



# “CAPE FEAR SKIES”

Cape Fear Astronomical Society Newsletter

Wilmington, NC and Surrounding Areas

June 2019



## Vice President's Report

So far, our calendar includes two scheduled events for June. The next Carolina Beach State Park public observing event is Saturday, June 8th: the day before the monthly meeting. In addition I will be supporting the Pender County Public Library Hampstead branch for a summer STEM event on Constellations on Wednesday, June 26th. No additional Cape Fear Astro people are needed, but if you wish to participate please contact me.

We have two events scheduled in July, more info in the July Cape Fear Skies. Other than the continuing CBSP events, I'm not aware of anything scheduled for August.

Looking ahead to the fall:

The Pender County Public Library will be receiving a visit from “Starlab”, a portable planetarium similar to that used at the Cape Fear Museum. Starlab will be at PCPL at least September 20th through October 18th, with a possible extension. It will be set up at various locations throughout Pender county. Although Starlab will be run by PCPL staff, and come with “canned” programs, it may be possible for Cape Fear Astro to provide some programming such as seasonal sky tours using it. If you have ideas for programs and would like to develop them, please contact me, so I can raise the possibilities with the Library Director.

The Town of Leland has contacted us regarding a series of evening events in the fall. I've returned their e-mail message, but no definite plans have been made yet.

The Cape Fear Fair runs November 1st through 10th at the Wilmington International Airport. The suggestion has been made that Cape Fear Astro have a presence there, at least on the weekend days. That would be the 2nd, 3rd, 9th, and 10th. Weekend hours are noon-ish to midnight-ish. We can also create an adult-class educational booth and enter it in competitions if we so desire. If you would be able to represent Cape Fear Astro to the fair-going public on one of those days, for even a few hours, or wish to work on a booth, please contact me.

As always, if you are contacted concerning, or have any ideas for, a public outreach event, please let me know so we can follow up on them together.

Jon

## Next CFAS Monthly Meeting

Sun, June 9, **7:00pm** – 9:30pm  
212 DeLoach Hall, UNCW Campus

## GAStronomy Meeting

Sun, June 9, **5:00pm** – 6:45pm  
(Dinner, prior to the Monthly Meeting)

Flaming Amy Burrito Barn, 4002 Oleander Dr,

## Next Event - June Public Star Party

June 8, **8:00pm** – 9:45pm  
Carolina Beach State Park

## June Calendar

June 3rd: New Moon

**June 8th: Public observing at Carolina Beach State Park:  
8pm**

**June 9th: CFAS monthly meeting: 7pm**

June 10th: First Quarter Moon

June 10th: Jupiter at Opposition

June 17th: Full Moon

June 21st: Solstice

June 23rd: Mercury at Easternmost Elongation (25 deg. from sun), evening

June 25th: Last Quarter Moon

Astronomical events courtesy Guy Ottewell, [Astronomical Calendar 2019](#)

## Memorial Weekend Observing at “Starfields”

Article and Photo by Jon Stewart-Taylor

Last quarter moon was approaching. At the last Cape Fear Astro meeting I'd raised the possibility of leasing the club a portion of the property at “Starfields”, a 50-acre farm in north-west Pender County for a permanent observing site. So, I sent a message to the e-mailing list inviting people to come to “Starfields” before sunset to look at the possible locations for a club shed or observatory building, and then do some observing on my observing field.

Skip and Karl said they were interested. There was some back-and-forth about the forecast vs. people's Memorial Day Weekend plans during the week. We settled on Saturday.

After mowing and cutting some trees and shrubs during the afternoon, I dragged out my scope and started doing some long-neglected maintenance, mostly tightening fastenings, then collimating. About 3/4s of the way through that task, Skip arrived. I took him on a tour of the various possible locations.

There's an area next to the observing field on the east side which has room for a shed or observatory. It has the advantages that people could use the existing observing field, and a building could easily receive a feed from my solar/battery 12V system to get some power for free. The major disadvantages would be a restricted southern horizon, and limited parking directly adjacent.

There's room for a shed due north of the field, but there are no real advantages to the spot.

Perhaps the best spot would be about 100 yard north-west of the current observing field. There's currently room for a couple of sheds or observatories, piers and pads, and parking for up to 10 cars. With some work to cut back the shrubs which have grown up during a year while I could not maintain the property, space could probably be opened up for another 5-10 cars. It has better horizons than my current observing field, especially to the south. The only real disadvantage would be the need for a separate power system.

