

From the President

By President Rick Morales

The Fremont Peak Observatory and Association has been a wonderful part of my life from the first time I listened to a discussion about the possibility of establishing it and building an observatory in a park. I was the Ranger at Fremont Peak then and I was just beginning to learn more about astronomy. When I was in my late teens and early twenties I lived not far from Los Angeles and I found my way to Griffith Observatory with my aunt and uncle who lived in Pasadena. I often went back on my own to marvel at the place. I met a couple of guys then who spent a lot of time grinding mirrors for telescopes. It seemed a very tedious process but when I had the opportunity to look through the eyepiece of one of those little telescopes I was amazed at what I saw. As time passed, I came back to northern California where I grew up, finished college, got a job with State Parks and met more amateur astronomers at the Mountain Theater on Mt. Tamalpais in Marin County and had the opportunity to look through their scopes. Again, I was struck by the beauty of what I saw.

Six or seven years later I found myself at Fremont Peak and on a Saturday night I came back to the little house where I took up residence and found some people past the gate. In my most official manner, I approached them and asked what they were doing. One fellow said he was doing astrophotography. I asked him to not use that kind of language and asked again what he was doing behind the gate. He then told me he was taking pictures of celestial objects and he asked if I would like to look through his telescope after he'd finished collecting photons on a piece of film in a cold camera. I asked what a cold camera was and he spent some time explaining to me what astrophotography and cold cameras were all about. That was my initiation to astronomy at Fremont Peak. The fellow was John Gleason and that was almost thirty years ago.

A lot happened quickly after that. After I met John, I met Kevin and Denni Medlock, a whole bunch of people from the San Jose Astronomical Association, people from the East Bay Astronomical Society (EAS), people from Santa Cruz and Monterey, the SFAA, AANC and many more. All were amateur astronomers.

Continued on page 6

FPOA Programs 2011

Saturday Evening Programs

Sept 3, 24, Oct 1, 22, 29

Solar Programs

Sept 24, Oct 22

Board Meetings

Sept 24, Oct 22, Nov 19

Please check <http://www.fpoa.net/schedule.html> for changes or updates to this schedule.

View our Neighbors

By Rob Hawley

The Fall skies bring the second galaxy season of the year. While there are fewer bright galaxy groups visible in the fall and certainly nothing as numerous as the Virgo Super Cluster, the Fall affords us the opportunity to view several of the brighter members of our Local Group. Two of these, the M31 (Andromeda) group and M33, are probably very familiar. Two others are probably less familiar (and less showy).

