

The Fremont Peak Observer

— Bringing Astronomy to the Public —

Vol 39 No. 1

February 2022

President's Message



Pat Donnelly

Welcome everyone to 2022. It's a new year and a new chance to return to a normal way of life. If you are like me, you're probably a bit frustrated with the COVID restrictions. Never-the-less, please follow all mandates, and please, please get yourself fully vaccinated and get the booster. It is the best way to protect yourself and those around you. The sooner everyone is vaccinated, the sooner we can return to normal.

The Fremont Peak Observatory Association (FPOA) is still on-hold relative to conducting public programs. Because of the COVID restrictions, we believe the safety of the public would be at risk during public programs. In 2022 the public programs are scheduled to commence on March 26. We are waiting to see if the COVID restrictions will be eased to the point that we can resume our public programs. Please check the FPOA website for any change in status. I, personally, want to get back to the peak.

I can report that the FPOA is in the home stretch relative to all of the modifications, repairs, and upgrades to the observatory. The only significant work still to be done includes repair of the lecture room southwest corner and the additions of the track stops on the on the rolling roof track guides. The track stops are needed to prevent rolling the roof too far in either

COVID-19 Status

2022 Programs remain suspended contingent on improvement of State and Local positivity of COVID variants.

FPOA Observer programs are unaffected.

direction. FPOA still plans to have a rededication ceremony once all of the COVID restrictions are lifted.

In case you did not know, the James Webb Telescope was launched into space on Christmas morning. I awoke very early to watch the launch. As best as I could tell, everything went about as smoothly as possible. I even saw the telescope deploying the solar panel arrays, as the telescope moved away from the booster rocket. As I write this article, everything is still proceeding as well as it could. Webb has entered its orbit around the Earth-Sun's Lagrange 2 (L2) Point in space. The L2 point is approximately 1,000,000 miles from the Earth opposite the Sun. I'm eager to see Webb's first pictures.

Here's hoping for a really good 2022.



Observations



Tom Kellogg; Rob Hawley

*Our new section "Observations" hosts member stories from observing at FPOA and abroad. Send stories to **editor at fpoa.net**.*



Sharing the wonderful cosmos

Tom Kellogg

What event inspired you to spend time looking up at night at the heavenly wonders? For me it started with a very bright shooting star that caught my attention while I was at a church fiesta in upstate NY in the 1960s. Then in 1972 after I graduated from high school, I went to the Rochester Museum of Science Strassenburgh Planetarium and looked at Saturn through the telescope on the roof. Saturn pulled the inner most strings of my soul. My college physics professor in Kansas let me use a small telescope and I was launched into cosmic wanderings. In 1982 I moved to SF and soon stumbled upon a very old man with a solar telescope in GG Park. That was John Dobson who became my mentor. I bought a 10" Dobsonian telescope and joined his effort to invite passers-by to look through the eyepiece.

Eventually I learned about SFAA and started attending meetings at Randall Museum in the mid-1980s. John Dobson spoke there and many other important astronomers including Jill Tarter of SETI and author Patrick Moore. Often the month after the lecture a headline article of Sky & Telescope was the meeting discussion topic and sometimes the SFAA speaker was the article author or mentioned in the article. SFAA became my way to fully understand our place in the cosmos. SFAA provided a place where I could join in the conversation,

1 on 1, with astronomers. The star parties on Mt. Tam taught me how to star hop to many deep sky wonders and share them with others.

Sidewalk astronomy has been my focus and I continue to set up my 8" telescope in my new hometown of Aptos in Santa Cruz County. As John Dobson did, I encourage all amateur astronomers to set up their telescopes on moonlit nights to share views of the moon and planets. You'd be surprised how many people have never been invited to look at the heavens through the eyepiece of a telescope.



"The Last Stargazers" by Emily Levesque
Rob Hawley

The Silicon Valley Lectures are always informative. Sometimes they catch my attention so much that I say "I have got to get that Book". "The Last Stargazers" is an autobiography of Emily's adventure through professional astronomy. Because she has connections via her job, it allowed her to get a very broad range of experiences from mountain tops in Chile to a ride on SOFIA. If you want to know what being a professional astronomer is really like, this is the book for you.

In particular, one of the points that I found most interesting was her discussion about the evolution of the profession.

Pre 1880's - Look in the eyepiece
late 19th century - 1970's - Glass Plates then film
1970's - 1980's - CCD replace film
1980's-1990's - computer processing
2000's - computer control of telescopes
2010's and beyond - Telescope as a Service Bureau

We are in the last phase now. Scheduling of scopes has evolved from single astronomers



controlling a single scope for a night to astronomers submitting tasks for eventual execution.

I have myself, experienced several of these phases moving from film to CCD for my eclipse work and now to computer control. My own observatory progressed from simple CCD images to full automation as a list of tasks. I have also experienced the telescope as a service bureau with a scope I used in Chile. I would submit work to them and get an email when to pick up the data.

With the growth in number of space telescopes and increased automation of existing ground-based scopes, the profession is changing. Its evolving away from required astronomer travel to get data and toward image ordering approaches via Amazon (except without the guarantee of delivery).