After the tour Skip started setting up two mounts and one 'scope. He explained he'd brought a little scope to observe with, and a big mount he wanted to verify with new polar alignment software. Shortly after that, Karl arrived, and I gave him the same tour.

Then it was basically waiting for darkness. As the evening fell, clouds began to thicken, and i was somewhat pessimistic we'd see anything. As it got dark, some stars were visible, but it didn't look promising.

As it turned out, it wasn't too bad. We managed to find a bunch of the late spring and early summer tourist traps. Galaxies weren't in the best condition (the Leo Triplet became the Leo Doublet), but the Globulars were pretty nice. M3, M13, and M92 were observed and compared. About 10 PM the clouds started to thicken even more, and by 10:30 we gave up and started packing.



Photo: Karl and Skip setting up at “Starfields”.

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## Memorial Weekend Observing at “Starfields” 2

by Karl Adlon

It was cloudy pretty much all day in Southport but never having been to “Starfields”, I thought it was a good opportunity to get “the lay of the land”. As I drove, the sky conditions improved quite a bit, so I was pretty sure I'd see something through a telescope.

Several years ago, knowing that eventually we would move to somewhere in the Southport area, I purchased an equatorial mount, which I am setting up in the above photo. It is designed for 32 degrees latitude. This was my first time using it and it performed well, keeping objects in the eyepiece field, moving only a little off center after ¼ hour or so.

When Jon showed me the area where 10 or so cars could park, my thought was how similar it could be to my previous club's observing location at a county park. My thought, which I'm first expressing here, is that several pads (concrete slab or garden pavers) would be great. I could set up a scope on the pad and set my spare 12 volt car battery down and pretty much be ready for the night. This would be a start and we could decide on what other facilities we wanted in the future.

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## 40 Years Ago

by Karl Adlon

*“Our fantastic civilization has fallen out of touch with many aspects of nature, and with none more completely than the night”*

So begins *Chapter VIII, Night on the Great Beach* of Henry Beston's “The Outermost House”. I learned of this book 40 years ago on a trip to Cape Cod. First publish in 1928, he tells of spending a year on the beach in a tiny house. If you love the beach and nature, it is a “must read”. I wonder what he'd think of 2019.

## 5" f/6 Dob Telescope Donated

By Jon Stewart-Taylor

Steve Hilliard received a donation on behalf of the club: a Galileo brand Dobsonian-mounted 5" f/6 Newtonian. It came with top and bottom dust caps, two eyepieces (25mm "Astroscopic" and 10mm Galileo brand plossl), and a plastic 3x Barlow.

There's a handle on the front of the rocker box to carry the scope, but I wouldn't recommend using it on the fully assembled scope. For a 5", it's heavy and awkward.

It came with an eyepiece tray which screws onto the rocker box above the handle and holds 3 eyepieces: one 2" and two 1 1/4"ers. The tray is made of pressboard, and had split (possibly by being used to supplement the handle). I've glued it back together and reattached it, but it's likely to break again if stressed.

There is a bracket for some kind of finder. It resembles a Telrad bracket but is much shorter. We'll need to replace it with another unit power finder.

The focuser is rack and pinion, and operates fairly smoothly. It can in theory accommodate 2" eyepieces, but the supplied 1 1/4" adaptor would be awkward to change, especially in the dark.

Both the azimuth and altitude bearings have screw-in tensioner knobs. I didn't play with the tension much. The tube is out of balance without a finder.

I collimated it using a laser collimator and took it out briefly to look at the moon. The supplied 25mm was difficult for me to use: it was difficult to position my eye to avoid "greying out" the image. Your mileage may vary. I had better luck with the 10mm Plossl. The moon looked quite good, clear and detailed. I tried taking a cellphone image, but I don't have a steady enough hand. The image doesn't match what I saw.

It was suggested we might donate this scope to a library. I don't think this is the right scope for that: too heavy, and too hard to store.

So what do we do with it? It might make an OK loaner scope within the club. It might do OK as a public viewing scope. I don't think it's an ideal scope for anything, but it was free and it will be usable with an added finder.

There's an image of a very similar scope on amazon here: <https://www.amazon.com/Galileo-G-160DB-1300mm-Dobsonian-Telescope/dp/B01N3NME4O#>



*Moon image by Jon Stewart-Taylor using Samsung S5 through Galileo 130mm dob*

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Members are welcome and encouraged to submit articles or other input for "CAPE FEAR SKIES". Submit any and all interesting items for publication to Karl Adlon, Editor (email [kmja79@yahoo.com](mailto:kmja79@yahoo.com)).

### CFAS Officers:

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