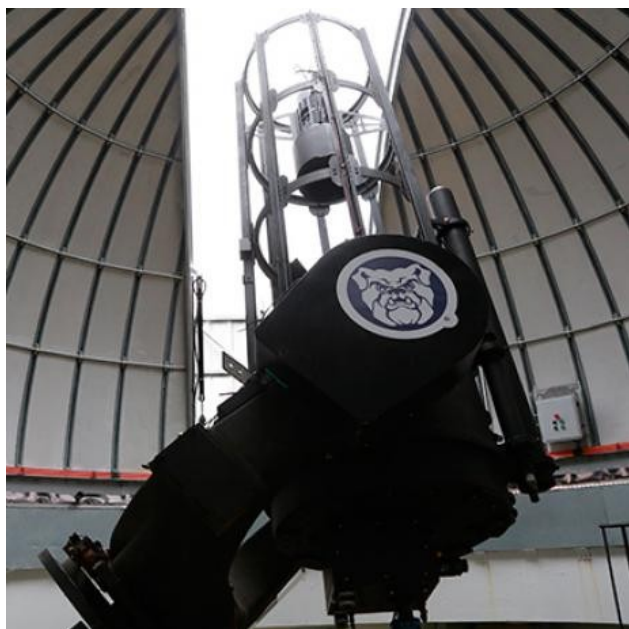


Holcomb Observatory & Planetarium Visit

Saturday November 11th.

By Don Fohey



38 inch Cassegrain Telescope



Holcomb Observatory with 50 foot dome



Floor Mosaic

While in Indianapolis with my brother and his wife, we visited Butler University's Holcomb Observatory and Planetarium. The massive limestone edifice was built in 1954. The central lobby is impressive with a cantilever stairway which follow the walls of the lobby rising to the height of the dome. Many visitors stayed to the wall side of the stairway both ascending and descending so as not to be near the rail and the exposure to the height as one peers down into the lobby. The lobby floor has a 14 foot replica of the zodiac done in brilliant colored terrazzo.

The dome houses a 38-inch cassegrain telescope on an automated equatorial fork mount. The telescope was refurbished 1995-1997. This is the largest telescope of which I have ever had the privilege of looking thru the eyepiece. It was family campus visit weekend, so there where at least two hundred visitors and the line to the telescope extended in the lobby, up the stairs and filled the dome. The observing was limited to bright objects due to thin clouds that were present all evening.

The docent was able to show visitors Alberio and Uranus. We could actually see the blue dot of Uranus thru the clouds! It is amazing what a large aperture can do.

The planetarium presentation was "In Search of Alien Earths". The presentation was by my sister-in-law's nephew, a physics major at Butler. He explained the various techniques used to discover exoplanets in language that visitors of all backgrounds could understand. The Spitz A3P planetarium projector installed in 1981 did a nice job, however it made me appreciate the Digitalis Epsilon planetarium projector recently installed at EMU.

The observatory has public weekend tours. I recommend that you make the 5 hour drive to look thru a really big telescope. Check their website for dates and times.

Photos copied from <https://www.butler.edu/holcomb-observatory>

<https://www.butler.edu/holcomb-observatory/public-tours>

Member Photos

Brian D. Ottum, Ph.D.



The fingernail moon was only 31 hours old, setting over the Chiricahua Mountains 30 miles away. You can see individual trees on top of that rocky top.

Photo time stamp 11/19/2017 7:54pm



The ET Cluster, or Owl Cluster, is NGC 457. 8,000 light-years away. Located in Cassiopeia. If you look close, you can actually see E.T.

Photo time stamp 11/27/2017



Doug Scobel

Canon 7D, Canon 100-400mm lens set to 400mm, 1/250 second at f/5.6, ISO 250. RAW image processed in Photoshop Elements 9. Cropped, of course.

Photo time stamp 11/26/2017 8:33pm

An Odd Phone Call

by Douglas Warshow

A few weeks ago I was at home when the telephone rang. A woman from the University of Michigan's department of Literature, Science and the Arts wanted to know if I wanted to make a donation. I politely told her that I did not take solicitations by phone and to please send me something in the mail instead. She thanked me for my time and then said,

"Oh, I see here that that you studied astronomy at Michigan."

