FASTTracks
By: Gary Hug

At last count we have 442 asteroid designations from the MPC including one NEO, several inner-main-belt Hungaria type asteroids, a Griqua family asteroid (only a couple of dozen known to exist),   a now-numbered comet (178P), and nearly 4,500 NEO follow-up observations. We (Farpoint) are currently listed as the 43rd most productive site in the world for asteroid discoveries (0.1% of ALL asteroids ever discovered were discovered at Farpoint). We accomplished all of this with a telescope whose optics was used by Clyde Tombaugh the discoverer of Pluto (yes, still considered a planet by myself and others). The optics purpose, created around the time of the Great Depression, was to study the solar system.

The FAST program will end in April. It should not be, however, the end of scientific use of the Tombaugh. Of course there will be the pretty pictures, the hunting down of all the classic star-party-favorite objects and the faintest object hunt. Just remember the Tombaugh has the capability to perform useful and meaningful science.

 I hope to continue (at a much reduced rate) dealing with asteroids and maybe some TNO hunts. Dr. Twarog (Kansas University) is currently training a student in photometry with the Tombaugh.   With the addition of the new adapter (generously donated by Midwest BRD) the Tombaugh can now accept equipment with a 1 _ inch or 2 inch barrel. This means if you have a digital camera or video camera with a common adapter for a telescope, it should work in the Tombaugh. This adds a lot of versatility.

Dan Tibbets is our new Tombaugh Telescope Director. If you're interested in using the Tombaugh talk to him or send him an e-mail. Dan has been steadily improving the telescope since it arrived at Farpoint. I think you'll find him a dedicated telescope director and observer.

This will be the last FASTTracks as the FAST program officially closes April 15th, 2007.

FAST was a very successful START of the scientific work for the Tombaugh.

What plans do you have for the Tombaugh now….