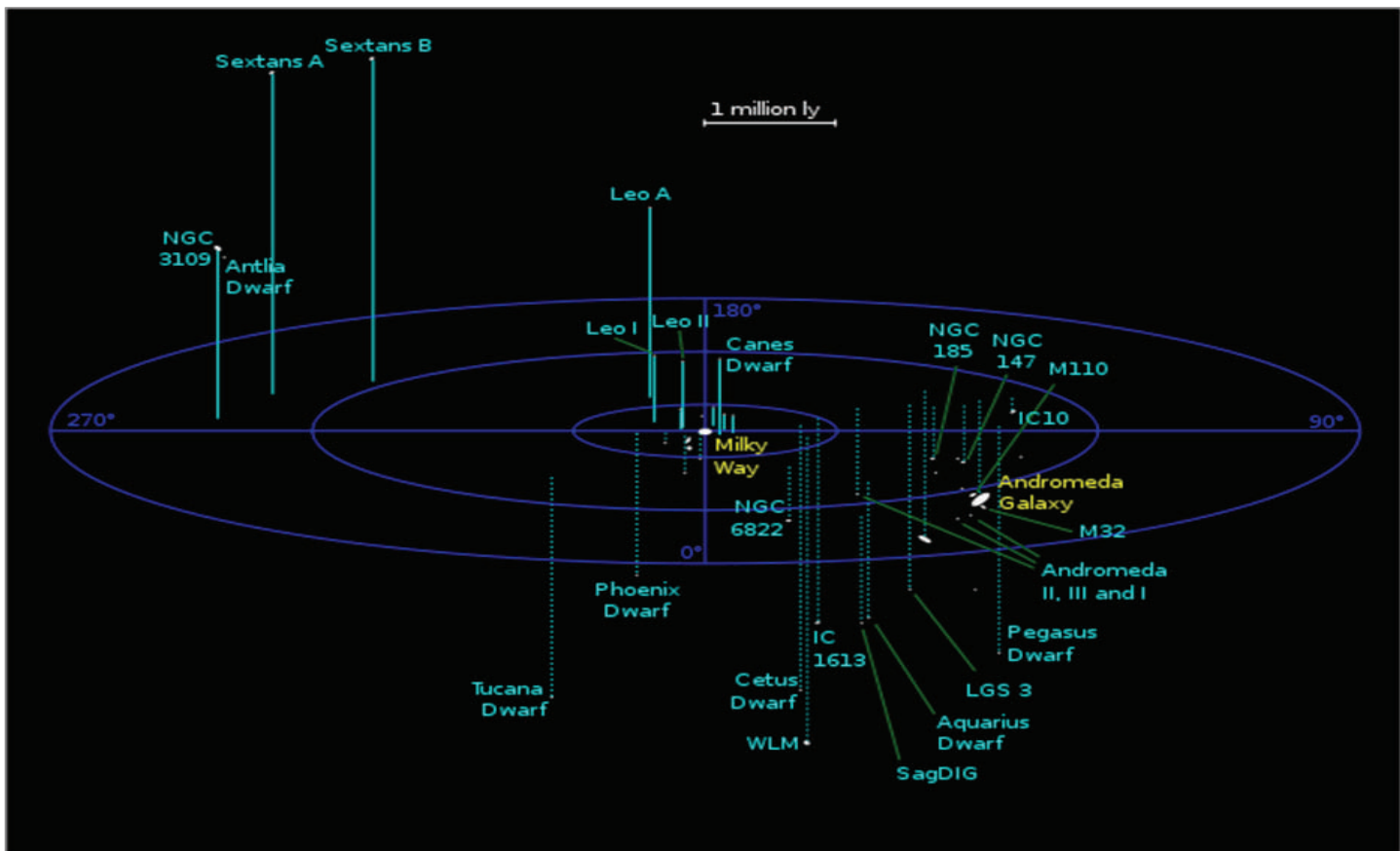
On a map of the members of the local group, the Milky Way, M31, and M33 are the big dogs, but there are many smaller members and several dwarf galaxies. Of course the two closest members, the Magellanic Clouds, are only visible in the southern hemisphere.

M31 Group

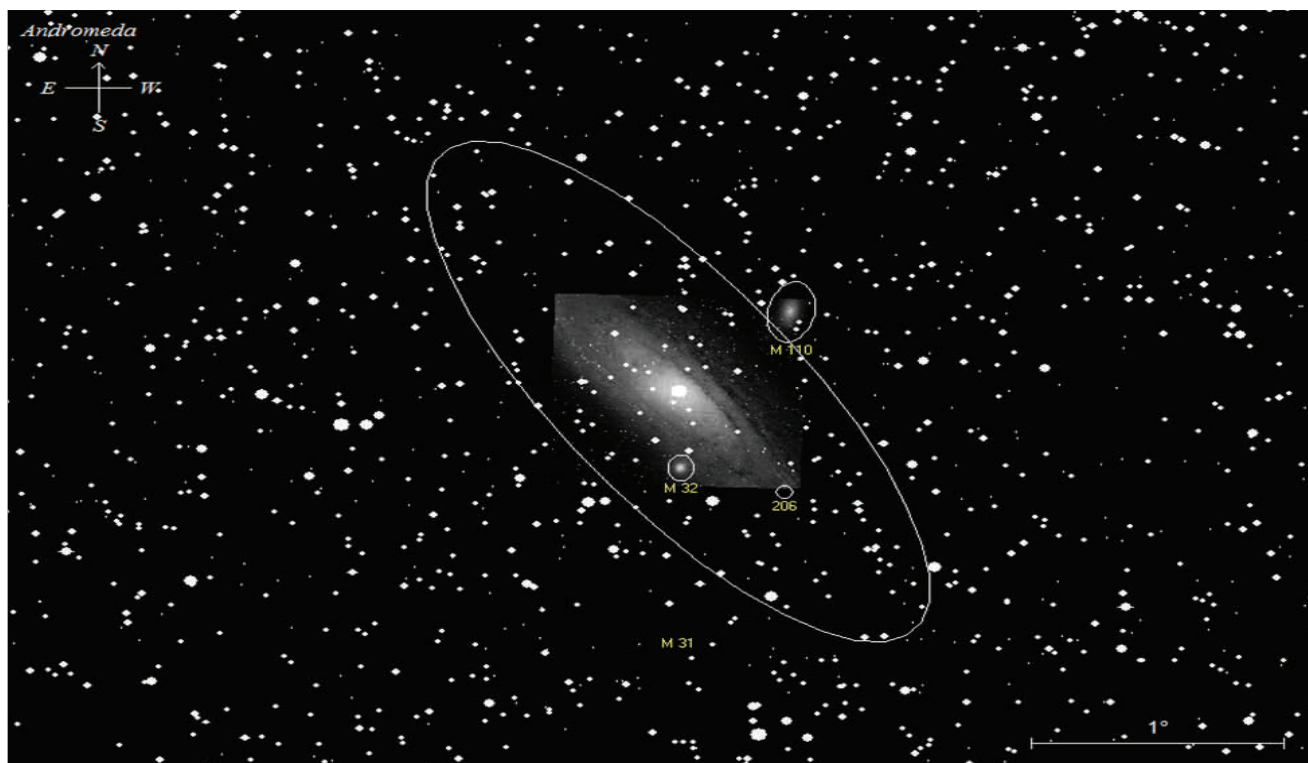
Andromeda is the most distant object (about 2 million light years) visible to the naked eye. You can see it for yourself at Fremont Peak starting about 11 PM in early September. The Andromeda galaxy (M31) has a number of smaller galaxies that orbit it. Two of the satellites M32 and M 110 are very close and can be seen in the same field of view at low power.

