














# The Fremont Peak OBSERVER

December 1990

Promoting public education in Astronomy

Volume VI No. 4

## First Quarter 1991

January	February	March
5 	2 	2 
12 Board Meeting 1:00PM 145 Martinvale Lane, SJ (Pat Donnelly) 	9 Board Meeting 1:00PM Fremont Peak State Park 	9 Board Meeting 1:00PM Fremont Peak State Park 
19 	16 	16 
26 	23 	23  30 

### Calendar Notes

Since we have no scheduled public events, the first quarter calendar looks a bit empty. As a reminder, the dates that appear on this quarterly calendar are Saturday dates. The moon phases on this calendar represent the phase it will be/had been on that Saturday. For example, new moon actually occurs in January midway between the 12th and the 19th; that is why both Saturdays show a new moon.

The FPOA uses the winter months to perform maintenance on the Observatory and the equipment. We also use this time to assess our public program presentations, and look for ways to make them better. The January 12th board meeting will be devoted to selecting a general format for our formal presentations, and we will decide on about 6 standard presentations that can be given by our members. The February and March board meetings will be used, in part, to train FPOA members who wish to volunteer this summer in giving these presentations.

If you want to be involved, please call our executive secretary, Rick Morales (408-623-4255), and sign up. We will also need donations of color slides taken by FPOA members of celestial objects, and of the Observatory itself. Scenes showing

construction (for an historical perspective) are desired. Rick is the focal point (no pun intended!) for these materials.

For further information, call Rick. Also note that the January Board Meeting will not be held at Fremont Peak, but at Pat Donnelly's place of employment. The address is 145 Martinvale Lane in San Jose (off Bernal). As Pat has to wait at the door to let us in, he asks that anyone attending please show up promptly at 1PM.

### Volunteers Needed

On January 19th, there will be a grass seeding project at Fremont Peak. Volunteers from Henry Coe and the Boy Scouts will be doing the work, but they will need your help. The Henry Coe volunteers will be sponsoring a pot-luck after the seeding. Call Rick Morales for more information, and to volunteer for this effort.

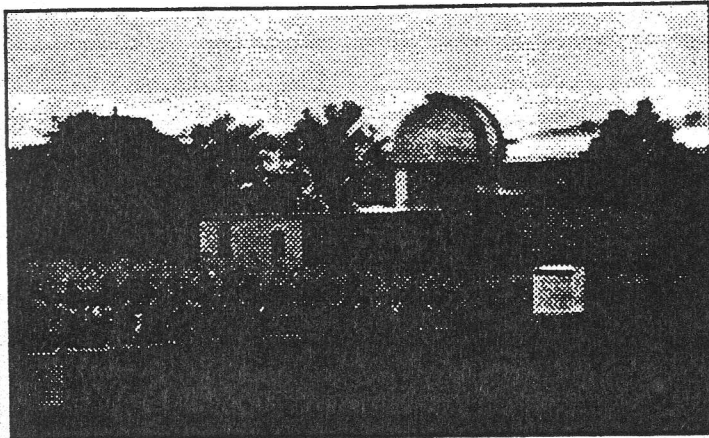
### ANNOUNCEMENT

Beginning January 1st, 1991, Bob Fingerhut will take over the 30-inch telescope reservation schedule from John Gleason. We want to thank John for the outstanding job he has done in maintaining the 30-inch schedule.

If you wish to reserve time on the 30-inch, contact Bob Fingerhut at (408) 263-4455.

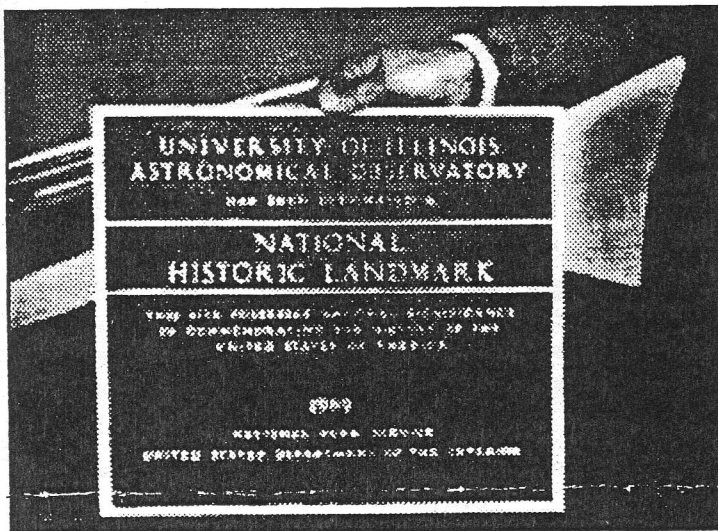
# A National Historical Landmark

by Pat Donnelly



The Observatory of the University of Illinois (all photos by Pat Donnelly)

