer and make use of the natural sunlight so as to economize on candle usage. In fact, Franklin published this idea, albeit anonymously, in a 1784, [rather tongue in cheek](#) essay. In truth, Benjamin Franklin is not the father of DST, but he was the first recorded person in history to suggest that people live more in-tune with the Sun.

After Franklin, the world would have to wait more than a century in order to get more advocates for living in sync with the Sun.

Around the year 1900, two different men would bring the idea of an actual time change (rather than the wake up/go to bed time change proposed by Franklin) to the public forefront. In England, prominent builder/outdoorsman [William Willett](#), like Franklin, hated the idea that people were sleeping half their mornings away and, on a personal note, hated having to cut his rounds of golf short due to early nightfall. It is Willett who is commonly credited with the DST idea despite the fact that New Zealand entomologist George Vernon Hudson also proposed a time shift 10 years before Willett. Hudson's personal stake: extra daylight would allow more time for specimen collection.

In the years following the time shift proposals by Willett and Hudson, the thought of springing the clocks forward started to spread around the world but, like with most political

matters, more important issues came to the forefront, at least until 1916.

By the arrival of 1916, Europe had been at war for two years. As the then-called Great War continued with no end in sight, governments were looking for ways to cut costs to fund the war effort in any way they could. Then, come summer 1916, the Central Powers (Germany, Austria-Hungary, and their allies) agreed to set the clocks ahead for an hour as a means for saving coal. The other belligerents quickly followed suit. The United States, which entered the war in 1917, adopted a time shift in 1918.

Come the end of the war, though, DST was largely discontinued. However, with the advent of WWII, it would be re-instituted as, once again, an energy-saving measure. This time, though, it stuck around, although its advent wasn't formalized, at least in the United States, until 1966. Curiously, though, the [Uniform Time Act](#) was not binding in that localities could choose to ignore it and keep Standard Time if they so wished. So far, Arizona and Hawaii still don't observe DST. In 2007, at least in the United States, DST was extended on both ends of the year by 3 weeks in spring and 1 in fall.

Another curious fact about DST is this: throughout history and around the world, the shift has not always been one hour. In the past, time changes ranging between 20 minutes and 2 hours have been observed. Right now, there is debate in some countries whether to make DST the new Standard Time, as in having DST all year, while other nations are contemplating doing away with DST altogether. Also, there are pushes in some places to extend DST by springing ahead more than 1 hour, too.

In all, the whole business of time change is an interesting history lesson not found in most textbooks and is still history in the making.

Oh yes, if you think our method of time change stinks, at least we don't track time like the ancients did. Most ancient cultures always kept 12 hours of day and 12 hours of night year-round because they adjusted the hours' lengths accordingly. And you thought springing ahead and falling back was an inconvenience!

~Denny Bodzash

BREAKING COSMIC NEWS

Explore the informative BRAS [webpage](#) and all its interesting, timely [links](#), join the interactive members-only [BRAS Forum](#) and keep in touch.