Continued on page 2

View Our Neighbors from Page 1



Copyright [Richard Powell](#) Licensed under [Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 2.5 Generic](#)



SkyMap Pro. Image from [DSS](#)

Continued on Page 3

M31 is the large central galaxy. It is a bit larger than the Milky Way. It is one of the few galaxies that is blue shifted meaning it is heading toward us. In fact, astronomers expect it will collide with the Milky Way in about 4.5 billion years. Not to worry, the sun will be a red giant by then so the future residents of earth will have bigger problems to worry about. M31 is easily visible in binoculars.

M32 is a bright satellite near M31. In a low power eyepiece, both it and M31 are visible in the Challenger at the same time. In a small scope it appears as a near stellar object in a triangle with two stars of similar brightness. In the Challenger it is clearly an elliptical galaxy.

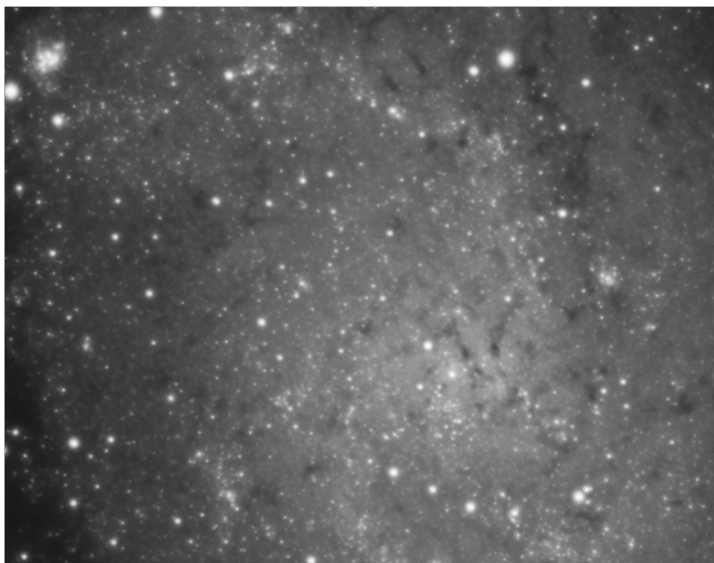
M110 is more distant from the center of M31 and is much dimmer. M110 can sometimes be challenging in a small scope since it has low surface brightness. During the annual Messier Marathon I regularly missed M110 since in March it would be low in the direction of San Jose from Henry Coe.