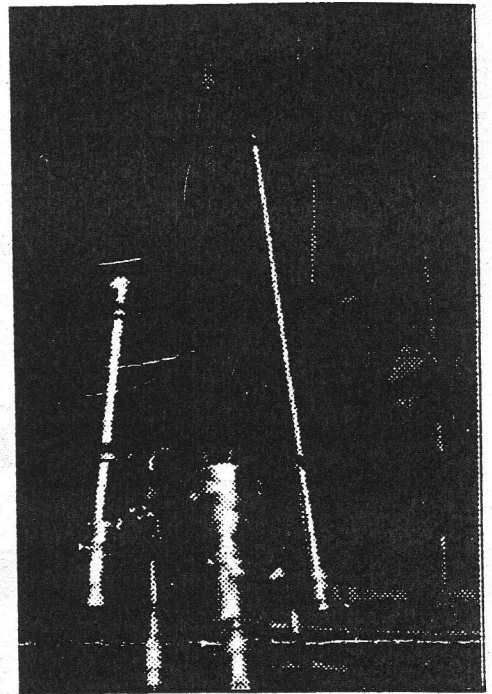
Last September I had the honor of being invited back to the University of Illinois for the dedication of the University observatory as a national historic landmark. It was quite an affair. The president of the University was there along with the chancellor and the entire staff and faculty from the Astronomy department. A dedication ceremony was held at the observatory with Undersecretary of the Interior Harry Butowsky awarding the plaque to the University.



The dedication plaque denoting the observatory as a national landmark

I had to go back for the ceremony. My first really spectacular view of Saturn was from that telescope. The telescope, built in 1896, is a 12-inch F15 refractor. I'm not sure who did the optics but the mount is a Warner & Swasey mount. The telescope has three different eyepiece holders, including a 3" wide field. I used it to view the entire Pleiades while I was there. The mount has two 16" setting circles for the dec. and R.A. axis. The circles allow a pointing accuracy of 2 arc minutes. The observing room is painted mostly black and the dome is all wooden. The walls of the observing room have been painted blue and the stars of the sky have been superimposed on the walls.

The reason the university observatory was made a national landmark is that in 1908 the observatory director, Joel Stebbins, invented photoelectric photometry. The story goes that he was trying to use a mechanical photometer, but he got so frustrated that he put the old photometer in a box on the shelf and went out and developed the selenium photoelectric cell. This photoelectric cell went on to make television possible, as well as revolutionizing astronomical photometry.



The 12-inch f/15 refractor at the U. of Illinois Observatory

Before I left, I had managed to observe Mars, Saturn, and M15. A trip well worth the effort!

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## FPOA Officers and Directors

<b>President</b>	Frank Dibbell	(408) 974-7319
<b>Vice Pres.</b>	Dave Ambrose	(408) 449-1778
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	Bob Fingerhut	(408) 263-4455
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The *Fremont Peak Observer* is published quarterly, and is the official publication of the Fremont Peak Observatory Association. The Association is a tax-exempt, not for profit organization dedicated to providing public education and interpretive services in Astronomy using the resources available at Fremont Peak State Park.

Basic membership in the Association is \$10.00 per year, plus a one-time \$10.00 initiation fee. Membership runs for the calendar year; there is no pro-rationing of dues. For more information, write to:

Fremont Peak Observatory  
PO Box 1110  
San Juan Bautista, CA 95045

## From the log...

4/28/90 Astronomy Day, 1990.

Weather is fairly warm. High cirrus clouds thinly obscuring the nighttime sky. John Briggs is here to give a guest lecture. Good turnout tonight. I would estimate that 200 - 300 people came through. After Jupiter the public loved NGC 4565, M 104, NGC 5128, Centaurus A), 5139 (w Centaurus). - *Rob Toebe*

5/5/90

Opened at sunset for the 4-H Club of Hollister of about thirty people, only two or three seemed a little bit interested in astronomy. Because of a very bright moon the only subject we could see was Jupiter, - too much haze to see through. Oh, we also blinded ourselves with views of the Moon. - *R.M. (Rick Morales)*

6-20-90

1910 hr. Opened the place up. The cat's going nuts. Skip and Bomke opened. At 2100 hrs called the pres. about the big fire about two to three miles north coming this way - Informed Kevin about this - myself and Mr. Bomke are ready to grab the mirror and run. Standing by the scope waiting. (*Skip Whitworth*)

7/27/90

Opened observatory at 8:00 PM. Flies hover around us like globulars around a galaxy, except the attraction is not mutual. Very nice night once the Moon set. Looked at double stars while the moon was still up. A polarizing filter works well. Spent the rest of the night looking for new objects (for me). The Saturn Nebula shows this lovely emerald green color. Most unexpected!

Sunrise was pretty according to Mary. I was still running the saw mill simulation in my sleeping bag. Death to the flies! I'm declaring war! - *Dave Ambrose and crew*

8/16/90

8:30 PM Saturn very good at about 400X. Had about 30 from Saratoga YMCA. Showed Saturn, M4, M8, Comet Levy naked eye; fills 40 mm field. Photographed Comet Levy, Dumbbell, Ring. Closed 3:30. -*Carter Roberts*

8/18/90

Opened at 3:05 am. Sighted Levy just a short distance off nose of Pegasus. Looked at M57, Ring Nebula. Quite clear view of core star of M57 with averted vision.

