

STELLAFANE

1926-1989

Saturday, August 5, 1989

The 54th Convention of Amateur Telescope
Makers on Breezy Hill in Springfield, Vermont.



Friday evening, August 4th, at 8:30 p.m., Dave Aucoin of the Springfield Telescope Makers will conduct the informal program under the tent behind the Stellafane clubhouse. If you wish to contribute a short talk during this session, you must submit a brief description of your planned presentation with your registration form. Talks are limited to 10 minutes and 20 slides -- the time limit will be strictly enforced. A 35-mm slide projector is available. Following the informal talks there will be observing (weather permitting) with the Porter Turret Telescope in front of the clubhouse.

The Hartness-Porter Museum of Amateur Telescope Making is located in the underground rooms of the Hartness Turret Telescope at Hartness House in Springfield. Convention-goers can plan a visit to the museum on Saturday or Sunday. Light meals and snacks are available at Stellafane Friday evening and throughout the convention on Saturday. Barbequed chicken dinners are available for Saturday's lunch and dinner. Cooking is allowed in the camping area, and drinking water will be provided at the camping site beginning Friday afternoon. Camp stoves, charcoal grills, and the like are allowed, but no open fires are permitted anywhere at the convention site.

TELESCOPE COMPETITION

This is a convention of amateur telescope makers. If you have built a telescope, we encourage you to bring it and also enter it in the competition. Awards are presented for mechanical and optical performance. There are also awards for the best junior telescope (made by a person under 16 years of age) and other special categories. Judging for mechanical excellence begins at 10:00 a.m. Saturday, so please register your telescopes at the clubhouse and have it on display as early as possible. Registrations will not extend beyond noon. We try to have the judging completed in time for all to attend the afternoon talks. Judging for optical excellence begins immediately following the evening program (weather permitting). Only telescopes that are operative both mechanically and optically will be accepted in the competition. However, telescopes do not have to be judged in both categories. We also welcome all home-made telescopes in the display area; they do not have to be entered in the competition. The Porter Youth Award acknowledges the junior exhibitor (under 16 years of age) who shows the most promise for a career in science and technology.

SWAP TABLE

The swap table is where convention participants can trade or sell their astronomical and telescope-related items such as eyepieces, lenses, cameras, mirror-making materials, and observing accessories. This table is not for commercial sales. Participants must be responsible for their own material at the table, which operates all day Saturday until 7:30 p.m. The location of the table may be changed from its traditional spot behind the clubhouse to the new campground; check with a convention official for the actual location.

CAMPING/PARKING AREA

This year, as in the past, will be tight for parking and camping. This year we will not have overflow parking available at the site of the old campground. Although land clearing at our new site is proceeding, it will be several years before we have available the amount of camping and parking space that we have enjoyed in the past. People interested in camping must read the special instructions in the camping registration section of this mailing. Convention officials at the registration gate will direct participants to the appropriate camping and parking areas. Controlled traffic is allowed to the clubhouse for unloading and picking up telescopes. Unless otherwise allowed by a convention official, there is no parking around the clubhouse. There is no assurance that light-free conditions will be maintained in the camping area. If you must avoid lights, especially car headlights, please bring your telescopes and cameras to the display field by the clubhouse. Furthermore, since there will also be observing from the camping area, we ask everyone to be considerate of others and avoid any unnecessary use of bright lights at night.

AFTERNOON PROGRAM

This year's Saturday afternoon program begins under the tent behind the clubhouse at 2:00 p.m. Scott Milligan of the Springfield club and the Amateur Telescope Makers of Boston is the MC. He and other club members are making progress on a Schupmann telescope, which will be the largest operational instrument of its kind when completed.

Df Waves and Mirrors -- Peter Ceravolo

The quality of optics and optical systems are usually stated in terms of a fractional wavelength of light. But these values can be misleading, especially in advertising where it is often not told how the wavelength accuracy is specified. Mr. Ceravolo, a professional optician, will tell how to interpret the various wavelength specifications. He will also comment on the quality of some of today's commercial optics.

Observing and Photographing the Sun -- Vladimir Vudler

Mr. Vudler, Vladi to his friends, is a long-time member of the Boston ATM's. He has a special interest in viewing the Sun in white light as well as with hydrogen-alpha filters. He has recently recorded many aspects of the rise in solar activity with conventional photography and video tape. Since we are rapidly approaching maximum in the current solar cycle, this talk will be of interest to all observers.

The Ross Null Test -- Peter Ceravolo

A second talk by Mr. Ceravolo will describe an easy-to-use null test for ATM's. A simple plano-convex lens can be used to test a paraboloidal mirror at the center of curvature. It is easier to use than the Dall Null test or autocollimation. A graphical approach to setting up the test will be described.

EVENING PROGRAM

Welcome

Presentation of Awards

Stellafane Shadowgram -- Walter Scott Houston

The Stellafane Keynote talk:

Eclipses and other Astronomical Tales -- Roger Tuthill

Since the 1960's Mr. Tuthill, better known as Tut, has been a Stellafane regular. His award-winning telescopes have ranged from an 11-inch Maksutov to a 20-inch Cassegrain that, for a while, was the largest instrument ever displayed at the convention.

In the early 1970's, Tut began leading groups of amateurs to view total solar eclipses. When a failed experiment for a new tent designed for use in the Sahara Desert turned into a solar-filter business, Tut embarked on a career of developing innovative products for amateur astronomers.

As a commercial telescope dealer, Tut has found that dealing with amateurs and the general public can lead to some entertaining moments, several of which he plans on sharing with us.

A NOTE TO FIRST-TIMERS

If this is your first visit to Stellafane, especially if you are camping, there are several things you should know. First, our camping is very primitive. We have limited drinking water and only portable chemical toilets in the camping area. There are no showers, no electrical hookups, and no isolated, individual campsites. You are likely to be camping back-to-back with others, and while this usually makes for good friendships, it can cause other less desirable side effects. The camping area and the convention site around the clubhouse and Porter Turret telescope can be hot and dusty. Furthermore, the land is all carved out of a rugged Vermont hillside. Bring comfortable clothes and walking shoes. A shady hat by day, and insect repellent by night should be the first order of business, and always be prepared for a possible thunder shower even if the weather forecast is for fine conditions. We do our best to see that everyone has a happy and comfortable convention, but don't be surprised by our "rustic" conditions -- they are as much a part of Stellafane as the telescopes and astronomical friendships.