



The *FREMONT PEAK* **OBSERVER**

Editor: *Donn Mukensable*

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December 2000 / March 2001

The Winds of Change. . .

They are a-blowin. The end of 2000 saw the departure of several key CDPR personnel; Rangers Cameron Bowers, Nedra Martinez, and Supervising Ranger Mary Pass. Cam and Nedra are moving to Henry Coe State Park, while Mary is taking an assignment with the state park planning project in Sacramento. While we wish them all the best, their presence and expertise will be missed. Until new staff has been appointed, Chief Ranger Paula Peterson, working out of the Monterey District Office will be serving as FPOA's Cooperating Association Liaison.

There are also several physical plant changes in the works for the peak, including upgraded campground facilities with flush toilets, and a possible change to the access road to better serve the Observatory's main users, the astronomically inclined public.

EXTRA -- EXTRA -- EXTRA -- EXTRA

2001 Dues are Due !!

January 2001 is Membership Renewal Month for those who are not Life Members (so, we're a little late this year). To determine if you need to renew your membership, check the address label on the envelope this newsletter came in. If it says "2000" or earlier, then you need to renew! (Life members show up as "9999")

If you choose not to renew, then your subscription ends with this issue -- Please don't let that happen! We value your support; your dues allow the Association to continue its mission of promoting public awareness in astronomy. Send your tax-deductible check in today.

President's Message

by Pat Donnelly

When I joined the FPOA in the spring of 1986, I did not imagine that I would be writing this column to you in 2001. This is really an honor to be able to lead the FPOA into the new millennium. I expect 2001 to be a very exciting and challenging year for us, and I am quite excited about some of the activities and astronomical events that will take place this year.

Our first public program will occur on April 14, 2001, and these programs continue on weekends through October. We need volunteers to conduct a program for each of these public program nights and others to run the telescope. A schedule of these dates is provided in this newsletter, and they are posted on the FPOA website.

If anyone does not know, our website address is www.fpoa.net. I would personally like to thank Morris Jones for all the hard work he has done to generate our website. We shall also be conducting solar programs during the day on Saturdays. Jack Murphy has volunteered to conduct a solar program on April 14, May 12, June 2, July 14, August 11, Sept. 8, and Oct. 6.

All other public program Saturdays are open to conduct a solar program. I would encourage anyone, who is interested, to consider conducting a solar program as an alternative to doing an evening program. If you wish to sign up early for any of the public programs please call or E-mail me or contact any board member.

Our annual Star-B-Que is on August 18 this year,

which is also my birthday, and this year's FPOA Member Appreciation Night is September 15.

I think it is appropriate to relate a few administrative topics here too. Remember, in order to reserve and use the 30" telescope on non-public program nights, you must be a paid up member, have participated in a public program in 2000 or plan to present one in 2001, and be certified on the telescope. We are working on a new system to keep track of this information and to make reservations for the telescope. At present to reserve the telescope, you will have to call the state park office in San Juan (831-623-4526 or 831-623-4881). You can obtain the gate combination at that time too.

Please note that the gate combination changes at the beginning of each calendar month, and that the gate combination is not for general distribution, since the combination is part of the observatory security. A schedule for telescope certification and state park volunteer training will be issued soon. Please contact any board member for further information.

In closing, 2001 should be a very spectacular year for astronomy. Mars comes to opposition on June 13, and this opposition should be the best since the late 1980's. It will be a great time to observe Mars. Both the Leonids and the Geminids occur at new moon with a partial eclipse of the sun visible from Fremont Peak the day after the Geminids. See you at the peak.

Clear, dark, and steady skies,

Pat Donnelly

Interpretive Training Class

As you know, you must attend a CDPR interpretive training class in order to present public programs.

This year, the one-day training course has been scheduled for Wednesday, May 23 at the Stanton Center in downtown Monterey (by the wharf). Please contact our CAL representative, Paula Peterson, if you are planning on attending this session.

Peak Experiences in Y2K

by Jane Houston Jones

Last night 9/9/00, Akkana and I did the FPOA public program. We presented a lunar program, with slides of lunar features, and a few constellation and deep sky slides to show what else we'd be looking at that night through the 30 inch Challenger telescope that night. This slide presentation was followed by a lunar sketching activity we've been wanting to try out. We handed out little sketchpads Akkana made and let those who were interested sketch. We had 8 little "clipboards" and many more budding sketchers than materials. We had examples of our own sketches and explained how to start a sketch, and let them go to the telescopes to see what they wanted to sketch. Then they came into the classroom to compare their sketches with our RUKL charts. Or to find out what they were looking at. It was a fun and interesting program.

It was a good mooning night and then we looked at M57 and M13 and Uranus and many of its moons. A few other objects were looked at through 4 refractors out in front. The 40 or so visitors had a great time. So did we.

