



several similar temples in neighbouring islands share a common orientation towards a rising declination of -9° . Perhaps the sun rose at that declination on the date of a since forgotten holy festival.

But of the several hundred temples elsewhere in Polynesia studied so far, few, if any others, appear to have an astronomical connection. (See Liller 1990). The people of Easter Island, called the most remote inhabited island

Figure 7: Erich Wenderoth (standing) and Franklin Alvarado analysing CCD data at the Instituto.

on Earth, seem to have had a special desire to record fundamental directions.

References

- G. Alcaino, W. Liller, F. Alvarado and E. Wenderoth: 1990 *Astron. J.* **99**, 1831.
 G. Alcaino: 1973, *Atlas of Galactic Globular Clusters with Colour Magnitude Diagrams*. Univ. Católica de Chile.
 W. Liller: 1990, "Orientations of Religious and Ceremonial Structures in Polynesia", paper delivered at the Third International Conference on Archaeoastronomy, St. Andrews, Scotland, U.K.
 W. Liller: 1991, "The Viña del Mar Nova Search: 1982–1991", paper delivered at the Workshop on Cataclysmic Variable Stars, Viña del Mar.
 D.A. Vandenberg, R.A. Bell: 1985, *Astrophys. J. Suppl.*, **58**, 561.

Sporty ESO

The victorious ESO Teams are feared by the competitors!

No, this is neither the translation of a phrase in a Latin reading book, nor does it refer to the technological and scientific achievements of our organization. It describes how sporty ESO staff members have repeatedly destroyed the common myth that astronomy is the realm of old men who stumble over long and white beards!

Football has always been one of our strengths and ESO teams on two continents have taught their adversaries many a lesson. ESO-La Silla tennis players are reputed to have the fastest serves above 2300 metres, and long-distance ESO-runners have been seen on many a road in Chile and Germany.

Bicycling, that noble art of ecological propagation, is in the coming, and ESO people are among the pioneers. At the ESO Headquarters just outside Garching, more and more of these elegant machines are seen, shining in all colours and in a great variety of shapes. Concerned car-drivers (a few are still left) have noticed an increasing spill-over onto the sparse parking space. New speed records are being set during the early morning race from Garching to the ESO Headquarters. And there are unconfirmed rumours that some ESO staff members spend an important part of their free time, riding along the beautiful roads in the hilly Bavarian countryside.

But nowhere has the impact been so great as in the 4th region of Chile! Read the following story to learn how the ferocious La Silla mountainbike team conquered the hearts of the Chilean public, won (almost) all of the honours at Tololo, all while representing ESO in the best possible way. Racing up (and down) the mountains in the dry Atacama desert, they have shown the world that at ESO power, transmission and response refer to more than telescopes and CCD's.

Because of the international nature of our organization, the International Astronomical Union some years ago decided that ESO astronomers participating in international IAU meetings may be registered as belonging to "ESO", rather than to a particular country.

It is at this moment not known whether the International Olympic Committee will follow this example, when the first ESO athletes show up . . . and what about the anthem?

Another Aficionado

The Other Face of La Silla

THE ESO AFICIONADOS

There used to be a time when driving a car up to La Silla one would hardly meet a living soul, and the only occasional *obstacles* of appreciable size were some donkeys. Not anymore. Several La Silla visitors and most of the La Silla staff have lately seen cyclists on the local roads, any time of the day, and going quite a bit faster downhill than uphill.

Although a solitary cyclist could be observed here and there already years

ago, this activity on the present scale is new for La Silla. So what's behind the display of these hairy legs? A sudden increase of interest in a healthy pastime, or does it go further than that?

The answer is in fact better known by the amateur cyclist of the 4th Region in Chile than by many of the ESO staff and visitors. Since about a year and a half ago, these ESO mountainbikers have won all competitions that have been organized in this area.

It all started with the arrival of the mountainbikes in Chile. As a robust and all-terrain version of the traditional bike, a mountainbike is particularly well suited to wheel on unpaved roads. Although the unpaved parts of the access road to La Silla are among the best maintained of Chile, they are still unsuitable for race-bikes with narrow tires. Hence some of the ESO personnel with interest in biking brought such a mechanical piece of art up to La Silla, and a couple



Figure 1: Start of 70 cyclists at the gate of Cerro Tololo Interamerican Observatory. (Photos 1 and 2 by Claudia Astorga; photos 3 and 4 by Nelson Muñoz).

of them actually started using it a few times a week. A similar situation was seen in other parts of this country, abounding with dirt tracks, and especially also in Tololo.

The Tololo Experience

Things became a little more serious in the beginning of 1991, when Tololo people talked about organizing a bike-race on the Tololo roads. The original idea came from Bob Williams, director of Tololo and lifetime jogger. More than a real race, he saw it as a personal challenge for all the participants, including himself. Knowing how tough an exercise this is, he stated: "This is where the *real* men are separated from the ordinary guys". He couldn't know then that also women would participate, even some of his own female employees. Where are you, ESO girls?

Not exactly unfamiliar with this type of road, six ESO cyclists quickly inscribed for this test. At the time of the event, end of April 1991, some of the ESO participants had been riding a mountainbike for only a week or so. Which was of course still a lot better than most of the 55 participants. The 34 km race, from the Tololo gate up to the top of the mountain, rising from 600 m to 2200 m above sea level, was really too much for many unprepared adventurers. But not for five of the six participants of ESO. Hans Gemperlein won easily, Luis Wendegass was third, Walter Rosenfeld sixth, Andrea Moneti eighth and Eric Allaert eleventh. Stimulated by this overwhelming success, the La Silla sports commission knocked immediately on the ESO management doors to get per-

mission for the organization of a similar event on the ESO premises.

