

President's Message

by Ben Steelman

One of the best times I had in 2022 was attending the grand re-opening of the Morehead Planetarium and Science Center in Chapel Hill. . The pandemic had postponed the event for several years, and it was a pleasure to see the planetarium in all its glory again, with an array of interactive exhibits and the 68-foot full-dome Star Theater again running a regular schedule,

I grew up on the Planetarium when I was a little kid, and I took Astronomy 31 in the theater as a college freshman. (They made me compute the parallax of a light bulb up on the roof.)

Now, Amy Sale from the Planetarium staff is coming down for our March program to give us some hints on how to make astronomy more accessible for the general, non-obsesses public.

We're lucky to have the Ingram Planetarium nearby in Sunset Beach, but the Morehead is really something and well worth the visit if you've never been,

One of the oldest planetariums in the country, it was donated to the University of North Carolina in 1947 by John Motley Morehead III, an alumnus, industrialist and chemical engineer. (Basically, he invented acetylene.)

The story goes that "Uncle Mott" committed to the project after he heard the astrophysicist Harlow Shapley joke that North Carolinians were the most "astronomically ignorant" people in the USA.

Completed in 1949 -- a 75th anniversary celebration is coming up -- the planetarium's beloved Zeiss projector, the "Bug," presented shows to tens of thousands of students and schoolchildren. Created by Germany's Zeiss works, it really did look like a giant ant. Updated in 1969, it was finally retired in 2011 and replaced by a digital video projection system.

Morehead's place in history was assured, when NASA used it between 1959 and 1974 to train Mercury, Gemini and Apollo astronauts in celestial navigation -- Neil Armstrong, Buzz Aldrin, John Glenn and the whole crew. Apparently, it paid off. During the Apollo 12 launch, a lightning strike knocked out the computer navigation system. Using their Morehead training, crew members Pete Conrad, Alan Bean and Dick Gordon were quickly able to get the system back on line by focusing on a series of guide stars. Jim Lovell used his Morehead training to steer the crippled Apollo 13 command module during key moments of the mission.

One of the planetarium's proudest exhibits is a Gemini capsule simulator in which astronauts learned the star fields by peeking through tiny portholes.

In 2011, the Planetarium launched the N.C. Science Festival, in which we've participated.

For more about the Morehead, visit moreheadplanetarium.org

Calendar

February 2023

Date – Event – Time

05 Full Moon (smallest in 2023)

**** Note Date Change due to NFL SB Game! ****

05 ★ Cape Fear Astro Monthly Meeting ★

CFAS Monthly Meeting - 7:00pm – 9:00pm

212 DeLoach Hall; UNCW

Also simulcast via Zoom

**10 Club Observing @ Starfields (the Club Observatory);
6:00 PM; 3rd Quarter Moon**

**11 Club Observing @ Starfields (the Club Observatory);
6:00 PM; 3rd Quarter Moon**

13 Last Quarter Moon

**17 Club Observing @ Starfields (the Club Observatory);
6:00 PM; New Moon**

**18 Club Observing @ Starfields (the Club Observatory);
6:00 PM; New Moon**

20 New Moon

27 First Quarter Moon

28 Mars 1.1 deg from moon: Occultation; 05:00 UTC

Astro phenomena from:

<https://www.universalworkshop.com/astronomical-calendar-any-year/>

2023 Public Events

Watch this space for 2023 Public Events. If you haven't done one before, perhaps make a New Year resolution to try on – you might like it!

2023 Monthly Meeting Dates

February 5, 2023 (Next week is NFL SB)

March 12, 2023

April 2, 2023 (Next week is Easter)

May 7, 2023 (Next week is Mothers' Day)

June 11, 2023

July 9, 2023

August 13, 2023

September 10, 2023

October 8, 2023

November 12, 2023

December 10, 2023 (Date and time may change for Holiday Celebration)



Yerkes Observatory has a baby!

Special Interest Groups (SIGs)

Usual meeting dates – watch emails for exceptions

Phenomena:	First Wednesday
Both Eyes:	Second Tuesday
Telescope Usage:	Third Tuesday
New Astronomer:	Third Wednesday
Outreach:	Fourth Tuesday

From the Editor's Desk: "From the Editor's Desk..."

by Karl Adlon

That title is not a mistake! On July 5, 2021 I purchased a 1974 MGB. During my college years, I had a 1957 MGA that needed work and have been familiar with Moss Motors – a British car parts supplier who also provides advice and a newsletter, "Moss Motoring". The following is from the latest Issue.

