
From: jeffrey E. <jeevacation@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, February 14, 2016 8:39 PM
To: Pritzker, Tom
Subject: Re: Better Lucky than smart

grEAT im off to ted conference. yo=?

On S=n, Feb 14, 2016 at 3:15 PM, Pritzker, Tom <[REDACTED]>m> wrote:

We went down to the Magellan telescope (6.5 m) with Wendy Freedman who is a rock star cosmologist. She recently came to U of Chicago. Once the dovening was over, they told us that they were going to do something that had only been done once before in history. One of the geniuses had adapted an eyepiece to the telescope and we were going to look through it with the naked eye. Turns out that the human eye can (still) do some things better than optics. What they had done was developed 'adaptive optics' for the secondary mirror such that they were able to reshape the mirror many times per second and thereby correct for atmospheric disturbances from moment to moment. This allows the human eye to observe at a resolution unprecedented in history. Margot was the 12th person to do this in history, I was the 13th. We observed Sirius (8 light years). It was quite a show. Before turning on adaptive optics (580 points on the secondary mirror that can change the shape of the mirror in order to consolidate the light of the first mirror into a readable image) you only saw a blur of light. Flip the switch and voila, a tight image of the star. This, of course, means absolutely nothing, but it was better than watching the Bearss.

tjp

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