

You know you are a planetary observer when...

You campaign for bond measures for urban street lighting, so you can read your charts more easily while observing.

You don't think it's funny at all when people tell you refractors make good finders.

You seek corneal surgery to improve your vision, and insist on a final polish with fine, washed rouge.

You see canals on the faces of people with acne.

You know where James Lick is buried, and envy him.

You have your nose surgically removed to provide increased clearance for Panoptics in your bino-viewers.

You didn't understand the preceding remark, because real planetary observers don't use Panoptics.

The batteries that came with your red flashlight have long since run down, and you never even noticed that it had batteries in the first place.

You name your pet dogs "Phobos" and "Deimos", and feed them ALPO.

Your no. 2 telescope was scavenged from the finder of a big Dobson: You kept the Dobson primary as a shaving mirror, and traded the rest of the telescope for two uncoated Ramsden eyepieces and a used yellow filter.

You wear an old Astro-Physics baseball cap to bed and in the shower: You save your new one for fancy dinners, ballroom dancing, and job interviews.

You own more bino-viewers than eyepieces.

You can spell "Schiefspiegler" correctly at least two times out of three.

You think the natural observing cycle is not the lunar month, but the synodic period of Mars.

You only buy eyepieces in pairs.

You actually own a Zeiss TeleMentor.

You spend three hours collimating to make a half-hour sketch.

You can't believe you are having marital difficulties, because the red planet is usually too close to the Sun for good viewing.

You can talk about garlands all night long without once thinking of the Wizard of Oz.

You have memorized the entire Takahashi catalog in Japanese, even though you neither speak nor read Japanese.

You know what Encke actually saw, and why it isn't named for him: You think that's not fair, but it doesn't confuse you in the least.

The optics of your two-inch-barrel eyepieces have reverted to the original sand from lack of use.

You wish someone would turn off the Sun, so you could get a better look at Mercury.

You have fully multicoated contact lenses.

You have two wrist watches, synchronized to the two main rotational periods of the atmosphere of Jupiter.

You have tried to make a Coddington eyepiece by grinding a groove in a clear glass marble. You had to terminate your efforts when the child from whom you obtained the marble complained that you weren't

playing "keepsies".

Your dream vacation is a deep-water luxury cruise in the oceans of Europa.

You ask star party organizers to turn off the Milky way so you won't get confused looking for faint outer satellites of gas giants.

You name your telescopes for members of Roland Christen's family and staff, and none of your friends will admit to thinking that's the least bit strange.

You wish the solar corona would go away, so you could get a better look at craters during totality.

You don't star hop because you have forgotten what stars look like, but that's all right because you neither need to star hop nor care what stars look like.

You can't say "A, B, C" without wondering what happened to the Cassini Division.

Your idea of an LPR filter is sunglasses.

You think everyone else is using way too little magnification.

The transparency is wonderful on the night of the New Moon, and you don't look at anything outside the solar system.

The only central obstruction you want anything to do with is the one between the opposite sides of the Crepe Ring.

You can count the total number of celestial objects you have viewed on the fingers of both hands.

You have a compulsive urge to make detailed drawings of the subtle, low-contrast detail seen on light bulbs.

You neither know nor care that your mount has periodic error.

You know what "syzygy" means, and apply it to configurations of billiard balls on a pool table: To facilitate that task, you have nicknamed each billiard ball for a satellite of Saturn.

You no longer worry about shrinking pupil size with age.

You spend two nights at a deep sky star party, and never see a galaxy.

Your focuser has your own fingerprints permanently worn into the knobs.

You see color in all the objects you observe.

You still find 0.965-inch-diameter eyepieces useful.

You time central-meridian crossings of terrestrial clouds.

You wait for the first quarter Moon to put your telescopes out.

You don't know what a "light year" is.

You almost never remember how to spell "Schmidt-Cassegrain".

You examine people's trousers carefully, to see if their belts have festoons: You only look occasionally at your own belts, because you already have the shapes and positions of their festoons memorized, so all you need to do is monitor now and then for long-term changes.

You find a spider in your tube, and fumigate.

During a favorable western libration, you find yourself wishing the moon were full so you could see the Mare Orientale.

You think 180 mm is large aperture.

You are confident that "faint fuzzies" always refers to obscure low-contrast details in the Jovian atmosphere.

Deep what?

-- Jay Freeman, Deep Sky Weasel
with thanks to many contributors