

The FREMONT PEAK

OBSERVER

The newsletter of the Fremont Peak Observatory Association

Volume Thirteen

Number Two

April 1996

Editor - Denni Medlock

COMET HYAKUTAKE MAKES DEBUT AT PEAK

Morning Visitor Brings Crowds

In the January issue of *The Observer* it was mentioned how important the visit of Comet Hale-Bopp was going to be to the public program schedule this coming summer. It was being touted as the "Comet of the Century."

Well, when you least expect it...

Not even discovered at newsletter publication time in January, Comet Hyakutake (C/1996 B2) has zipped in and stolen the celestial show, at least for the time being.

But what a show it is!

On the weekend of March 15 - 16 the park was packed with observers to view this speedy comet. With its rising around 11:30 PM local time in Libra reports had the comet at about 4th magnitude with a 5° tail on Saturday night. Several observers reported an ion tail and Rob Toebe says he was able to pick up a blue-green aura around a rather squarish nucleus, also on Saturday night. Jack Zeiders reports it was standing room only at

the Peak by Sunday evening.

Comet Hyakutake will continue to climb northward in the evening sky as it brightens to a predicted 1.7 magnitude! (Comet Ephemeris is published on page 2).

Crowd Control

With all of the publicity this particular comet is getting in the news media it will be important for observers at the peak to be as conscientious as possible to the many general visitors who will be coming up the mountain. The FPOA has *no* public programs scheduled for this event because the observatory public season does not open until April 20.

Those privately reserving the 30" during this time are asked to share and be patient. There will be many questions being asked about comets and be prepared to hear them again and again if you are anywhere near a telescope, either at the observatory or over at Madrone or Coulter Camps. Remember, all FPOA members are emissaries of the association and Fremont Peak State Park.

continued on page 2

continued from page 1

If you have the time to help out during this comet crunch chances are there will be a need for traffic control and direction giving. If you can spare an evening to help out with crowd control, especially during the weekend nights, give Rick Morales a call at (415) 623-4081.

Ephemeris Comet Hyakutake (c/1996B2)

Date	00UT RA	DEC	Mag	Cstn
03-23	14h47.8m	+21°10'	1.5	Bootes
03-28	04h21.9m	+80°21'	1.1	Cmdlis
04-02	03h12.5m	+52°31'	2.1	Pers
04-07	03h05.9m	+43°44'	2.5	Pers
04-12	03h01.2m	+39°14'	2.5	Pers

Universe '96

Perhaps Comet Hyakutake is preparing the FPOA members for crowds. On June 22nd Fremont Peak will be hosting the official star party of Universe '96, an astronomical conference sponsored by the Astronomical Society of the Pacific. This conference, being held at the Westin Hotel in Santa Clara June 22-24th, will be attracting both professional and amateur astronomers from throughout the Western Hemisphere. A conference brochure has been included in this issue.

The FPOA will be running an information table on Friday evening and all day Saturday. We will also need several volunteers at the park on Saturday night. If you are interested in helping out at the booth or at the observatory, please contact Denni Medlock at (510) 339-9224.

1996 PUBLIC PROGRAM SCHEDULE

April	20	Opening Day Program
		Board Meeting 2:00 PM
	27	Astronomy Day
May	6	Work Party
	11	Public Program
	18	Public Program
	25	Public Program
June	1	Work Party
	8	Public Program
	15	Public Program
		Board Meeting, 2:00 PM
	22	Universe '96 Star Party
July	7	Public Program
	13	Public Program
		Board Meeting, 2:00 PM
	27	Public Program
Aug	10	10th Star-B-Que, Board meeting, 2:00 PM
		Perseid Meteor Shower
	17	Public Program
	24	Public Program
Sept	7	Public Program
	14	Public Program
		Board Meeting, 2:00 PM
	21	Public Program
Oct	5	Public Program
	12	Public Program
		Board Meeting, 2:00 PM
	19	Public Program

All public programs start at 8:00 PM and run until around midnight. At least two people are required to be present - one to give the program and at least one to operate the 30" telescope. If you are certified to use the 30" you must volunteer to give at least one program a season or your privileges will be revoked. Call Rick at (415) 623-4081 to sign-up for a show (or two!)