I responded, "Yes, that's right."

"Could you please tell me which planet has the longest day?"

This call occurred not long after the Cassini probe showed that we may not actually know how quickly Saturn actually rotates, so I mentioned that fact to her. "But to play things on the safe side, I would say 'Venus' which take 178 or 179 Earth days to rotate once."

"Really?"

"Yep. Not only that, but it spins backward."

"I didn't know that. Thank you."

Sensing that we might have a potential new member for the Lowbrows, I asked, "So are you studying astronomy?"

"No. I'm playing *Jeopardy!*"

2018 Speaker Schedule

Jan 19: Professor Jamie Cutler, U/M dept of space engineering, topic to be announced

Feb 16: David Austerberry, JPL, topic to be announced.

Mar 16: Peter Challiss, Topic to be announced.

Apr 20: Fr. Richard D'Sousa

May 18: Professor Sally Oey, U/M Astronomy,

Jun 15: Professor Ethan Siegel, topic to be announced

Jul 20: Dan Davis (Tentative)

Aug 17: Dr. Ed Cackett, WSU physics, Recent LIGO work. (Tentative).

Sep 21: Associate Professor Nicolle Zellner, Albion College, Topic to be announced, but related to Lunar Research

Oct 19: Dr. Dan Durda, Planetary Scientist, Southwest Research Institute (Tentative)

Nov 16: David Levy

Dec 21: Fred Schebor, Artsy-Meaningless Slide Show

LOWBROW MEETING MINUTES

November 17, 2017

President Charlie Neilsen called the meeting to order at 7:36 PM and introduced the evening's speaker, Ken Bertin. Ken's talk, "Eclipses: How and Why They Happen" was informative and well received. A highlight was his 360° panorama video of the 2017 total solar eclipse.

The Business Meeting was very short, with few of the officers having anything new to report.

Vice President Dave Jorgensen recounted the two sessions the ATM group has held for the 17.5 inch telescope ServoCat installation. (Another two have since taken place.)

Treasurer Doug Scobel reported our current membership to be 138 and the Club Treasury balance as \$5505. The Royal Astronomical Society of Canada materials are in. If you haven't yet picked up your materials, notify Doug to be sure he has your order at the next club meeting.

Observatory Director Jack Brisbin announced, that after several months since the attempted break-in, the University has finally repaired the Observatory door. (Hooray!)

Newsletter Editor Don Fohey requested articles,

Vice President Jim Forrester suggested dropping the proposed September 15, 2018 Peach Mountain Open House as it conflicts with next year's Astronomy At The Beach. Moved, seconded and passed by acclamation.

Neither President Charlie Neilsen or Vice President Larry Halbert had anything to report.

Member Mark Cray offered to any present either or both of two lovely mounted 4" achromatic objectives.

The Meeting adjourned at 9:10 PM

Submitted respectfully, by

Jim Forrester

Upcoming Events

Lowbrow Monthly Meeting, Friday December 15th. 7:30pm Angel Hall
Speaker: Sandra Macika "Meteorites and Tektites: Types and Composition - Part 2: Chondrites.

Open House Reports

Both the November 11th and 18th Open House were cancelled due to weather.

LOWBROW MEETING MINUTES

October 20, 2017

The Meeting Started: 7:37pm

Opening:

- Introduction of Lowbrows
- Introduction of speaker: (ed. Jason Gilbert)

Start of Business meeting: 9:13pm

SPEAKER REPORT: President Charlie Nielsen

- Dr David Levy would likely be our first speaker from the recent Vatican Seminar.
- Fr. Richard DeSouza - subject unknown at this time, but likely galaxy mergers.
- Dan Davis - subject unknown at this time.
- Dan Durda - President of our club in the 80's.
- Br. Guy? When do we squeeze it in?
- Great recollection of times with the special guests at the Vatican Observatory Foundation Seminar.