We did make a discovery last night, however. Just as we were finishing up for the night we looked through the 20x100 binoculars mounted on the south opening of the observatory. Dave North made the discovery, so I can't take credit for it. He announced "here's Scorpius". Right in between Formalhaut and B Cetus was Scorpius Minimus, the little scorpion asterism. The whole asterism fit in the field of view of the binoculars. Today we pulled up the area on SkyMap Pro, and sure enough, there was our asterism! 103 and 104 Aquarii made up the "pinchers" of the scorpion. 106, 107 and 108 Aquarii made up the thorax area, and TYC 6408 1355-1, 620-1 and 1347-1 made up the tail.

It was a great finish to a fun night!

[Do you have your own "Peak Experience?" write it up and you could appear in a future edition of the Fremont Peak Observer... Ed.]

AANC Conference in April

by Jane Houston Jones

April 7th is the date for the annual one day conference sponsored by the AANC, the Astronomical Association of Northern California. This year the event will be held at the new Chabot Space and Science Center in Oakland. The theme this year, The Northern California Astronomy Club Conference, will to showcase the astronomy clubs and give everybody the opportunity to exchange ideas and get to know each other.

Astronomy clubs from all over Northern California will give brief presentations of their unique club activities or pretty much what ever they'd like to talk about. Everyone will be able to see and hear about the impressive telescope restoration of Rachel, Leah and the Transit Telescope. There will be plenty of time to check out the new Chabot, of course!

Everybody will receive a ticket for the planetarium show, and some of the days events will take place in the planetarium. There will be workshops for astronomy club newsletters, and much more.

There will be a speaker or two, and more information will be available soon.

One special planned feature will be the first annual? Full Moon Daytime Indoor Messier Marathon, using the Ask Jeeves Planetarium Zeiss Universarium Mark VIII star-ball projector (and binoculars).

Pre-registration by April 1 is \$20 for adults, \$10 for ages 10-18. Registration is available at the door for \$25. More information is available online at <http://www.aanc-astronomy.org>.

For more information about Chabot space and Science Center, including directions, please visit the web at <http://www.cosc.org/default.htm>

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FPOA Public Schedule 2001

March		
	24	Board Meeting
April		
	14	Solar Program*
	21	Board Meeting, Work Party (10 am)*
	28	Public Program* (Astronomy Day)
May		
	12	Solar, Public Programs
	19	Public Program
	26	Public Program, Board Meeting
June		
	02	Solar, Public Programs (Mars)
	16	Public Program
	23	Public Program, Board Meeting
	30	Public Program
July		
	14	Solar, Public Programs
	21	Board Meeting, Public Program
	28	Public Program, Star-B-Que
August		
	11	Solar, Public Programs
	18	Public Program, Board Mtg, Star-B-Que
	25	Public Program
September		
	08	Solar, Public Programs
	15	FPOA Member Appreciation Night
	22	Public Program
October		
	06	Solar, Public Programs *
	13	Board Meeting, Public Program*
	20	(Work Party) Public Program*
November		
	17	Board Meeting (offsite, TBD)
		* - Call FPOA Hotline 831-623-2465 beforehand to verify program schedule

To volunteer for a public night, you **must** have completed the docent training course. Contact Pat Donnelly at 408-255-1863 to reserve dates; ideally one month but at least two weeks prior to the date desired.

FPOA Balances the Budget

In the year just passed, the Association stayed on its plan and even managed to show a small net gain. Here is a brief summary of the budget for 2001:

Checking as of 12/31/00 \$5656.36
Savings as of 12/31/00 \$19874.73

Income

Membership \$3500.00
Donations \$150.00
Store \$50.00

(total in) \$3700.00

Expenses

Maintenance \$500.00
Star-B-Que + M.A.N. \$850.00
Program Devel. \$500.00
Newsletter \$500.00
Assoc. Memberships \$85.00
Insurance \$600.00

(total out) \$3585.00

Net gain (loss) before interest: \$115.00
Interest Income [estimated] \$1000.00

Fremont Peak Observatory Association Officers and Directors

President	Pat Donnelly	408-255-1863 <i>KUNGFUGINA@aol.com</i>
Vice-President	Bob Black	650-592-2166 <i>Bob-Black@worldnet.att.net</i>
Secretary	Rick Morales	831-623-4081 <i>oreosfam@hollinet.net</i>
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CAL	Paula Peterson	831-649-2842 <i>ppete@parks.ca.gov</i>

The *Fremont Peak Observer* is published quarterly by the FPOA, a non-profit cooperating association. For more information, contact any Board Member or write to FPOA, P.O.Box 787, San Juan Bautista, CA 95045

Application for Membership in the Fremont Peak Observatory Association

Name: _____
Address: _____
City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____ - _____

Optional Information

Home Phone: (____) ____ - _____ e-Mail: _____
Work Phone: (____) ____ - _____ FAX: (____) ____ - _____
May we list you in the Observatory Directory? Yes No

Please enroll me as a member in the FPOA in the following category
 _____ General \$20.00 per year Is this a renewal? Yes No
 _____ Student \$10.00 per year (include copy of current Student ID)
 _____ Life \$350.00 one-time (applicants over the age of 60, senior rate of \$315.00)

Additional Contribution: \$_____ for _____

Your tax-deductible check may be made payable to FPOA. Please *do not* send cash.
Mail payment with your application to: FPOA, 585 Dartmouth Ave. San Carlos CA 94070