

# The Flint River Observer

## Newsletter of the Flint River Astronomy Club

July 2005

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**Officers:** President, **Steve Knight:** [sdknight@flintriverastronomy.org](mailto:sdknight@flintriverastronomy.org) Vice President, **Steven (Smitty) Smith:** [Saratoga@flintriverastronomy.org](mailto:Saratoga@flintriverastronomy.org); Secretary, **Doug Maxwell:** [doug@flintriverastronomy.org](mailto:doug@flintriverastronomy.org) ; Treasurer, **Dawn Knight:** [sdknight@flintriverastronomy.org](mailto:sdknight@flintriverastronomy.org); Board of Directors: **David Ward:** [dward@flintriverastronomy.org](mailto:dward@flintriverastronomy.org); **John Wallace:** [JWCOSMOS@att.net](mailto:JWCOSMOS@att.net); and **Scott Hammonds:** [Scott@creatorsview.com](mailto:Scott@creatorsview.com); Public Observing Liaison, **Felix Luciano:** [felix.luciano@flintriverastronomy.org](mailto:felix.luciano@flintriverastronomy.org); **David Ward** webmaster (see above); Librarian, **Curt Cole:** [24e29d55c@speedfactory.net](mailto:24e29d55c@speedfactory.net); Event Photographer, **Doug Maxwell** (see above). Club mailing address: 114 Central Lake Cir. Griffin, GA 30223. Web page: [www.flintriverastronomy.org](http://www.flintriverastronomy.org), discussion group at [FRAC@yahoogroups.com](mailto:FRAC@yahoogroups.com).

Please notify **Dawn Knight** if you have a change of address, telephone number and or new e-mail address.

**President's Message:** First let me start by welcoming the clubs three new members: Larry Higgins (one of the founders of FRAC), Chris Freeman and Doyne Tallman. We hope that you guys have as much fun in FRAC as we have had over the years. FRAC would like to extend it's sympathies to Matt McEwen and family for the loss of Matt's mother.

I have read on several astronomy forums that Hardin Optical has announced that the public side of Hardin will be closing so that they can focus on contracts and other sides of the business. We sure hate to see them go. I did however finally purchase my niece the telescope that she has tried to win at GSV for the last two years. I hope that she will enjoy it for many years to come. On to other business, we have secured insurance for the club. I received the paperwork June 21 saying that it went into effect June 10. We have also secured Indian Springs for GSV 2006 for April 20-23. This time it will be a three day event as many people have suggested. We will officially announce GSV 2006 in October to make sure that the park doesn't decide to do renovations and close during our event. Don't forget that TNSP, Chiefland and PSSG are just around the corner. I am hoping to be able to attend TNSP and Chiefland this year. TNSP is being held October 7-9, 2005 and Chiefland will be October 30-November 5, 2005. I hope to see some of you guys there.

**Club Calendar:** July 1-2, Cox Field Observing; July 8 – 9, Cox Field Observing; July 14, Club Meeting, Griffin Library; July 29-30, Cox Field Observing

**Membership Renewals:** All renewals are due during the month of February.

**Last Month's Meeting Highlights:**

The June meeting was conducted by Dawn Knight who covered the Night Sky Network kit that we have and the different items that it contains. We also covered the Astronomical League ballot that was for the office of Secretary. John Jardine Goss was the only candidate for the office and that is who the club has cast a vote for. We also discussed advertising the club in more places. Larry Higgins suggested that we talk to the UGA office in Griffin about their facility and the possibility of doing an event for them. He said that he would handle this as he already has a relationship with them. We talked to the library personnel about putting flyers for the club in the library and they agreed. Larry and others also suggested contacting Clayton State since they also teach some astronomy courses, contacting the Griffin Daily News since they run advertisements for local events once a week at no cost and contacting the Town and Country Shopper about running an ad. If anyone has contact at any of these places or knows of some other places we may want to try, contact Steve or Dawn and let them know. We are a great club and want to get the word out for other budding astronomers looking for a local club. Chuck Sims is working on putting together a full moon weekend event that would take us to McDonough. We would be going to a small amusement facility that has putt-putt, rock climbing walls, bowling, etc just off Hwy. 155. It looks like a great place. The final details will be announced once they are finalized. John Wallace volunteered to head the "dinner on the grounds for the Coxses" which will be held sometime in the fall. Once a date is decided on everyone attending

will need to get in touch with John to let him know what they plan to bring. We will again invite the Coxses and present them with a gift for being the wonderful people that they are. We will announce this event when the dates are chosen.

