



The Fremont Peak **OBSERVER**

Promoting public education in Astronomy

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August 14 Picnic a Big Success!

The August 14th Annual Picnic and Star-B-Q was a well-attended success. Co-sponsored by the AANC, almost 200 amateurs, representing all the local area astronomy clubs, attended the picnic.

The weather this year was quite a bit different from the weather last year: cool and windy vs. hot. The fog kept coming in, then receding, like some celestial ocean tide, alternately hiding and exposing the night sky. The bad news: we had to have "spotters" at some of the tables to keep things from blowing away, and we canceled the Super-Soaker water fight; the good news: we had no problems with the infamous Fremont Peak deer flies!

After the barbecue, both the FPOA and AANC gave out awards and door prizes. The FPOA presented two awards for "Dubious Achievement" this year: the "Two Left Feet" award was presented to Carter Roberts for falling down the observatory steps that he built, not once, but twice! Rick Morales received the "Charles Atlas" award for opening and closing the observatory roof dozens of times, hidden from the cameras, during the filming of the Pacific Bell TV commercial. Leo Gorsky of the AANC presented several more serious awards to several people and groups who have advanced the interest and education in astronomy (unfortunately I had no on site reporter to take notes for me).

Once the awards and door prizes were presented, we were treated to a presentation on Meteors by Peter Jenniskens, a visiting astronomer with NASA/Ames, who is an expert on meteors. At his home in the Netherlands he is president of the Meteor Society. Included in his talk was a demonstration of how to take pictures of meteors, and he ended his talk with an appeal to the FPOA to establish a meteor observing program.

As twilight gave way to starlight, the fog came in thick and heavy, wiping out any chance to observe with the 30-inch. So ends another FPOA Star-B-Q.

Board Elections

Long Time Member B. Fingerhut Retires

This year we had no contenders for positions on the FPOA Board of Directors, so the three incumbents, all of whom were standing for re-election, were appointed to fill the vacancies on the Board. The three incumbents are Denni Medlock, John Stewart, and Dave Barosso.

One of our original Board members, and a founding member of the Association, has retired from active duty on the Board after serving for nine years: Bob Fingerhut. Bob was the very first FPOA president; the observatory was built during his administration. The Board extends its appreciation for the fine work he did while he was a member. Donn Mukensnoble, former Board member who left for a two year assignment in Germany, is back and has been appointed to fill the vacancy created by Bob's retirement. Good luck to the both of you!

Work Parties, Board Meetings, and Trivia

This coming Saturday, September 18th, the FPOA will be holding another work party to perform some much needed maintenance on the Observatory building. I realize this is somewhat of a short notice, but if you can spare a few hours this Saturday, please come up to the 'Peak to help out! No RSVP is necessary.

There will also be an FPOA Board meeting this Saturday, the 18th. The Board has some important business to conduct, and we need some input from the membership (see article next page). We would welcome your attendance at the Board meeting. The meeting time will be announced on Saturday (most likely around 3 or 4PM, after the work party is complete).

If there is enough interest, we will hold a Telescope Certification class on Saturday as well.

State's Budget Woes Impacts FPOA

As many of you know, the State of California is undergoing a fiscal crisis. The California Department of Parks and Recreation has suffered budget cuts along with every other State function. Since the FPOA is a volunteer organization with no State funding, how does this impact our Association, you may ask?

Well, we have been getting State funding, in a way. The State used to cover the cost of our liability insurance, since we were considered unpaid volunteers. Under new budgetary guidelines, the State will no longer provide liability insurance coverage, which means that the FPOA will have to pay the cost of its own insurance.

We have been doing that since the first of January of this year. Cost of insurance is not cheap; the FPOA spends \$600.00 each year now on liability insurance. To put this in perspective, our operating budget has been \$1,200.00 per year. This \$1,200.00 is used to pay the costs our our Newsletter, Annual Picnic, maintenance supplies for the Observatory, and program materials. In order to afford the additional expense for liability insurance, the Board is faced with some difficult choices.

Some of those choices include: suspending publication of the Newsletter (\$300.00 a year savings), stop funding the annual picnic (net \$200.00 savings), increase membership dues (each \$5.00 increase will net about \$500.00), seek grants and/or donations to cover insurance or program costs, etc.

This fiscal crisis will be the focus of our Board meeting on September 18th. If you have ideas and would like to present them to the Board, please plan on attending. The meeting will be held after the Work Party, probably around 4:00 in the afternoon.



Welcome Newcomers!

The FPOA welcomes 13 new members who have joined the Association since June. Our new members are:

Karl Moll of Tracy
Mike James of San Jose
Bob McCullough of San Jose
Mark Wagner of Los Gatos
Charles Chew of San Jose
Carl Christensen of Salinas
Vince Burkhart of San Jose
Eric Tilenius of Los Altos
Jeffrey MacQuarrie of Monterey
David Sworin of Fremont
David Bevans of Salinas
Mark Lloyd of Fremont
Brian Sowders of Gilroy

Welcome to the FPOA!

FPOA Officers and Directors

| | | |
|-------------------|---------------|----------------|
| President | Frank Dibbell | (408) 974-7319 |
| Vice Pres. | Bob Black | (415) 592-2166 |
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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:

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