PROJECT ASTRO

Be A Visiting Astronomer in Bay Area Schools & Community Centers in 1996-97

The Astronomical Society of the Pacific is seeking amateur and professional astronomers and advanced astronomy students to participate in Project ASTRO, an innovative program that matches amateur and professional astronomers with 4th - 9th grade teachers in Bay Area schools and community centers who want to enrich their astronomy and science teaching.

Project ASTRO helps astronomers for an ongoing partnership with a teacher. Astronomers agree to make at least four visits to their partner school or community center during the day, working with the same teachers and students over time.

Project ASTRO provides training in how to be an effective resource for teachers and how to do hands-on activities that make astronomy interesting and fun for kids. Astronomers and teachers together attend a 2 1/2 day training workshop, receive a wide variety of activities and resource material and work together to plan school year activities and programs.

During the school year visiting astronomers (depending on their interests) can help to lead hands-on activities, serve as a resource for teachers, organize evening observing sessions, create a school astronomy club, present auditorium programs, arrange field trips, or assist with science fair projects. The project's emphasis is on a hands-on, activities-based approach that research has shown is most effective in helping students learn the process of science.

The 1996-97 training workshop will be Thursday afternoon, August 15 through Saturday, August 17, 1996 at the San Mateo County Office of Education. Visits will begin in Fall, 1996.

Amateur and professional astronomers with an interest in education and some experience working with children or teens or presenting astronomy to the public are encouraged to apply. Attendance at all or most of the training workshops is required. Astronomers should have time to make at least four visits during the day and to plan with their teachers between visits. (The ASP can provide a letter to employers if this will facilitate release time from work).

The first application deadline (for preferred placement) is April 22nd, although applications will be accepted after this date. For more information and an application form, contact Crystelle Egan, Project Assistant, at the ASP (415) 337-1100; leave a message at (415) 337-9210; or send e-mail to jrichte@cello.gina.calstate.edu.

The project is funded by a grant from the National Science Foundation.

ASTRONOMICAL AUCTION

The 16th Annual Bay Area Astronomical Auction will be held on May 4, 1996. This event, which includes a swap meet before the auction, is always a fun event. Bring those unused goodies and trade them for something new and different or turn the dust collectors in the garage into cash.

The auction, sponsored by the San José Astronomical Society, is held at Hogue Park (Camden Ave East, right on

Bascom, left on Woodard, right on
Twilight, left into Hogue Park)

The times are : Doors Open at 12 Noon
Swap meet: 12:00 - 3:00 PM
Auction: 4:00 PM on till finish.

More information and pre-registration
forms for items can be gotten by
contacting Jim Van Nuland, 3509
Calico Ave, San José 95124, (408)
559-1221.

FPO NEWS ON THE NET

FPOA news can be seen on a net
homepage. It can be reached at

[http://www.rahul.net/
resource/fpeak](http://www.rahul.net/resource/fpeak)

This is a correction of the address
publish in the last newsletter.
FPOA member Mark Wagner is the site
attendant. If you have FPOA news or
would like to reach him outside of the
net you can call him at (408) 356-
1072.

Application For Membership in the Fremont Peak Observatory Association

Name _____
Phone: _____
Street: _____
City: _____ State: _____ ZIP: _____

Do you wanted to be listed in the FPOA Directory? (Y/N) ____ The Directory is distributed to
FPOA members only.

Please enroll me as a member in the FREMONT PEAK OBSERVATORY ASSOCIATION under
the following category:

____ General \$20.00 year
____ Student \$10.00 year
____ Life \$350 one-time fee (10% discount for applicants over 60)

Is this a renewal? (Y/N) _____

Your tax deductible check may be made out to FPOA. Mail with application to:
FPOA, P.O. Box 787, San Juan Bautista, CA 95045

FPOA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President	
Donn Mukensnabe	(510)462-4602
Secretary	
Chris Angelos	(408)688-3562
Membership	
Bob Black	(415)592-2166
Treasurer	
John Stewart	(510)527-7036
Patrick Donnelly	(408)778-2741
Denni Medlock	(510)339-9224
Doug Padrick	(408)637-6936
Rob Toebe	(707)426-2935

The *Fremont Peak Observer* is published
quarterly by the Fremont Peak Observatory
Association, a non-profit cooperating
association.

MEMBERSHIP DUE

All annual memberships in the FPOA
are now due and payable. If you are
unsure of your membership status
check the address label attached to this
newsletter's envelope. A "TIME TO
RENEW" will be visible. When
renewing please use the attached form.