And in this change, something is lost.

Construction



Eric Egland

The roof's been leaking in the SW corner of the lecture room for a while. We had a chance before the rains last year to head up and do an inspection of the leak area. The west track slopes to the center point where the tracks join, collecting water in the track valley. Without sealing washers, the water found its way down the bolts and rotted those holes. Without quick options to secure the bolts, we patched over with gorilla weather tape until we can revisit the issue. I also added aluminum reinforced gorilla tape dams and weep holes to divert water in the track valley

and on the track sides onto the flat room, and down the side of the building. We'll rebuild the sweepers to make sure those are waterproof and have a tighter fit to the track.

So far, it's working! We collected 4" of water from our first storm in a rain gauge and saw no leaks in the lecture room. Rain from a 6" storm also drained away. Following that storm, I replaced all the exposed track washers with sealing crush washers.

The rolling roof is much lighter than it used to be, and its north stop can drag and hook over the 2x4 it abuts with excessive travel. We repaired some damage, improved the flashing dress, improved the END OF TRAVEL markings on the east wall, painted the bottoms of the hooks and their anchors and labeled each to prevent location and orientation swapping.

Always leave each hook by its location, and white is down. Watch the END OF TRAVEL mark when closing the roof. Tighten the hooks one side (E, W) at a time to secure the roof N-S quickly, and to balance tensions.

Rob made a significant improvement to our phone service with new wireless service, farewell landline. We'll also have a termite inspector up this year to confirm and treat some damage we observed.



Support



Rob Hawley

Let me give a big thanks to those of you that renewed since the first of the year. You will notice that you received a full year of membership instead of it being truncated in December.

FPOA gets most of its income from Memberships. Most of the annual members are now Observers. The area is open for observing (with some restrictions).

For those that have not renewed we still need your support. Although 2022 programs remain suspended from 2021, our expenses to support our observers continue, and to cover our phone, insurance, etc. We appreciate your continued support.

Membership Renewal

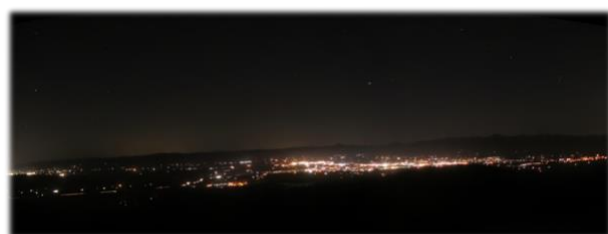


Rob Hawley

FPOA Memberships are for 12 months with Observer memberships available as a separate option. Please use our web enrollment forms on the membership page to join or renew.

Members [may pay with PayPal](#) or mail a check to the address below:

FPOA Membership
c/o Rob Hawley
1233 Hillcrest Dr.
San Jose, CA 95120



Feature Photos



(please submit next issue photos to the [editor](#) by May 1st)

Covid-19 community transmission categories

High transmission (red) Substantial (orange) Moderate (yellow) Low (blue)



Note: Data reported on January 20, 2022



November 18-19 Lunar Eclipse series kindly sent by Ryan Clark, Fremont Peak moon and tower below





Oh Man, not this variant...

Fremont Peak Observatory Association

Box 1376, San Juan Bautista, CA 95045

Phone Number: (831) 623-2465

General info *info at fpoa.net*
 Schedule *schedule at fpoa.net*
 Membership *membership at fpoa.net*
 Editor *editor at fpoa.net*
 Treasurer *treasurer at fpoa.net*

Website: www.fpoa.net
 Facebook: [fpoa.observatory](https://www.facebook.com/fpoa.observatory)
 Twitter: [fpoa_info](https://twitter.com/fpoa_info)

Observing Reservations



For observing pad reservations,
 please send the following information
48 hours in advance to:

schedule at fpoa.net

- Member name
- Reservation date
- Estimated arrival time
- Duration of stay
- Number in party (2020 1 guest limit, contact FPOA to bring more than 1 immediate family member)
- Vehicle description and license plate
- Specific observing site request (pad)

COVID Precautions:



- Arrive before 8pm, depart before 8am
- Face masks, hand hygiene
- Maximize distance between observers (one pad at least)
- Observers may bring immediate family
- No public viewing or talks that encourage formation of a tight group
- The building remains closed

Officers and Directors 2021

President	Pat Donnelly
Vice President	Chris Angelos
Instruments	Ron Dammann
Treasurer, IT	Rob Hawley
Facilities	Loren Dynneson
Secretary, Editor	Eric Eglund
	Windell Oskay
	Lenore Edman
	Tom Kellogg
Instruments and: Schedule	Ron Dammann
Membership and: Distribution	Rob Hawley
Website	Rob Hawley
Directors Emeritus	Kevin Medlock
	Denni Medlock

Dates and Delivery

Members, The Observer is now sent by email and posted on our website at [FPOA Observer online](http://www.fpoa.net). Please send email updates to *membership at fpoa.net*.

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

