

The FREMONT PEAK

OBSERVER

The newsletter of the Fremont Peak Observatory Association

Volume Thirteen

Number Three

July 1996

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UNIVERSE '96 STAR PARTY A SUCCESS!

250+ VISIT FPO

The Universe '96 Conference on June 22, hosted by the Astronomical Society of the Pacific and held at the Westin Hotel in Santa Clara, drew attendees from all over the country. An estimated 250 attended the star party that Saturday evening at Fremont Peak Observatory sponsored by the FPOA.

Those of us manning the FPOA booth (Bob Black, Chris Angelos and myself) should have seen the crowd coming. I had brought 100 maps but was out of them by 11:00 am. Another 100 made it to 5:00 pm. I fled the booth at 6:00, relying on the crew already at the Peak to handle the crush.

But despite the heavy numbers all reports were good. An effort to coordinate carpooling resulted in at least fifty people sharing rides up the mountain. This journey was evidently an unique experience for many coming from the flatter southern and midwestern states who expressed concern about the long drive up a twisty, windy and very high mountain! One gentleman told Kevin Medlock later

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1996 PUBLIC PROGRAM SCHEDULE

July	7	Public Program
	13	Public Program
	27	Board Meeting, 2:00 PM Public Program
Aug	10	10th Star-B-Que, Board meeting, 2:00 PM
	17	Perseid Meteor Shower
	24	Public Program Public Program
Sept	7	Public Program
	14	Public Program
	21	Board Meeting, 2:00 PM Public Program
Oct	5	Public Program
	12	Public Program
	19	Board Meeting, 2:00 PM 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. To volunteer to help at a program call Rick Morales at (408) 623-4081 to sign-up for a show (or two!)

that the map was a very good one except that it failed to show the loop-de-loops in the road!

Fortunately, word had gotten out on the net and by other sources that telescopes, and plenty of them, were going to be needed at the Peak. And the amateur community responded. Donn Mukensnoble estimated that 75+ telescopes were set up around the peak. Jack Zeiders had his 17" there and there was a short focus portable 30" also in attendance near the tool shed. (Sorry I don't know the owner's name, but thanks for having it there.) Even John Dobson and a group of Sidewalk Astronomers were there to help out. Rick Morales gave three programs that evening while Ron Dammann, Mark Wagner and Rich (again, missing last name) ran the 30" Challenger throughout the night.

The well mannered crowd viewed through a moon until about 12:30 am and then were shown the fainter objects. Comets Hale-Bopp and Kopff were looked at and the Saturn Nebula followed by - you guessed it - Saturn found its way into the 30" eyepiece. One observer was evidently an expert in satellites and was predicting and pointing out passes by specific orbiters. One (secret) Navy satellite, in the configuration of an equilateral triangle, made two passes overhead, once around 10 pm and again at 3 am. Even the space station MIR was spotted.

Though the donuts and hot coffee ran out very early many observers stayed until dawn, finally giving up when the sky became too bright to observe in.

With cooperative fog and mild temperatures, many are saying this was one of the best star parties at Fremont

Peak in recent years.

The FPOA wishes to thank the dozens of people who came up to crew the equipment and support the effort that evening. Managing a huge event such as this could not have been feasible without everyone's untiring effort. Hundreds of people left that night with a great impression of the facility, the program and the people who run it.

BOARD ELECTIONS APPROACHING

Nominating Committee Chairperson John Stewart announces that there is a position open on the FPOA Board of Directors. Any who have been a member of the FPOA for a year and are interested in the operation of the facility are eligible. Board meetings are held on New Moon Saturdays, generally at Fremont Peak (though sometimes at lower elevations in winter months). Terms run for three years. If you find yourself interested in serving on the board give John a call at (510) 527-7036.

Up for re-election at the August General meeting will be Rob Toebe and Bob Black. Both have agreed to place themselves in the election path again.

