

“Each spring the song of the universe begins again.” —Winton Southern

Continued from previous page entered a huge open area. To my right are the *Edge of Space Exhibits* including *Pieces of the Sky* or what I like to call, “everything you ever wanted to know about meteorites.” This colorful space is packed with lots of fun interactive exhibits and electronic games. There is also a



genuine moon rock (for those readers who don't believe we have stepped on the moon, look away quickly!). To my left are the breathtaking *Gunther Depths of Space Exhibits* featuring a scale model of the solar system juxtaposed against *The Big Picture*, a 15.2 by 2.0 degree slice of the night sky, accurately reproduced to cover the 152 foot wide by 20 foot high wall, making this the largest astronomical image ever created. This area also houses many exhibits relating to the

Milky Way and our neighboring galaxies.

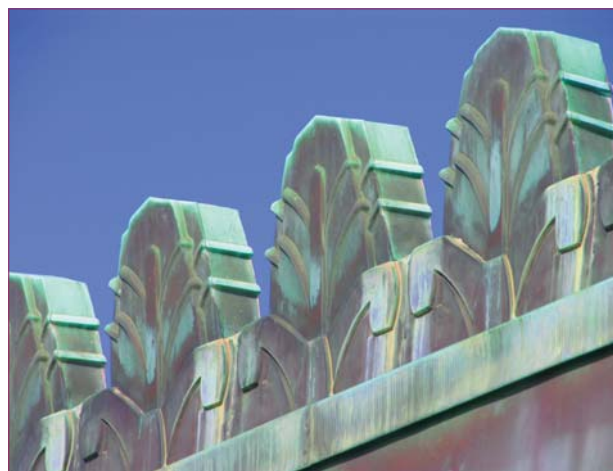
Moving ahead we pass the new *Leonard Nimoy Event Horizon Theater* where a short film telling the story of the Observatory and its renovation and narrated by Nimoy plays free of charge throughout the day.

Taking the *Cosmic Connection*, a gradually inclining ramp elevating you in a half circle to the second level is a hoot in itself. To the right is a 150 foot timeline of the universe, made up entirely of space-themed jewelry, complete with the Big Bang partially composed of hat pins!

The end of this corridor delivers you to the main level where many of the more familiar exhibits have been shined up and/or improved. Old standbys like the *Foucault Pendulum*, the *Tesla Coil*, and a much enhanced *Camera Obscura* are all here, as well as a new addition, the *Griffith Exhibit*. Located where the old ticket booth was on the central rotunda, it tells the story of the man who donated the land and funds to build the observatory, and for whom it is named, Griffith J. Griffith, who, like New York, was so nice they named him twice. Included in the exhibit is a portrait of Griffith commissioned after his death (but is surprisingly life-like).

The *Samuel Oschin* (pronounced ocean) *Planetarium* is all new with a state-of-the-art computer controlled star projector and full-dome laser projection system filling the perforated aluminum dome with a combination of traditional planetarium constellations and dazzling

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A detail of the decorative art deco roof. All photos by Kurt Reichenbach

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