



Vol. 51, No. 6-June 2003

What Your Astronomy Textbooks Won't Tell You
Norm Sperling – June 18, 2003–General Meeting

Norm Sperling has taught thousands of introductory astronomy students what their textbooks won't tell them. Some didn't get it. He's carefully probed the reasons why, and puts the best, student-proven ways to master astronomy into his new book, "What Your Astronomy Textbook Won't Tell You." His lively talk will show startling reasons why common assumptions lead to incorrect ideas.

Norm Sperling teaches intro-astro courses at Bay Area universities. He ran the old planetarium at Chabot Observatory before they moved to their new site, and lectured at Morrison Planetarium for 18 years. He was an editor of Sky & Telescope magazine. He co-designed the Edmund Astroscan telescope and "The Stars Above" starfinder. He runs his own astro-goods company, Everything in the Universe, www.everythingintheuniv.com.

!!!! Membership Dues !!!!

Check your mailing label on the back of this issue. It is the month and year through which your membership was paid. If this date is past, your membership has expired and this may be your last bulletin.

In an effort to save the club money, this will be the only notice of membership expiration in the future. Also, in an effort to save the club money, you may receive no more than one bulletin after the expiration of membership. If your membership is expiring, please renew soon.

A Special Benefit for New SFAA Members



The SFAA is pleased to announce that **Scope City** (San Francisco's only telescope and binocular retailer) has offered, as a special benefit for new SFAA club members, a \$25 credit toward any item in the store. Simply bring your membership receipt to the store and ask to speak with Sam. This offer is valid for new members only, and your membership receipt must indicate this fact.

We encourage you to take advantage of this offer. Pick up some observing guides, a new eyepiece, or perhaps a new telescope! Scope City is well-stocked with a wide variety of products, including Celestron, Meade, Parks, Televue, Lumicon and other major brands. The people who work there are friendly and serious about astronomy, and have their own telescopes. www.scopecity.com/scopecity.htm

2003 Club Officers & Contacts

<i>President</i>	Michael Portuesi (415) 550-9366
<i>Vice President</i>	Nancy Cox (415) 269-8259
<i>Secretary</i>	Morris Jones (415) 453-2885
<i>Treasurer</i>	Lorrie Boen
<i>Speaker Chair</i>	Bob Naeye
<i>City Star Party</i>	Randy Taylor (415) 255-8670
<i>Membership & Subscriptions</i>	Lorrie Boen
<i>Bulletin Editor</i>	Phil Estrin (415) 703-4533
<i>Telescope Loans</i>	Pete Goldie (415) 206-9867
<i>Astronomical League Representative</i>	Lorrie Boen
<i>Honorary Director</i>	John Dobson
<i>Board Members</i>	Cheryl Schudel Bill Stepka Randy Taylor Dennis Tye Jim Webster Dan Christian James Mace
<i>Alt. Board Members</i>	Bob Naeye (650) 756-0430
<i>Webmaster</i>	Joe Amato

CLUB TELESCOPES

The SFAA owns 3 club loaner telescopes, Dobsonian/Newtownian reflectors: 6" f/10, 8" f/7, and 10" f/8. They are available for extended periods (30 days or more) to SFAA members. These are generally very fine scopes, easy to use and well-suited for deep sky, planets, and star parties. The loaner custodians are Pete Goldie & Sarah Szczechowicz, located in San Francisco. If you are interested in borrowing a scope, or if you have items you can donate for the loaner program (eyepieces, star maps/books, collimator, etc.) please contact them via email (<mailto:pg@lbin.com>) or phone (415-206-9867). Email communication is preferred and strongly recommended for a quick and accurate reply.

