

# Baseball...

Spring training is officially over, and the MLB starts now. While I know there was a game or two in China, the official first game that I acknowledge is tomorrow at 1:05 in Detroit. I wish I could be there, but there are always other obligations. I'll be following the Tigers and one other team. I have friends who are Cubs fans. Since they are in the other league, I can root for them too. Someone else I know (who shall remain nameless... Can't say that name anymore ☹ ) will be rooting for the Yankees. Never could stand those Yankees.

All new season, with everyone starting on an even basis. Any game can be won by any team. This is baseball, all 162 games... Looking forward to it. Go Tigers...

Oh yes, and I have a couple of friends that are rooting for the Indians... We don't talk much during the season... ☹

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## Telescope review 1 – The Questar

I really can't say much about this telescope. Most of my memories of that night were trying to look again and again at the orange-red dot that was centered in the telescope's field of view. I was 5 or 6 years old. My sisters were bigger than me at that time. Why bring this up now, since it won't be of any use for those looking to buy a telescope? The answer is simple. This is the scope that focused my attention on all things in the night sky.

For the record, I did find out (when I was much older) that

this was a 3.5 inch Questar scope. It was a production test scope with a brand new mirror material (called "Cervit"). My father worked for O-I in the 60's as part of the quality control of various telescope mirrors made with "Cervit". The Questar company was looking into the possibility of using this material for their scopes. Questar telescopes have a history of being a "Quality Scope", so I was probably looking through a good one. I will have to check the histories to see if Questar ever put the Cervit mirrors into production. I know that they now use a different zero-expansion material. Might be fun trying to find one.

On to the review, from the memories of a 49 year old trying to remember something at the age of 6.

I was frustrated (mad) that I didn't get to look through the scope as much as I wanted. I remember being told that if I didn't settle down, I wouldn't be able to look again. I think I sat as still as I ever did. I got to look a lot. My sisters then complained I was "hogging" it. I didn't care.

The color of whatever I was looking are still clear in my mind. After years of looking through other scopes the only thing that comes close is Mars or one of the red stars of similar color. I can't remember if it was a disk or a dot, so that is of no help I just remember a bright red-orange object in the middle of the blackest background I ever saw. I just was drawn to that telescope. Unfortunately, my father took the scope back. I had to survive, my growing fascination with space, with any books or magazines I could find. At that time, it was hard to find them for my reading level.

I forced myself to learn to read better, because I wanted to understand all I could. I thought if I really applied myself, my dad would bring back the telescope, or maybe get another. That was never meant to be. Dad noticed I was interested in space, but never put a connection with that one night with a telescope. It was the middle of the space race, so the

apparent assumption was that I was interested in rockets. Those were cool to, so I didn't complain.

Jump forward a few years... Just after my mother died, I took my dad to the Ritter Planetarium and Brooks Observatory at the University of Toledo. This was the closest mirror made with 'Cervit'. Yes, my dad was on the quality control team for that mirror. It was too cloudy to actually look through the scope that evening, but we did get to look at it. Dad was in center stage, explaining how the mirror was made, and all the problems they had casting "good" glass. I also explained that evening about how much I remembered the scope that one summer evening so long ago.

I was never able to get back out the the observatory when they had open view with the 'Cervit' scope when Dad was alive, but I did go again shortly after he died. Do you know the object we looked at was the planet Mars. It was red-orange in the middle of a deep black sky. Oh how the memories just came flooding back. A wonderful evening.

Later a review or two of scopes I actually use...

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## **The sweet life...**

It's maple syrup time in our area. While we don't have the size and number of stands (sugar shacks) as Vermont, we have a few. Our local groups (family run businesses) have an annual pancake and sausage breakfast (with real maple syrup, of course). Today was that day.

My family (daughters, grandparents, son-in-law, boyfriend, other friends) all went today. We road the wagon out to the sugar camp and watched them boil down the sap. We road a horse

drawn wagon. We ate syrup, pancakes, and sausage.

You should be told that my daughters are all older. The youngest is 16 and the oldest 26. We've been doing this almost every year for about 9 years. This day just keeps getting bigger and bigger. My wife and I started going when we wanted something close, easy and different for the girls to do. I now have enough knowledge of the maple sap gathering and boiling that I could make syrup if I had the trees and inclination. I haven't learned anything new for the past few years, but I will go again next year, and the year after that and so on. It is a wonderful day for family and now friends. Of course the syrup, candy, pancakes and sausage aren't bad either.

So maple syrup producers, I will see you next year when the sap runs.

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## **Days of wine and roses...**

I feel like reminiscing about the past. I'm in my 49th year and will hit the big 50 next year. If I live to 100, I guess I will officially be middle age. So now is a good time to reflect on the past.

In April of 1983 I met my future bride. We didn't know it then, but we figured it out soon enough. After a whirl wind romance, we were married the following January. Together through the years we raised 4 daughters, had fun and most of all stayed very much in love. As I said earlier, she died in 2003, but I don't want to dwell on that. I want to remember the good times.

