

Re: Reflections from Coe: Looking In The Mirror Again...

Source: <http://sci.tech-archive.net/Archive/sci.astro.amateur/2006-08/msg01205.html>

- *From:* brian@xxxxxxx (Brian Tung)
 - *Date:* Tue, 8 Aug 2006 14:44:13 -0700 (PDT)
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Willie R. Meghar wrote:

From what I've noticed the two most outspoken exponents for posting with a real name (and against posting with an alias) include in their signature either a book or software from which they stand to make financial gain. Furthermore, one or the other of these individuals will occasionally respond to known trolls and/or off-topic postings for no apparent reason (unless it's to further propagate the advertisements contained within their signatures).

If you're not selling something or looking for handouts there's little reason to provide a true identity or personal contact information with your postings. The argument that one can tell the worth of a posting by whether or not an alias is used is totally bogus.

A person's real name, by itself, has no greater significance than a made up alias. It's only when that name is used to search for a physical address, phone number or other personal information that it gains a greater significance.

These occasional postings advocating the use of real names may (or may not) in reality be efforts to gain names with which to do searches for more critical personal information. It raises an even larger red flag when the request comes from someone with something to sell.

I think you're being a bit hard on Greg. He does sell a product, but as far as I can tell, he doesn't come here to sell it. And I certainly do not think he's harvesting names! He's been here for several years, and if he were harvesting names, I think we'd all have heard about it by now.

There is value in seeing a real name, but I don't think it's the fact that's the real name; it's the fact that it's permanent. I have no real clue as to whether any of the folks that go by the names Rod Mollise, Greg Crinklaw, Stephen Paul, or whoever—whether those are really their names. It doesn't matter, as far as SAA is concerned. What I do know is that I know what to expect out of the posts their names are attached

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to. That, in my opinion, is the value of using a real name. One could do the same thing with a pseudonym like Lumpy Darkness, who I know has been posting to SAA, off and on, for a long time indeed. I know what kind of posts he produces (and for the record, I like them), and that's what matters here.

I seem to recall that you're using a pseudonym yourself, and that might be why you take umbrage at Greg's rationale for his request, but I also read your posts, because I know that posts with the "Willie Meghar" stamp are generally full of useful content. :)

So, although I disagree with Greg on a matter of principle—that it's the reality of names that make a post meaningful, rather than their constancy—I will be an equal-opportunity disagreeer <g> and say that I can't believe Greg has a nefarious purpose in mind in pushing for the use of real names. It simply does not accord with what I know of him from his posts.

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The Astronomy Corner at <http://astro.isi.edu/>

Unofficial C5+ Home Page at <http://astro.isi.edu/c5plus/>

The PleiadAtlas Home Page at <http://astro.isi.edu/pleiadatlas/>

My Own Personal FAQ (SAA) at <http://astro.isi.edu/reference/faq.html>

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