

The Solstice Project



Summer Solstice



Equinox



Winter Solstice

I am fortunate enough to live up on a hillside where I can see the entire western horizon from my back porch, and I am continually fascinated by where the sun sets during different times of the year. This is a project I started on June 21st, 2015 at the Summer Solstice. I marked the position of the setting sun on my back porch railing and will track it until the Winter Solstice. When you live in Arizona, about mid-summer you start looking forward to shorter days and cooler weather! No wonder the Ancients (without air conditioning or central heating) paid attention to this stuff.

From my vantage point, on the summer solstice the sun sets north of Thumb Butte. From there it marches southward until it reaches its south-most setting on the Winter Solstice.

So, I thought I would build my own little Stonehenge on the railing.

Last night marked the summer solstice, so I am calling this the "Solstice Project." It will be a simple monument consisting of small rocks aligned with the setting sun. OK, so maybe not as sophisticated as the Druids, but lots of fun!

Last night I took a picture of the setting sun and took a measurement with the compass. As you can see, the sun is quite a ways north of Thumb Butte. Its angle appears to be 290° .



Setting Sun on June 21st 2015 Well North of Thumb Butte



Azimuth = 290°



July 23rd The Sun Sets Right on Thumb Butte



August 4th The Sun Sets South of Thumb Butte



August 18th Still Further South



September 1st Continuing It's Southward Journey



September 21st, The Autumnal Equinox



Sunsets at 265 Degrees



December 25th, A Little After the Winter Solstice but Close
(It Was Cloudy on December 21st)





Sighting Along the Ruler



Sunset Angel = 240 Degrees



Stonehenge on My Back Porch Railing



Summary of Observations so far:

Summer Solstice at 290 degrees to Autumnal equinox at 265 degrees = 25 degree difference

Autumnal Equinox at 265 degrees to Winter Solstice at 240 degrees = 25 degree difference.