

Return of Halley's Comet chance of a lifetime for most

By LeAnne Lovings
Staff Reporter

Promotions from comet pills to frisbees are advertising the return of Halley's Comet this fall. For most people, this will be their only chance to see the comet.

The comet was named after Edmund Halley, an English astronomer, who correctly predicted its return in 1682.

According to Ed Schmidt, professor of physics and astronomy at UNL, the comet was last sighted in May, 1910.

"Back in 1910, they weren't too sure what was going on. Everyone thought they were going to be poisoned," said Jack Dunn, program coordinator of the UNL planetarium.

That is why comet pills came around, Dunn said. The pills were supposed to keep poisonous gasses from the comet away from a person's body.

Comet pills again are being offered for nostalgia's sake.

According to Dunn, the comet will

first be visible to the naked eye sometime in December. However, the comet will only be visible early in the morning, around 3 to 6 a.m.

By March, the comet should be visible later in the day.

The comet will be visible this winter in the western sky. However, he said the comet will be visible in the eastern sky in March. The comet should be closest to the sun then.

"In April it (the comet) is closest to the earth, but it will be hard to see then because it will be so close to the horizon," Schmidt said.

It's closest point to earth will still be 40 million miles away.

Dunn suggested that people should view the comet from the countryside where it is dark.

"The lights of the city make it virtually impossible to see the comet," he said.

The Ralph Mueller Planetarium at UNL's Morrill Hall is sponsoring a presentation called "The Return of Comet

Halley" and is planning another show about the comet. The presentations will be shown throughout the time the comet is visible.

Also, Behlen Observatory in Mead, Neb., will be open for public viewing of the comet. Viewing hours include: Oct. 12 and 19 from 3 to 6 a.m.; Nov. 1 and 8 from 8 p.m. to midnight; and Dec. 6 and 13 from 7 to 10 p.m.

The Hyde Observatory at Holmes Lake in Lincoln opens Oct. 13.

Roskens finalist

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"I haven't even had time to think about it," he said. "I don't even know what they know about me. I am not familiar enough with Iowa State at the moment to know what I'd do.

"There's a certain degree of just plain feeling flattered to have been asked," Roskens said.

Roskens received his elementary education in a one-room country school near Spencer, Iowa. He earned his bachelor's and master's degrees from the University of Northern Iowa and his doctoral degree from the University of Iowa.

Roskens became UNO chancellor and professor of educational administration in 1972. In 1977, he became president of NU.

Salaries priority

ROSKENS from Page 1

The state's depressed economy has caused the university to review its mission, Roskens said. He said a lower budget request this year resulted from the depressed economy.

"Salaries remain our highest priority," Roskens said. State money, reallocating state money and private donations are three approaches to increasing faculty salaries, Roskens said.

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