

# Re: The Dumbing Down of Astronomers

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- *From:* "Förster vom Silberwald" <[chain\\_lube@xxxxxxxxxxxx](mailto:chain_lube@xxxxxxxxxxxx)>
  - *Date:* 24 Feb 2006 02:01:32 -0800
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RMOLLISE wrote:

Well, I commend you on your fine efforts, but I don't see what this has to do with clubs or Sky and Telescope....

I do not know why we are at this point. However, let me clarify that I am not involved into astrophysics anymore. As I wrote elsewhere I happend to build a photometric solar telescope for my Master thesis in astrophysics (the scope was meant to observe the solar chromosphere in the Calcium line). I shifted a little bit the field since and have been employed at the university the last couple of years for conducting a PhD in physics, though, it is still the same astrophysics departement. For this I made calculations of radiative transfer through the atmosphere (aerosols and climate in the Earth its atmosphere). I am somewhat happy now that it has been accepted. How funny, the PhD has been approved by an old professor who was very high in the NASA hirarchy in the 70's (he was in der directorial board). But I am still faced with the problem to get it published in a peer-reviewed journal since aerosols are a very hot topic now and if I had not another guy from NASA with a good name in the field as co-author I would have been long kicked out from the peer-review process. Climate change is now a political debate and a lot of money goes into that field actually now.

That said: In the 80's when I was young there was a German astronomy magazine called "Sterne und Weltraum" (similar to Sky&Telescopes)". However, it had one serious problem: one of the editors was a refractor fanatic. At this time it was even this: there was a solar observing book written by amateurs (it is also vailable in Englisch) which changed the Rayleigh criterion in so far that a 20 cm (8") mirror telescope will have no better resolution than a 10 cm (4") refractor.

It took me one year to convince the editors of the book that in this case scientific ethics are undermined and it is a fraud. The author of this section in the book, though holding a degree in meachanical engineering from a university, was not fit in reading Englisch texts and couldn't read all the articles from Sky&Telescope.

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At this time and in the 90's I also tried to introduce some concepts (star testing from Suiter, MTF, etc.) into the magazine "Sterne und Weltraum". However, it was always refused since the editors were refractor fanatics. It was even this that some individuals wanted to file suit me for calling them names.

That is the reason why I become upset quickly as one mentions refractors. In the meantime a lot has changes due to the internet and it is not important what magazines writes since more than one meaning can quickly become available in google.

Schneewittchen

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