FPOA 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)

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.

FPOA/AANC STAR - B - Q

Potluck Picnic and Super Star Party
at Fremont Peak State Park
Saturday, August 10, 1996

COME HELP US CELEBRATE OUR 10TH ANNIVERSARY!

Hamburgers Hotdogs Raffle Speaker Awards Telescopes
Observing Through the 30" Challenger Telescope

The Fremont Peak Observatory Association (FPOA), the Astronomical Association of Northern California (AANC) and the California Department of Parks and Recreation (CDPR) are co-hosting a potluck picnic/barbecue and super star party at Fremont Peak State Park.

The FPOA and AANC will provide the hotdogs, hamburgers, drinks, relish and utensils. Bring a dish to share. There will also be a contest for the best dish with an astronomical theme. In the past there have been such entries as IO pizza, cosmic strings (spaghetti), solar cheese cake, black hole pie, etc. BE CREATIVE!

COST: Fremont Peak State Park charges \$3 per car for daytime use. If you wish to camp overnight the charge is \$8. Self-serve pay envelopes are provided. Raffle tickets (optional) are \$1 each. Proceeds go to the FPOA observatory and their public astronomy program. Bar-B-Q and program are free.

ARRIVAL TIME: If you have a telescope plan to arrive early (1 - 2 PM). There is limited space for telescopes behind the ranger's house where the potluck is held. ALL VEHICLES MUST LEAVE THIS AREA AFTER UNLOADING. Most people will be setting up at the Coulter-Madrone group sites. The gate to the ranger's driveway will be closed after 5 PM.

POTLUCK: Begins at about 5 PM. FPOA will be holding board member elections from 3 PM on. There will be various games throughout the afternoon. If you have a water pistol or supersoaker, bring it for the fifth annual Douse-Off!

RSVP: PLEASE RSVP by calling the FPOA hotline at (408) 623-2465 and leaving your name, number of guests, name of your astronomy club and whether or not you are a FPOA member. (non-astronomy club members welcome, too!) RSVP by Aug. 8th.

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.

OBSERVATORY SHOWING OFF NEW DUDES FOR 10TH ANNIVERSARY

Here's a riddle for you: How many volunteers does it take to roll the roof off (and back on)? Generally, the answer to that question is one. However, during the week of June 9th the pulley which is part of the hand crank used to open the roof self-destructed, literally! Metal pieces and shavings everywhere! If you have ever tried to open the roof with a fully operational crank you know just how heavy that roof is. Imagine trying to open it by getting FOUR people up on the viewing platform and PUSHING while a cadre of people down below are trying to prevent the platform from obeying the universal law of "for every action there is an equal and opposite reaction." Add about a five mph wind hitting the broad north side of the roof and you have the definition of RESISTANCE.

So the scene at the observatory the week before the Universe '96 star party looked like an exercise in patience, schedules and skill.

A new pulley assembly (unassembled) was FedEx'ed to Rick Morales by Tuesday, who had to face the day-long daunting task of trying to figure out the puzzle pieces of Kevin Medlock's gizmo. A dozen tries later -voila'! A pulley system is born!

Wednesday was new carpet day. Evidently, the new flooring in the observing room went down without a hitch. (Whew!)

Early Saturday morning a crew of FPOA volunteers was at the site, putting back the baseboards and moving the observing room equipment out of the meeting room back to where it truly belonged all before 250 + people arrived to tromp through the facility. Probably not the best way to christen our brand new beautiful green carpet!

Finally, the FPOA wishes to thank Jack Zeiders and Mike Maloon for the financial contributions which made the new carpet possible.

MEMORIAL DONATION MADE

Katie Barrow-Hawks, a past visitor to the park, impressed with the facilities and sights Fremont Peak has to offer, has recently made a donation in the memory of Tom Garcia, an avid hunter and outdoorsman.

