



# STELLAFANE

1926-1990

Saturday, July 28, 1990

The 55th Convention of Amateur Telescope  
Makers on Breezy Hill in Springfield, Vermont.

Friday evening, July 27th, at 8:30 p.m., the Springfield Telescope Makers will conduct an 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. Barbecued 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 telescope 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.

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

## CAMPING/PARKING AREA

Clearing continues on the land purchased for the Stellafane convention site several years ago by the Springfield Telescope Makers. For the first time in many years we hope to accommodate all the campers who request a site at the convention. Nevertheless, camping and parking space will still be tight. 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 on the summit of Breezy Hill 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.

## SWAP TABLE

The swap table is where convention participants can trade or sell their astronomical and telescope-related

## 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 Telescope Makers is the master of ceremonies.

### Telescope Performance

-- Peter Ceravolo

A lot more than just the quality of the optical components affects the image formed by a telescope. Such things as optical collimation, design and construction of the mountings for the optics, central obstructions, and the design of the tube assembly contribute significantly to the images seen in the eyepiece. Mr. Ceravolo will explain how each of these factors affect a telescope's performance and what we can do to optimize them for the best results. A professional optician working for the National Research Council of Canada, Mr. Ceravolo makes custom optics for science and industry. He is also the new Associate Editor of Telescope Making, taking over the position after Robert E. Cox died last December.

### Update on the Group 70 Project

-- John W. Briggs

In 1988 a number of West Coast amateurs banded together to form Group 70 with the goal of building the largest amateur telescope in the world. The project is spearheaded by Kevin Medlock, a well-known amateur telescope maker and former award winner at Stellafane. The heart of the project is a 72-inch Pyrex mirror blank manufactured by Corning Glass Works in 1939 and once intended for a telescope in the Southern Hemisphere. Mr. Briggs, a frequent Stellafane exhibitor with a bent for historic telescopes, is a member of Group 70.

### Building a Laser Interferometer

-- Ethan Harris

Mr. Harris made his first telescope, an 8-inch reflector, about 10 years ago and is presently working on a 24-inch f/4 mirror. Using surplus parts, including a laser from a supermarket checkout scanner, he built a common-path interferometer along the lines of one described in Volume 1 of *Advanced Telescope Making Techniques* (1986 Willmann-Bell). In addition to describing the construction of the interferometer, Mr. Harris will talk about interpreting the results of this sensitive optical tester.

## EVENING PROGRAM

### Welcome

### Presentation of Awards

### Stellafane Shadowgram

-- Walter Scott Houston

### Stellafane Keynote talk:

Comet Hunting: A Personal Perspective

-- David H. Levy

Well-known astronomical author David Levy has discovered six comets while sweeping the sky from his home outside Tucson, Arizona. (His most recent discovery, made on May 20th, occurred as this bulletin was being written!) "Comet hunting has affected me deeply over the years," he writes. "I will use the topic of comet hunting to explore some of the greater questions as to why amateurs become committed to astronomy."

In addition to his popular monthly "Star Trails" column in *Sky & Telescope*, Levy has written several books on astronomy. He is a variable-star observer and is particularly interested in introducing children to astronomy. A Canadian, he has received several awards including the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada's Chant Medal and the Western Amateur Astronomers' G. Bruce Blair Award. In 1988 the International Astronomical Union recognized his achievements by naming minor planet 3673 LEVY in his honor.

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## 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.