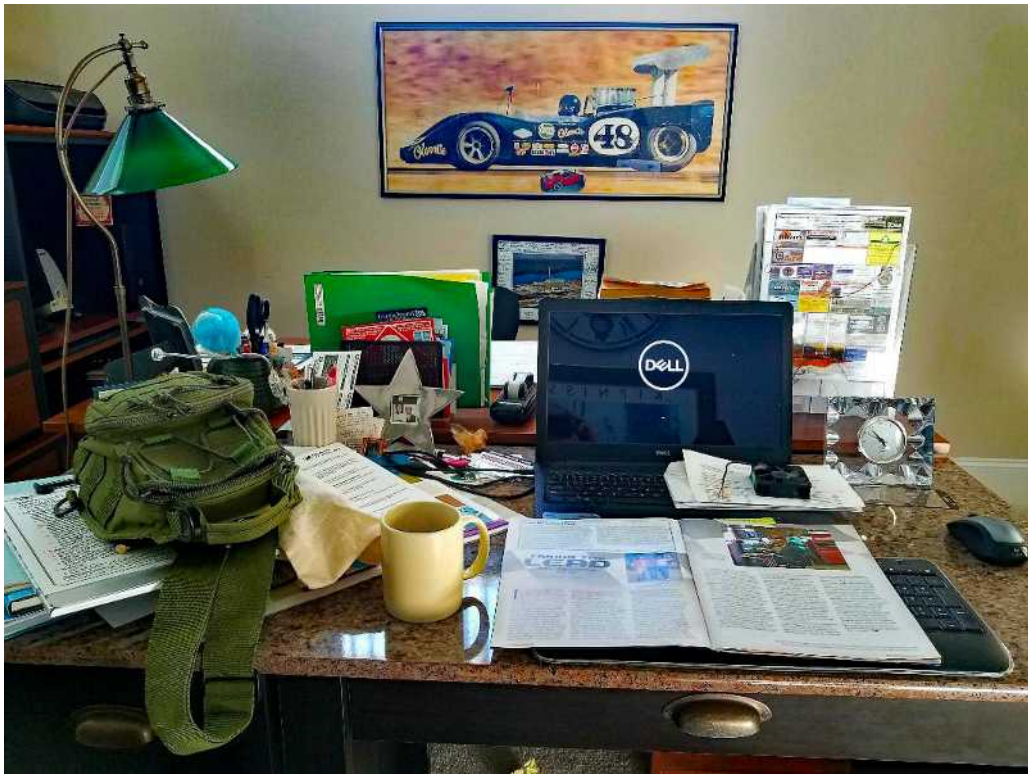
From the Editor's Desk...

A few months ago I asked the Positive Earth Drivers Club in Central New Jersey if I could share a story written in their excellent newsletter. The author, Mike Ferguson, and I mailed back and forth a bit, and along way Mike shared another piece he wrote. I'm including that here because I know his words will remind many readers of friends they've known who've gone ahead to explore the ethereal roads beyond. Mike's words also hit upon something that has an editor I'm inclined to appreciate, and that's the permanence of written words. Mike's friend Ray Carbone actively wrote tech articles for the clubs newsletter, The Terminal Post, and he also regularly participated online at the Austin-Healey Experience forum with sound advice and encouragement. Even though Ray is no longer with us, some of his words are.

On that note, today I want to say thank you to all of you who are taking the time and energy to write down and share your experiences on forums and Club newsletters and in this magazine, too. No matter whether you are a novice or an expert mechanic - no matter whether you're a struggling or proficient writer - your words can entertain, educate and inspire others. And for those of you who have never tried your hand at writing, I want to encourage you to support your clubs newsletters if you belong to one, or submit stories to be shared in this magazine. You may be surprised at what you're able to create and the fun you'll have doing it. And you never know the impact you may have.

-Dave Stuursma

So what do you want to say? I know you have something!



The Editor's desk. Anyone know who is driving #48?

A Look at Our SIGs

by Jon Stewart-Taylor

We've been holding Special Interest Group (SIG) meetings for about two years now. SIGs were started in part because the COVID pandemic reduced the opportunity to meet in person, and in part because Astronomy is a hobby with a lot more in it than was easy to address in the monthly meetings.

The first step was asking what people might be interested in as topics of SIGs. The answers included meteors, unaided eye observing, observing with telescopes, binoculars, information for new astronomers, solar observing, comets, eclipses, outreach, and astrophotography. That was way too many topics to hold individual meetings for. We did our best to address the wide range by grouping into just 5 SIGs. One (Outreach) died within the first few months from simple lack of participants. The remainder are still active to some extent: Astrophotography, Both Eyes (encompassing unaided-eye, binocular, and bino-viewers), New Astronomers, Phenomena (comets, meteors, eclipses, conjunctions, and such) and Telescope usage.

