



The FREMONT PEAK **OBSERVER**

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FPOA's Sweet Sixteenth

This spring the Fremont Peak Observatory begins its 16th year of presenting the heavens to the public in the state park, and already things are getting off to a good start.

In February, the Board met to make plans, both short and long term, focusing on activities which will enrich the experience for visitors and students.

There is a new Ranger Superintendent, C.L.Price, covering the San Juan Bautista and Fremont Peak facilities, as well as two new rangers at the Peak. Stop by and introduce yourself to C.L.'s new team.

Opening day is April 20th, Astronomy Day, and there are already things to see, from a bright comet to the dazzling evening star, Venus. *Clear Skies!*

EXTRA -- EXTRA -- EXTRA -- EXTRA

2002 Dues are Due !!

January 2002 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 "2001" 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

WOW! What a way it was to end the 2001 public observing season. It was dark, clear, and the seeing was excellent on Saturday night Nov.17, and none of that mattered. That's because the predicted Leonid meteor storm occurred then.

The very first estimates for the peak zenithal hourly rates (ZHR) were 3000 - 4000 meteors per hour. I tried to count the most meteors I could see at one instant, and I got nine (9)! The only thing more numerous than the Leonids was the number of people that were at the peak that night. The rangers' upper estimate was 800 - 1,000 people.

Many of them stopped by to observe with the 30" Challenger. Saturn was a huge hit, and more than once someone suggested that the image of Saturn was a cardboard cutout because of the quality of the image. That same night the Zodiacal Light was visible as the meteor storm was ending.

Other observing highlights of 2001 included multiple observations of Mars' two moons, Phobos and Deimos; an observation of Pluto; detection of Saturn's moons Hyperion and Iapetus; detection of four (4) moons around Uranus; and multiple observations of the Neptune - Triton pair. The lunar occultations of Venus, Jupiter and Saturn were observed, and we were able to show the public the asteroids 1 Ceres, 2 Pallas, 4 Vesta, and 7 Iris. There were also observations of two comets, a partial eclipse of the sun, the central star in the Ring Nebula, and naked eye observations of Canopus. During the first months of 2002 we found the supernova in M74 and showed the public the asteroid 3 Juno.

(continued on page 4)

~ In Memorium ~
Rob Toebe

July 16, 1965 - October 24, 2001

Rob Toebe, a past Board member and Director of Instruments at Fremont Peak Observatory, passed away Wednesday, Oct. 24, 2001 at his home in Davis. He was 36 years old.

Rob was an extremely talented astronomical artist who could spend hours at the eyepiece sketching what he saw in the faint, fuzzy nothings. His drawings have been published in *Sky & Telescope* and Bob Garfinkle's book "Starhopping: Your Visa to Viewing the Universe" carries his illustrations.

Apart from that he was an instinctive observer and knew the sky, and the 30" at Fremont Peak, like none before him. The old logbooks are filled with his insightful comments about the night sky, his drawings, and his experiences in the observatory at night.

As Director of Instruments, he maintained the observatory's 30" Challenger telescope and conducted the Telescope Certification Classes. He unselfishly passed on wisdom that he acquired through long nights of observing at the Peak with the Challenger telescope to visitors at the observatory.

Igniting the spark of interest in astronomy and the sciences in the kids that visited the observatory was always a dream of Rob's. He often said that he hoped what the FPOA was doing at the Peak would produce a astronomer, engineer or scientist that would help lead mankind into the heavens.

Rob Toebe laid a very firm foundation for all of us at the FPOA.

Ron Dammann

Dark Skies News Notes

by Bob Black, Vice President

Dark Skies News #1

Nancy E. Clanton from the International Dark Sky Association (IDA) and the Illuminating Engineering Society of North America (IESNA) was the guest speaker on Jan 17, 2002, at the Chabot Space and Science Center as part of their Distinguished Lecturer Series. Ms. Clanton has served on the Board of Directors of the IESNA and currently chairs the IESNA Outdoor Environmental Lighting Committee.