CLUB ASTRONOMY VIDEOS

The SFAA owns a series of astronomy videotapes featuring Alex Filippenko, a world-renowned professor of astronomy at UC Berkeley. The videotapes provide an introduction to astronomy and cover topics such as the Solar System, the lifecycles of stars, the nature of galaxies, and the birth of the Universe. The SFAA loans the tapes free to all members. If you are interested in viewing these tapes, you may check them out at any of the SFAA General Meetings. These tapes were kindly donated to the SFAA by Bert Katzung. Our librarian is Dan Cristian.

For information on the course tapes themselves:
<http://www.teach12.com/tc/assets/coursedescriptions/180.asp>

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 Phil Estrin at pestrin@dir.ca.gov.

From Your President

Our Astronomy Day event at the California Academy of Sciences was well-attended and very successful. We had about eight telescopes set up for solar viewing outdoors. Most had white-light filters for showing sunspots, but Art Owens set up a Meade LX-200 scope with a hydrogen-alpha filter for viewing solar flares and prominences. The weather cooperated with a cloudless sky, and lots of people viewed the Sun.



May 10 - Astronomy Day
California Academy of Sciences
Viewing through a solar telescope

The Academy staff sponsored indoor activities for kids, such as the "Paper Cup Star Lab" and "Birthday Moon". They tested a new card game that featured stunning astronomical images on every card of the deck. I'd like a copy of this game once it's complete! Many thanks to the SFAA members who shared their time and equipment with the public to make this event successful.

Our City Star Party that same evening was also very successful. We had over 30 telescopes. About ten were brought by beginning astronomers attending the Telescope Clinics we run in partnership with the SF Sidewalk Astronomers. Everyone learned something. Personally, I learned how to align a Meade LX-90 go-to telescope for an evening's observing. Fog and cloudy skies rolled in towards 10 pm, but we got in a few good views before the final "curtain call". Special thanks go to Luisa Riofrio, our City Star Party Speaker, who lectured on the shape of the Universe.

If you have a telescope and feel stumped getting started, or would like some extra instruction and

encouragement, I urge you to come out to the Telescope Clinic! You'll be so glad you did.



May 10 - City Star Party

SFAA has a big roster of special events scheduled for the remainder of the year, and we're still adding more. Here's a recap, including a peek at the new events we're adding. Look for details in this and future issues of *Above the Fog*. And mark your calendars!

June 21 is our visit to the Stanford Linear Accelerator Center, along with members of the San Mateo County Astronomical Society. Our sign up list is full, but if you are already on the list, details will be going out to you soon.

August 15 and 16 is our annual trip to Yosemite National Park. This event is still open for sign ups, but there are a few rules. Most notably, you have to bring a telescope.

August 23 is the date for our SFAA Annual Picnic. This year, the picnic will be at the Bootjack picnic area on Mount Tamalpais in the afternoon, followed by a special SFAA-only observing session (no public allowed!) at the Rock Springs parking lot (site of our normal Mount Tam star parties) in the evening.

September 6 is our special Fall Astronomy Day at the Randall Museum in San Francisco. We will be having activities and Mars observing in the afternoon and evening.

September 13 is a special event we are having in conjunction with the Eastbay Astronomical Society and the Chabot Space and Science Center. The Chabot telescopes will be open exclusively to SFAA

and EAS members for private viewing of Mars. Details and sign ups for this event will be available soon.

October 18 is a tentative date for a trip to Mount Wilson Observatory in Pasadena, to observe through their historic 60-inch telescope. We need at least 15 people willing to pay approximately \$50 in advance, in order to book the telescope for the evening. If bad weather closes the telescope, you are refunded. If you are interested, please let me know. More details will be available once plans are finalized.

If you participate in these events, why not bring along a camera and snap a few pictures for the newsletter, or better yet write a short article about your experience?

I'm looking forward to my best observing season yet - hope to see you out under the summer skies!

