

REFLECTIONS / REFRACTIONS

University Lowbrow
Astronomers

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December 2012
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Lowbrow Calendar

Friday, December 21, 2012. (7:30PM) Monthly Club Meeting.

Saturday, January 12, 2013. (6:00 PM) "So You Got a Scope from Santa" Workshop at Leslie Science Center

Friday, January 18, 2013. (7:30 PM) Monthly Club Meeting

The Lightholder Bucket--Part Two

by Doug Scobel

This article can be found at <http://www.umich.edu/~lowbrows/reflections/2012/dscobel.40.html>

Was It Only Last Summer?

Another Memory of the Venus Transit

Professor Norbert Vance holds class from EMU's Sherzer Observatory:

Hi. It's GREAT to read all the glowing reports from the variety of sites set up by Lowbrows and other GLAAC groups that showed the public the transit. It was indeed great fun and perfect for the hobby. Wow, an extremely rare astronomical event that didn't spell doom for the human race! And it demonstrated again the power of science to predict with great accuracy the details of the event. Best of all, just seeing that jet black disk set against the backdrop of the Sun sure looked stunning, putting smiles on people's faces as they looked.

We too had nice feedback from the many that attended, and the student assistants thoroughly enjoyed answering questions and pointing out features at each of the telescopes stations we had on the cozy deck at EMU Sherzer Observatory. I did not, perhaps purposely, advertise and yet found the deck full throughout the 3+ hour event. I guess recalling the overwhelming crowds we had for "Mars Mania" in 2003 gave me trepidation. It turned out perfectly in spite of those instability clouds that decided to clear out a mere 15 minutes before the transit began. I did note a modest "black drop effect"... anyone else? The 10-inch apo had our .7A H-alpha and the guide apo a video camera for those entering the dome to see the live image on a small monitor. Another half dozen filtered scopes were scattered across the deck. We had an unobstructed view to the NW horizon, which made for a spectacular sunset with both the Sun AND Venus morphing into some intriguing shapes. There was an almost strange public sigh as the last of the suns rays disappeared below the distant tree line. They all had witnessed something pretty cool. We remained open until midnight to show returnees and diehards Mars, Saturn, and other spring/summer delights. That was one busy, long day but well worth it!

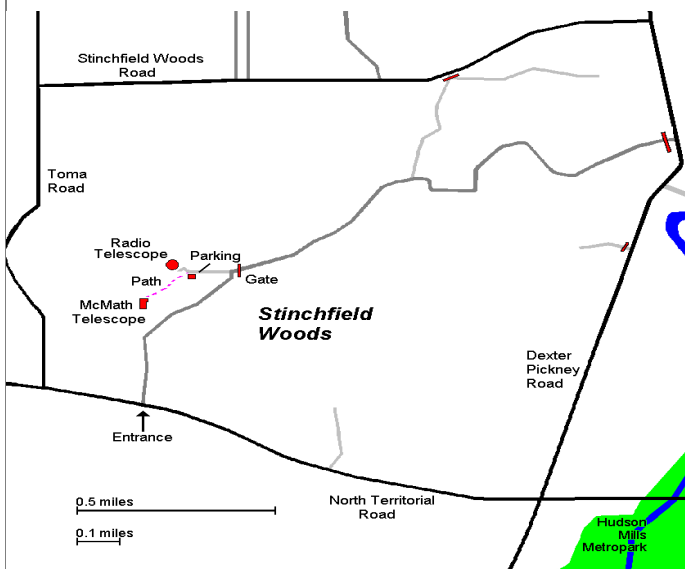


Norb is seen head-above the crowd along the rear rail of EMU's Sherzer Observatory.

Places & Times

Dennison Hall, also known as The University of Michigan's Physics & Astronomy building, is the site of the monthly meeting of the University Lowbrow Astronomers. Dennison Hall can be found on Church Street about one block north of South University Avenue in Ann Arbor, MI. The meetings are usually held in room 130, and on the 3rd Friday of each month at 7:30 pm. During the summer months and when weather permits, a club observing session at the Peach Mountain Observatory will follow the meeting.

Peach Mountain Observatory is the home of the University of Michigan's 25 meter radio telescope as well as the University's McMath 24" telescope which is maintained and operated by the Lowbrows. The observatory is located northwest of Dexter, MI; the entrance is on North Territorial Rd. 1.1 miles west of Dexter-Pinckney Rd. A small maize & blue sign on the north side of the road marks the gate. Follow the gravel road to the top of the hill and a parking area near the radio telescopes, then walk along the path between the two fenced in areas (about 300 feet) to reach the McMath telescope building.



Public Open House / Star Parties

Public Open Houses / Star Parties are generally held on the Saturdays before and after the New Moon at the Peach Mountain observatory, but are usually cancelled if the sky is cloudy at sunset or the temperature is below 10 degrees F. For the most up to date info on the Open House / Star Party status call: (734)332-9132. Many members bring their telescope to share with the public and visitors are welcome to do the same. Peach Mountain is home to millions of hungry mosquitoes, so apply bug repellent, and it can get rather cold at night, please dress accordingly.

Membership

Membership dues in the University Lowbrow Astronomers are \$20 per year for individuals or families, \$12 per year for students and seniors (age 55+) and \$5 if you live outside of the Lower Peninsula of Michigan.

This entitles you to the access to our monthly Newsletters on-line at our website and use of the 24" McMath telescope (after some training).

A hard copy of the Newsletter can be obtained with an additional \$12 annual fee to cover printing and postage.

(See the website

<http://www.umich.edu/~lowbrows/theclub/>

for more information on joining the club).

Membership in the Lowbrows can also get you a discount on these magazine subscriptions:

Sky & Telescope - \$32.95 / year

Astronomy - \$34.00 / year or \$60.00 for 2 years

For more information contact the club Treasurer.

Newsletter Contributions

Members and (non-members) are encouraged to write about any astronomy related topic of interest.



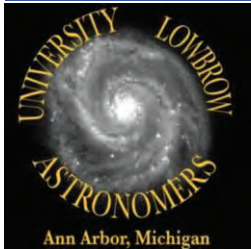
Lowbrow's Home Page

<http://www.umich.edu/~lowbrows/>



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Here's Doug Scobel with his "completed" 16-inch f/4.6 AstroSystems TeleKit. But is it really done?

