



Rules for ATM Merit Awards at RMSS

1. The RMSS Merit Awards Committee is responsible for the selection of the following awards:

A. Up to 6 Merit Awards (certificates) - The Merit Award is to recognize, reward, and call attention to the best ideas in whole or single unit construction, new ideas, and progressive achievements in concepts and design (see selection parameters further on in this text).

B. Up to 6 Honorable Mention Awards (certificates). The Honorable Mention is also for the above (A) reasons, but more importantly to encourage persons to continue to develop their ideas without penalizing those entries that are not as complete or developed or otherwise not as competitive as systems mentioned in (A) above. The Honorable Mention Award can be used to alleviate the over formalization and rigidity in limiting the number of awards given for only the "best". This is especially important as to keep flexibility in the process to both recognize and encourage telescope building when dealing with the multiplicities of entries each year.

General Criteria for Awards Selection

2. Eligibility for Awards

- A. A telescope or related item designed and built by a person or group for their own use. To be eligible, the entire telescope need not be made by the amateur. So, a commercially made eyepiece or focuser on an amateur-made telescope would not disqualify that entrant from receiving an award. However, a telescope, which is substantially an "assemblage" of commercially made parts, would not be eligible to receive an award. Only items substantially the work of the entrant will be considered for an award.
- B. A telescope or related item designed and built by an artist (usually a sculptor or fine woodworker) on commission for a customer. This object d'art must be a one-of-a-kind item, as making a series of 'signed-and-numbered' object would constitute manufacture.
- C. A telescope or related item designed to be easily made by a group of beginners, even if manufacturing techniques are employed, so long as this is not done for commercial purposes.
- D. "Commercial Prototypes" are ineligible. The designer of a telescope or related item that has been developed for manufacture and sale receives their rewards in a different arena - the marketplace. So, commercial prototypes have traditionally not received awards. If an entrant develops something with the intent of manufacturing it, that item is a commercial prototype, and would not be eligible for an award. If another person enters an item which they designed for their own use, for the use of a friend, or to be-used by a club or group but not for manufacture, that item is eligible for an award. Its subsequent use is not the business of CSAS. Note: Indications that the entry has become a commercial prototype is the following: 1) The designer demonstrating plans for manufacture, such as providing sales brochures; obtaining the names and addresses of potential customers, dissemination information about the

differences between the "entered-version" and the "commercial-version", etc. 2) The designer or builder accepting orders for the product, exhibiting examples of the entered item (some for sale), etc.

E. Qualifications of the entrant are irrelevant. For example, a tool-and-die maker is not precluded from entering a lovingly crafted telescope they made for their (group's) use because they are a "professional". What they designed, and for what reason are the only relevant criteria for their receiving an award.

3. General Guiding Criteria in Award Selection

A. All awards (Merit Award & Honorable Mention) are equal; there is no implied "contest"

B. Awards are to promote exchange of ideas and information on the craft of telescope making, construction, and design.

C. Awards are to encourage, recognize, and honor individual achievement in outstanding craftsmanship, innovative design, construction, and use of materials and processes in telescope systems, optics, and instrumentation. Some of the common criteria that have been developed over the years are: 1) One driving criteria, but not necessarily all encompassing, is: "Does the entry (or some aspect of it) advance the cause of the telescope maker's art?" This allows the committee to reward a particularly outstanding idea, even if it has been implemented as part of an otherwise ordinary telescope. 2) Outstanding craftsmanship allows recognition of the builder's skill in the realization of their entry whose design, which may or may not break new ground. 3) Outstanding system design or integration. This category allows the recognition of an entry, which shows outstanding choices in design, and construction of a complete telescope/observing system. Some such factors that fall into this category include: ease and safety of use, portability, protection and storage of equipment, ease of assembly, etc. (Please note that merely making an excellent series of choices in assembling a telescope system from commercially-available products will not qualify an entrant for an award.

D. Awards are to encourage amateur telescope makers to display examples of their craft at the annual RMSS.

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