Michael Portuesi

president@sfaa-astronomy.org,

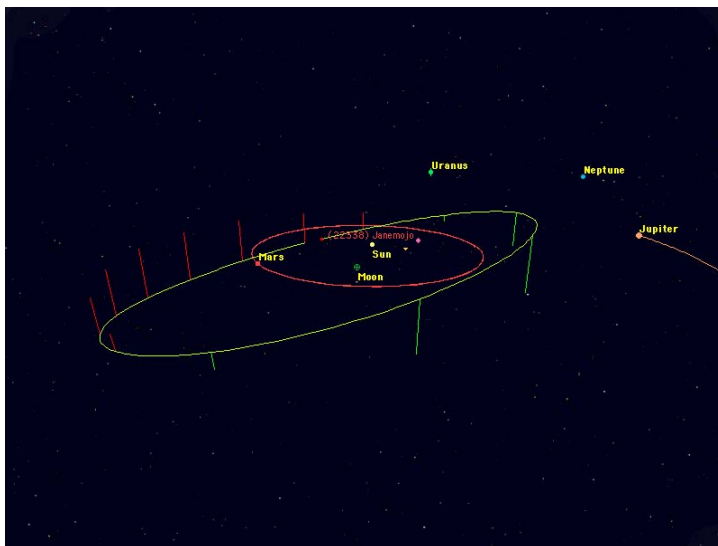
415-550-9366

Minor Planet 22338 Janemojo = 1992 LE

On the first day of January 1801, Giuseppe Piazzi discovered an object which he first thought was a new comet. But after its orbit was better determined it was clear that it was not a comet but more like a small planet. Piazzi named it Ceres, after the Sicilian goddess of grain. Three other small bodies were discovered in the next few years (Pallas, Vesta, and Juno). By the end of the 19th century there were several hundred.

Several hundred thousand asteroids have been discovered and given provisional designations so far. Thousands more are discovered each year. There are undoubtedly hundreds of thousands more that are too small to be seen from the Earth.

One of these little mountains in the sky, 5km 1992 LE was discovered by Carolyn Shoemaker and David Levy during a long successful observing night on June 3, 1992. They began at 20:00 and continued until 04:30 the next morning, taking 40 pictures using the 18-inch Schmidt Camera atop Mt. Palomar in California. After several required observations to recapture the object and determine its orbit, minor planets are given a number and sometimes discoverers name them. Minor Planet 1992 LE has been designated 22338 Janemojo, for SFAA members Jane and Morris (Mojo) Jones.



Additional information, orbital plots and a motion trail, plus pictures and the Minor Planet circular are displayed on this website:

<http://www.whiteoaks.com/Janemojo.html>

Above: Z view made by Carter Roberts using Voyager III

Left: janemojo-year.gif motion trail plot for 22338 Janemojo for the next twelve months, by Skytools <<http://www.skyhound.com>>

Jane Houston Jones

San Rafael, CA

jane@whiteoaks.com

<http://www.whiteoaks.com>

Messier Madness

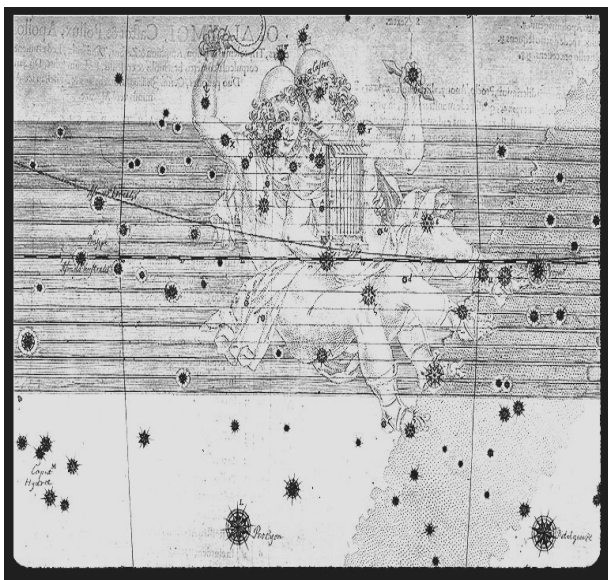


This Messier madness for me all started last October when Dennis Steele, a telescope maker of

