

A time to watch the night

This weekend seems to be a big astronomy shindig. The event is called [Galilean Nights](#). This is in honor of Galileo. Sidewalk astronomers around the world will be out letting people look through their scopes to see the Moon, Jupiter or some other bright evening object.

The site above has a link to find some sidewalk astronomy locations. The closest places to this neck of the woods will be Bowling Green Ohio, Sylvania Ohio and Fort Wayne Indiana. If my youngest agrees, I may be in Fort Wayne.

In case you wondered, a sidewalk astronomer is somebody who sets his/her telescope out on the sidewalk. They hope people will stop and share the evening sky with them.

Something I need to do

It has been quite a long time since I took any of my telescopes out to gaze at the night sky. I've had many excuses, but they were just that, excuses. I think I'm really beginning to miss that hobby of mine.

The first thing I need to do is have a talk with my boss. Some of the best nights of the year are going to be happening in the near future. I need to be able to plan some time off on a quick basis if I know the sky will be clear.

I love early spring, because some of the wonderful winter constellations are visible just after sunset, and if you are up long enough, some of the summer constellations are there in the morning. On top of that, the spring time just starts to

have some warmer nights. Not summery warm, but you don't end up fighting the frost bite you do in the winter.

Right now, it doesn't look like clear skies, but [my favorite place to check](#) this sort of thing, is forecasting favorable viewing tonight.

I hope it is clear when I get home tonight, I may take my little scope out to view the heavens above me.

Could you send in a plumber?

They are having more [toilet problems on the International Space Station](#). Seems that the Russian made space toilet is not working. I realize that the water hunger, gravity fed toilets that work on earth would not work very well on the Space Station, but to break down twice in a short period of time is not good at all. I would really reconsider working on the space station if the main toilet is going to break every 4 to 6 months. Seems like that would be a vital function. Especially when some of the water used on the Space Station comes from recycling the waste collected in those high-tech privies.

Oh well, that massive water recycling program in use on the space station would also give me pause to send in my resume for Space Station Tech.

Where are the days when the astronauts would just play with their food in the micro-gravity situations. I miss the Jello floating in the air.

Time and Numbers

Every so often I write something to try to get some of the lurkers, who read my blog, to stop and say hi. This is another of those posts.

I am a numbers person, so I am fascinated by the statistics that are generated for this blog. Some topics seem to bring more people. Books, Haunted houses, Star Wars, Indiana Jones, Moon Landings are all big draws. Big of course is a relative term. This blog has been averaging about 15 readers per day. My maximum in 1 day (that I know of) was just over 80. The average this week was around 25. I realize that some of the 'readers' I am seeing are just robots or data mining sites, but when they find something that, in the programming, is found interesting, they leave blog replies. Some of the people who come to read just won't do it.

I know a couple of the 'shy' people, and I don't really expect replies from them (they know who they are). There are others that I think would be very interesting to hear from.

Things I would like to know about you. How did you find this blog? What do you want to read here? What country/state are you from? Do you come back often? Am I boring you? Just pop in to say hello. Again, until you are 'vetted' (good political term, no?) your replies will only be seen by me, or maybe the owner of the place, he once 'hacked' in for a April Fools joke... But he is a good friend of mine, almost like a long lost brother. So if you don't want them to be seen, let me know in the response, and I'll get rid of it. Me, I'm just curious...

Other things I want to know. Why is a site in Russia interested in my blogs on Superman Movies? Why isn't the same

site interested in Batman? Just wondering..

This is just stuff I was thinking about this Saturday morning...

Loaded with tags, just for fun? Just having a bit of fun, that's what blogging is all about.

Space tourism

The private sector has been in the space race for a few years now. The prize for the first commercial, non-governmental vehicle that made it to space was awarded. And now they are getting ready to unveil the start of the next phase, paid passengers. Virgin Galactic will be unveiling the first half of their attempt for commercial traffic in space. The well named [Mothership](#) will be displayed by the company that developed it.

Right now the price for a 5 minute space ride is well out of my budget, but this is hopefully the first step to more and less expensive rides into space. My wife's great grandmother lived to be 104 years old. She was around (and remembered) when automobiles started to take over the roads, she was around for the first airplanes. She couldn't afford to ride a plane when passenger travel was first introduced, but when she was in her nineties, she was able to buy a ticket and enter a plane, travel to California to see her sister. Maybe when I am in my nineties, I'll be able to do something like that and travel in space. I hope it is sooner.

Time Travel...

I commented on something in another site, that got me thinking about time travel, instantaneous travel, and relativistic travel. Some heavy thinking for this late in the day, but I'm here now.

Time travel has been in our collective stories for centuries. The early stories were all using magic or wishes to go back in time. This was used to correct mistakes, make different choices or somehow get something you missed out on. I don't have any of the myths and stories available to me at the moment, but I seem to remember a common theme. It generally didn't work out the way it was planned. That doesn't always mean bad things happened, just not the planned things.

In 1895 H. G. Wells published a book where a machine was used to travel back in time. [The Time Machine](#) was one of the early science fiction works on time travel. Many other authors have written works on time travel, and there have been many movies and even a TV show or two about time travel. As these stories progressed, the time travel paradox was brought up. What would happen if you went back in time and prevented your birth sort of thing. This stuff can get deep quickly, so I'll leave it for another topic. I was just thinking about the time travel stories..

Then we have instantaneous or faster than light travel. Used in almost every Space science fiction story known this type of travel was invented by the story tellers out of need. They needed to get from one end of the Galaxy to the other without writing about long voyages or worse yet relativity. Transporters on [StarTrek](#) were made to save money on the effects of a shuttle craft landing. If you ever noticed the when a shuttle craft was used in the original series, it was always a plot device, and that justified the cost.

But of course, Einstein said that the Universe has a speed limit, the speed of light. That gets rid of the instantaneous/faster than light travel, but again brings back the time travel story. Space ship captain goes away an some high fraction of the speed of light, comes back to earth and finds out many many years have passed on earth and his twin brother is now a very old man... I remember a story or two like that, but I don't recall them at the present.

Just a few thoughts off the top of my head, so I can relax and get some rest...

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?