

SHENANDOAH ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY

August 2009

A REAL SIDEWALK ASTRONOMER

Herman Heyn lives near Baltimore. I met him by email through a transaction on AstroMart, where amateurs can buy and sell astronomy stuff. First a photo of Herman and a friend on the sidewalk.



Herman's own words

I'm unaffiliated these days, but Trading as "Baltimore's Street Corner Astronomer", my main involvement is with "street" telescoping in downtown Baltimore. It's a real interesting experience to greet every possible type of person, from every country in the world. I give away a lot of educational handouts. Just about all my lookers are thrilled by the craters on the Moon, the "rings", and Jupiter's moons.

I work real hard on the educational part of it, giving out planets mnemonics to little ones (and to adults on request!), right now a picture of the aspects of Saturn's rings between 1995 and 2016, a monthly star map to especially interested lookers, a NASA sun hologram to kids, and more(!). Despite the difficulty a few have looking through a scope, I claim to have "never lost a patient"! Also, I usually show lookers a picture of what they'll be seeing before

they look. I give out rubber stamped I SAW....SATURN! (JUPITER!, MARS! etc.) Post-it notes kids can stick on themselves as they leave the scope.

HIS RECOMMENDATION TO ME!!!

James, if you've seen all the "dim fuzzies" and don't want to start on them all over again, I highly recommend regular sidewalk telescoping!

I ASKED ABOUT JOHN DOBSON

About Dobson, have never met him but a photo of me was in the recent comervative booklet published recently, plus I am (or used to be) on the board of the International Sidewalk Astronomers.

THE REFERENCES ON THE INTERNET

Finally, I haven't checked recently, but if you Google my name and/or Baltimore's Street Corner Astronomer, you might find something of interest.

MORE DETAILS OF THE VENTURE

Downtown where I set-up the limiting mag. is ~2.0. Members of the public are often fooled by the light pollution into thinking it's cloudy and ask, "It's cloudy, what can you see?" I disabuse them by pointing out any 1st mag. Stars available. Actually I'm the world's only telescopist who wants lights. With all the creepy types around, if the lights went out and the Milky Way leaped into view, I'd pack-up fast and head for home!

MESSIER OBJECTS AND PLUTO

Jim, It's great you've seen all the M's. In all my years of telescoping I'm guessing I've seen 1/3 if them. It's just that I've never tried very hard to see them all. Have never seen Pluto, either...never tried. "Have you seen Pluto is among the

the top ten q's I get from the public. Can you guess what is #1? Hint: #2 is "Can you see the flag on the Moon with your telescope?"

On my first night public, my first Q. was the flag on the Moon one. Had no idea of ans....had never crossed my mind. However, by 2nd night I knew the answer. Today I tell lookers the smallest thing even the Hubble can see on the Moon is ~225' across. I add, "next time, if they take a flag about 1-mile on each side and lay it flat, we'll see it with my scope." To the frequently asked Q. "Do you believe they really went to the Moon?" , I answer, "It would be harder to fake it than to do it...and anyhow, they'd have to convince thousands of people to keep it quiet. Also, why go six times? If they were faking it, wouldn't one time have been enough?" 95% of the time that answer seems to convert the doubters!

I have a list of my dozens or more questions. Since you didn't guess at it, my most often asked is, "How much did your telescope cost?"

REFERENCES TO HERMAN

To see my aurora photo:

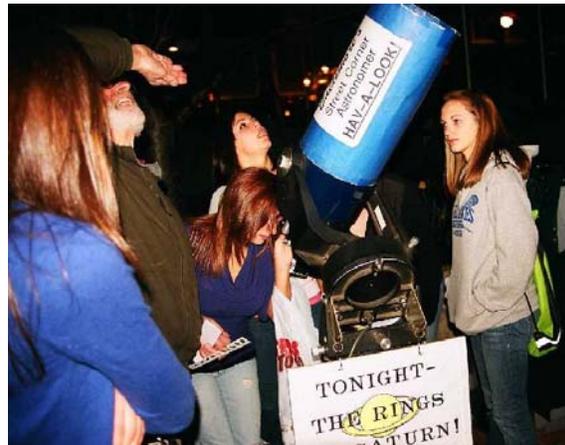
- 1) www.spaceweather.com
- 2) Aurora Gallery
- 3) Scroll down to 2001
- 4) Click-on Nov. 5-6
- 5) it's the last one on the page

Jim, you can see my Comet Halley (different locale) at <http://www.wallentinsen.com/binary/highlights/hermansX.htm>

<http://www.bisque.com/tom/asterisms/hermanscross.asp>

Also, I have a full page eclipse photo in the Sept. '73 S&T (anyhow, the one whose cover shows people in Africa watching the eclipse). For March '08 eclipse photos, into www.ask.com type Howard Astronomical League. Then click on Howard Astronomical League Photo

Gallery, then on my photo. For a picture of me in my eclipse t-shirt www.eclipselimericks.com/t-shirt/shirtindex.htm I hope the above works.



More Sidewalk Astronomy

Herman has an asterism named after him. I found it with this reference so take a look:

<http://www.bisque.com/tom/asterisms/hermanscross.asp>

Here is site about the James Webb space telescope:

<http://www.jwst.nasa.gov/scope.html>

I hope you enjoy reading about Herman's experiences, adventures and accomplishments as an amateur astronomer. – Jim Adkins

Program for August 12 at LFCC

7:00 PM Room 125

Our plan is to show the video on the outer planets that we could not show at the last meeting. This video discusses the status of Pluto and how the dilemma came about as well as describing the outer planets and the Kuiper Belt.