



STELLAFANE

1926-1992

Saturday, August 1, 1992

The 57th Convention of Amateur Telescope
Makers on Breezy Hill in Springfield, Vermont.

Friday evening, July 31st, at 8:30 p.m., the Springfield Telescope Makers will conduct an informal program under the tent in the central camping area. 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 at the top of Breezy Hill.

9-12

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 is available at several locations in the camping area. Camp stoves, charcoal grills, and the like are allowed, but no open fires are permitted.

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 10:30 a.m. 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 homemade 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.

CAMPING/PARKING AREA

Clearing continues on the land purchased for the Stellafane convention site several years ago by the Springfield Telescope Makers. After a decade of limited space, for two years in a row we have accommodated all the campers who request a site, and we hope this will continue. 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 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, 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 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. at the southwest edge of the campground.

AFTERNOON PROGRAM

This year's Saturday afternoon program begins under the tent in the central camping area at 2:00 p.m. Scott Milligan of the Springfield Telescope Makers is the master of ceremonies.

A Forgotten Design

-- Construction of a High-Performance

Gregorian Reflector

--Philip Rounseville

Telescope Designs Using Off-the-Shelf Components

-- David Shafer

What Adaptive Optics Can Do for Astronomy

-- Berton C. Willard

EVENING PROGRAM

Robert (Bob) Morse of the Springfield Telescope Makers will be the master of ceremonies for the evening program, which begins at 7:30 p.m. Saturday in the hillside amphitheater in the main camping/parking area.

Presentation of Awards

Stellafane Shadowgram

-- Walter Scott Houston

Stellafane Keynote Talk:

Second Light at Mount Wilson

-- Dr. Robert Jastrow

California's Mount Wilson Observatory has been the site of more major discoveries in astronomy than any other observatory. From 1908 until 1948 it was also home to the largest operational telescopes in the world. Though threatened with closure in the 1980's, Mount Wilson is once again thriving. There are currently 10 major research projects under way on the mountain ranging from planetary to stellar astronomy.

Dr. Jastrow is the newly appointed Director of the Mount Wilson Institute and Chairman of the Board of Trustees overseeing the observatory's operation.

INFORMAL SOCIAL HOUR

For more than half a century the focus of Stellafane conventions was in the small clearing at the top of Breezy Hill where the pink clubhouse and Porter Turret Telescope are located. Everyone at the convention was either there or in the small camping area a short walk from the clubhouse. When loss of the camping field threatened to end conventions in the 1980's, the Springfield Telescope Makers purchased more than 30 acres of land east of the Breezy Hill summit. This has become the parking/camping area as well as where the tent talks and Saturday evening program take place. The telescope display area and observing site remain around the original clubhouse.

Because today's conventions cover such a wide area, the Stellafane tradition of chance meetings with old friends is lessened. Thus, this year we've set aside a few hours beginning about 4 p.m. on Saturday afternoon for an informal gathering around the Porter Turret Telescope. There's no set plan, just drop by and look for familiar faces among the crowd. For those new to Stellafane, this is a chance to meet some of the people who have made amateur astronomy and telescope making what it is today. In case of rain -- bring an umbrella!

THE ULTIMATE STAR PARTY?

Although the oldest and perhaps best known, Stellafane is but one of a growing number of amateur astronomy gatherings in North America. Because publications often list Stellafane along with star parties in their calendars of events, some people arrive at the convention expecting it to be the ultimate observing experience. In truth, Stellafane originated in the 1920's as a meeting of amateur telescope makers. There has always been observing at night, but it does not have the emphasis that it does at gatherings such as the Texas Star Party or Florida's Winter Star Party. The convention is only a few miles from the center of Springfield, and some light from town is visible in the sky over Stellafane.

If you want the best observing conditions, bring your telescopes and cameras to the area around the Porter Turret Telescope at the top of Breezy Hill. On Friday and Saturday nights we do our best to keep lights and car traffic to a minimum at the summit. It is a different story, however, in the main camping/parking area where people are allowed to come and go freely during the night. If you do observe from the camping areas, please be tolerant of participants, many of whom stay in hotels, as they drive out of the parking areas.