OFFICERS REPORTS:

VP Dave Jorgenson - nothing to report

Treasurer Doug Scobel

- 140 memberships, \$5852 in kitty (including \$390.00 collected for RASC items).
- Made last call for RASC calendars and handbooks (order was being sent in the weekend of October 28/29 to provide time for them to arrive for distribution starting at the November meeting).
- Installation of ServoCAT to 17.5 Club Dob is imminent. Date/time to be announced.

Observatory Director Jack Brisbin

- Met with Total Construction on Oct 10th. They are licensed to repair broken door handle. They stated they would repair the door and get their own key for it. Went out on 19th of October, still not fixed. Door may be fixed by the end of the month, or sometime in November.

VP Adrian Bradley

- No response to my inquiry for the Law Students who wanted us to do a night sky event with them.
- Facebook continues to get more likes and traffic.
- Images are rotated on a monthly basis. Latest image was of the Cassini probe.

Newsletter Editor Don Fohey

- Item 1: Volunteered to work with Ethan Siegel (our June Speaker) who has a new book titled 'Star Trek Technology' and will work with the Lowbrows to autograph books ordered directly from him using PayPal. Ethan suggested the book be offered to members in time for Christmas. Now that Ethan is our June speaker he may prefer an ordering window before the June meeting. Don will speak with Ethan next week. One option is to do nothing now... approach it in April, and we get our books in advance of his talk.
- What will his talk be about? We don't know. (Will ask Ethan).
- The plan is to have ordering instructions in the Newsletter and email the instructions to members. Ethan had suggested a bulk shipment of the books, his motivation may be that it would be more convenient for him rather than individual shipments and cost the individuals less. Estimated individual book shipping cost is \$5
- Question was posted by Doug Warshow "Which generation of Star Trek is this book about?" Answer: Don't know.
- Item 2: Newsletter articles are needed for the November newsletter. Don mentioned that he has been republishing member emails in the newsletter and asked members present if they thought it appropriate. One member responded that they thought the selections in the newsletter were credited appropriately and it was a "good thing" to read them again.

V. P. Jim Forrester:

Open House dates were proposed:

- Second open houses in April/May - the moon would be dominant in the night sky. May 19th, possible date for Messier Marathon? Do we do our own Messier Marathon? (No open house if we do it). It was decided that we would do a Messier Marathon and that the 17th will not be an open house.
- Mars in opposition July 26th. (July 27th UTC). Moment of opposition about "as big as a basketball!". Do we want to do something around this? August 4th - Mars rises late. There will be hype around Mars opposition so we may have to show it a lot during our open houses and events. It comes up too late or early in the morning to observe. Sept 15 - Mars will change in apparent size from 24 arcseconds to 18 arcseconds. Maybe ask Shannon for this observatory. Hold a public event on top of Angell Hall? It's going to be a lot of work. We have to plan on our advertising for an event like this if we do this event away from 'foot traffic'.
- Astronomy At The Beach - we have to talk to Dr Ottum and find out what the dates will be for 2018. It is usually sometime in September. We may cancel one of our September open houses in order to participate in AATB.
- Camp Burt Shurly participation will be needed again in the summer. However, Mars may not be observable during the time we're showing kids objects in the night sky.
- Lastly, who's going to the pizza house??! A total of 7 participants ended up going.

Other announcements:

- Doug Warshow is taking orders for 2018 'Year in Space' desk calendars".

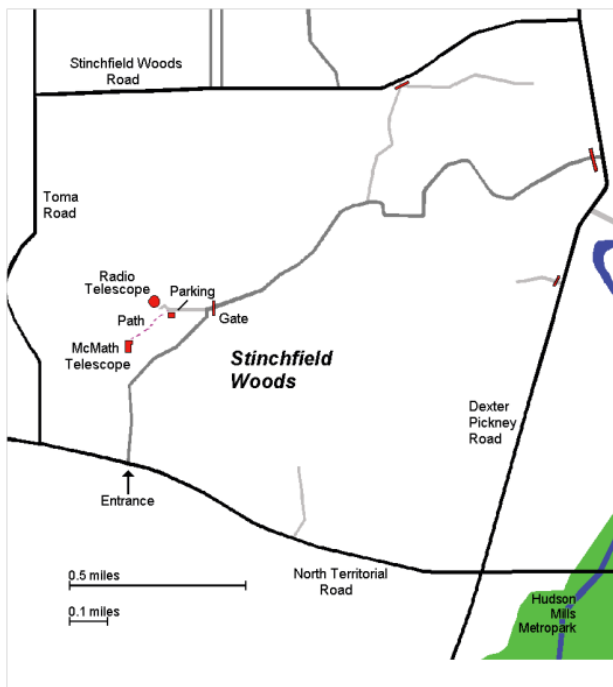
Meeting Adjourn: 9:45pm.

