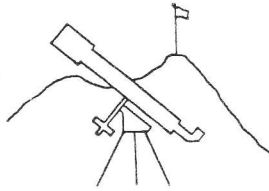


THE FREMONT PEAK OBSERVER



Vol. II No. 1

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

Call For Volunteers

Construction of the 30" Observatory begins this month. John Stewart has arranged for an auger to drill the holes for the piers. We still need able-bodied volunteers who can drive a nail, under the direction of our foreman Charlie Carlson. We also need people with pickup trucks who can haul materials.

Also, if you know of anyone or any organization that will donate materials, please let us know! It will help to defray our costs.

There are a couple of forms that need to be filled out if you wish to be a volunteer. Rick Morales, our Executive Secretary, has the forms at the construction site. They can be filled out when you arrive to help.

To volunteer, call Frank Dibbell at (408) 735-9597.

1986 Membership Renewal

Membership renewal notices went out in December. If you haven't for some reason received yours, let me know so that I can send you one.

1985 membership expired on December 31st, 1985. January is used as a "grace" month, to give people extra time to recover from the holidays, and to give us one last chance to remind you! If you haven't renewed by January 31st, your membership will have lapsed, and it will be necessary to re-join (paying initiation fees plus membership dues, losing charter status and all that)! Remember, your membership fee is tax-deductible!

If you have already sent your renewal in, I wish to thank you for your continued support. You should have also received your 1986 membership card by now. Any questions regarding membership should be directed to me, Frank Dibbell (Membership Chairman).

My number appears at various places throughout this publication.

Did You Move???

Quite a number of you have changed addresses this past year. I found out by checking the address on your renewal form with the address on your original application. PLEASE!!! If you change addresses, please let us know, so that we can update our records to insure that you receive this newsletter and all other *Association* correspondence in a timely manner.

FPOA Directory

The next issue of this newsletter will contain an *FPOA* Membership Directory. Essentially, it is a listing of all *FPOA* members with their addresses and phone numbers. Its use is solely for your benefit, so that you may contact others within the *Association*.

Call For Articles

We are looking for articles written by *Association* members about their interest in Astronomy, and what drew them to the *FPOA*. If you have written such an article, or would like to, please do! Articles for publication can be written, printed, typed, or whatever. The subject should be of general interest to the *FPOA* membership at large (always a judgement call). For more information, contact Frank Dibbell at 408-735-9597.

UPCOMING EVENTS

April Star Party & Cometwatch

An *FPOA* sponsored Star Party will be held on Saturday, April 12th, beginning at dusk. A no-host barbecue will precede the Star Party, behind the Ranger's house near the Observatory Site. A Halley Cometwatch will commence at 4:00 AM, Sunday morning, for those hardy souls who made it through the night!

Summer Public Programs

The *FPOA* will be running a public observing program this Summer, beginning in May. The dates have not yet been set. We need some ideas from the membership at large as to what you think might be interesting for these programs. Call or write to Frank Dibbell with your ideas.

1986 Annual General Meeting

The 1986 Annual Meeting will be moved up from December until sometime late this summer, or early fall. It's just too cold for a winter general meeting! Watch this space for the date and time.

AT LAST --- GROUNDBREAKING!!!

by *Denni Medlock*

Mild temperatures and a weekend break in the rainclouds gave the *FPOA* a dry day for its Groundbreaking Ceremonies on December 14th. Over 40 people (roughly half our membership!) attended the afternoon event at the *Association's* site on the hill behind the Ranger's house. Groundbreaking itself was handled by our shovel-wielding *Association* President Bob Fingerhut, who was spurred on by the applause of the assembled group.

Kevin Medlock had come up earlier that weekend to prepare for the Groundbreaking, and spent Friday evening determining the all-important North-South line using Polaris and a transit. On Saturday morning, Kevin and fellow *Association* members Frank Dibbell and Charlie Carlson layed out and tagged all 39 foundation and two telescope pier locations, using the line determined from the night before and the Observatory blueprints. (Weather permitting, the pier holes will be drilled sometime in mid-January, with the concrete being poured the week after).

After a few shovels of dirt had been dug the meeting was turned over to Kevin Medlock, who gave a Status Report on the 30-inch telescope (*see the following article - Ed*).

Upon completion of the Status Report on the scope, *Association* members were invited to warm up with coffee provided by the Park Rangers in the equipment building, and to view

the Observatory drawings and blueprints on display there. For most of those present it was the first look they had had of the plans for the building.

A no-host barbecue followed at Coulter Camp Group Picnic Area, and for those brave souls who didn't mind the cold, chances to view Comet Halley were provided. John Gleason, an *Association* Board Member and Astrophotographer Extraordinaire, captured the comet on film using a 40 minute exposure with chilled Konica 1600 color negative film. This beautiful shot will join the *FPOA* archives, commemorating the date of our Observatory's Groundbreaking.

30 " STATUS REPORT

by *Denni Medlock*

The 30-inch telescope is facing its last stages of assembly, much to the relief of everyone associated with it. This one ton beauty has reached a point where it can no longer be worked on in the Medlock garage!

Jack Peterson has generously donated a 12' x 12' x 14' area at his place of business, where the telescope will undergo final assembly and remain until the Observatory building is complete.

Movement of the sub-assemblies to the warehouse, located in Milpitas, took place on Sunday January 12th. Jack Peterson, Jack Zeiders, Bob Fingerhut, Dave and Mary Ambrose, Randy Smith, Howard Medlock, and Kevin and myself spent five hours transporting the components to the warehouse. Upon completion of the move, Jack Zeiders was heard to comment, "Kevin, next time you move the 60-inch or 80-inch, don't call me, call *BIGGE!*".

