

★ ABOVE THE FOG

• BULLETIN OF THE SAN FRANCISCO AMATEUR ASTRONOMERS •

VOL. 48, No. 9 – September 2000

San Francisco
Amateur Astronomers

Dr. Joe Tenn
Guest Speaker
General Meeting, September 20

“Astronomy in the 20th Century”



Sharing the Wonders
of the Universe



Information Hotline
(415) 566-2357

Web Page
<http://www.zennla.com/sfaa>



A native Californian, Joe Tenn was educated at Stanford University and the University of Washington. Between his undergraduate and graduate years he taught high school mathematics and physics as a member of the first group of Peace Corp Group in Ethiopia. Dr. Tenn has taught in the Department of Physics and Astronomy at Sonoma State University since 1970. He enjoys teaching courses in mechanics; modern, mathematical, statistical, and quantum physics; and astronomy and astrophysics. Many of his courses have web pages.

Dr. Tenn is active in the Astronomical Society of the Pacific. He has written some 30 articles on the modern History of Astronomy, most of them profiles of winners of the ASP's Catherine Wolfe Bruce gold medal, for the Society's magazine, *Mercury*. He is also a member of the American Astronomical Society and its Historical Astronomy Division, the American Astronomy Division, the American Physical Society, the American Association of Physics Teachers and, and Physics In Our Neighborhood, a local alliance of physics teachers. He is a consultant to the History of Astronomy Commission of the International Astronomical Union.



Speaker
City Star Party, September 2
To be announced...

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(510) 728-1851

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Telescope Loans

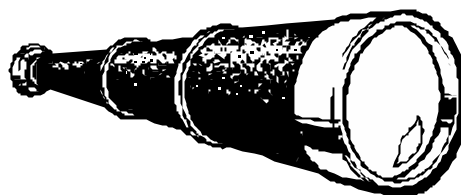
Ray Cash (415) 665-8666

SFAA Website Update

For those of you with online access, don't forget to visit the club's website. The bulletin board area especially is a great place to post info and ask questions. Go to <http://www.zennla.com/sfaa>.

Above the Fog is the official bulletin of the San Francisco Amateur Astronomers. It is the forum in which club members may share their experiences, ideas, and observations. We encourage you to participate by submitting your articles, announcements, letters, photos, and drawings. We would also like to hear from our new members. Tell us about yourself – what you have done in the past and what other clubs you have joined. **The deadline for the next issue is the seventh day of the month.** Send your articles to Lorrie Boen at 765 Geary Street #302, San Francisco, CA 94109 or at LorrenLee@aol.com.

Club Telescopes



Long time member Ray Cash-LePenec has 3 loaner telescopes for club member use and is in charge of loaning them out. If you are interested in borrowing a club telescope, give Ray a call. There are many new members in the SFAA and they ask what kind of telescope to buy or use and this is a good way to get to know the Dobsonian type of scope and learn the sky as well.

CLUB DATES

Board Meeting – September 13

7:00 p.m. Western Addition Library – corner of Scott & Geary Sts. SF

SFAA Club Meeting - September 20

Refreshments at 7:00 p.m.

Speakers begin 7:30 p.m.

Morrison Planetarium, Golden Gate Park

City Star Party

September 2 at 7:15 p.m.

Mt. Tam Star Party

August 26 at 8:00 p.m.

September 30 at 7:30 p.m.

From the President

First some member news. The Astronomical Society of the Pacific annual meeting was held in Pasadena during the weekend of July 15th. Several of our club members were present. Dan Christian and I were volunteers. Renita Mock and Randy Taylor were in attendance, (I hope I didn't miss anyone). The tours of Griffith Observatory and the Mount Wilson site were both very interesting. At the membership meeting it was announced that Bob Havlen will be leaving the ASP and Jay White, who has been the Mercury Magazine editor, has been appointed to be the Executive Director of the ASP. At the same meeting it was announced that our own club member Jane Houston Jones has been elected to the Board of Directors of the ASP to represent amateur astronomers on the board. Congratulations Jane!