Submitted by Adrian Bradley

Places & Times

Monthly meetings of the University Lowbrow Astronomers are held the third Friday of each month at 7:30 PM. The location is usually Angel Hall, ground floor, Room G115. Angell Hall is located on State Street on the University of Michigan Central Campus between North University and South University Streets. The building entrance nearest Room G115 is the east facing door at the south end of Angell Hall.

Peach Mountain Observatory is the home of the University of Michigan's 25 meter radio telescope and McMath 24" telescope which is maintained and operated by the Lowbrows. The entrance is addressed at 10280 North Territorial Road, Dexter MI which is 1.1 miles west of Dexter-Pinckney Rd. A maize and blue sign marks the gate. Follow the gravel road to the top of the hill to a parking area south of the radio telescope, then walk about 100 yards along the path west of the fence to reach the McMath Observatory.



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 Mt. Observatory, but are usually cancelled if the forecast is for clouds or temperature below 10° F. For the most up to date info on the Open House / Star Party status call: (734) 975-3248 after 4pm. Many members bring their telescope to share with the public and visitors are welcome to do the same. Mosquitoes can be numerous, so be prepared with bug repellent. Evening can be cold so dress accordingly

Lowbrow's Home Page

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

Membership

The University Lowbrow Astronomers membership dues are \$30 per year for individuals or families, \$20 per year for students and seniors (age 55+) and \$5 if you live outside of the Lower Peninsula of Michigan. Membership entitles you 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 \$18 annual fee to cover printing and postage. Dues can be paid at the monthly meetings, by PayPal, or be check made out to University Lowbrow Astronomers and mailed to:

The University Lowbrow Astronomers
P.O. Box 131446
Ann Arbor, MI 48113-1446

Lowbrow members can obtain a discount on these magazine subscriptions:

Sky & Telescope - \$32.95/year or \$62.95/2 years

Astronomy - \$34.00/year, \$60.00/2 years or \$83.00/3 years

For more information about dues or magazines contact the club treasurer at: lowbrowdoug@gmail.com

Newsletter Contributions

Members and non-members are encouraged to write about any astronomy related topic. Contact the Newsletter Editor: Don Fohey donfohey@gmail.com to discuss format. Announcements, articles and images are due by the 1st day of the month as publication is the 7th.

Telephone Numbers

President:	Charlie Nielsen	(734) 747-6585
Vice President:	Adrian Bradley	(313) 354 5346
	Jim Forrester	(734) 663-1638
	Larry Halbert	
	Dave Jorgensen	
Treasurer:	Doug Scobel	(734) 277-7908
Observatory Director:	Jack Brisbin	
Newsletter Editor:	Don Fohey	(734) 812-3611
Key-holders:	Jim Forrester	
	Jack Brisbin	
	Charlie Nielsen	
Webmaster	Krishna Rao	

A NOTE ON KEYS: The club currently has three keys each to the Observatory and the North Territorial Road gate to Peach Mountain. University policy limits possession of keys to those who they are issued. If you desire access to the property at an unscheduled time, contact one of the key-holders. Lowbrow policy is to provide as much member access as possible.

Email to all members

Lowbrow-members@umich.edu



University Lowbrow Astronomers



Member Club



Astronomical League Member Society
#201601, Great Lakes Region

University Lowbrow Astronomers
P.O. Box 131446
Ann Arbor, MI 48113

STAMP