

Ashton Observatory Public Nights

The Des Moines Astronomical Society invites you to visit the Ashton Observatory Saturdays, 8:00 p.m., April through October.

Most Saturdays include a classroom presentation, followed by stargazing as sky conditions allow.

Meet one of our presenters this season:

Mike Hotka



Born and raised in Iowa City, IA, Mike started his amateur observing there. Before 2019 is done he will have observed over 6000 unique objects of the night sky. He is a prolific lecturer, giving talks about how to observe celestial objects to astronomy-minded audiences around the country. He has developed a goal oriented process to get the amateur astronomer out observing under the night sky. Mike received the Astronomy League's Master Observer Platinum Award for his observing achievements, one of only two people to do so at the moment, and is in fact the person with the most AL observing awards.

His book, *Exploring Amateur Astronomy – Goal Oriented Observing*, describes a hands-on approach to observational astronomy, and how to earn the AL observing program awards. In it he details the specific plans he followed for each observing award that he has done, to help others overcome the learning obstacles that some of the programs possess. The book can benefit both the novice observer as well as the most experienced.

Mike has a BA degree in physics and MA in computer science. He currently works for Ball Aerospace and Technology Corp as a development programmer, and has taught college-level astronomy in Colorado, in addition to regularly presenting programs at area observatories.