Two other more distant satellites of M31 are also visible. NGC 147 and 185 are located together a short distance from Andromeda. (See Page 4)

M33 is the other large spiral of the Fall skies. It is about [1/10 the size of the Milky Way](#) and is slightly further than Andromeda. It may be a distant satellite of Andromeda.

One of the interesting items of M33 are the star forming regions. In particular, NGC 604 glows brightly on one of the arms. It is visible in the upper left in the picture below and in the lower left in the full image.

Copyright© 2010 Rob Hawley Almaden Observatory



M33

President's Column *from Page 1*

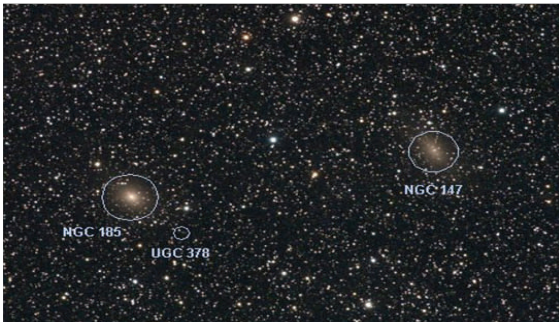
With Kevin and Denni I began the discussion of the mirror Kevin had ground to near perfection and the construction of a telescope that he planned to haul to dark sky sites with the scope tied down to a trailer. He was coming to the realization that hauling the telescope on a trailer would probably beat the thing to pieces and that a permanent home for the telescope would be a better use of the instrument. They asked me if I thought the Park Department would be open to allow the scope to be set up in the park. I asked, and my boss, Harry Batlin, who suggested that I pursue the idea and we would see where it might take us. Batlin was the superintendent of the district and he was a guy who didn't mind going out on a limb if something beneficial would result. The idea was bounced around the Park department with mixed views from Department heads but somehow the idea was accepted. I received a memo from a department head with a clear message. It read, "Build it!! But the department had no money to put into the venture. It was up to us to find a way to obtain enough money to build an observatory.

I will continue with the history of the construction of the observatory with the next issue. Until then, Clear Skies.

Rick Morales

NGC 147 and 185 *from Page 3*

These two galaxies are more distant members of the M31 group. They are located across the constellation boundary in Cassiopeia. Both are in the "faint fuzzy" class of objects and would be overlooked except for their association with the Local Group and M31.



EMAIL DELIVERY OF THE OBSERVER

Dear FPOA Members,
We have been delivering the Observer via email for the past several issues. This obviously saves the Association postal expenses, and assures the quickest delivery to you. However, several of you no longer have valid email addresses, due to ISP changes, moves, etc. If you would like to continue to receive, or begin to receive, notification of the Observer via email, please send your current email address to schedule@fpoa.net

Fremont Peak Observatory Association
PO Box 1376, San Juan Bautista, Ca. 95045

Officers and Directors—2011

President: Rick Morales 408-804-3374
rickmorales at charter.net

Vice President Loren Dynneson 831-443-8631

Secretary: Dave Samuels
Dave at davesamuels.com

Treasurer: Rob Hawley 408-997-6526
Treasurer at fpoa.net

Directors: Mark Levine 831-623-4878
Tatamark at razzolink.com

Doug Brown 408-314-2844
Nworbd at comcast.net

Pat Donnelly 864-885-4015
Pmdonnelly at duke-energy.com

Chris Angelos 831-688-3562
chris .angelos at plantronics.com

Dir. of Instruments: Ron Dammann 408-255-1863
ron.dammann at lmco.com

**Membership &
Newsletter Distrib.:** Rob Hawley 408-997-6526
Treasurer at fpoa.net

Directors Emeritus: Kevin Medlock
Denni Medlock
Epoch at majornet.com

The Fremont Peak Observer is published four times a year (Winter, Spring, Summer, Fall). Articles from members are encouraged and should be emailed to ron.dammann@lmco.com. Articles should be in plain text or MS Word format. Deadlines are Feb. 1, May 1, Aug. 1 and Nov 1, respectively.

FPOA on the Internet

Phone Number: 831-623-2465
Email Address: info@fpoa.net
Website: www.fpoa.net
Members Only Page: members.fpoa.net
Members List Signup: <http://fpoa.net/mailman/listinfo/fpoa-members>