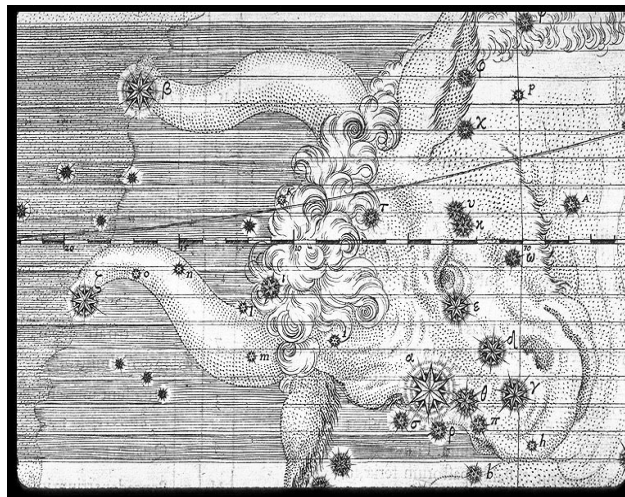
some years back (from Chabot fame) and coworker at Scope City said, "Here Ken, this will get you started," referring to Harvard Pennington's Messier Marathon Field Guide. Well, on my all-nighter flights back from the Islands, I'd try to make something out of it. My view in the northeastern thru southeastern sky from usually 35,000 feet at latitude 22.7, longitude 154.3 heading usually 047 true and about 1500 UT with horizon to around 25 degrees.

I have a weakness for rare books; mix with astronomy & you've got a dangerous combo. If you do a Google search for Messier Marathon you get 10 pages of results. My clicks led me to the Linda Hall Library and the Out of this World exhibit. This exhibition [Out of This World: The Golden Age of the Celestial Atlas](#) ran originally from November 1, 1995 through February 1, 1996.

<http://www.lindahall.org/pubserv/hos/stars/welcome2.htm>

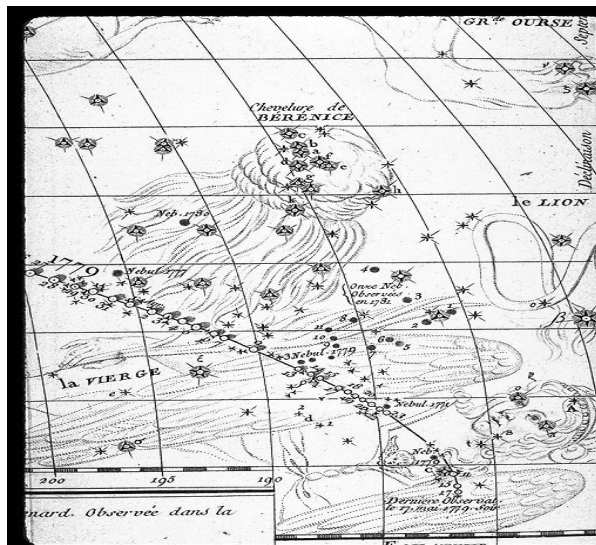


28b. Johann Bayer, Detail of Gemini in *Uranometria*, 1603



28a. Johann Bayer, Detail of Taurus in *Uranometria*, 1603

The exhibition contains forty-three star atlases and maps, covering the period from 1482 to 1851. Focal points include all five of the "Grand" celestial atlases -- Johann Bayer's *Uranometria* (1603), Julius Schiller's *Coelum Christianum*, Johann Hevelius's *Firmamentum* (1690), John Flamsteed's *Atlas coelestis* (1729), and Johann Bode's *Uranographia* (1801) -- as well as such colorful jewels as Andreas Cellarius's monumental *Harmonia macrocosmica* (1661) and Johann Rost's tiny *Atlas portatalis coelestis* (1723).



