

Re: best goto type mount for SPC8?

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On Tue, 08 Feb 2005 22:34:42 GMT, "Roger Hamlett"
<rogerspamignored@ttelmah.demon.co.uk> wrote:

*>I still find the display annoying. There is no illumination to the
>buttons, which are too sensitive to be comfortable in the cold with gloves
>on.*

I guess, but I seem to do fine with them. One Celestron Nexstar hand paddle I had started developing sticking keys with two years. So far, the Sphinx buttons appear to be able to take the abuse. Perhaps you should try thinner gloves that give you more feel?

*>So have ended up with a ND filter, in a custom made 'case', which has
>the buttons recessed, with rings round them, so you can feel them in the
>dark. Compared to the used interface quality of the SS2K, it is not even
>in the same 'class', and it is wrong that the unit should need an add-on
>filter to work acceptably. Turning the display off, doesn't help if you
>have already destroyed your night vision...*

Sounds a bit like you've decided this is a problem whether it is or not. I find that **any light** destroys your night vision temporarily -- the question being how quickly it recovers. Mine seems to recover quickly when using the StarBook with a ND filter, plus I have my unit set for a short timeout and the backlight disappears entirely in short order. I usually want to observe objects for at least 5 minutes and I have not found my night vision severely impacted by the StarBook with the ND filter since I obtained Build 26 with the timed OFF feature.

*>Yes, it is a good mount now, if you can live with the remaining problems,
>but it should have been 'excellent' from day one.*

I don't know of any remaining "problems" in Build 26. Missing features perhaps that would be nice add-ons, but the features that are there seem to work fine to me. Regarding PEC, are you attempting autoguided astrophotography and find the Sphinx doesn't perform for you? Or are you trying to avoid an autoguider entirely?

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> *the brightness is because they went for EL backlighting. This is
>the commonest solution for laptop displays etc., However you can get the
>same displays with LED backlighting, which gives a slightly less smooth
>backlight, but can be dimmed to nothing.*

As long as the windows contain white backgrounds I don't think it matters what kind of backlight you choose. Turning down an LED backlight to such low levels would just mean you wouldn't be able to read the display. Having the display at any readable level with white background will be enough to affect your night vision. Whether it is EL or LED isn't the issue.

What could be done to best effect would be to have a "night vision" mode where all is on black backgrounds with shades of red text and symbols. Then a red filter could be added to further filter the display backlight without rendering elements on the display unreadable. I do this with my laptop and it works perfectly.

Plus, aren't EL backlights more power efficient? I prefer longer battery life. And the more even lighting allows lower overall brightness levels that still retain full-screen readability.

*>I think I am spot on, in my assesment, that the handcontroller was 'farmed
>out' to a team outside the company, who are not involved in astromony, it
>explains exactly why a system that is in places truly excellent, is marred
>in this area.*

The StarBook is a different paradigm. It has some rough edges, but after several observing sessions I don't find the model any more difficult to use than anything else. In fact, even without double star lists, direct RA/DEC entry, and other features, I find I can still get the mount quickly to a target.

For example, as I have stated here before, you can find a double star quickly by using the Constellation object list to get the mount in the general area, and then use the star chart as feedback to quickly home in on the target RA/DEC for a faint double star. It works very efficiently for me. It's as good or better than a LONG linear list of doubles in a Nexstar or Autostar controller, and it works for every double rather than just ones pre-picked for you as interesting. Use the NSOG to pick objects to go after rather than the whims of a hand paddle programmer...

Michael McCulloch