CONVERSATIONS UNLIMITED - Tuesday, Nov. 25, 1986

INTRO UP AND UNDER

10:38:45

Hi, everybody. Ten million Americans claim they saw Comet Halley when it made its latest visit to the inner solar system early in 1986. And more than 90 per cent told a survey they had read or heard about the comet. It's a safe bet, however, that most of us put the comet out of mind within days, or even hours. Not so for Roger Knacke. He's an astronomer at the State University of York at Stony Brook, and he headed up one of six teams of scientists working in the International Halley Watch. I mentioned to a colleague the other day that I would be talking with an astronomer who has been working on the Comet Halley visit and he said, "What a great job. You work for a year and then have 75 years off." Is that how it goes for you, Dr. Knacke?

INTERVIEW DR. KNACKE:

-- Review long history of Halley visits
-- Review basic facts of 1985-86 flyby (dates etc)
-- How did this visit compare with others for laypeople?
-- Review long preparation by science community
-- Spacecraft: U.S., USSR
-- Review the six science teams and their functions
-- Review some of major findings:
    * Comet is losing water at fluctuating rates (e.g., 30 tons Feb. 18, 70 tons Feb. 19)
    * Surface may be lumpier than expected (Ian Stewart, Univ. of Colorado/Boulder)
    * Losing 20-30 feet of tail on this visit?
-- Comet 4 miles in diameter; enough ice for thousands of visits remain (Stewart); loses 1% per visit (RK)

~~14:00~~ 13:05

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13:15
14:00

We'll take a short break now. When we return, I'll be talking with Dr. Knacke about the data logged in at his Stony Brook office and the findings turned up so far about Comet Halley. Stay with us, please.

BRIDGE MUSIC UP AND UNDER

Hi, everybody. I'm Al Oickle. I'm talking with Dr. Roger Knacke at the State University of New York at Stony Brook. Dr. Knacke is an astronomer who headed up one of six international teams collecting data about Comet Halley during its most recent visit to the inner solar system. How many of you are working on the project at Stony Brook now, Dr. Knacke?

INTERVIEW DR. KNACKE:

-- Get details of the SB study (infrared wave lengths, or heat waves, as measured in the infrared area of color spectrum)
    * Name team members
    * How much data received? From where? From whom?
    * How is it stored: computer? paper?
    * What reports are resulting from this work?
-- Any unexpected, or even startling, conclusions?
-- How will this effort help astronomers? Other scientists?
-- How will sharing continue into future?
-- His reaction to new develops in space study:
    * Note NASA cutback in space shuttle program
    * New telescope in Chile (8 kilometers)
-- What lies ahead?

~~29:00~~ 27:30
OUTRO

PROMO - For use no later than 5:55 p.m. Nov. 25, 1986

Hi, everybody. This is Al Oickle. I'm on Conversations Unlimited every Tuesday at 6 p.m. here on WUSB. This week I'll be talking with Roger Knacke about Comet Halley. About 10 million Americans saw the comet on its journey near the earth early in 1986. Most put the comet out of mind within hours. But Dr. Knacke and his colleagues are still going over valuable data collected by scientists around the world. He'll give us the latest on Comet Halley. That's Conversations Unlimited, Tuesday, at 6 p.m., on WUSB - 90.1 FM.