31. Messier, Charles. "Carte celeste qui represente la route apparente de la comete de 1779...", in: *Memoires Academie Royale des Sciences pour 1779*. Paris, 1782.

Many folk concentrate on the Virgo Cluster & to pop off 18 M objects. [Messier, Charles](#) Charles Messier also a cartographer made Catalog plate 31 "Carte celeste qui represente la route apparente de la comete de 1779..." which I use as my desktop. This particular plate depicts tracing the path of

comet 1779 which conveniently passes thru Virgo has 28 Messier objects in the full comet map.

This last Friday the 28th I was all pumped up after the email invite from Morris & Jane to the Lake Sonoma venue. So after getting care for my son Aeddán, I headed up.

Finding Lone Rock via TAC
<http://observers.org/sites/LS/> or
<http://www.darkhorizons.org/sites/sonomadetails.htm> is a snap.

I'm only sorry I didn't bring my digital camera to take a few inspiring photies (as they say in Australia). The wild flowers were in full bloom and walking on them smelled like chamomile. Before Jane & Mojo showed up I enjoyed the solitude but had a hard time relaxing as I was studying the charts like I was readying for a final exam. Jane sold

me on Don Macholtz Marathon guide, which I used to tick off each object I observed and scribbled notes

I've done lots of marathons; swimming, running, rowing, cycling and all to this point of a physical nature. Sure, there's lots of sports psychology and positive thinking, but this time, nothing like I've experienced before. After finding 45 objects and Jane asking "Have you found that?" And my response was "No," I knew it was time to quit.

So after thanking Mojo & Jane for the tortellini and Girl Scout cookies I followed Michael and James down the hill to 101 and returned home with a sky full of stars I'm now minutely more familiar with.

Kenneth Frank

CLOSE CALL AND ADVICE TO CLUB MEMBERS AT STAR PARTIES

I thoroughly enjoy public star parties and the delight of the people who look through our telescopes and hopefully get "infected" with our enthusiasm for astronomy. That being said I had a recent experience that reminded me of the need to remember that the public can't be counted on to do the right thing.

I was enjoying the City Star Party and left my telescope to assist one of the newbies with their brand new telescope. I always keep an eye on my scope to hopefully prevent things like eyepieces "growing legs" but wasn't prepared for what happened. I happened to glance over to my Nexstar 11GPS and noticed someone trying to manually slew it to the moon. At the time the telescope was turned off, the scope was aimed slightly down, and the clutches were clamped down albeit loosely. I was waiting for the scope to cool down and alignment stars to show up before turning it on.

I rushed over and asked the people to please not move the scope...that it was turned off. Luckily I had my clutches loosely engaged so while they were able to force the scope to where they wanted to see...it didn't do any damage. But if the clutches had been tightly locked down, they could

have done some damage to the gears, breaking teeth or stripping something.

So this was a reminder that we need to be aware that the public most often hasn't the foggiest idea of how our telescopes work. In my case I will make a point of keeping close watch on my telescope...although I thought being 20' away was sufficient I was wrong. It probably would help to keep your clutches on motor driven scopes just a slight amount on the loose side to avoid damage due to the intentional or unintentional grab. Kids are perhaps the most likely problem...when trying to look into a scope they often figure that they can grab it and pull it to their eye for a better viewing position. I always have a step stool for kids and shorter people to avoid this.

It might be a good idea to collect various "damage prevention" tips from other club members. Some I have heard about are using dew shields on SCTs and Maks ... to keep wandering fingers from touching the corrector plates, don't leave unused eyepieces in exposed eyepiece racks, using shrouds on DOBS so people won't try to touch the primary mirror...or toss cigarettes into it thinking it is a trash can. Robert Naeye has nicknamed his Portaball DOB "portapotty"....he might want to rethink that name lest someone take it literally ;-)

Bob Berta

MAY 15 LUNAR ECLIPSE – UNDER A RUST-COLORED MOON

May 16 -- I'm still basking in the glow of that fantastic eclipse night we had last night. Lots of the country was clouded out or rained out. I thought you'd like to read some observing reports people have sent in from various locations around the bay. It's great that so many people viewed the eclipse from so many locations.