The move was not without some levity; Kevin had asked Jack Zeiders to get the secondary diagonal from the van (the secondary diagonal for the 30-inch is fully as big as a standard 8-inch mirror!), which was wrapped in a towel. Jack got another towel, walked back into the warehouse, and eight feet from Kevin said, "Here!" while tossing the bundled-up empty towel to him. I understand Kevin's life flashed

before his eyes as he saw the airborne towel approach! (*These guys are sick! sick! sick!*).

The telescope now sits in the warehouse, on wooden piers, with all major sub-assemblies put together. Kevin reports that it will take about 20 pounds more of weight to balance it properly, and it will still need to be fine tuned for movement. The painting of the tube assembly and the polar housing will take place here (instrument white and midnight blue).

Recently completed on the telescope was the declination assembly, which included the cutting and welding of the cradle assembly and its matching pieces on the tube. The declination gear is in place, and the clutches have been made for both the R. A. and declination gears. The worms for these gears are the only major components left to machine.

The secondary holder is an indexing piece; that is, the diagonal may be rotated to either side of the tube to facilitate viewing objects that otherwise would require the viewer to lean far over the tube. That would be a very precarious position from the top of a 12 foot ladder!

In Kevin's words, the telescope is 85% complete. What is left is mainly heavy work. Those with muscles who wish to help move the assemblies around are invited to call Kevin or I at 415-654-6796.

Tours of the partially assembled scope can also be arranged by calling Kevin or I. This is a very impressive instrument; it is well worth the trip out to Milpitas to see it.

PROGRESS REPORT

by the FPOA Board

Observatory Status

The Observatory site has been cleared and marked, and we have the go-ahead from the State to begin digging. Charlie Carlson has developed a bill of material list from the detailed drawings, and determined how much the 30-inch Observatory building will cost us. The Observatory will be built for under \$15,000. Since we have about \$20,000 in our "war chest", we have ample funds to complete this project!

A building schedule is a bit hard to put together at this time, but an approximation of the major events with a rough time table is presented here:

- Dig pier holes (mid-Jan)
- Acquire materials (ongoing)
- Pour concrete (end-Jan)
- Frame the building (concrete + 10 days)
- Finish building (end-Feb)
- Install 30-inch (mid-Mar)
- Dedication Ceremony (Apr-May)

The schedule is heavily dependent upon the weather, which is quite variable at this time of year. Adjustments and refinements will be published, as they become known, in future Newsletters.

The 30" Scope

The 30 inch scope is a dual purpose telescope designed to be either an f4.8 Newtonian or f14.6 Cassegrain. See Denni's article for more detailed information.

The 22" Scope

The 22 inch scope is set up as an f4.5 Newtonian. It will be equatorially mounted on a standard fork mounting.

The building to house the 22 inch scope will be very similar to the 30 inch observing room. The plan calls for locating the 22 inch observatory due west of the 30 inch observatory. Fundraising for this observatory will commence upon completion of the 30 inch observatory.

MEMBERSHIP NOTES

by Frank Dibbell

As of January 10th, a little over 70% of the *Association* has renewed their *FPOA* membership. In addition, we have received several new membership applications. The Board wishes to extend a special recognition to the following people who upgraded their membership class, and renewed as Life members:

David Klausner

John Cincotta

The Board also wishes to extend a special recognition to the following people who either joined as Sustaining members, or renewed at that level:

Brian Day
Gregory Edwards
Howard Kuhlmann
Edward McGuire
Kim McKelvey
Carter Roberts
Ed Schell

Both Life and Sustaining members will receive a parchment proclaiming their membership status in the *FPOA*. In addition, Life members will receive a permanent, bronze membership card. Delivery times for the cards and parchments are on the order of six to eight weeks.

The 1985 Life and Sustaining member parchments have finally been mailed! If you were a Sustaining member in 1985, and have not yet received your parchment, give me a call at 408-735-9597. If you joined in 1985 as a Life member, and have not received either your parchment or your permanent membership card, likewise give me a call.

HALLEY WATCH

by Frank Dibbell

As Comet Halley disappeared into the twilight glow, attempts to observe it on January 11th from the Peak were frustrated by cloud cover in the western sky. Observing attempts earlier in the week were more successful, however.

On Sunday, January 5th, the *FPOA*, in conjunction with the *San Jose Astronomical Association* and *Orion Telescopes* provided telescopes and expertise for the Comet Halley program put on by Mirassou Winery. Some 250 people attended this event.

The *Columbia Amateur Astronomers*, an auxiliary of the Columbia Community School PTA, co-sponsored three Comet Halley nights with the *FPOA* on Monday, January 6th, Wednesday January 8th, and Thursday January 9th at local Sunnyvale schools. A

combined total of 300 people viewed the comet on those nights. I used both a C-14 and a 90mm Fluorite refractor to view the comet on these nights, and the Fluorite gave the most impressive views (though the tripod was kicked out of alignment more frequently by the younger observers tripping over it!). Many people showed up with their binoculars as well, and we took the time to help them find the comet using them. The consensus of the binocular users: "Boy, is it faint", and "7x50's are better than 6x30's!".

The next *FPOA* sponsored Halley Watch at Fremont Peak will be on Sunday morning at 4:00 AM on April 13th, at the *FPOA* observing site following the Saturday night Star Party. Bring warm clothing!!!

The purpose of the *Fremont Peak Observatory Association* is to provide educational and interpretive services of astronomically related topics to visitors of Fremont Peak State Park. The *Fremont Peak Observer* is published quarterly, and is the official publication of the *Fremont Peak Observatory Association*. Articles and other items for publication should be sent to:

Frank Dibbell, *FPOA*
710 Georgia Avenue
Sunnyvale, CA 94086

Deadline for articles is the 15th of the month preceding the month of publication.

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