REAL SKY DONATED

Donations were going to be sought from the membership to help the FPOA obtain *Real Sky*, the 10 disc CD Rom version of the Palomar Sky Survey

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being offered by the ASP. Before the call could go out in the newsletter Pat Donnelly jumped in and generously donated the \$250 needed to acquire this remarkable collection.

The set is now on order and is expected at the FPO sometime in August. **THANK YOU, PAT!**

PARK BOND ISSUES ON NOVEMBER BALLOT

(The following is a direct excerpt from the May/June 1996 issue of Friends of California State Parks newsletter).

PARK BOND LIKELY, THOUGH CONTENT UNCERTAIN

There are at least three park related bond efforts currently being pursued in Sacramento. It is anticipated that at some point the efforts will converge and at least one park bond will appear on the November ballot.

The first formal bill introducing a park bond was AB 3014. Authored by Assemblymembers Louis Caldera (D-46, Los Angeles) and Jim Cunneen (R-24, Campbell), it would provide \$200 million for *urban park* acquisition, expansion, development and restoration. A second effort is being pursued by the Planning and Conservation League. As drafted, their effort would provide an undetermined amount of funding to state and local agencies, nonprofits, concessions and partnerships for development, restoration, protection and acquisition. The third effort in AB 2910 -- a park bond of "modest" amount that would provide local and state park funding for infrastructure and maintenance repairs.

Getting a bond through both the Senate and Assembly, with support from both Republicans and Democrats

is a challenge *Friends* and numerous other groups are diligently working on. Whatever our hopes and cautions, averting opposition and maximizing legislative support will force negotiations and compromise. The trick is to get a bond through the legislature that will truly help State Parks, and that both the Governor and voters will support. Recent voter opinion surveys conducted by the Strategic Research Institute, indicate that strong support exists for protecting and preserving the public's investment in parks, and for making public lands more accessible. Perceiving that California is still in an economic crisis, surveys also indicate that voters will likely reject funding for acquisition or major development. The most encouraging aspect of the voter polls is that a November bond is modest, clear and concise, and focused on parks, it will win.

What you can do: **SPREAD THE WORD!** Let your park groups, neighbors, friends and community leaders know that a park bond is being negotiated. If State Parks are to receive a fair portion of any bond allotment, legislators must hear that their constituents want State Parks supported in a bond. You and other community members are urged to call and write your state representatives and let them know you want **park bond that will help address State Parks' maintenance backlog.**

**PAID YOUR
MEMBERSHIP DUES
FOR
1996
YET?**

MISCELLANIA

SOLAR PROGRAM

The FPOA Solar Program got off the ground on Saturday, July 13 when Jack Murphy ran two solar telescopes in the parking lot near the kiosk during the afternoon. Jack reported that although he had about thirty people stop and look there was not much to show them - the sun was being exceptionally quiet!

Jack plans on setting up the solar telescopes on the first Saturday of every month this season. If you are interested in setting up and scopes on any other Saturdays give Rick Morales a call at (408)623-4081

OPEN SLOTS FOR NIGHTTIME PROGRAMS

There are still several public program nights where volunteers are needed to give the program and operate the telescope. They are August 24, Sept. 21 and Oct. 12 and 19th. Remember: if you are certified to use the 30" it is mandatory that you help out at least once a season. Give Rick a call to schedule!

"DEAR SANTA" WISH LIST REQUESTS

The FPOA Board of Directors are urging members to submit their "wish list" of items or programs they want to see at the observatory. The board is currently looking at our next ten years to see what can be done to increase the quality of our program. All wishes may be given to Rick or any Board member or written in the log next time you're there.

Conversation heard between two kids Saturday night:

"You can see satellites better if you use perverted vision."

"That's inverted vision, stupid!" (used only after anonymity was guaranteed)

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:

<input type="checkbox"/> General	\$20.00 year
<input type="checkbox"/> Student	\$10.00 year
<input type="checkbox"/> 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