San Anselmo: I'll start with my own event and then circle the bay on an eclipse tour. I was at St. Anselms School in San Anselmo with several hundred kids, parents and neighbors. My Project Astro partner (<http://www.astrosociety.org/education.html>), science teacher Anita Pisciotta prepared a handout on lunar eclipse geometry for the crowd. Ken Frank and 5-year old Aeddan, Kerry and nephew Kevin Sagar and I brought a total of six small to medium size inexpensive and/or homemade reflector telescopes and a few sets of binoculars to the schoolyard. After checking my compass, I knew where the moon would rise, through some trees and between some buildings. We observed Jupiter and Saturn until 8:55 p.m. when we finally spotted the moon near the end of totality -- a reddish/orange low contrast moon glow, which slowly brightened as the moon left the umbra. When the school event was over, I eclipse-hopped to another local gathering of lunatics on...

San Pedro Road, San Rafael. Art and Chelle Owen, David Winstrom, and Norm and Linda Mahan set up a couple large Meade and Celestron Schmidt Cassegrain telescopes, and big mounted bins. First they observed the sun in h-alpha light and through solar safe filters early in the evening. They eagerly hunted the eclipsed moon as it rose above San Pablo Bay. All of a sudden, it popped out of the horizon hugging muck a little off where they thought it would appear, and a couple hundred visitors had great views. Some viewers celebrated with champagne! Another astronomer was set up away from the crowd quietly doing some imaging of the eclipse. When the eclipse was over, the bright moonlight reflected on the calm water of the bay offering a lovely image to carry home in our memories..

McInnis Park, San Rafael. My mom and dad, Barbara and Alan Miller, scouted out the moonrise

location the previous night and joined a dozen or two casual observers along the marshes. They brought their 9 x 63 Celestron Ultima bins for a perfect view. Mom was first to spot the moon! Go mom!

Bernal Hill, San Francisco. Mojo, Pete and Sarah were there with bins. Jayson Wechter reports it was a very festive atmosphere with lots of folks from the immediate neighborhood, all speaking in "oohs and aahs", the language of the stargazer. Haze prevented everyone from seeing the moon until it was fully eclipsed and was a hazy orange. Lots of folks looked through Jayson's spotting scope. Mojo spotted the moon first at 8:46 p.m. Go Mojo!

Coast Guard Island, San Francisco. Bettie Grinnell viewed the eclipse from the Coast Guard Island. Sensational at 9:00 p.m. The students in her class were treated to a heavenly treasure as the class got out. Jennifer and Anna Myers got special permission to go to the very top of one of our landmark hotels to watch the eclipse. While they had a cozy and fantastic view in an elegant room, they missed looking at the moon through their own telescope. I'm glad someone got a view from high, tho'.

Akkana Peck and Dave North went to Palo Alto Baylands, and lots of others did too. Haze prevented seeing moonrise, like just about everywhere in the bay area. Dave North gets the eagle-eye award -- first to spot the moon -- at 8:40 p.m. at that location. By 9:00 it was looking very nice and most people could see it naked eye. The colors continued to deepen as the sky got darker until the point where the lit part overwhelmed the red shadowed part.

Chabot Space and Science Center, Foothill College, College of San Mateo and San Jose's Hogue Park were popular destinations. East Bay Astro Club president Carter Roberts took a fantastic image of the eclipsed moon with Chabot rooftops in the foreground. At Foothill, people shot the moon with their digital cameras through club member telescopes, which was great fun and popular event for the club, reports Ken Lum.

Steffan Bartschat was at the Point Bonita lighthouse in the Marin Headlands. Great once the moon rose 5 - 6 degrees above the horizon. Nice orange hues then a brightly lit chunk appeared.

