

Article on the Snow Library (Orleans) Telescope Loan Program (2016---)

....online at....

<http://capecod.wickedlocal.com/news/20170714/check-it-out-snow-library-has-telescope>

Check it out: Snow Library has a telescope

By Pat Canavan

Posted at 8:29 AM Updated at 8:29 AM

ORLEANS -- "We're talking the wonders of creation -- astronomy, not astrology."



So began Peter Kurtz's workshop at Orleans' Snow Library, where his Introduction to the Night Sky presentation familiarized people with the use of the library's new Orion StarBlast 4.5 inch Tabletop Telescope.

Kaimi Lum, the library's assistant director and coordinator of the telescope program, explained that with a CLAMS card and a brief training session, access to the marvels of the night sky are now available. She said training workshops would be held as demand requires, "probably every couple of months."

Sponsored by the Jarvis and Judith Hunt, of Orleans, the refractor telescope will circulate among library patrons, just like the books and other materials offered at the library.

At a training session June 23, attended by a half-dozen or so people, Kurtz, also of Orleans, drew in the participants with a demonstration that compared Galileo's 17th century view of Saturn, reminiscent of a ball with ears, with the sophisticated instruments used today, which clearly show the celestial rings associated with Saturn.

While Kurtz explained the mechanics of viewing through the telescope, he zigged and zagged from technical talk to wondrous descriptions of the world visible through the telescope, commenting on the 300,000 or so stars in the Hercules constellation that are "just sitting there, waiting for you to go look at them." (The Hercules constellation's so-called globular cluster, according to astronomytrek.com, is about 25,000 light years away.)

Kurtz provided tips on viewing specific bodies, and explained that moon gazing is best during the several days prior to a full moon because details of its deep craters are more prominent. And he provided reference materials and talked about the various smart phone apps that assist with the identification of celestial objects.

A portion of his presentation was devoted to handling the telescope, and he invited trainees to pick it up and pack and unpack the eyepieces.

He also explained how to transport it. The telescope weighs about as much as a 3-month-old baby, he noted, and recommended treating it with as much care when users check it out and take it to their favorite viewing spots.

And there's no need to travel far, he said; Kurtz uses his own backyard to stargaze.

Attendee Jacqueline Krzeminski of Orleans said that her "love of the stars" and a desire to learn more about the night sky prompted her to sign up for the training.

Eastham's Adele Sullivan, who also attended, said she considers the availability of the telescope a great opportunity for local residents, who can take advantage of low light pollution on the Lower and Outer Cape.

She, too, often looks to the sky and said she found Kurtz's demonstration of the tabletop scope a welcome relief from her previous experiences with bulky telescopes.

Kurtz, an officer of the Cape Cod Astronomical Society, hopes that the "personal contact with sights unimaginably far away" found with Orion StarBlast will spur people to visit the society's Schmidt Observatory at 210 Station Ave., in South Yarmouth.

The observatory, gifted by Werner Schmidt, has a rotating dome and houses several sophisticated telescopes, including a computer-controlled 16-inch scope. The society sponsors “star parties” at the observatory throughout the year and meets monthly. Information about CCAS is available at capecodastronomy.org.

Learn more

Those interested in signing up for the training session, which is held at Snow Library and required before the tabletop telescope can be loaned out, should contact Kaimi Lum at Snow Library, 508-240-3761, ext. 11, or email her at klum@clamsnet.org