In Bay Area news, the new Chabot Space and Science Center is scheduled to open August 19th. We should all take an opportunity to go see it. This is the home of a great planetarium, a MegaDome theater with wonderful film presentations, and the new home of the 20" and 8" telescopes from the Chabot Observatory.

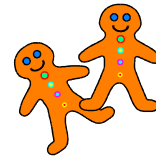
Back to club things. The Stern Grove site has been arranged for the club annual picnic on September 16th. It should be a fun time and the new location should be interesting. Hope to see you there. We always seem to have a good time.

The plan to have refreshments at the general meeting has been moving forward. I hope you folks will pitch in and help with set up and clean up. I have said that I do not want this to be a burden on just a few people. Lets make sure this experiment is a success!!!



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### **REFRESHMENTS AND CONVERSATION** **7:00 p.m. AT THE GENERAL MEETING**



The board, in conjunction with The Morrison Planetarium, has decided to have refreshments at the general meeting. It was decided that the refreshments and conversation will start at 7 PM and the meeting will begin as usual at 7:30 PM. The refreshments will be served from a table set up in the planetarium. It is the responsibility of the club to provide the refreshments, and clean up the refreshments area within the planetarium.

The board would like the entire club to participate by donating non-messy treats when requested, help with set up and clean up, and help support the activity with small contributions 'in the jar' (which will be provided) for running this event. Thanks in advance for your support.

## ***PROCRASTINATORS BEWARE!***

*This is your last chance!!!  
You have until August 31 to mail, email, messenger, deliver personally  
your entry in the...*

### **SFAA 2000 Literary Award**

Sponsored by our friends at



# SFAA Annual Picnic

September 16, 2000  
Stern Grove – 19<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Sloat Blvd.  
East Meadow Picnic Area



Hamburgers and Hot Dogs will be provided.



Any contributions of other food items will be most welcome and gratefully devoured!!!

## Public Transportation:

- **MUNI buses:** 23 and 28, exit at 19th Avenue and Sloat Boulevard
- **MUNI Metro:** K or M, exit at Sloat Boulevard

## By Car:

- **From the North Bay:** Golden Gate Bridge to 19th Avenue/Park Presidio exit. Continue on 19th Avenue. Turn right at Sloat Boulevard. Turn right at Vale Avenue and proceed to parking area.
- **From the South Bay:** 280-North to 19th Avenue exit. At the first stoplight, bear right onto Junipero Serra. Turn left at Sloat Boulevard.
- **From the East Bay:** Bay Bridge to 101-South to 280-South. Exit at Ocean Avenue and turn right. Bear right onto Junipero Serra. Turn left at Sloat Boulevard.

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## Davis Star Party

By Jane Houston Jones

What do you get when you cross an Astroscan with a 30 inch folded reflector? When you mix in a dollop of Questar, an hour of Filippenko, and a poster from Hubble? Why you get the Davis Star party, of course! These are but a few of the deep sky wonders offered for free to the public over the weekend of August 4 and 5 in Davis California.

Astronomy Magazine and the city of Davis, California joined forces recently and put on a terrific star party for the town citizens! And the citizens came in droves! Dr. Alex Filippenko opened the weekend star party with a talk Friday night. The talk began at 9:00 pm and Alex was still to be found talking and answering questions at midnight!

The speakers Saturday included Seth Shostak from SETI, Jack Sales from IDA, and Jeff Hester from the Space Telescope Science Institute. These talks and others were attended by a full-to-capacity 500 people each! Booths were set up by Lumicon, Star Safari from Chico, ASP, IDA, the Sacramento Valley Astronomy club.

The star party itself was designed for the public! A large quad behind the Veterans Memorial Building was split in three stations, the Constellation station, the Lunar and Planetary station, and the Deep Sky station. Additional telescopes were set near the building, manned by several members of the SFAA who conducted solar viewing all day. They didn't want to take down and set up a few hundred feet away, so they stayed put for the star show. Speaking of SFAA, there was a great contingent from our club there, and from the SF branch of the Sidewalk Astronomers, too!