We set aside one evening per month for each SIG. It was Tuesdays and Wednesdays, since I had previous commitments on most other days, and didn't think people would want to give up their weekends. We tried to have a mini-program for each session, with time open for questions during and after the main topic. In practice I have trouble remembering to stop for questions and fitting into the 45-minute limit on free Zoom meetings. I eventually figured out we could get around the time limit by simply restarting the meeting after it automatically kicked us out.

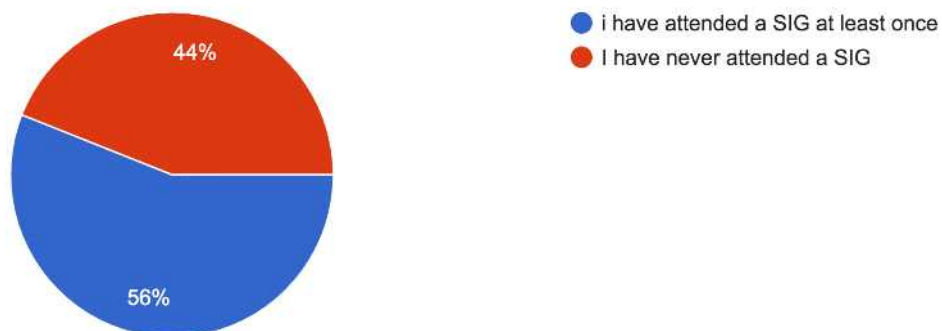
Over the two years the number of participants in any given SIG, or even *any* SIG, was never large. The same several faces were the most common participants. It has been gratifying to see them gain more knowledge and experience, and see some grow from learning to sharing.

I recently found out about Google "Forms", which provide a quick, easy, and anonymous way to create, fill out, and analyze questionnaires. With some assistance and advice from Kathleen I created a survey about member's experience with our SIGs. I emailed the resulting survey to everyone via the Groups.io emailing list. With only a little begging well over half the total club members have responded. That's a remarkably good return: thank you very much to everyone who took the time to answer.

The first question was simply whether a member had ever attended a SIG:

Have you ever attended a Cape Fear Astro SIG?

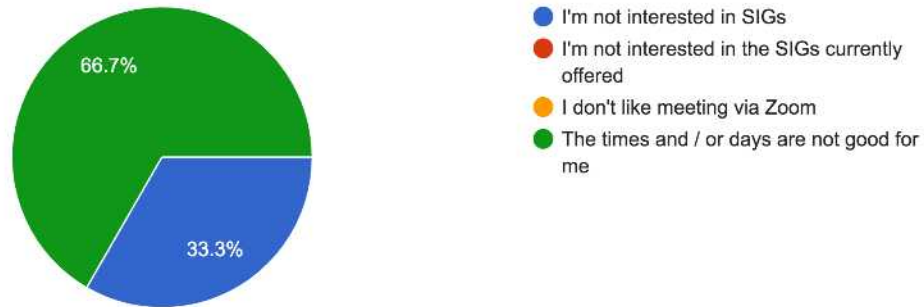
25 responses



About ½ of all members haven't. If one hadn't attended a SIG, the next question was, why not?

If you have not attended a SIG, was it because:

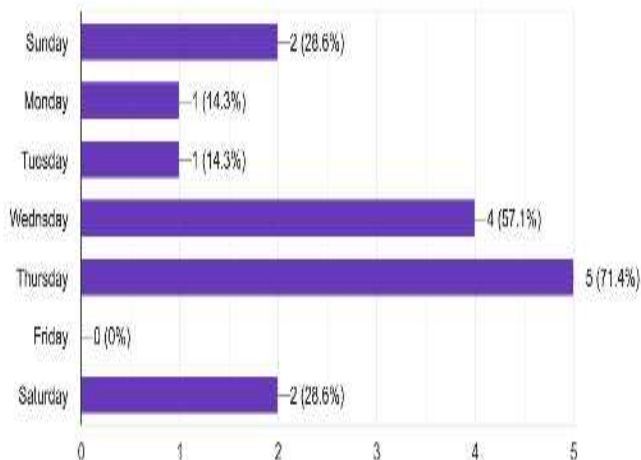
9 responses



Of the 11 people who hadn't attended 1/3 said they weren't interested in SIGs. They were off the hook at this point: the survey ended for them. 6 said it was because the day or time wasn't good for them, and the next questions asked what would be their preferred days and times.

