

[PLANOCULT] NEO comes close to us and in the reach of video cameras in Feb 2010

Von: Hristo Pavlov <hristo_dpavlov@yahoo.com>

An: iotaoccultations@yahoogroups.com, rasnzoccultations@yahoogroups.com, planoccult@aula.com

Dear all,

In March this year the asteroid 2009 DD45 come very close to the Earth and became bright enough to be observed by amateurs. Back then John Broughton suggested that video astrometry may show better results than CCD astrometry because of the better time resolution. In fact Dave Herald and myself successfully observed the asteroid from down under and the reported astrometry was with a better accuracy than some major observatories.

As a result a guide to video astrometry was put together and made available. It can be downloaded from the MPC web site:

<http://www.cfa.harvard.edu/iau/info/VideoAstrometry.pdf>

Now there is another NEO which is coming close to us. It will not be as fast as DD45 but will be almost as bright. On 9 Feb 2010 the asteroid 2009 UN3 will come as close as 0.037 UA to the Earth and will be moving with 50"/min at 12.3 Mag. This will make it a very interesting target for those that want to try video astrometry this time around.

Knowing the position of the target is essential and to get an accurate ephemeris you will need to use the MPC ephemeris service:

<http://www.cfa.harvard.edu/iau/MPEph/MPEph.html>

From 2009 DD45, I remember that finding the target was the most difficult part of the observation. You will want to have available the position of the object every 15 min. In case you loose it you can go to the next expected position and wait for it to come.

2009 UN3 will be an excellent opportunity for occultationists with integrating video cameras or bigger telescopes to try another area in which amateurs can make a difference. So don't wait but read the video astrometry guide and get ready to observe. And remember for astrometry you need as many stars as you can get in the FOV and the target does not have to be in the center.

Good luck and clear skies!

Regards,
Hristo Pavlov
Sydney, Australia

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In case of problems : contact Pierre.Vingerhoets@telenet.be or Jan Van Gestel
(jan@vangestel.be)