

The Astronomer's Code

Foreword

I would like to introduce one of my ideas. It is my belief that astronomy is the oldest hobby in the world and the second oldest profession. Even before the advent of campfire, our ancestors were looking at the stars and wondering “what is out there?” Yet with all that, we do not have any secret/mysterious communication symbol, handshake, initiation ceremonies or even enigmatic night ritual to celebrate astronomical events.

Introduction

As a result of this, I have decided to fashion an unofficial Astronomer's Code that we could use in our daily communication (email, letters, etc.). It is nothing more than a list of statements with individual identification numbers, which could be included in our daily correspondence. To use it, you simply enter a statement number, such as AC-107 (which means “When someone is as good as me, it is hard to be modest,”) at the appropriate location in your document. The recipient then has to look for the meaning in the list and send a quick reply, if required. Some of us already include footnotes at the end of their email such as Clear Skies, which is now listed as AC-1.

Closing Statement

The proposed Astronomer's Coded, that follow, should be considered as a living document for the time been and will be updated at regular interval. I have divided the list into 3 sections: Series 0 is for astronomical / observation comments, the 100 Series is for comments with a mild negative undertone and the 200 Series is for inspirational comments.

I see this as a fun way to add some pleasure and mystery into our daily correspondence. You are more than welcome to send me your comments, feedback, and proposals.

AC-203

Robert Bussières

RASC Halifax Centre Librarian

RobertBusieres@gmail.com

Astronomer's Codes (AC for short)

Code Number	Meaning	2009 Oct 05
The 0 series.		
1	Clear skies.	
2	Clear skies at the observatory (SCO) tonight.	
3	Anybody going to the observatory (SCO) tonight?	
6	What happens in a Black Hole stays in a Black Hole.	
7	I bought a ***** with all my life savings.	
8	Wish you were here.	
9	Glad you are not here.	
10	Happiness is a clear forecast.	
11	Despair is another cloudy / foggy night.	
12	Aperture fever.	
13	Bigger is better.	
14	Mine is bigger than yours ('scope).	
15	Size is not everything.	
16	Going to try my new toy.	
17	I have enclosed some pretty pictures for your viewing pleasure.	
18	Well done.	
19	"A comet is not a comet unless it makes you fear your maker." (Nat Cohen, before Hyakutake)	
20	"I perceive this to be a real comet." (Nat Cohen, after Hyakutake)	
21	When all else fails - read the instructions!	
22	It's in the Handbook.	
The 100 series.		
100	Another good example of deplorable light pollution.	
101	It is difficult to believe that we are working on the same cause.	
102	You have the uncanny ability to complicate a very simple situation.	
103	Believe it or not I am right.	
104	Better late than never.	
105	Never underestimate the power of stupid people in large numbers.	
106	The Mass is stupid.	
107	When someone is as good as me, it is hard to be modest.	
The 200 series.		
200	Exhilaration is that feeling you get just after a great idea hits you, and just before	

	you realize what's wrong with it.
201	The way some people find fault, you'd think there was a reward.
202	When everything has to be right, something isn't.
203	Progress walks in single file behind a person willing to stick his neck out.
204	All arguments have two sides, but have no end.
205	The executive exists to make sensible exceptions to general rules.
206	Bring ideas in and entertain them royally, for one of them may be the king.
207	Smile.
208	If there is determination, there is a way.
209	"Press on: nothing in the world can take the place of perseverance. Talent will not; nothing is more common than unsuccessful men with talent. Genius will not; unrewarded genius is almost a proverb. Education will not; the world is full of educated derelicts. Persistence and determination alone are omnipotent." -- Calvin Coolidge (1872 - 1933)