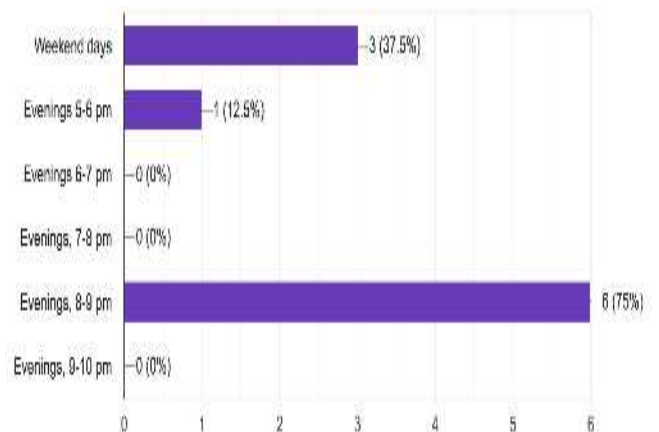
Choose your best days. Click as many as you wish.

7 responses



Which times would be best for you? Click as many as you wish, regardless of what days they'd be for.

8 responses

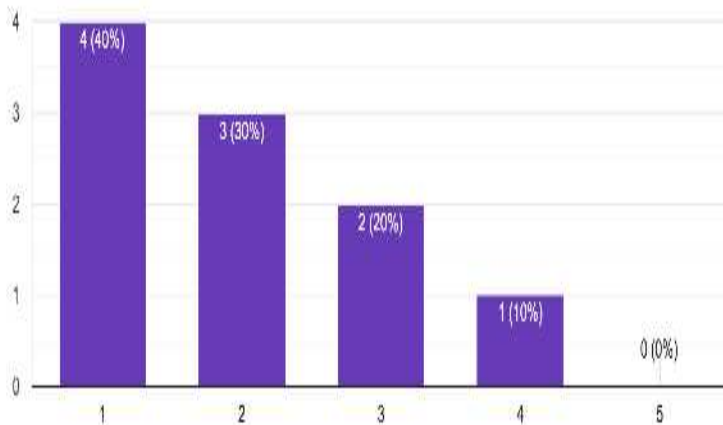


Since people were allowed to choose as many responses as they wished for each question there were more answers than respondents. The answers kinda supported my assumption about not meeting on weekends: the majority (9) were for either Wednesday or Thursday. But, it also kinda undermined it: both Saturday and Sunday got two votes each. Although "evenings 8-9" were also a majority, "weekend days" were selected 3 times.

After this question people who never attended a SIG were done. People who had attended "at least one" SIG meeting were then asked to rate each of the Astrophotography, Both Eyes, New Astronomer, and Telescope Usage SIGs on a scale of 1 (good) to 5 (needs improvement).