Bob Black attended the lecture, which was preceded by an informal gathering of lighting engineers and manufacturers' representatives, on behalf of the FPOA. Bob took this opportunity to get acquainted with the speaker and with a few of the representatives. The lecture covered the latest practices recommended by the IESNA for outdoor lighting as well as Ms. Clanton's personal observations and suggestions. She noted that much of her material was taken from the IESNA Recommended Practices Publication, RP-33. Bob has since obtained a copy of RP-33, which may be of value to us as FPOA addresses our neighboring jurisdictions on light pollution.

Many thanks to Denni Medlock, who was instrumental in arranging for the lecture at Chabot.

Dark Skies News #2

Dr. David Crawford, founder of the International Dark Sky Association (IDA), was a scholar in residence at Salinas' Hartnell College on February 20. He gave a talk that evening. Andy Newton, long time FPOA member and instructor at the college, arranged for us to meet with Dr. and Mrs. Crawford over dinner for a specific discussion regarding light pollution. Denni Medlock, Rick Morales, Chad Moore, and Bob Black were able to attend. During dinner we discussed some of the

light pollution problems and opportunities that FPOA and Pinnacles National Monument face. Chad showed some of the preliminary results of a project that he is working on. The evening lecture was based on a PowerPoint presentation that IDA has prepared and that is still under development. It is an excellent and concentrated presentation. The completed version will probably be available to organizations such as FPOA to use with public officials. This was an outstanding opportunity for FPOA. Thank you, Andy, for making it possible!

Dark Skies News #3

The California Energy Commission is developing draft regulations for outdoor lighting. The current version of the draft is available on their web site, URL http://www.energy.ca.gov/outdoor_lighting/

The Commission will hold a public workshop in Sacramento on Wednesday, March 27 to discuss the proposed standards ideas and to receive public input. If you wish to comment or participate in the workshop, please contact the Commission for the latest information on dates, times and locations at the above web site. Bob Black will try to attend.

Sign up for Public Programs

The heart of the FPOA's service to Public Astronomy is the weekend programs at Fremont Peak that run on Saturdays throughout the summer and fall.

The first observing Saturday of the month (check the 2002 Schedule for the precise dates) is the Solar Program, presenting the roiling surface and upper atmosphere of the Sun in hydrogen light using our Solaris telescope from the main Fremont Peak lot. Sunspots and prominences are frequently visible. In the evening, visitors can view objects with the 30" and an astronomy-related talk is given at 8:00pm.

This year, more volunteers are needed. Please contact Pat Donnelly to sign up for a day or evening and help the FPOA achieve its 16th year of success.

FPOA Public Schedule 2002

March

16 Board Meeting

April

13 Board Meeting, Work Party (10 am)*
20 Public Program* (**Astronomy Day**)

May

04 Solar, Public Programs
11 Public Program, Board Meeting
18 Public Program

June

01 Solar, Public Programs
08 Public Program, Board Meeting
15 Public Program
29 Public Program

July

06 Solar, Public Programs
13 Board Meeting, Public Program (**TMSP**)
20 Public Program

August

03 Solar, Public Programs
10 Public Program, Board Mtg, **Star-B-Que**
17 Public Program
31 Public Program

September

07 Board, **Member Appreciation Night**
14 Public Program
28 Public Program

October

05 Solar, Public Programs *, Board Meeting
12 Public Program*
26 (Work Party) Public Program*

November

09 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 408-778-2741 to reserve dates; ideally one month but at least two weeks prior to the date desired.

(President's Message continued)

I want to thank all of the FPOA members, who helped out and stayed to watch the celestial fireworks show.

Finally, the FPOA was instrumental in getting a dark sky ordinance passed for San Benito County. I want to thank Rick Morales and Bob Black for their efforts in this area.

The year 2001 was also a year of great sadness. Our most prolific observer, Rob Toebe, passed away prematurely. Rob was the Director of Instruments for many years, and in spite of the distance came to the observatory regularly to observe. Rob was the observer, who first showed me 3C273 with the Challenger. I and the rest of the FPOA will sorely miss him at the Peak.

Finding FPOA on the Net

Web Site: <http://www.fpoa.net>

Member Information: Site:

<http://members.fpoa.net>

Userid: xxxx

Password: xxxx

Fremont Peak Observatory Association Officers and Directors

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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 1376, 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