**May Events:** The club hosted an observing (May 27th) for the Cub Scout Pack 84 and their parents at the County Line Methodist Church. FRAC members present were Steve Knight, Steven (Smitty) Smith, Chuck Sims, and Felix Luciano. We had some 20 plus kids and just about the same number of parents all camping out across the street from the church. After the required Cub Scout meeting and awards presentations, Smitty was called upon to do a short presentation on the observing. After the presentation the kids and parents came up to the scopes to view Jupiter, Saturn and a few double star systems. We fielded a lot of questions and were able to assist with the setting up of one small refractor. The observing went very well and the kids and parents came out very pleased with the short session. The following is the message we got back from the event coordinator: "The kids can't stop talking about what they were able to experience through you guys. Thank YOU so much for bringing your equipment and allowing us to take part in viewing the wonders of our universe! I really appreciate your taking the time to explain all that was going on. And for your patience - as our programs don't always run according to schedule...THANK YOU VERY MUCH!" A big thanks to Smitty and Chuck.

Next in the club's public observing schedule was the Spalding County 4-H

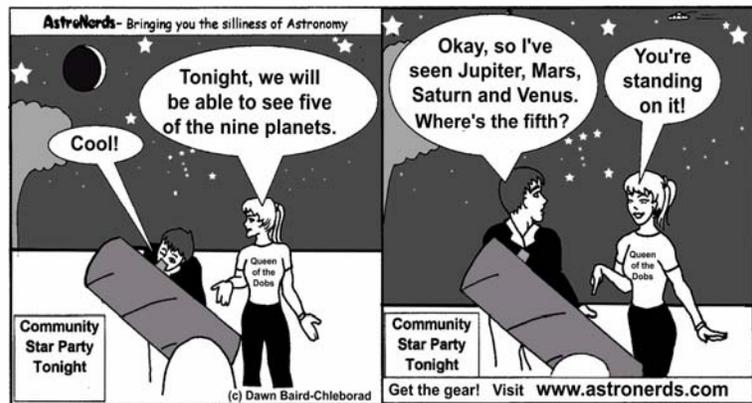
Club on Thursday, June 9. Present were Steve and Dawn Knight, Matt McEwen, Doug Maxwell, "Smitty" Smith and Felix. We hosted some 15 plus teens and 4 – 5 adults in charge of the group. We moved from the stated location to a house with a much larger open area for us to set up and do the observing. We were able to show Jupiter, Saturn, Alcor and Mizar, Castor, The "Stargate" by Corvus and a few of the brighter stars in the skies that evening. Before too late, the kids were taken down the field for naked eye stargazing by the "pied piper of astronomy, Felix". We were able to point out Venus already low in the horizon and about to go behind the tree line. Also close to the Moon was Saturn. The teens were surprised at how close the Moon looked through the eyepiece and the number of craters visible. Steve and Smitty gave away Night Sky magazines that we got through the Night Sky Network. We had a mishap with Steve taking a fall as we were packing it up for the night. Steve missed the bricks surrounding a gas tank and fell over together with the scope. He gave us a major scare, seeing Steve on the ground and the scope next to him. Sure hope he is doing much better by now!

**Highlights for the month of July:** Beginning July 1 as you gaze to your west-northwestern skies, Mercury and Venus can be seen in close proximity. Saturn is located above the horizon long enough to be seen just a few degrees lower than Venus and Mercury.

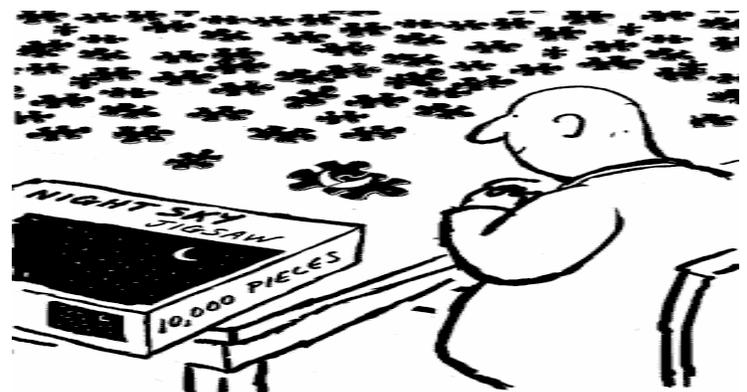
Jupiter is located high towards the southwestern skies. It is shining as the brightest point of light in the evening skies.

From night sky magazine: "July 8 - The thin crescent Moon hangs above Venus and Mercury low in twilight."

From Astronomy Magazine: "Crash Course – In the wee hours of July 4, Comet 9P/Tempel 1 gets slammed by and 816-pound projectile as part of NASA's Deep Impact Mission."



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# July

<i>Sun</i>	<i>Mon</i>	<i>Tue</i>	<i>Wed</i>	<i>Thu</i>	<i>Fri</i>	<i>Sat</i>
					<b>1</b> Cox Field Observing Venus & Mercury 1° apart	<b>2</b> Cox Field Observing
<b>3</b>	<b>4</b> NASA's Deep Impact Mission - Comet 9P/Tempel 1	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b> New Moon	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b> Cox Field Observing. Moon located over Venus & Mercury	<b>9</b> Cox Field Observing
<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b> First Qtr Moon Club Meeting	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>17</b> Mars closest to the Sun	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b> Full Moon	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b> Last Qtr Moon	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b> Cox Field Observing	<b>30</b> Cox Field Observing

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