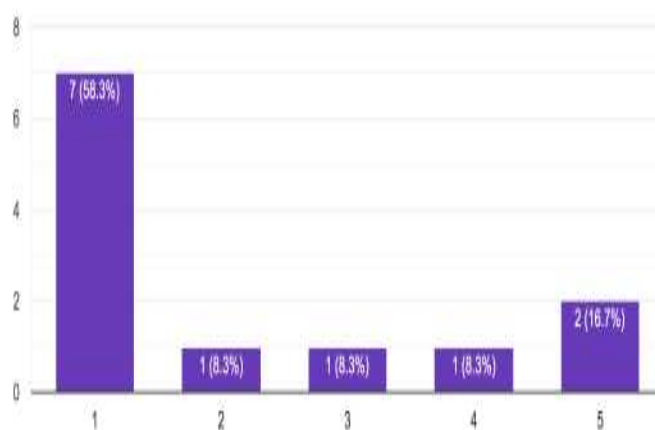
Astrophotography

10 responses



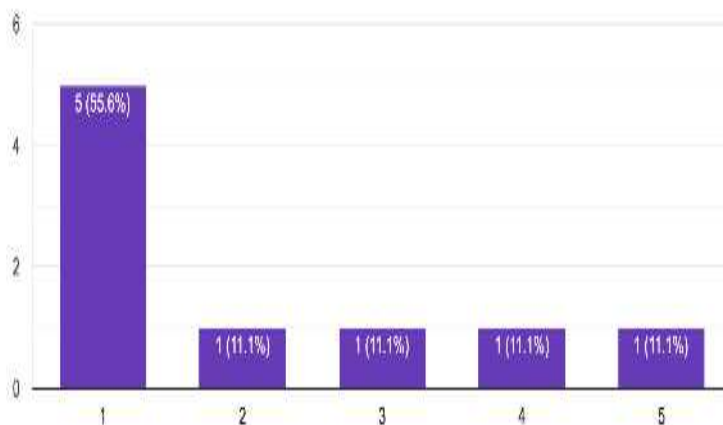
Both Eyes

12 responses



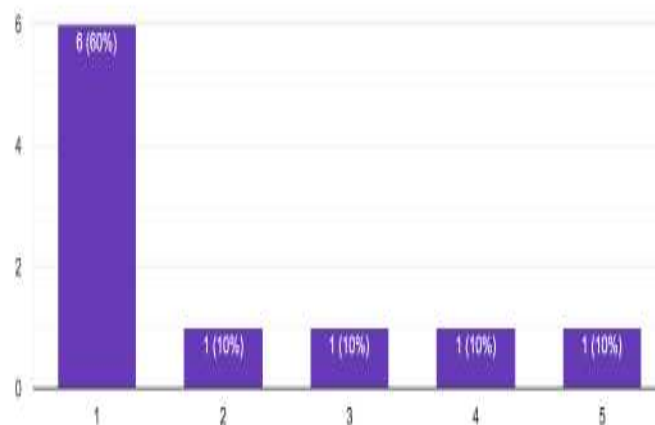
New Astronomer

9 responses



Telescope Usage

10 responses

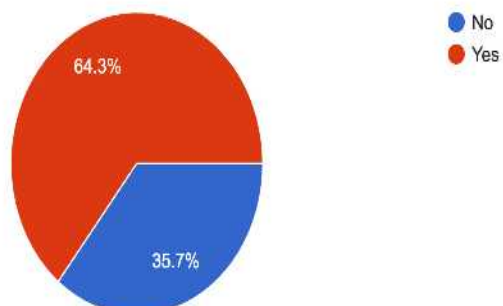


As you can probably see, Karl's Astrophotography SIG is rated very well, with only one person responding toward the "needs improvement" end of the scale.. Both Eyes, New Astronomer, and Telescope Usage are not as well rated, with about 1/3 of the responses indicating need for improvement. I expect I'll need to post another survey to the list (sorry) asking what specific improvements need to be made.

The last question was again about scheduling:

Are the SIGs scheduled on good days for you

14 responses



14 people answered, and about 2/3rds of them said the sheduled days were good. About 1/3 said they were not. Looks like another question for a follow-up survey to determine which days/times are best for those who do attend the SIGs, and compare it to the prepered days and times of people who haven't attended.

Thanks to everyone who responded to the survey, and especially to the people who sent me comments via e-mail. I hope this will eventually make SIGs better for everyone.

Get to Know YOUR Astronomical League



The Astronomical League (AstroLeague or AL) is one of the largest amateur astronomical organizations in the world. The organization serves to encourage an interest in astronomy (especially amateur astronomy) and promote the science of astronomy by:

- ✓ fostering astronomical education;
- ✓ providing incentives for astronomical observation and research;
- ✓ assisting communication among amateur astronomical societies.



CFAS is one of over 300 member societies affiliated with the AstroLeague. Your membership in CFAS allows you take full advantage of this relationship so periodically review the information below to see how the AstroLeague can support your astronomical interests and endeavors.

AstroLeague Home Page	www.astroleague.org
AL Observing Programs List	https://www.astroleague.org/al/obsclubs/AlphabeticObservingClubs.html
What's Up Doc? (Monthly Guide for AL Obs Pgms)	http://humbleisd.net/Page/81224
February Navigation Guide (New)	https://www.astroleague.org/files/u220/2023%20February.pdf
Venus and Jupiter in February (New)	https://www.astroleague.org/files/u220/2023%20February%20%20Venus%20%26%20Jupiter.pdf
Supermoons (New)	https://www.astroleague.org/files/u220/Supermoon.pdf
Observing Castor A, B and C (New)	https://www.astroleague.org/files/u220/Castor.pdf
Current and Past Issues of Reflector Magazine	https://www.astroleague.org/reflector/april-2022-reflector-magazine
CFAS ALCor	Hank Lyon, hlyon8448@gmail.com
Additional AL News, Information and Reminders	<i>Unnatural light ruining your night?</i> The AL has created a handy outreach guide you can use to help get the word out about light pollution. If you've provided a mailing address to CFAS, please remember that your quarterly <i>Reflector</i> magazine will arrive via US Mail unless you specify the digital/email version.

The AstroLeague Correspondent (or ALCor) is your link between CFAS and the AstroLeague. Don't hesitate to contact your ALCor if you need assistance with anything AstroLeague related whether its general information or detailed coordination of observing program completions for certification. **Check back each month to see any new links, postings or reminders.**

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