

# Dudley Observatory Launches Astrophotography Research Project

Phyllis Budka



Janie Schwab, Executive Director of Dudley (on the right) addresses first meeting of DARK.

More than 20 teens and adults gathered for the first meeting of the Dudley Astrophotography Research (K)night (DARK) on December 10<sup>th</sup> at the Dudley Observatory office on Nott Terrace in Schenectady. Attendees included people new to astronomy as well as experienced amateur astronomers. DARK goals include working together to learn digital imaging techniques that are central to many astronomy projects and progressing to perform actual astronomy research.

It's not too late to join DARK! Whether you want to take nice photos with a digital camera, or do CCD imaging through a telescope, this group will get you started. We are looking for mentors, as well as novices. For more information, see the Dudley website at <http://www.dudleyobservatory.org/>

In addition to imaging, we have chosen a basic variable star research project which can be worked on by members of the group. The "Star" Of Our Project is epsilon Aurigae, a mysterious, bright, eclipsing binary variable star, the subject of a current 2 year research project sponsored by Citizen Sky. To learn more about Citizen Sky and the epsilon Aurigae project, see the link below: <http://www.citizensky.org/>

No equipment is required for this project but observing a variable star takes practice! Janie Schwab will help us calibrate our eyes by working with Citizen Sky's 10 Star Training Tutorial (and the clear winter sky). This tutorial begins with stars that are easy to find and observe and progressing to Epsilon Aurigae, at the bottom of the list.

It's not too late to join DARK!

Next meetings – Clear skies or cloudy:

Tuesdays at 7pm at Dudley Observatory

Jan 12, Jan 26, Feb 2, Feb 9

Here's a chance to become an expert variable star observer contributing real data to professional scientists!

DARK Project Coordinators are Elfuns Phyllis Budka and Marv Weiss.