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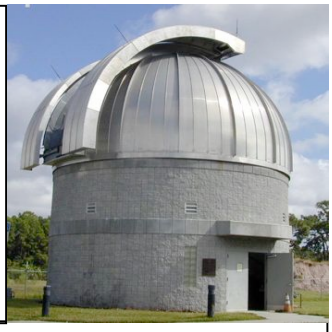
Quarterly Astrolog



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Special Items of Interest

CFAS Meetings:
Second Wednesday of each month at 7:00 pm.

CFAS Board Meetings:
First Wednesday of each month at Dan's Restaurant at 7:00 pm. All are welcome!

Observing Sessions and **Dark Sky Observing:**
Check the CFAS web site for dates and times of planned events.

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FALL Observing News *by Ray Jones*

Cooler weather and clear nights are upon us. It is time to get your telescope out, and ensure it is ready to go for our observing season. Start observing early and you can still catch the last of the great summer constellations before they set in the west. Jupiter is near zenith. M101 has a bright supernova that needs to be photographed!

To better organize our observing sessions at our 2 dark sky sites at Harmony and Ocala we are going back to email lists of CFAS members interested in observing at these sites. Observing announcements will still be made on the Harmony and Ocala Forums, but coordination and last minute changes will be communicated by using the email network established for each site. We are asking each CFAS member to sign up for a site(s). Once you are on the list you will receive emails concerning observing opportunities at those sites. The email lists will be shared so all can communicate with each other. Information on how to sign up will be sent separately to all CFAS members as well as being posted on the forum.

You might want to consider Variable star observing. This program is broken down into 3 major sections; Visual, DSLR camera, and CCD observations. The good news is you will be doing scientific work!! I urge you to check out their website at: http://www.aavso.org . There you will find a complete explanation of all their programs. The data collection is very easy, and you will be helping science. For those wanting a greater challenge the DSLR and CCD camera programs are available. The DSLR program requires just a telephoto lens and tripod for your DSLR camera. Participating in this program will keep you familiar with the night sky, and greatly improve your observing skills. Consider trying out their Visual 10 star training program, and get your AAVSO Certificate. In doing so you'll probably get hooked into this interesting and worthwhile astronomy pastime. Wishing each clear skies! --Ray

NASA's Lunar Electric Rover Simulator Review *by Tom Chitty*

Given the current state of our economy, and NASA's budget, I don't think any of us will be going to the moon in our lifetime. However, NASA has released an app that allows you to 'drive' their LER (Lunar Electric Rover) on your iDevice – for free. The opening screen of the app looks like Figure 1.

Figure 1

From the opening screen, you can take a picture tour (GALLERY) of the LER here on earth out in the field.

LEARN will let you take a virtual tour of the LER, rotating it 360 degrees and learning the different parts of the LER, including the docking hatch, shields, etc.

When you want to play, tap the PLAY button, and Figure 2 shows up – the starting point.

Figure 2

In the upper left is an overhead projection of the moon's surface, the location of the LER (red dot) and the locations of the various stops (yellow dots) you need to make before your power (upper right indicator) runs out.

The lower left corner has the steering arrows and the speed indicator, while the lower right has the forward and reverse buttons and two buttons to take you back to the Main Menu or bring up the Help Menu.

Now, the fun begins!

One of the yellow dots will start flashing, indicating the location to which you need to drive the LER . Your objective is to manipulate the controls to drive the LER to that location.

When you get to that location, be aware that there is only one spot and one direction you can safely park to complete that portion of the mission. You will know you are there when you get an image.

Figure 3

After you park in the proper spot, an image of the item at that location is presented, along with a description of it and its use.

For example, this is the Altair Lunar Lander image you get when you park in the right spot.

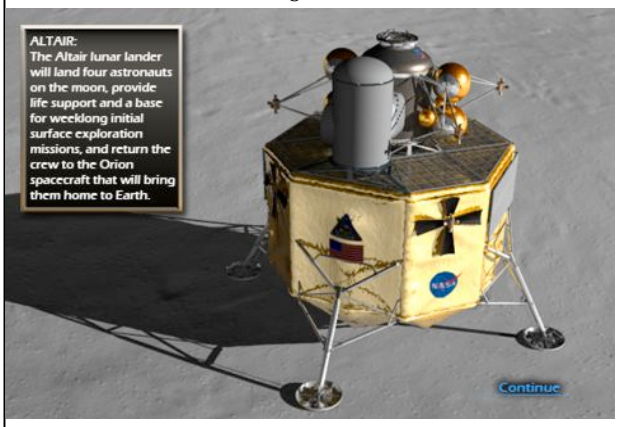

Figure 4

The app is a lot of fun while being educational for the next generation that (hopefully) will have the opportunity to go to the moon. If only I could complete the mission before running out of power… ∞

Gadgets! *by Gordon Cain*

Gadgets! (Synonym for: appliance, contraption, contrivance, gimmick, gizmo, jigger, widget, etc.)

This past June was gadget night at the CFAS Meeting. It was an open forum and a variety of issues were discussed.

Richard Wright addressed an issue that sends fear through most astronomers' minds. Collimation! He went on to explain his frustration and how he finally solved it with his CATSEYE collimation tool, and explained how it works. The plus factor was that the system traces the laser beam back to the eye piece, allowing positive alignment of both mirrors, which is not an easy task on a MAK.

David Hallemeyer brought in the least expensive device, a binocular mount. It is an older mount that uses Velcro straps to hold the binos in place. It was given to him by an attendee at one of the Outreach Events. This mount attaches to most any stable tripod. Cost: $0

Bert Burch had constructed an adjustable observing chair made from aluminum rectangular tubing. It is quite sturdy and portable and is made along the same design as the "Starbound™ Observing Chair," only cheaper. Cost: about $40

Gordon Cain displayed his binocular mount, constructed of narrow 1" x ½" aluminum tubing and small bars of solid aluminum stock. This was mounted on a repurposed circa 1960's wooden telescope tripod and the binos attached using a camera style pan head mount taken from a very cheap telescope. Cost: $30, excluding the repurposed components.

Gordon also built an observing chair (though he did not bring it) but it has been seen at many EPO events and at Astrofest. It is the *CATSPERCH*™ observing chair. Constructed from red oak, using the plans purchased from www.wood-wonders.com, the chair is sturdy and stable, though considerably larger than the one Burt made. Made from red oak it was not inexpensive, but less costly than buying a kit, or a completed chair. Cost: $140 (including full sized pattern, hardware, and wood)

Do you have a gadget, money saving tip, or an easier way to do something?

Bring your gadget or idea to a meeting and share it with others. One of the great values of being a member of CFAS is the opportunity to meet other amateur astronomers and share knowledge through formal presentations during the meetings and general discussion before and after the meeting and during the refreshment break. ∞

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CFAS Membership Application and Magazine Subscription

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Membership Type	**Yearly Dues**	**Amount You Are Paying**
Regular Membership	$35.00	$_____
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Astronomy Magazine Subscription	$34.00 Annual Subscription	$_____

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TOTAL REMITTANCE (PLEASE SEND CHECK): **$_____**
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What did one Neutrino say to another Neutrino? Answer: "Why is it always so dark in here?"