Over 60 amateur astronomers spanning the state from Chico to San Jose set up telescopes. A few members of the Nevada Astronomical Society in Reno drove across the state line to attend. Sidewalk Astronomers from the bay and beyond could be heard beckoning the crowd to "come see the moon".

I don't think I mentioned the crowd, did I. There were 2000 members of the public out on the quad at any time during the peak of the party. From 8:00 PM, when scopes were pointed at Venus on the horizon, until midnight, when the lines at the

big scope finally shortened to 10 or 15, we partied on!

Even the astronomers did a bit of stargazing. At one point, when I was explaining Alcor and Mizar to the crowd around my 6 inch reflector, a familiar

face appeared behind me. It was comet discoverer and Messier Marathon populizer, Don Machholz, joining in the fun! It was that kind of a night. You never knew who would show up at your telescope next!

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## Mt. Tamalpais State Park Astronomy Programs

*Lectures held in the Mountain Theater  
Observing is in the Rock Springs Parking Area*

**August 26 at 8:00 p.m. - DR. DOMENICK TENERELLI**  
Systems Engineer Consultant for TPF, LOCKHEED-MARTIN  
"The Terrestrial Planet Finder"

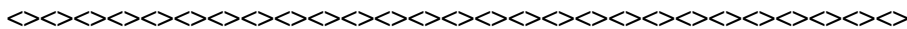
The TPF, under development, is a major component of NASA's Origins program. Missions over the next two decades will study planets beyond our solar system.

**September 30 at 7:30 p.m. - DR. LYNN ROTHCHILD**  
Research Scientist, Ecosystem Branch, NASA-AMES RESEARCH CENTER  
"The Sun, the Moon and the Algae" Evolution is influenced by the physical environment, including extraterrestrial factors. What was the roll of the Sun and the Moon on the development of life?

**October 28 at 7:00 p.m. - DR. ROCCO MANCINELLI**  
Senior Research Scientist-SETI INSTITUTE  
"Life's Expansion Beyond its Planet of Origin"  
What is the potential for survival, adaptation, and biological evolution of life beyond the home planet?"

Information: (415) 455-5370, (415) 388-2070  
Same Day Hotlines: (415) 566-2357, (415) 455-5370 (messages after 4:00 p.m.)  
Address: MTIA/Astronomy Programs, PO Box 3318, San Rafael, CA 94912

If you are a Mt. Tam volunteer, please call in your hours to Bridget Mason at (415) 361-6527



## CalStar 2000

### California Unified Star Party September 29-30, 2000

The California Unified Star Party (CUSP) is a new event. This year, it is only for telescopic observing (and imagers). There are no lectures, prizes or vendors. If this first CUSP proves successful, we may expand the number of nights, and include other attractions next year.

Please see [www.astronomy-mall.com/calstar/](http://www.astronomy-mall.com/calstar/) for more information. Or go to The Astronomy Connection (TAC) website at [www.observers.org](http://www.observers.org) for a link.

Behavior guidelines will be posted on this site shortly. These will be comprised of the usual common sense star party etiquette suggestions practiced by regular dark sky observers.

Founded in September 1952, the San Francisco Amateur Astronomers (SFAA) is an association of people who share a common interest in astronomy and other related sciences. Our membership consists of people from all walks of life, educational backgrounds and ages. Many SFAA members own their own telescopes; some have been made by hand in local telescope-making classes and vary in size from 6 to 25 inches.

**Treasurer, SFAA, 13 Mabry Way, San Rafael, CA 94903**

make checks payable to **San Francisco Amateur Astronomers** and mail to:

- \$ 8 enclosed, youth membership (under 18)
- \$30 enclosed, institutional membership
- \$30 enclosed, family membership
- \$30 enclosed, foreign membership
- \$25 enclosed, individual membership

**Select one category:**

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Email address:

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Name: Telephone:

## **San Francisco Amateur Astronomers Membership Application**

### **San Francisco Amateur Astronomers**

c/o Morrison Planetarium  
California Academy of Sciences  
Golden Gate Park, San Francisco, CA 94118

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