

## Minimizing Long Lines at your Telescope at Star Parties

- 1) Process the "big iron" telescope through one of those automobile-capacity trashmasters so it doesn't look so imposing.
- 2) Keep a pet skunk, comma, deodorized, comma, leashed to the mounting.
- 3) Keep a pet skunk, comma, non-deodorized, comma, leashed to the mounting.
- 4) Buy a bottle of skunk oil and use it liberally to clean your eyepieces' field lenses.
- 5) Install one of those spring-loaded giant collapsible "snakes" wrapped around the focuser, with a remote-controlled release.
- 6) Assert that you are in the middle of a telepathic reception from inhabitants of the z--- R----- system, and require continuous optical contact to preserve coherency in the message.
- 7) Carry a large squirt gun, and when the passerby asks for a view, aim it high into the air, pull the trigger, and say "Sorry, it's raining!"
- 8) Have a list of fellow observers you don't like, and say "Gee, my Astro-Physics has such lousy optics, I'm sure Stefan's Quintet will look much better in that fellow's 50 mm Tasco over there."
- 9) Wear a WalkMan with the volume turned up loud. It helps if you have one of the models with an antenna sticking upward from each ear piece, then you can put glow-in-the-dark ping-pong balls, miniature fox tails, or plastic spiders, on the antenna tips.
- 10) Structurally weaken the ladder whereby you climb to the eyepiece, so that it is in obvious and immediate danger of collapse. Have one leg in a cast.
- 11) Wear combat fatigues and carry a walkie-talkie. When the passer-by approaches, key the mike and say loudly, "Security! Security! Perimeter violation at unit eighteen!"
- 12) Have a large crank sticking out of the side of your telescope. Offer a free view to anyone who will work the mechanism for the sidereal drive for an hour or two.
- 13) Decorate your telescope as an altar to Cthulu. Bow toward it frequently, and mutter in tongues. Drool salaciously, and finger your sacrificial knife, when the passer-by asks for a turn.