



Introduction to *Amateur Astronomy*

Stargazing is easy, and astronomy is something anyone can do and enjoy. You just have to get started off on the right foot. Starting out wrong can lead to disappointment, frustration, and wasted money. Starting out right can lead to a lifetime of celestial exploration and enjoyment. Today, the hobby of astronomy - the biggest and most mind-boggling branch of amateur nature study - is attracting more people than ever. The **Kalamazoo Astronomical Society** is happy to present a five-part lecture series that will help you become a star-hopping skymaster!



Part 1: Our Place Among the Infinities

January 23

For a long time, the stars were merely pinpoints of light on the black backdrop of the heavens. Before massive telescopes on mountaintops came along, all we could observe were the Sun, Moon, planets, their satellites, and the occasional comet. Today we know that those pinpoints of light are distant suns and that we live in a remote corner of one galaxy amongst billions. For our first presentation, we'll travel through our solar system, explore the star clusters and nebulae of our Milky Way Galaxy, and the countless other galaxies in this vast, infinite universe.

Part 2: Discovering the Night Sky

February 6

Is that a bright star or a planet? Where's the constellation Orion? Your first task as an amateur astronomer is to learn your way around the night sky. Learn how to find any star or constellation in the night sky with the use of a simple star map. We'll also look at several of the best books geared toward the novice stargazer and the many sophisticated planetarium programs for your home computer.

Part 3: Binocular Basics

February 20

Every amateur astronomer, novice or advanced, should own at least one good pair of binoculars. They make an ideal first "telescope" because of their wide field of view, ease of use, portability, versatility, and low cost. Several types of binoculars are available, but which ones are best for astronomy? You'll be amazed at what you can see!

Part 4: Telescope Tutorial

March 6

Sooner or later, every amateur astronomer faces the decision of purchasing a first telescope. There are literally hundreds of choices today! What's the difference between a refractor and reflector? Which telescope is the right one for you? To make this daunting task easier, we'll compare several of the top telescopes available today and tell you which ones to avoid. We'll also look at the countless array of accessories available for your telescope. If you already have a telescope but need help then bring it along.

Part 5: The Art of Astrophotography

March 20

Astrophotography is the art of photographing the night sky. In the past few years that art has undergone a revolution as digital cameras have overtaken their film counterparts. In some ways this has made the field more technical, but in many ways shooting the sky is easier than ever! We'll start with the basics like using a stationary photographic tripod and work our way up to imaging with sophisticated CCD cameras. Constellation patterns, the Milky Way, the night-to-night motion of the planets, bright comets, northern lights, and perhaps a meteor all await you.

Time: 1:00 pm → 3:00 pm

Admission: FREE

Location: Online via Zoom

Registration: www.kasonline.org

