



Renew now for 2017. Don't let your membership expire. See page 5 for details.

President's Message

By John Parker

Welcome to the Spring edition of the FPOA Observer newsletter.

As most of you know, this last winter brought us a lot of rain and wind. We hope that you were able to ride out the storms safely. The observatory sustained a little damage from the winter storms. The winds were strong enough to move the sliding roof to the extent that it broke one of the four turnbuckles that hold the roof in place. We also lost some wood from the south side of the building that we will be replacing and there was some water damage to some of the sheet rock in the conference room. Other than that, the observatory weathered the winter pretty well and we are looking forward to our opening day on April 1st.

We are entering the planning and material procurement stage of the new west side access project. We will be removing the existing ramp and replace it with a slightly different arrangement. Instead of a ramp, we will have stairs located on the south west corner of the building that will lead to a level platform with a railing. This will allow us to use this platform as a "stage" for outdoor presentations, possibly some extra storage and a possibly a projection screen. To accomplish this task, we will have the help of some of the Scouts from Boy Scout troop #455, led by Eagle Scout candidate Zachary Loos. Zachary and Loren Dynneson started taking measurements and making a materials list for this project. We expect that deconstruction will start in last of Spring and that the new deck and stairs will be in place mid-Summer. Keep an eye on the website, Facebook and Twitter for updates.

Continued Page 3

Approved 2017 FPOA Program Dates

Saturday Evening Programs

Apr 1, 22, 29 May 20, 27
Jun 3, 17, 24 Jul 1, 15, 22, 29
Aug 12, 19, 26 Sept 16, 23
Oct 14, 21, 28

Solar Programs

Apr 1, 29 May 20 Jun 17
Jul 15 Aug 26 Sept 16 Oct 14

Board Meetings

Jan 28 Feb 25 Mar 25 Apr 22
May 27 Jun 24 Jul 22 Aug 12
Sept 23 Oct 21 Nov 11

Special Events

Annual Meeting / BBQ Sept 23

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

Total Solar Eclipse 2017

Many people have asked me over the years what the big deal is with Total Eclipses. There is no good answer since if you have not experienced one nothing I write can convey the experience.

On Monday, August 21 the shadow of the moon will cross the United States from Oregon to South Carolina.

Continued Page 2

Total Solar Eclipse

from page 1

By Rob Hawley

This will be the first Total Solar eclipse in the continental US since February 26, 1979. For those not willing to travel to the ends of the earth this is your opportunity to see what all of the fuss is about.



Sun's Corona at Totality

Unfortunately only a fairly narrow track will experience the full beauty of the eclipse – Totality. Everywhere else (including our area) will only see



Living in the West we have the best weather prospects, but to experience totality will mean a drive. Here is the path in Oregon. Everywhere within the band will experience totality, but totality will be longest toward the centerline.



Continued Page 3

Another effort we plan to make is to be more engaged with you, our membership through more email announcements and by continuing to make upgrades and updates to the website. We will also be keeping you and the public more informed by posting current weather and program updates using Twitter and Facebook – allowing our visitors and volunteers to know what the conditions are at the peak and how that may impact whether we will be viewing or not. We also plan on surveying our membership to get to know you better and to help us understand your relationship with the FPOA so that we can keep you engaged and interested and identify new membership opportunities.

One way to remain engaged is to volunteer for activities and programs that the FPOA puts on. The public program schedule is now on the website and we encourage our members to consider volunteering to do a presentation to the public. If you are interested in doing a presentation, please let us know. We have guidelines, policies and information available to you in our members only section of the website. There are even some canned presentations all ready to go that will make that effort even easier. There are all sorts of opportunities to participate as a member of the FPOA. We can always use assistance with operating the telescopes during public programs. Some of you may possess skill sets that can be used in other areas such as painting, construction, business development, social media and web site work. To help us with our public programs this year we expect that the Hartnell College Intern program will continue this year and we look forward to having some enthusiastic students helping us while they work towards their individual academic goals.

The Annual Members Meeting and Barbeque is scheduled to take place on September 23rd. We have started looking for our guest speaker and making plans for what we hope to be another successful event. If you have any ideas to contribute regarding the Members Meeting and Barbeque, please email them to info@fpoa.net. Your feedback and comments are always welcome and appreciated. We are looking forward to an eventful and successful season this year – supporting our mission of “brining astronomy to the public” as we have faithfully done for the last thirty years. As always, we hope to see you at the peak this year.

