



# The *FREMONT PEAK* OBSERVER

*Promoting public education in astronomy*

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## **The FPOA Star-B-Que is Coming July 9<sup>th</sup>**

The annual FPOA Star-B-Que will be held on Saturday, July 9, 2005, at the observatory and adjacent picnic area. This will be our 18<sup>th</sup> Star-B-Que. The picnic portion of the event will begin approximately 5:00 PM, and the annual FPOA raffle, astronomy trivia quiz, and astrofest bake contest will be held there after.

Our election of board members will also be ongoing during the Star-B-Que. If you are interested in becoming a board member, please let one of the present board members know, and we shall put you on the ballot. The FPOA is always looking for new board members their new ideas and thoughts about the organization.

Our guest speaker is Dr. Douglas Vakoch, Director of Interstellar Message Composition at the SETI Institute. He will be giving a talk on the progress of the SETI searches. If Comet Tempel 1 is still bright, I suspect that will be the object to observe that night.

If you are planning to attend the Star-B-Que, please RSVP to one of the FPOA e-mail addresses or call the FPOA phone message line. If you have any questions about the Star-B-Que, please feel free to contact any FPOA Board Member.

Pat Donnelly, President FPOA

## **Presidents Message**

By Patrick Donnelly

Well the 2005 Public Programme season is here again. The FPOA is planning on doing 20-25 programmes at night and 6 solar programmes during the day. We could really use some more volunteers to do a 20-30 minute speaking programme or run the telescope on the programme nights. If you can volunteer, please contact Ron Dammann or me. We shall add your name to the calendar. In addition to our public programmes the FPOA has its three-(3) annual special events, the Star-B-Que (July 9)—*See the special page included with this newsletter, Editor--*, Member Appreciation Night (August 6), and Rob Toebe Night (Sept. 10). Please RSVP by E-mail or call the phone message line with the number of people planning to attend the event. I am especially

looking forward to Rob Toebe Night, so that we can try to set a new record for the farthest galaxy (not quasar) observed. I believe we shall need to find a galaxy over 300 million light years away to set a new record. Any suggestions?

As I write this article there are at least two (2) special astronomical events taking place in 2005. On the night of July 3-4 the Deep Impact probe will slam into comet Tempel 1. According to the June issue of Sky and Telescope magazine the impact will take place around 11 PM PDT on July 3. The comet will be in the sky near Spica about 25 degrees above the horizon. The comet will be magnitude 10 and will probably be visible at the eyepiece in a 10-inch or larger scope. The observatory is already reserved for that night so bring your own scope or plan to use one of the smaller scopes in the meeting room. The second event is the Opposition of Mars that takes place on Nov. 6. There should be some fine views of Mars starting in September. One other minor event takes place this year. On October 17 there will be a partial lunar eclipse.

I have one administrative matter that needs to be noted. Please note that if you are using one of the pads or the amphitheater area on a public programme night, you are considered to be part of the public programme. Thus, please be courteous to members of the public and plan your observing programme appropriately. After the public disappears, usually by 11 PM, this item no longer applies. To date we have had no problems with this procedure, but it seems important to reiterate things.

Finally, in case you did not see the E-mail, the American Automobile Association (AAA) has listed the Fremont Peak Observatory and its public programmes as a point of interest for travelers. This listing gives us some national exposure.

## **Peak Presentations Go Digital**

By Doug Brown

During the spring work party FPOA's meeting room was launched into the digital age with the installation of a new InFocus LP640 video projector. This equipment allows images from a computer to be displayed at high resolution (1024 x 768) on the projection screen. You may have noticed the same type of equipment in use at the peak during last summer's Star-B-Que or other presentations over the past few years.

The Board of Directors has made this investment because it provides several advantages over 35mm slides due to Kodak's discontinuation of color slide film production and the ubiquity of digital images from NASA, ESA, and a variety of other sources. A number of software applications (Microsoft PowerPoint being one) now make it extremely easy to compose and edit a digital presentation that includes any combination of photos, text, and even animations and movie clips.

Currently, if you wish to use the projector, you'll need to bring your own laptop and presentation. Eventually, we plan to install a computer on the west wall (near the TV), where the InFocus connectors are. Finally, we'll be assembling a set of resources to help you assemble your own presentation or use a prepared one.