From the very first New Years Eve together, we shared a bottle of wine on every special occasion. Our first date, I bought

her some sweet-heart roses. On days of nothing special, and for a surprise, I would get her one or more of these roses. Those are my days of wine and roses. Days that were special and days that were not. Good days, bad days, and even indifferent days. These days made my life worth living. These days gave me the strength to continue even after the very worst days. These days made me the man I am today, and the one I will be tomorrow. These days continue, they are my life.

During these days our family was most important. Other things, material things, took a back seat to all things family. But we had good times together. Our favorite thing to do was go to zoos. We planned whole vacations revolving around zoo visits. We would pack lunch and make day trips to many of the zoos in our area. These things made our life and our family.

When movies made their way to Video tape and then DVD's our family enjoyed watching and collecting various movies. This made for many wonderful days together.

Can life be any better than the good times we have with family and friends? I hope to continue my days of wine and roses at a later time.

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## **I'm going green**

Ok, I think I should stop reading the news... I found [this](#) on people doing extreme recycling.

I'm all for getting by with less and taking my bottles and cans to the recycling center. I've seen how big Mt. Trashmore is getting just down the road from where I live. But taking old food out of dumpsters?!! Man, you have to draw the line somewhere don't you? This just hit me wrong. I know people

throw out a bunch of stuff that is still good, but once it is in the dumpster, ya just got to leave it there. Don't you?

Maybe not... Hmm... There is a small gathering of friends this weekend. Maybe I can check the trash behind the local markets and restaurants to see what is available... Anybody else want to go extremely green?

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## Whoa!!! I use this stuff!

While scanning the news sites today I found [this](#).

I've taken that stuff through the years. The heaviest usage was during my most depressing time of life!! The allergy season of 2004 was extremely bad for me. I took *Singular* for the entire Spring thru Fall (Last Frost to First Frost). I'm very glad (my girls are probably glad too) that I never had that side affect. Suicidal is something I've never been. Hell, I've been so depressed I couldn't find my own socks in the morning, and they were right in the sock drawer where they've always been. I've put things in 'safe places' never to find them again. I went through at least 1 year on pure instinct. I'm surprised the people I met then still talk to me... Then again, the depression medication I was on had the same warning about suicide. Scary to take a med to help depression, that could cause thoughts of suicide.

Guess I have to talk with my Dr. before the allergy season starts up again...

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# 1 a lonely number?

I am a widower. My wife died, from cancer, a little over four years ago. Since that time I've been 1 where I used to be part of 2. Yes, I still have my daughters in my life. 2 of the 4 are still living at home (well at least part of the time – teenager and young adult). For the most part, I really can't say I'm lonely. I do like to spend some of my time alone.

My hobbies tend to be solitary in nature. I am in a local theater group, and that is the one hobby I really can't do on my own. All the rest, you guessed it, can be done alone. Even blogging is a solitary activity.

Tonight I feel very much alone. My daughters are off to various locations, the dog is fed and relaxing behind the couch. I'm here typing thoughts popping up in my head. Not where I thought I'd be 5 years ago.

We've all been told to make a 5 year plan. I've never done that. My lovely wife did. Back in the spring of 2003, she started saving money for our 25th anniversary. When she died, I found an envelope with money in it. Not a lot, but by Jan 2009, it could have made a bit of an impact on our anniversary plans. I didn't even know it existed. There was just an envelope marked 25th. We just missed our 20th anniversary. 21 days shy.

Most of that money is gone now. Most, but not all. I held some back. \$25 dollars to be exact. One dollar for each of the years we would have had. That envelope was in a box on my dresser. I hadn't opened it until today. I knew I had money left over, but I didn't know how much. Odd that there would be exactly \$25 dollars in and envelope marked 25th. I'm going to start putting money back in that envelope. I'm not sure how much I can save by January, but I'll save something. I need to celebrate that special day in January. I've spent that day

alone since 2004, in 2009 I plan to do something a bit different. Maybe I'll figure it out by then...

Well, this has been a somber post, maybe lighter the next time... Maybe not. Just missing S.

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## Stars out at night

Well, I got a small telescope for my birthday in February. I was able to take it out for a short time soon after that, but the weather was too cold to stay out long. The other night, I was able to take it out for a longer period. It wasn't too bad for the size and design, maybe someday I'll write a review for it.

What was really nice about that night was being able to share this night with one of my daughters. Normally I spend my nights alone with the stars, but it was nice to have a little company. It was still a bit chilly, so the night was shorter than it could have been. She's taking an astronomy course and was doing a 'lab' assignment. It felt good to help her out.

This got me thinking of her growing up. Back when she was in grade school, I gave a talk to her class about telescopes and astronomy. I brought in my telescope, and a few items of astronomical interest. Later that school year, we had a 'star party' for kids at the school. I'm not sure if it sparked any future interest in that class, but it was made my evening. Their questions were intelligent, and they seemed to enjoy themselves.

I was quite a bit younger when I saw my first telescope. I was about 5 or 6, when my dad brought home a small scope. I don't know what we looked at, but I was hooked on astronomy



from that very day. Funny how I still remember that day.  
What in your life changed your outlook on life?