

If at tea-time too much joking and giggling are heard from one table it can only mean that the guide has digressed from the passionate topic of astronomy and has launched into more personal matters with the young ladies. *Un amigo* will usually bring him back to inner space by telling him in a loud voice: "Your wife just phoned, she will be at your mother-in-law's with the children this afternoon." The room is filled with disappointed groans and giggles reach maximum peak. "Oh Death, where is thy sting?"

Incidentally, there is a Drama Group on the mountain and they are most enthusiastic about their personal production of "*Il Barbiere di La Silla*". The actors, all extremely talented buffoons, adapt their lines with very local terminology as they go along, sometimes producing such hysterical situations that rehearsals have to be stopped until everyone pulls himself together again. At this pace, opening night will not probably be before Christmas 198? but, then, there is no real hurry.

With all this conviviality, and the starry nights and the moon shining so bright, romance is bound to put in an appearance from time to time, and so it does. Several couples have met while working on the mountain and actually owe their married bliss to La Silla. The first marriages date as far back as when they were dynamiting the site to construct the 3.6-m. In this romantic setting, a young and dashing Dutch constructor fell passionately in love with a delicate desert flower who'd come to work on the standard materials catalogue. They were married almost instantly. Soon afterwards a galant French mechanics technician from St.-Chamond declared his love to a pretty, young secretary and was immediately accepted; they were also promptly married and off they moved to Istanbul.

In fact, since the times of site-hunting, twelve unpremeditated internationals, whose only motive for coming to Chile was a contract with ESO, have already walked down the aisle with their Chilean brides or are on the verge of signing this more permanent type of contract. Some have not made it yet, but they don't lose hope. Evidently, the forces of the stars do cast a tantalizing spell over the more assailable benedicks from abroad.

But even for those who are always in a mental fog when it comes to romancing, La Silla is a great place to meet people and make friends, particularly so for the more shy types who have a hard time communicating with others. At meal times people are just bound to meet and talk. For the super-shy who wish to be around people but avoid the talking, we recommend the jogging team. This team is a silent group who rush about the Observatory at hypersonic speed in the early hours, while the more sedentary are just getting into, or out of, bed.

All Departments on La Silla have their Baby-Football teams to be proud of. Each team plays with five mighty "cracks" who look very professional in their spotless uniforms out on the concrete field. All the teams have their fans and cheer-leaders, so considerable thought goes into choosing the appropriate names that will symbolize them with vehemence. Hence, we have the "Come Fierros" (Lead-Chewers) from the Astroworkshop; the "Super H.P.". (Super Horse-Power) from Construction and Maintenance; the "Troncales" (old tree trunks too

## Tentative Time-table of Council Sessions and Committee Meetings in 1982

May 4	Users Committee
May 5	Scientific and Technical Committee
May 6-7	Finance Committee
May 7	Committee of Council
May 24-25	Observing Programmes Committee
May 26	Council
November 9	Scientific and Technical Committee
Nov. 10-11	Finance Committee
November 12	Committee of Council
Nov. 30-Dec. 1	Observing Programmes Committee
December 2-3	Council

heavy to move) from the Warehouse and Maintenance, the "OVNIs" (UFOs) from Administration; the "P.P.Q.P." from Electronics (better not translate this one); the "Condores" from the Hotel and Kitchen Staff and "Astronomia" from Astronomy.

The first team was founded 15 years ago and since then the football season has been the main recreative event on La Silla. Unfortunately for want of a well-lit indoor gym, the season is very short. Games are only played after work and they rely on day-light only. The first game is played on October 1st when daylight is prolonged by one hour. Each team works hard to enter the championship, win it and take possession of the cup that is awarded. This much coveted trophy is usually donated by a prominent staff member or an ESO supplier; such is the case of the famous "Dr. Muller Cup", which had to be won three consecutive times before the winning team could keep it. The *Club Deportivo* is the public relations manager and makes sure the press know all about the tournament events. T.V. La Serena has been at La Silla for the closing games of two seasons now.

The Volley-Ball team was recently born at a pic-nic in El Beño water hole. This is La Silla's own "national park" just 15 minutes drive on the road to Pelicano. The occasion was due to many Garching visitors being on the site and this, naturally, called for some special celebration. So written invitations were issued and, after work, the Sunday cold-buffet dinner was transferred to El Beño. The Volley-Ball net was set up and the game was well on its way even before everyone had arrived. Others, less sports-oriented, attached a cassette player to the battery of a car and there was music for those who wanted to dance amid the stones and lizards. The general comment afterwards was unanimous: We should have picnics more often.

Still, there are times when not everybody can leave the mountain, so at Christmas and New Year the families of those on duty are invited to come and spend the holidays on La Silla. Meal-times are full of childish chatter—which is a welcome change from the scientific chatter normally going on—the consumption of ice-cream really soars up and, for two days, the soft-drink machine works non-stop. It is said that everyone should enter the New Year in a happy state, so the no-alcohol ("ley-seca") restriction is un-officially countermanded that evening; and as long as there is no more car driving once the party goes into proper motion, ESO will, obligingly, turn all eyes to the telescopes.

So we find that the efforts to sustain a social life in these adverse conditions are not completely futile. Apparently, the fittest could thrive in a black hole given a chance. It is only on those weekends—which seem to drag on forever—when the morale is at its lowest ebb, that the fittest begin to explore their capacities for endurance and ask themselves: "Why do I feel like going down today?"

## New Telephone Numbers for ESO-Chile

Please note that the telephone numbers for ESO in Chile have changed. The new numbers are:

La Silla Observatory: Santiago 88757  
 La Serena 213832  
 Office Santiago: 2285006  
 Office La Serena: 212882