If you would like to use the projector, contact Doug Brown for more information.

### **At The Eyepiece** By Patrick Donnelly

During the last 19 years I have spent many nights observing with the 30" Challenger telescope. Surprisingly, a lot of my observing with the Challenger was planetary observing. I have observed all 8 (?) of the other major planets in the telescope, and I have been to show all these planets to the public at one time or another.

However, as I look back at my personal logbooks, I seem to have found more enjoyment finding the moons of the other planets. In June 2001 both Deimos and Phobos were visible near the time of the Mars opposition. The Galilean Moons are always fun to observe, especially as one of the moons emerges from transit, occultation, or eclipse. Around Saturn a total of 8 moons have been observed at one time – Titan, Rhea, Dione, Tethys, Enceladus, Mimas, Hyperion, and Iapetus. For Uranus the 4 bright moons, all

around magnitude 14, have been seen at once – Ariel, Umbriel, Titania, and Oberon. Finally, Triton is almost always visible at high power with the Challenger.

For a future project it might be a good idea to try to find Hestia, magnitude 13.7, and Amalthea, magnitude 13.0 near Jupiter. Hestia should be easy to find, since it is over 6 times further from Jupiter than Callisto. However, it may be lost in the any crowded star field. Amalthea is only about half the distance from Jupiter that Io is. It will probably be difficult to see next to the glare of Jupiter.

I would like to hear from you on any interesting or unusual objects you have found in the Challenger telescope.

### **Fremont Peak Observer**

The Fremont Peak Observer is published four times a year by the Fremont Peak Observatory Association, on or near the first of February, April, July, and October. The submission deadline for each issue is the 15th of the preceding month, i.e., January 15, March 15, June 15, and September 15. Please submit all articles in plain text format (no word processor files please!) by email to editor@fpoa.net.

### **Get Your "Fremont Peak Observer" By E-mail**

The Fremont Peak Observer is now available online. It is published three forms, as a printed copy to be mailed to members, as a simple text edition to be e-mailed to those members who so request, and as a PDF file (possibly including colored photographs) which would be available at the FPOA web site in the Membership Section. Members are encouraged to any or all of these as methods to receive the Fremont Peak Observer. Naturally, publishing costs will be reduced by those members can elect to use only the online versions. Members will receive the printed version unless they select another option.

## **MAY 7, 2005 WORK PARTY**

By: Patrick Donnelly

On May 7, 2005, FPOA volunteers were able to complete several necessary repairs and upgrades for the observatory. I would personally like to thank each of the following members for donating their time and effort for this work party:

Doug Brown	Ron Dammann	Loren Dynneson	Landon Noll	Steve Loos	Donn Mukensnabe
Rick (Henry) Morales	Chris Angelos	Paul Bradshaw	Bob Fingerhut	David Samuels	Marko Sillanpaa
Rick Mazzarella					

Special thanks go to David, Marko, and Rick Mazzarella for painting the fence and/or cutting the weeds. This was a rather nasty job. I would also like to thank all those that brought some goodies for us to enjoy during the work party.

Thanks to all



## Schedule of Public Programs for 2005

Evening Program Dates for 2005	
April	9, 16
May	7, 14, 28
June	4, 11, 25
July	2, 9, 30
August	6, 13, 27
September	3, 10, 24
October	1, 8, 22, 29

## Solar Program Dates for 2005

Solar observing is offered at the observatory during the afternoon on these dates. See sunspots and solar prominences through special solar telescopes.

May 7
June 4
July 2
August 6
September 3
October 1

## Special Events and Astronomical Events for 2005

Spring Work Party	May 7
Star-B-Que	July 9
FPOA Member Appreciation Night	August 6
Rob Toebe Night	September 10

## FPOA by Internet and Telephone

Home page: <http://www.fpoa.net>

Observatory reservation and event calendar:  
<http://members.fpoa.net/ical.html>

Members email list signup:  
[http://www.fpoa.net/mailman/listinfo/fpoa\\_members](http://www.fpoa.net/mailman/listinfo/fpoa_members)

Observatory scheduling: (Email)[schedule@fpoa.net](mailto:schedule@fpoa.net)

FPOA Premises Access: (Email)[schedule@fpoa.net](mailto:schedule@fpoa.net)

Observatory telephone: (831) 623-2465

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