The La Silla Continuation

It didn't take too long to convince the decision takers, and off went the sports commission to organize this event. Followed many letters and phone calls pleading for sponsorship, collaboration and/or participation, meetings to set up regulations and the like, TV interviews, text processing of all documents, etc. A lot of manhours later, on the 20th of October 1991, La Silla opened its doors for its biggest non-astronomical event ever: 60 cyclists, 120 companions, and

about 30 volunteers made this day a real treat. Now on their own territory, ten ESO pedallers participated. The success of the organization itself was fully complemented by the results of these racers: again Hans Gemperlein comfortably first, Luis Wendegass second, Eric Allaert third, Walter Rosenfeld seventh (and first senior), Andrea Moneti eighth, Eduardo Matamoros eleventh, Bruno Altieri sixteenth, Eduardo Robledo twenty-second, Ricardo Otto thirty-third and Rainer Donarski thirty-eighth. Many of the outside participants still talk wonders about the organization of this event, where "nothing nor nobody was left unattended". Which is not surprising considering the efforts of the organizers and the support of the ESO management.

But success has its price: if you want to keep it up, you must do something for it, i.e. keep on training, more, longer, harder. That didn't seem to bother many of the iron-horse enthusiasts. Especially not during Chilean summer, when the after-work training consisted in riding to La Frontera, to have a cold beer and a sandwich, or to the world-famous telephone booth in Cachiuyuyo. And the good results kept on coming: Luis Wendegass won the 1st La Serena mountain race (August 1991), Hans Gemperlein the 1st race to Andacollo (November 1991), Eric Allaert the Cendyr circuit in La Serena (February 1992) and the 1st race Vicuña – El Pangue (March 1992). DIGEDER, the sports department of the Chilean government, awarded Hans Gemperlein as the best mountainbiker in 1991 for the fourth region.

So what about the second race to Tololo? Postponed for the absence of its inventor, Bob Williams, and en-



Figure 2: Hans Gemperlein and "compañero" 2 kilometres before the arrival.



Figure 3: The (unquiet) ESO bike team just before the start of the La Silla race.

dangered by *El Niño* – a periodic Pacific ocean stream spelling meteorological disaster – this race was finally scheduled for the 21st of June 1992. Expectations were high from many sides, as ESO racers had better-than-ever preparation, but at the same time were looked at as the ones to beat.

Tololo Again!

The night before the big event, again six ESO cyclists went down from La Silla to La Serena, and took off early next morning towards Vicuña. At the Tololo gate, on a cold but sunny Sunday morning, they saw many familiar faces half a metre above the 70 mountainbikes. Now with experienced organizers and perfectly assisted by Jorge Santana and Roberto Rojas in an ESO carry-all (thanks, boss!), the ESO racers had no one to blame in the case of a defeat. Nobody really worried, as Hans had said he was "feeling pretty good", quite opposite to all the other races. Where he had won anyhow. Halfway it didn't look bad at all with 3 racers a few minutes ahead: Hans, Eric, and – wait a minute – an unknown guy hanging on the rear wheel of Hans. Half an hour later Eric had to let the two other go: "Either I hook off and get up there, or I hang on and drop dead 1 km further." This scenario continued until about 250 m before the finish. In a spectacular sprint Hans left his opponent 20 seconds behind. He finished exhausted in about 10 minutes less than last year. When asked how he felt, he barely lifted his head to see who dared to ask him such a misplaced question. Eric came in third, 4 minutes behind Hans, Walter 4th (11 min), Luis 6th (12 min), Eduardo 8th (19 min), and Bruno 19th (42 min). Although a real fine result, this one was

tougher than ever, and the distances between the participants are vanishing. So do not take it for granted that ESO racers will keep on winning for ever. After all, between the training sessions

there is some work to be done on La Silla!

Citius – Altius – Fortius

The story does not end here yet. The sports commission already started to organize the second ascension of La Silla, after getting an informal approval from the management. Keep your thumbs up for the end of next October!

Most of the more conventional articles in the *Messenger* end with acknowledgements. This one is no exception. In their constant effort to offer healthy and active entertainment on La Silla, the sports commission would like to express its gratitude towards the ESO management for its continuous support. Of course we should not forget the main actors of these events, i.e. the fine sportsmen who defend the ESO colours also when the subject is not astronomy, and their colleagues for the encouragement. Also thanks to all the car drivers who take care and slow down on the La Silla roads, because there might be a cyclist just behind the next curve!



Figure 4: The (smiling) winners at La Silla.

Alive and Kicking into the 90's

During the past decade in Germany, ESO has established for itself a reputation of a dynamic and successful organization, with a relatively young staff of highly motivated people. Apart from the astronomy field, this found confirmation on several occasions on the Bavarian football fields. The ESO team integrated the best of the different national styles and proved that this can be done effi-

ciently and successfully, besides giving a lot of fun.

Some of the matches against the strong team of the Universitäts-Sternwarte München, led by its powerful director R. Kudritzki, have not been recorded in the Annual Report of the Organization, but are part of the legacy that we are passing to the future ESO generations, together with EFOSC, the