

URANOGRAPHOS

SHORELINE AMATEUR ASTRONOMICAL ASSOCIATION

NEXT MEETING

March 16, 7:30 pm
West Ottawa Middle School Planetarium

PROGRAM Mark Logsdon will guide discussions about the care and feeding of telescopes. Prior to the meeting there will be a short business session.

COMMENT

Now, astrophiles, are we on our way or what! Look at that moniker will ya? It says it all. We are an ASSOCIATION According to Webster, we are a people with a common purpose. What purpose you ask? Why the one in our proposed constitution, dear reader. The one we will be ratifying at our meeting on March 16, 1989 at 7:30 pm at the West Ottawa Middle School Planetarium. And it just so happens to be included in this newsletter so that you can preview it. Which brings me to the following.

Driving home today, listening to NPR's All things Considered, I was thrilled. The discussion centered on yesterdays occurrence of a huge solar flare. One that rated an X12! I didn't even know that flares were rated, let alone there has been only one X13.

A lot of the commentary revolved (notice the astro terms?) about particles thrown off by the sun, contorted radio communications, and interactions between particles, magnetic flux, and auroras. Which by the way, prompted me to fire up the ol' computer one full day earlier than absolutely the last moment. They warned of computers going wayward. Actually, if we think about it a little, weren't we looking for some rational explanation for those mistakes? "Twern't me Boss! Probably them flare thangs."

But as I listened, they missed one very important item. No one told the listening public "Do not look at the sun!" No one cautioned that it wasn't visible without special instruments. Every year many people loose their sight looking into the sun." And I expect many more will as we approach a particularly strong sun spot maximum, perhaps an historic high.

Flares and prominences will be prominently featured. The electronic media will be adversely affected. And they will make that news. Eyes will be literally focused on the sun for the next few years.

So dear reader, what does that have to do with us? It is not too early to tell those around us about the beautiful and yet dangerous natures of our sun. As an organized group of persons we can do this and more.

Clear Skies, Michael

THANKS: The Fortney Refractor

The SAAA is indebted to Dr. Phillip Hill and Mr. Larry K. Fortney. Just prior to last Christmas, Mr. Fortney gave Dr the 60mm refractor telescope. Mr. Fortney lamented to Phil he didn't have time to use it and it should not sit in an unopened box anymore.

Dr. Hill decided the telescope could best be used as a loan SAAA members interested in Astronomy who do not have their

The refractor may be used by non members when it is not out loan to a member. It should be signed out in advance or at monthly meeting. The telescope may be used one month at a time and brought back at the next meeting. Mark Logsdon will describe the use and care of the Fortney Refractor at our March meeting. It comes with several eyepieces. It should also be made available for all Star Parties.

TRIVIA, FLOTSAM, AND JETSAM

Our collective thanks to Consumers Powers of Michigan for their cooperation in lowering lights in Traverse City. It was brought to their attention that lighting at a substation was casting glow near John Rodgers Observatory. Consumers reacted quickly and turned off its night lighting.

Dick Cookman, professor of Geology and Astronomy, told me that a local group of amateurs, Traverse City Astronomical Society brought in a speaker from the Dark Sky Association. This brought awareness on the part of the local group to go to the City Consumers. Dick also said that several townships now have ordinances controlling lighting. Additionally two other power companies reduced their night lighting in the area.