

“The Observatory is closed and nobody says what will happen”

Pubblicato: Lunedì 9 Novembre 2015



“The astronomical observatory in Tradate is closed today, we don’t know anything about the future of the structure and neither what to tell to the schools that would like to book guided visits.” Luigi Pizzimenti is the person in charge of the astronautical section of **Foam13**, the foundation that has been running the Observatory in Tradate for 10 years.

In the last days, through its Facebook page, **Foam had announced its strong economic crisis due to the lack of funds given by the Province of Varese**, about 35 thousand euros per year. As envisaged by the statute, the Foundation, whose associates are the districts of Tradate, Parco Pineta and Gruppo Astronomico Tradatese, must be sold off when the balance is negative. Therefore, the council administration had declared that they were studying the situation with the other associates.

Meanwhile, **the president of Foam13, Roberto Crippa, resigned**. Now Pizzimenti, the person in charge also of the Space Pavilion of Volandia Museum, managed on behalf of Foam13, affirms: “ I’m not speaking for an economic reason. Foam gave me just a refund of my expenses and I work mostly as a volunteer because I’ve always believed in the passion of Crippa and all the others that made the foundation a reality known all over the world. A reality which now no institution wants to believe in.

Pizzimenti explains that the foundation “carries out researches on asteroids and comets and it is involved in the Seti programme, that deals with the search for life in space. All things that have been

discussed in these years. This is to say that it is a little reality, but, however, it is taken as a model by several non-professional sectors in Italy. Everything is done with the support of lots of volunteers who help to keep the structure open on Sunday, during the “nights of the observatory”, and who do also didactic activities.

Think that there are universities that ask to send us trainees. Without thinking that they even let to use the **telescope called Galileo**, which is not allowed to be used by everyone, a facility which costs billions of euros. We do not understand how an observatory like ours which has connections with the Nasa, could be abandoned. Because this is the reality: the public institutions abandoned us”.

“Interrupting a convention in such a unilateral manner is really barbaric. I cannot stay silent,we consulted all the public institutions, from the Province to the Region. I wonder how could be anyone so blindfolded. We want people to know what is happening, they want them not to stay silent,otherwise the observatory will be on the way to be closed. To get some money they throw away ten years of work” as Pizzimenti says.

The municipality has not answering to me for weeks while the Gat is one of the main problems. In June they should have voted the president and the vice-president of the FOAM,but they did nothing. **The Pineta Park is instead the one that supported us the most.”**

Among the offers after the liquidation of the foundation, it seems to be possible to get everything managed by a group of volunteers, “do they think to manage everything for free? Who is going to educate 10 thousand children and people each year? Who will wash? Who will clean? Who pays the bills? Now they fire three employees, also a president,to leave an intense scientific activity that made Tradate and the province of Varese known over the world. But we do not know anything about the future,and the organization: schools are booking the visits,what shall we do if no-one answers to our requests? We are answering that we do not know if the observatory stays still open. We do not know if it has been called neither a board of directors. Istitutions are working in silence and we do not say anything. They cannot do things in a hidden way. They have to tell us what they are going to do of this city reality.

di Manuel Sgarella Translated by Carretta & Cataldo (Reviewed by Prof. Robert Clarke)