

new product showcase

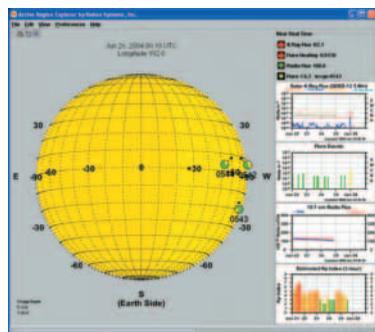


▲ **QUICK SCOPE MOUNT** While the name alone was enough to catch our attention, Stump Pod is just part of a small family of products (priced from \$49.95) that offers novel mounting solutions for a variety of binocular holders and small telescopes from Celestron and Meade. Post Pod attaches to any standard 4-inch wooden post, while Stump Pod (pictured at upper left) is intended for flat surfaces such as deck rails or, as the name implies, an appropriately lopped-off tree trunk. Made from heavy-duty 304 stainless steel, the units are impervious to weather. There are also similarly made eyepiece holders (priced from \$19.95), including several models with flip covers that protect against dewing. No word on whether there's a deluxe version of Stump Pod in the works that comes with an acorn and planting instructions.

■ FAR Laboratories, PO Box 25, South Hadley, MA 01075; 413-467-9262; www.dynapod.com.

▼ **TEC TURRET** Telescope Engineering Co., manufacturer of the superb TEC 140 APO refractor reviewed in this magazine last December (page 54), has just introduced the I-Turret (\$500). The precision-machined, all-metal unit fits any 2-inch focuser and holds up to five 1 1/4-inch eyepieces. The input barrel is threaded for standard 2-inch filters, and each eyepiece socket has a locking thumbscrew and brass compression ring. The internal mirror can be made of quartz or zero-expansion Sitall. It is flat to 1/10 wave and coated with enhanced aluminum, offering a reflectivity of 96 to 97 percent across the visual spectrum. An optional handsome mahogany case (\$140) holds the I-Turret and six 1 1/4-inch eyepieces.

■ Telescope Engineering Co., 15730 W. 6th Ave., Golden, CO 80401; 303-273-9322; www.telescopengineering.com.



◀ **SUN WATCH** If you can't keep your mind off the Sun, *Active Region Explorer* (\$24.95) may help maintain a clear head. Written in Java, so it runs on a variety of computer platforms, this utility gathers fresh images and data from the Internet about our star and presents the results for quick comprehension. At an instant you can tell whether a sunspot group is intensifying or weakening, as well as whether it has produced flares and coronal mass ejections. The program displays graphs for a variety of geomagnetic indices, solar maps with your choice of several projections, and near-real-time images from Kitt Peak National Observatory and the orbiting Solar and Heliospheric Observatory. You can compare features by stacking the images and adjusting the opacity, contrast, and color palette of each layer. The software saves the data for offline examination. Try the program for 30 days — good for one solar rotation — by downloading it from the Internet.

■ Raben Systems, Inc.; support@raben.com; www.raben.com.

New Product Showcase is a reader service featuring innovative equipment and software of interest to amateur astronomers. The descriptions are based largely on information supplied by the manufacturers or distributors. *Sky & Telescope* assumes no responsibility for the accuracy of vendors' statements. For further information contact the manufacturer or distributor. Announcements should be sent to nps@SkyandTelescope.com. Not all announcements will be listed.