

**Moonstruck
Astronomy Club****Cammie Fairburn**

What do you call an alien with three eyes? An aliiien!

In October and November, we had a visitor, comet c/2025 A6 (Lemmon). It was 46.5 million miles from the sun and will return in about 1,300 years. Comet Lemmon was discovered in January by the Mount Lemmon Survey in Arizona.

Sunday, Dec. 21 is the winter solstice in the northern hemisphere, and it is the shortest day of the year. The North Pole is at its maximum tilt away from the sun, so it is at its furthest distance from the sun, resulting in the shortest day.

At our club meeting on Thursday, Nov. 6, Ed Hayes recounted his October trip to the Deerlick Astronomy Village in Crawfordville, Georgia, about 100 miles east of Atlanta. He attended the annual Peach State Star Gaze.

The Deerlick Astronomy Village is rated as a Bortle scale three. The Bortle scale measures the night sky's brightness on a scale of one to nine, where one is the darkest and nine is the brightest. The scale was created by John E. Bortle in 2001. Ocala is a Bortle scale six.

Glenn Cohen, in his moon minute presentation, got us pondering about

what the Earth would be like without the moon. The moon affects more than ocean tides, which would be much smaller. The moon's gravitational pull also affects the length of our day. Without it, the Earth would spin faster, resulting in six to eight-hour days.

The moon also helps stabilize the Earth's 23.5-degree tilt. Otherwise, the Earth would wobble more, leading to changes in our seasons and climate. The absence of the moon would also lead to darker nights and loss of both solar and lunar eclipses.

Our next meeting is Thursday, Dec. 4, and it will be our annual Christmas party. The club will provide the meal. Please bring your own beverage and a dessert to share.

Regular meetings of the Moonstruck Astronomy Club are on the first Thursday of every month from 11:15 a.m. to 12:45 p.m. in the Hobby Building Event Room. All residents and Gateway of Services pass holders can join the club, and new members are welcome! Club dues are only \$20 per year, and they include a subscription to the quarterly Reflector Magazine.

For information or club registration, please contact club President Jim Di Paolo at moonastroclub@gmail.com. More information is always available at moonstruckastronomyclub.org.

Keep looking up!



Photo by Jim Di Paolo