President’s column for April

April 6 program:

*The basics of meteorites*

Our guest for April 6 will be Craig Whitford, a volunteer at Abrams who serves officially as their Meteorite Collections Coordinator. As you may have noticed, the planetarium currently has a meteorite exhibit in the commons area titled Falling Star: A Celebration of Chinese Meteorites. He will do a presentation on the basics of meteorites, discussing the various types of meteorites as well as some of the key signs to look for if you think you’ve discovered a meteorite. He will also cover some of the more famous historic falls as well as a look at a couple of the more recent falls.

Craig will have examples from his personal collection and the Abrams Planetarium collection on display for us to examine. There will also be meteorites from the Moon and Mars on display.

This will be a great program to bring your friends and neighbors!

Got an idea for our May, June and July programs? Email me at mwrogers7@gmail.com

Michael Rogers
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Please email your program suggestions to me at mwrogers7@gmail.com
Society Presidents and ALCors:

Please share this information with your members so they can be informed of this urgency to make your arrangements NOW to attend Astrocon 2017 (ALCon)

Thanks & best wishes!

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A Total Eclipse of the Sun is Happening!

The MARS region of the Astronomical League is helping to plan ASTROCON 2017 in the days leading up to the total solar eclipse of August 21, 2017. Volunteers from various clubs in Utah, Montana, Wyoming and Colorado are actively involved, helping to plan and coordinate this event. This will be a major outreach opportunity for amateur astronomy……a total solar eclipse!

ASTROCON 2017 is collaborating with and supporting the Wyoming Eclipse Fest to help educate and support the many eclipse chasers who will descend upon Casper for AMERICA’s GREAT ECLIPSE! Casper lies directly on the centerline of the moon’s shadow and has excellent weather prospects for a clear, dry eclipse day.

Convention registrations are happening daily. League club members who choose to attend should act soon to experience this opportunity.

Please go to the event website at http://astrocon2017.astroleague.org, then go to the “Registration” tab to complete your online registration.

If you have Astronomy items for sale, images, test reports or observations you would like to post to the newsletter, please send them to me at kmelvin33@gmail.com

Check out the new website for the club! Go to the Abrams Planetarium website click on public programs then the Capital Area Astronomy Association text line and see the new website. Thanks to John French for setting that up.
A master of Astroimaging Terry Hancock gave a very nice talk highlighting his images, equipment and new book, the Armchair astronomer. His beautiful narrowband images have caught my eye in several publications such as Astronomy and Sky and Telescope magazines. Terry images from his “Downunder” observatory at home in Freemont Michigan. He is originally from Northern England then moved to Melbourne Australia now we are lucky to have him here in Michigan, and his “Aussie” accent is an added delight. Terry showed images of his 8’ x 8’ “Batwing roof” observatory and several of his telescopes: a Takahashi 180, an Astro-tech scope, his Paramount mount, cameras, CCD and DSLR, filter wheels and other equipment he is testing- all connected to a comfortable warm room inside his house with a CAT 5 cable. Terry also tests new equipment for manufactures. He brought with him a brand new CCD camera from QHY, which I believe is a 16200 APS H size one of only 10 made that he is testing. He recently tested the Optolong LRGB and Narrowband filters, the column in last month’s newsletter. Terry will be presenting several imaging talks at NEAF (Northeast Astronomy Forum) this month in N.Y. Terry became interested in astronomy around 12 years old, then at 14 his parents bought him his first scope, a 4.5” reflector. After seeing the Moon, Jupiter and Saturn he was hooked, and he was almost blinded when the small glass sun filter that came with the scope cracked, (use proper solar filters). He then took a job working in a photo store, moved up to a Meade 8” SCT and started taking photos, and he learned guiding was difficult. He moved to Michigan in 2000 built the 8’ x 8’ observatory and took up imaging seriously with the advent (magic) of computer-guided mounts and digital imaging. Terry’s new book the Armchair Astronomer, Nebulae written with Bryan Ventrudo, editor of Cosmic pursuits, created the book over five years. It is available on Ipad, Kindle or PDF download as well as print versions, and he hopes to have the second edition out next year about galaxies. Terry went on to show an 18-minute video presentation showing many beautiful images of Nebulae with descriptions. The Rosetta, the Heart, Orion, Horsehead, Eagle, Lagoon, Trifid nebulae, and many others, all in exquisite detail taken with Narrowband filters. One cool aspect of the video was watching the images change from standard to Narrowband filtered images while zooming and rotating with text. It was a very informative talk and much THANKS to Mr. Hancock for coming to Abram’s and sharing his remarkable images, techniques and new book the Armchair Astronomer.

Clear skies.
Kurt

Observation

Hello all,
I had the privilege of meeting another great Astroimager, who I have seen named in Astronomy and Sky and Telescope recently, Mr. Robert Fields. I have been amazed at some of the Narrowband images he has produced, and seeing he was from Howell Michigan (near me) I had hoped to meet him. Well recently my blood pressure went up and I went down, Ambulance ride, ER doc’s kept me here again, later in the stress test area I was talking Astronomy, and the nurse asked if I knew Dr. Robert Fields, I went “what?” I had no clue he was an ER Doctor. I needed to be transferred to Ann Arbor for a test and when we were leaving through the ER entrance I asked if he was available, and he was kind enough to speak with me for a few minutes. Unfortunately I looked terrible being trashed on a gurney, but it was still nice to meet him, he was very kind and he gave me his card. I hope to see him again under better conditions.

Clear skies.
Kurt

Check out the cool meteorite display in the lobby of the Planetarium by Craig Whitford. April showers bring meteorites in the lobby, or May flowers, or something like that.

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The planetarium is open

The Observatory is open
(Weather permitting)

The Sky is open

Go look up!
AND ENJOY

M-17 Image by K Melvin