Marshall Smith, James McHugh, Don Blasingame and another astronomer set up at the Marina Green, as reported in this morning's SF Chronicle, to a small but enthusiastic crowd. The article is accompanied by Frederic Larson's exquisite images, taken from the Marin Headlands.

<http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?file=/chronicle/archive/2003/05/16/MN212435.DTL>

Mike Portuesi and Jim Mace set up telescopes on Potrero Hill, and their first glimpse was an ashen gray moon at 8:45 p.m. They had people shooting pictures of the eclipse through the eyepiece of their telescopes...using a cell phone!



Viewing the eclipse - Twin Peaks

Twin Peaks - Bob Berta reports Peter Schumacher and family and Bob Naeye also brought telescopes. Long lines of cars snaked down Twin Peaks Road with people parked all over the place.

My favorite part of Bob's report is this "While waiting for the moon to climb above the low clouds I trained my telescope on Jupiter to the delight of the crowd. Many people viewed the glorious site of the giant planet and its four moons for the first time and remarked how moving the image was. It reminded me of the very first time 45 years ago when I first trained my little 50mm Tasco refractor that my parents bought for my 10th birthday on the



Waiting for totality

moon, Saturn and Jupiter and what an impression they made on me at that early age.

There were lots of kids too and I am sure they experienced the thrill I did so long ago with their first look through a telescope."



And at Pac Bell Park, when the moon rose high enough for the Giants fans to see, they broke out in mass applause!

Now we are all warmed up for next total lunar eclipse, which will be visible from the US later this year on November 8th - from 5:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. Pacific Standard Time. The moonrise azimuth for the next eclipse is 77 degrees (to the north of east) as opposed to last night's azimuth of 122 degrees which was south of east.

Jane Houston Jones . San Rafael, CA
jane@whiteoaks.com <http://www.whiteoaks.com> .

SFAA Annual Picnic

Saturday August 23, 2003, 4 pm

Bootjack Picnic Area, Mount Tamalpais State Park (\$4 parking fee for each vehicle)



Come to the 2003 SFAA Annual Picnic! Hamburgers and hot dogs will be provided. Any contributions of other food items will be most welcome, and gratefully devoured!

After the picnic, stay for a private SFAA-only star party at the Rock Springs parking lot, the site of our regular Mount Tamalpais Star Parties. Bring your telescope along and join in the fun!

You can do your own observing, or you can take part in a special group observing session we will be sponsoring for those interested. We will have a list of suggested targets for you to observe and the opportunity to share the views of these objects through each other's telescopes.

For directions and a map to the event, see our website at:

<http://www.sfaa-astronomy.org/sfaa/starparties/tammmap.shtml>.

Also see <http://www.mttam.net/map.html> for a map that shows the Bootjack picnic area.

If you plan to attend, please send email to president@sfaa-astronomy.org.

We need to keep a count for the Mount Tam rangers

SFAA GLACIER POINT STAR PARTY AUGUST 15-16

Morris Jones - Glacier Point star party coordinator

The San Francisco Amateur Astronomers are invited again this year to spend a weekend at Yosemite National Park and provide a public star party at Glacier Point on Friday and Saturday evenings, **August 15 and 16**.

Besides being a beautiful weekend getaway, Glacier Point in Yosemite is one of the best places to do amateur astronomy in California. Our weekend this year is not the best for long evenings of deep sky observing, as a fairly large moon will be rising early in the evening. Nevertheless on Saturday evening we'll have at least an hour of full dark between the end of astronomical twilight and moonrise in which to show fabulous Milky Way objects and distant galaxies to park visitors. Even with a large moon, the clear dry air at Glacier Point makes the moonlight less of a factor for deep sky observing than back home at humid sea level.

Moonrise itself should be a spectacular event to observe as it rises over Glacier Point's very clear horizon next to Half Dome.