Next was Alberio for fun, and M 31 and its companions were nice and clear. Clouds moving in from North, dew showed up on top of ladder. Closed at 4:20 am. -*Ray Cyr (and son Clark Cyr from Seattle)*

8/19/90

True to form when the last car pulled out of here today the fog died, sun came out, and it turned into a glorious night. Observed many objects including 15 mag + galaxies. Comet Levy very impressive. The Veil was absolutely awe inspiring! Locked observatory at 8:00 AM. - *Dave Barosso*

9/22/90

John Bally and Dave Rodrigues. Hubbell Variable, Rosette, M 42, NGC 2023, 2024, 2068, 2071, Reflection Nebula, HH/19-24. Used O III and U.H.C. IC 443. AANC Star-B-Que. Earth shaking and cosmic fireworks. 8 PM — 4 . O Earthquake three miles south . S . J . B . Lightning, rain, more lightning and more lightning and rain. Road closed by mud slide. - *Dave Rodrigues*

9/24/90

Became an official FPOA member this evening. Got checked out on the 30" and had best ever look at the Moon (prior to its setting), and Saturn. Also, my first look at some nebula (Ring, Andromeda). Thanks to Rick Morales for all his help. *New Kid in Town, Rick Miller*

10/14/90

Public Program run by Jack Zeiders at 7:20 PM with Rick Sarrica assisting. Slide show. Pierre Schwar and Gerry Rattley from Arizona as honored guests. Public 60 people total. Saw Saturn, Mars, NGC 891, Blinking Nebula, NGC 1300, M 57, M13, M22, gamma Andromeda, M 76. Closed at 3:15 AM.

P.S. Also Mike Maloon was here. - *Rick Sarrica*

# 1991 Renewals Coming Up

If you are a Life Member, you can ignore this article!

As you know, membership in the FPOA runs for a calendar year (January 1st through December 31st). Renewal notices are sent out the first week of January to all non-Life members. If you would like to get a "headstart" on your renewal, and save those of us who prepare and mail out the renewal notices time, effort, and money, send a check or money order made out to the "FPOA" to:

**FPOA Membership Renewal**  
P.O. Box 1110  
San Juan Bautista, CA 95110

Renewal rates are the same for 1991 as they were for 1990: \$10.00 for General membership, \$30.00 for Contributing membership, and \$50.00 for Sustaining membership. Non-life memberships are convertible to Life memberships for a one-time fee of \$300.00 (\$270.00 if you are 65 or older).

The FPOA is a not for profit, tax-exempt organization, so your membership dues are tax deductible, as are any donations you make to the Association.

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## Notes from the Board...

The following is an excerpt from the November 17th FPOA Board Meeting:

The FPOA will begin 1991 with two unfilled board positions. Normally, 1991 officers are appointed at the Nov-Dec meeting. Due to the vacancies, a motion was made and passed to defer appointing officers until the first meeting of 1991. In the interim, the Board will try to fill the vacancies.

The Board voted on and passed a resolution to allocate funds to purchase a printer for our Macintosh computer. Dave Ambrose has the responsibility to purchase one.

The FPOA has acquired a 36-inch mirror from Lawrence Livermore. Kevin Medlock will investigate the feasibility of replacing the 30-inch mirror with this 36-inch one. If it is deemed feasible, it will still be a good 2 to 3 years before it happens.

The Board discussed the h-alpha filter, and how we might want to create a solar viewing program. A champion for a solar viewing program needs to be found - someone who can design a simple program that can be taught to others, and presented to the Park's daytime visitors.

Dates were set for the January, February, and March meetings, then the Board adjourned until the new year.

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# 1991 Public Program Dates

April 6	Public Program
April 13	Open Observatory (new moon)
April 20	Public Program (Astronomy Day)
May 4	Public Program
May 11	Open Observatory (new moon)
May 18	Public Program
June 1	Public Program
June 8	Open Observatory (new moon)
June 15	Public Program
July 6	Public Program
July 13	Open Observatory (new moon)
July 20	Public Program (Lunar program)
August 3	Public Program
August 10	Public Program (Perseid Theme)
August 17	FPOA Annual Star-B-Q
August 31	Public Program
September 7	Open Observatory (new moon)
September 14	Public Program
September 28	Public Program
October 5	Open Observatory (new moon)
October 12	Public Program

As the Board assembles its library of public programs, we'll assign a theme to each public night. Details will appear in the "Calendar" section of each newsletter. If you would like to volunteer for a specific program, contact Rick Morales. We need at least three volunteers for each program: one to give the talk, and two to run the scope and answer the public's questions.

## Thru the 30-inch...

The Trifid Nebula (M20) taken by Carter Roberts through the FPOA 30-inch telescope. Original picture is a 30 minute exposure on hypersensitized Konica 400 film. The original was scanned at 300dpi, then converted to gray scale at about 65 dots per inch. If you have a picture you would like published, send it to the FPOA at the address listed in the information box on page 2. Black and white photos reproduce best.

