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Office of University Communications

January 22, 2014

All-Day Event is Free and Open to Amateur Astronomers of All Ages on Jan. 25

BOILING SPRINGS, N.C. –Ever been curious about the nighttime sky? Ever wondered about the constellations? Now you have your chance to ask any questions you have at the Cleveland County Astronomical Society (CCAS) 22nd Annual Regional Meeting of Amateur Astronomers, known as BoBfest. The all-day event will be held on Jan. 25, at the Tucker Student Center on the campus of Gardner-Webb University.

BoBfest is free and open to the public with doors opening at 8 a.m. The event wraps at 5 p.m. Since this regional meeting is catered specifically towards those whose interest in astronomy is new, CCAS president David Herndon will introduce participants to common astronomy terms, different types of telescopes and other resources used in this hobby.

“Anybody can come,” said Herndon, who attended his first regional meeting seven years ago. “Children who are interested in astronomy are welcome. This is where you learn. You don’t have to know anything about astronomy.”

The regional meeting will feature several speakers, astrophotography displays, swap tables, prize drawings and the opportunity for fellowship with other professional and amateur astronomers. There will also be a solar observing during lunch, weather permitting. All attendees are also encouraged to bring items for the astrophotography display. Entries can come in the form of print, digital or drawings.

Speakers for the event include Jim Craig of the Schiele Museum, Michael Castelaz of the Pisgah Astronomical Research Institute (PARI), and Ken Steiner of the Charlotte Amateur Astrologers Club and PARI. Scheduled topics are “In Starry Skies-The History of Stargazing,” “The Astronomy Legacy Project at PARI,” and “The Role of Water Masers in the Study of Stellar Evolution.”

Founded in 1986, by Paul Webb, the CCAS grew quickly in its formative years with a membership of 15 and the acquisition of a 16" f/4.5 Dobsonian telescope. Ken Vassey took over in 1989, and has maintained a strong presence since then. Bob Eskridge (the namesake for BoBfest) succeeded Vassey as president in 1992, and was followed by Steve Davis, Roger Ivester and Don Brooks.

During this regional meeting the society will also discuss club benefits, opportunities, and new partnerships. They will also be inviting new members to join for a cost of \$10 a year. For more information about the regional meeting and the CCAS, visit www.ccastro.org.

Located in Boiling Springs, N.C., Gardner-Webb University's purpose is to advance the Kingdom of God through Christian higher education by preparing graduates for professional and personal success, instilling in them a deep commitment to service and leadership, and equipping them for well-rounded lives of lasting impact, Pro Deo et Humanitate (For God and Humanity).