

2010-02-03

Delmarva Stargazers meeting

7:00 PM 4 members present, likely due to the meeting date change since the snow cancelled the last meeting date.

Michael Lecuyer, Tom P, Jerry Truit, Don Surles., Keith Lohmeir

- MM10:
 - 10 people have signed up. Money from 5, 5 we're confident will make the purchase.
 - In Early March Don Surles will send a email out to see what inventory we have for MMS.
- Solar scope Lunt 1500 to 1700 visual, 1000 more for photography. 60mm diagonal, dovetail, no mount. To pay for it the 22 inch blank will be sold for \$1,900.
- Don Surles will be the instructor at Kent County Parks and Recreation teaching Amateur Astronomy out at St. Joseph's Center for Community Service. They charge people to attend this \$50, so we should charge them. This is a six week program starting in April.
- PayPal: The selling of the mirror brought up the need for a PayPal account.

- We would like to accept registration for our events online as well as selling and buying equipment. We also will look into online event management systems.
- These discussions lead to the need to come up with an officer packet with names and passwords for our various online systems (web site, event management, and PayPal)
- Star Gaze - needs a mailing list, registration form. Perhaps Joe Cain will be handling the mail out.
- We need to think about nominations for officers this year. The President-Elect and Secretary are up for election this year.
- Topics for next month's meeting: Telescope designs (new designs), Superwide eyepieces, Cancer constellation.
- Jerry Truitt, as webmaster says we have the web site with one company and the domain at another (not unusual) and the web site is out of space. He will be transferring the domain name and files to another company. Modern hosting services offer huge improvements in service and space over early hosting.

Jerry Truitt: Presentation on Internet Controlled Telescopes.

- Many remote controlled telescopes. We will look at SLOOH.com, MyTelescope.com, and Global Rent-a-Scope (global-rent-a-scope.com).
- SLOOH: (pronounced 'slew') When Jerry tried to use it years ago it was always raining at their only telescope site on the Canary Islands. And it didn't feel different that looking at Hubble picture only with less detail. Now they have a world wide telescope network.

SLOOH works like this: Missions are created by customers and carried out by the SLOOH staff. You can submit a mission to them using the Command Console. You earn points to get more immediate missions. BTY Bob Burman is boring.

Doesn't feel like you have access to it alone (which you don't). The introductory rates are \$6/month, \$30/six, \$50/yr. In the second year rates go up.

- MyTelescope: They have a youtube.com video on typical viewing experiences.
- Spotting camera for general viewing and a telescope for photos. Small number of telescopes, and you buy time for each telescope, more for bigger, more capable scopes. This is a high-end operation and not cheap but you do get the telescope to your self.

- Recently on the GRB Yahoo groups someone rented a telescope to capture the afterglow of a Gamma Ray Burster. GRB after glows are seldom above Mag. 17.
- Jerry captured a video of someone making multiple exposures of the Andromeda galaxy at different wavelengths, using MyTelescope's software to process the images with their dark and grey frames. Then you can download, stack, and process the images with Photoshop. Very nice indeed.
- DIY: Control your telescope remotely – from Software Bisque. For several decades telescopes have had electronics that could guide the telescope remotely. Eventually this came to amateurs.
- Slewing scopes: GOTO scopes are now pretty good at getting around 3 to 24 degrees per second. Motors gradually accelerate and decelerate.
- Back yard DIY: Telescope, computer controlled mount, and remote controlled focusers are necessary.
- There is no substitute for hardware connections. Wireless connections are not fast enough. Size of the images are huge and can be slow to transfer. Remote control software like VNC is just too slow over Ethernet. Running wires no more than 30 feet or so has a lot of advantages. Costs go up for faster links.

RS=232 serial is good enough for running the telescope – low speed is fine and goes a long way. USB boosters are available from 15 to 95 bucks. Cable Guys sell reasonable cost USB boosters. There are cat 5, 6, USB boosters which can extend range to 50'. This is not documented but found on the Internet.

Parallel cable can run 200' shielded cable twisted pair. (Some of this information is dated as there are 300 mbit wireless connections and Gigabit Ethernet are both quite cheap. Wireless now ranges over hundred of feet at high speeds).

- Distant remote internet systems require cloud and rain detection systems, dome, remote power, and satellite communications.

JerryTruitt: Update on Foreign Affairs Security Training Center (FASTC)

(Ed: The Delmarva Stargazers are opposed to the development of the area since the Tuckahoe State park is our dark sky site.)

- Jerry showed a map with a Google maps and it showed the driving tracks and buildings. And some of Ruthsburg itself. The facilities are bigger than the park itself.
- Indoor and outdoor shooting range with a wide array of small arms ammunition.

- Explosive demonstrations where they will detonating explosives in series - three lbs. at the largest. This will not be done routinely.
- DSS director Jeffrey W. Culveron Planned Training Center in Queen Annes County: “These charges -- up to three pounds at the largest -- will be detonated to provide an opportunity for our personnel who are being trained to secure and investigate such an incident at one of our embassies. These blasts will NOT occur routinely.” This statement flies in the face of later hearings where it’s stated that they will occur six times a year.)
- More information can be found on www.state.gov/recovery/fastc.
- (Ed: You can find transcripts of public hearings there. The FASTC public relations people battle it out with well informed citizens to their discredit. Mostly they’re saying ‘trust us, we’ll do what we say.’ Like every agreement from Indian treaties to present day projects like this one there is significant mission creep.)

Don Surles: Presentation on the Winter hexagon and Canis Major

The Winter hexagon is an asterism with the corners at Rigel, Aldebaran, Capella, Pollux/Castor, Procyon, and Sirius.

Canis Major, contain Sirius. When it rose in Egypt in late July (when it was first sighted before the sun rose) it

marked the time the Nile would begin to flood. When it was sighted on the other side of the sun the flooding would soon be over (near the end of August). The Egyptian god Anubis (the jackal god) is associated with Sirius). The Early Greeks called Sirius the 'scorcher'. In Greek mythology it's one of Orion's hunting dogs eternally ready to jump on Lepus.

Sirius was thought to have started the calendar by the Egyptians because it could be used to predict the Nile's behavior – it was chosen as the start of the new year Astronomy originally tracked the seasons.

Sirius is referenced in a Robert Frost poem:

The great Overdog
That heavenly beast
With a star in one eye
Gives a leap in the east.

Sirius is a double star a challenge and we're in a time when it can be split.

Interesting objects: M41 an open cluster (oc), NGC 2234 (oc Mag 9.4), NGC 2362 (oc M 4.1), NGC 2360 (oc 7.2). There are also lot of double stars in Canis Major. (Ed. NGC 2362 also contains the Mexican Jumping Star - Tau CMa)

All bright stars in the constellation have Arabic names that were named about 1200 to 1500 AD (during the Islamic renaissance).

Done at 8:50