John

To see the track in other locations and learn of the weather prospects visit Jay Anderson's website

<http://eclipsophile.com/total-solar-eclipses/total-solar-eclipse-2017-august-21/>

Sadly, Fremont Peak (and the San Francisco Bay area) will be far enough from the track that this area will experience only a partial eclipse and not a very large percentage at that. Thus FPOA is not planning an event for that day. Other local observatories such as PAS at Foothill College in Los Altos (<http://pastro.org/dnn/>) or Hartnell in Salinas (<https://www.hartnell.edu/astronomy>) *might* plan events.

Remember to view the eclipse you will need special eclipse glasses. **NORMAL SUNGLASSES ARE NOT ENOUGH.** You can get the glasses in a number of locations. Look for those manufactured by Rainbow Symphony or Thousand Oaks as they are the best. Or you can build a projection viewer <http://preview.tinyurl.com/jzjcg7x>. This is best way to view the eclipse with children.

Interested in experiencing totality? I created a group of videos that describe how to safely view and photograph the eclipse. The FPOA website provides links to these. My own pictures from my past eclipse pictures are available from my website www.robhawley.net.

Many first time viewers will be tempted to try to take close-up views of the sun. Don't!!! Instead get a good pair of binoculars and **LOOK** at the eclipse. Just be sure to pay attention to the safety sections on my video on solar viewing. I do encourage you to take wide-angle photographs or moview of either the eclipse or the crowds. I use a GoPro for this, but a DSLR with a > 20mm lens, or even an iPhone will allow you to capture the experience. Since you can start these well before totality they will not risk your viewing.

Eclipses are over in the blink of an eye. Thus it is important to have a mental checklist of things to look for during totality. The last few I have also started recording audio notes so I can dictate my observations while they are happening.

Continued Page 5

West Ramp Project

By Daniel Dynneson

If you have come to the observatory recently, you may have noticed that the west ramp is in terrible shape. Damaged by weather and time, it has become an eyesore. That is why the Fremont Peak Observatory has made the replacement of the west ramp one of the most important projects of this year. The design was provided by Greg Bosler. We are currently in the process of obtaining the materials needed for this task. The removal and reconstruction of the deck will take place this summer and fall. It will also include facilities for supporting a projector screen. This project will have help from boy scouts from the local Troop 455. For his role in the deck building effort, one boy scout member, Zachary, will qualify for an Eagle Scout Badge.



Existing West Ramp (above)

Delivered drying new lumber (below)



Winter Storm Damage FP State Park

By Ron Dammann

This winter's storms caused extensive wind damage inside and outside the park boundaries. Weak or dead trees were broken or uprooted and fell onto San Juan Canyon road. Power lines were damaged causing intermittent or no power to the park for six days.



Dead Pine trees with tops broken off



Up-rooted Oak at Park entrance

The observatory suffered minor damage to the rolling roof system. One turnbuckle hook was pulled from its wood mounting stud and the roof had been moved about one inch from its fully closed position. We also have a new roof water leak in the SW corner of the Meeting room, probably from wind driven rain. Ranger Derek Davis estimated wind speeds of 80 – 90 mph.

Solar Eclipse 2017

from Page 3

Don't be too disappointed if when you listen to the soundtrack later it sounds kind of rambling. Contained within will be what you saw as you see it.

For those wishing to try to photograph (or those ignoring my advice) then I recommend my more detailed videos on doing eclipse photography. You can access these from the FPOA website.

If you would rather view the eclipse from home (instead of fighting the probable traffic jams in Oregon, Idaho, or Wyoming) then the Exploratorium plans to live stream it.

<https://www.exploratorium.edu/eclipse>

2017 Membership Renewal

Renewals are easy. You can use the forms on the membership page <http://www.fpoa.net/membership.html> to pay with either PayPal or via a credit card. For those preferring paper you can just send a check (that has your current correct address) to : FPOA Membership, c/o Rob Hawley, 1233 Hillcrest Dr., San Jose CA 95120

If your email has changed, then please be sure to include that in either the PayPal payment as a comment or a note with your check.

FPOA on the Internet

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Email Address: info at fpoa.net
Website: www.fpoa.net
Members Only Page: members.fpoa.net
Facebook: www.facebook.com/fpoa.observatory/
Twitter: twitter.com/fpoa_info.

EMAIL DELIVERY OF THE OBSERVER

Dear FPOA Members,

We have been delivering the Observer via email for the past several years. 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 membership at fpoa.net

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The *Fremont Peak Observer* is published four times a year (Winter, Spring, Summer, Fall). Articles from members are encouraged and should be emailed to <schedule at fpoa.net > Articles should be in plain text or MS Word format. Deadlines are Feb. 1, May 1, Aug. 1 and Nov 1, respectively.