

President's Message

Well, the world continues to spin. But my ambitions to rule the universe have been stalled by that darned dark energy. The universe continues to expand at an accelerating rate, and my portion of it becomes less by comparison. Oh well, at least I can still look up...which is more than I can say for the 14 inch Meade telescope. It is again broken and will not "move up" in the declination axis. Fortunately, through the initiative of Russell Valentine last winter, we still have a warranty, so it can be repaired at low cost, if we can overcome its dark matter quotient (it is at least 6 times as difficult to transport as I would expect). Another positive, the Tombaugh telescope and Farpoint Observatory roof are behaving thanks to the roof motor and pulley mechanism repair and replacement by Gary Hug. And thanks to repairs by Brian Martin and Bryant - the outside electronic limiting switch has been replaced, which allows the motor to run. There still seems to be a problem with the switch, so the roof must be stopped manually before it rolls all the way to the end of the rails. And there is now a 'Vixen' type mounting bracket on the side of the Tombaugh telescope [Ed. Note - this is thanks to Dan], so now, small to medium sized telescopes can be mounted for piggyback observing or photography. It makes taking astrophotos much easier as guiding problems are miniscule compared to most amateur setups, at least when dark matter doesn't block the view (some might refer to this type of dark matter as clouds - which along with dark energy seems to be increasingly dominant). And the Tombaugh telescope/ prime focus camera continues to devour asteroids, with over 500 asteroids discovered at Farpoint (or at Gary Hug's Sandlot observatory). Also, the water issue at Farpoint has been resolved.

By the time you read this, the September meeting and the presentation by Dr Bruce Twarog will be over. The October meetings presentation will be by Dr Mark Dudley, tentatively planned to be on terrestrial scars from asteroid impacts.

The November meeting will be a week early (third Thursday) and instead of being at the library, it will be at Farpoint observatory. It will be similar to an open house and hopefully will encourage hesitant or new members to become familiar with, and exploit, the enviable resources. Weather permitting some astrophotography with the Tombaugh telescope and piggyback photography will be demonstrated. Bring your own digital (or film) SLR camera or even point and shoot digital camera and you can collect several images you can play with. The moon will be waxing full so we will not be able to do much deep sky imaging, but the moon is a convenient target for starting astrophotography. The December 'meeting' is actually a Sunday potluck dinner at Bill Leifer's new home. It will probably be on the second Sunday in December, look for future updates. Next years first 6 monthly meetings have been scheduled to continue at the Topeka Public Library.

And, don't forget that it is getting to be that time of the year when nominations for board and officer positions are needed, so if you or your avatar wish to race against that pesky dark stuff, and dominate it then now is your chance!

Dan Tibbets