

Requests for Observing Time

Observing time on the CFH telescope is allocated twice a year. Available time for the first semester of 1982 has already been allocated.

Requests for observing time for the second semester of 1982 should be submitted before March 1, 1982.

Application forms and technical data on the telescope and instruments can be obtained from the following associated organizations:

For Canadian astronomers:

National Research Council
(Attention Dr. J.L. Locke)
Herzberg Institute of Astrophysics
Room 2003
100 Sussex Drive
Ottawa, Ontario
Canada K1A 0R6

For French astronomers:

Monsieur le Directeur de l'Institut
National d'Astronomie et de
Géophysique
77, avenue Denfert-Rochereau
75014 Paris
France

For Hawaiian astronomers:

Prof. J.T. Jefferies
Institute for Astronomy
University of Hawaii
2680 Woodlawn Drive
Honolulu, Hawaii 96822
U.S.A.

For any supplementary informations write to the headquarters of the Corporation at the address shown at the end of this bulletin.

Viewpoint: The State of the Observatory

"Much Ado...."

An observatory director is very sensitive to guest investigators' complaints of observing time lost to technical failures. He takes them for what they are: testimonies of failures and of insufficient technical management.

An 18-month old telescope must be expected to produce more than a normal frequency of headaches. But by the din from some past observers one may be led to believe that the CFHT is not even operational yet. It should not be necessary to remind scientists that a few days sample is unlikely to yield a fair estimate of a few hundred days of operation. And some must recognize that the responsibility for failures does not always lay on the CFHT side of the interface. Of course it is sometimes difficult, and probably futile, to attribute losses of time to one cause or to another. When coudé slit viewing becomes near impossible, is it because the engineering was weak? did the staff poorly align the optics? or did the observer bump into something in the slit room? It is also important to distinguish between downright breakdowns and mere discomforts and inconvenience although the latter may also reduce the efficiency; a cramped prime focus cage is not the same as a broken focussing unit. Finally the psychological influence of altitude must be properly weighed. Guest observers and staff are more "edgy" and more inclined to negative criticisms at the summit than at the beach; the trail from Hale Pohaku to the dome is rather more irksome than the road from Waimea to Hapuna Beach.

Whatever the rationalisations might be for misbehaviors and misgivings, the situation can be described in cold, hard numbers. CFHT maintains as complete records as possible on weather and equipment performance. Reports from observers are carefully read, evaluated and compiled, be they eulogistic or vitriolic. Given the racket about the whole thing and the natural curiosity of all users, we thought it might be useful and in the interest of history to lay down in print the gory details of all 1981 runs, giving names and data on used, lost and wasted telescope time. This is shown in the accompanying table. To most readers this will read as dry, anonymous statistics. For us at CFHT, each entry has a face, a history and brings back vivid memories. Collectively they summarize for all of us in Waimea one year of efforts, of worries and of successes. The bottom line gives the status of the observatory in 1981:

71% of the available time was scheduled for observers;

76% of the scheduled nights were clear;

85% of these clear nights were productively used;

14% of these clear nights were lost to CFHT equipment failures.

Many observers had excellent runs. Some lost most of their time to weather and a