This year's star party has a special treat of being very close to the opposition of Mars. With Glacier Point's excellent atmospheric conditions, it could be a spectacular show. Mars will rise shortly after 8 p.m., and transit the meridian at about 2:00 a.m. during our visit.

Only SFAA members in good standing and one member of their immediate family are eligible to take advantage of this offer. Each member who wishes to attend must

agree to bring a telescope to set up at the star party and show objects to the public until at least moonrise. In exchange for providing the star party, Yosemite National Park will provide us with free entrance to the park, and free use of the group campsite at Bridal Veil campground, on the road to Glacier Point.

A sign-up form will be on the SFAA secretary's web site: <http://www.whiteoaks.com/sfaa/yosemite/>

Members who have attended previous Glacier Point star parties will advise that the space provided in the group camp is woefully inadequate for the nominal population of thirty visitors. The biggest problem is parking around the group camp.

If you want to avoid issues with bear box space, tent room, and parking, and are willing to pay the \$7/night camp fee, you are strongly advised to arrive early and secure a standard campsite at the campground. It's possible but not assured that the park will waive the campground fee for star party participants not using the group campsite.

Jane and I plan to arrive around noon on Thursday the 14th to secure a private campsite and not use space in the group camp. Late arrivals aren't guaranteed of finding a parking space next to the campsite!

Hope to see you all at Glacier Point, August 15-16.

Morris Jones, mojo@whiteoaks.com

Upcoming Mt. Tam Events

The next astronomy program on Mt. Tam will be **Saturday, May 31 at 8:30pm**. Come to the Mountain Theater to hear Dr. Steve Stahler from UC Berkeley explain "How Stars Are Made". Just how stars form out of diffuse gas clouds is a central problem of astronomy -- one that has witnessed remarkable progress within the last few decades.

Weather permitting there will be viewing through telescopes supplied by the San Francisco Amateur Astronomers in the Rock Springs Parking Lot following the lecture. Our season has had a frustrating start with wind and cold in April and a rain-out in early May. But May 31 promises to be beautiful -- so gather your friends and come and enjoy the magic of a Mt Tam night. If you wish to join the speaker for dinner at 6:00pm at the Mill Valley Wok (at Tam Junction) call the restaurant ahead at 415-389-8868 and add your name to the



"Mt Tam Party". \$15 per person includes tax and tip.

Looking ahead, there is a change in speakers for the June 28 program: Bryan Mendez from the Space Science Center of UCB will discuss "Galaxies Near and Far". (Your season brochure lists Dr. Jean Brodie - but we'll have to wait until next year to hear her talk.)

Help us spread the word about our programs by forwarding this message to anyone you think might be interested. All of our programs are free and open to the general public. We particularly like to see a lot of young faces in the crowd, so bring the family and encourage youth groups to attend.

See you on the Mountain!!

Tinka Ross

Important Upcoming Dates

Board Meeting – June 11 - 7:00 p.m.
July 9 – 7:00 p.m.
August 13 – 7:00 p.m.
Western Addition Library, Scott & Geary Sts., San Francisco

SFAA General Meeting – June 18
July 16
August 20
Morrison Planetarium, Golden Gate Park
Refreshments at 7:00 p.m. - Speakers begin at 7:30 p.m.

Mt. Tam Star Party
May 31 - 8:30 p.m.
June 28 - 8:30 p.m.
July 26 - 8:30 p.m.
August 30 – 8:00 p.m.

City Star Party
June 7 - 8:30 p.m.
July 5 – 8:30 p.m.
August 2 – 8:00 p.m.

Online services for SFAA members

The SFAA's Secretary's Web Site helps keep SFAA information together and accessible to members. The site URL is <http://www.whiteoaks.com/sfaa/>. At this site you can find such information as minutes from meetings of the Board of Directors, the SFAA official by-laws, and other information. SFAA also offers email lists to supplement the bulletin board offered at the SFAA's official web site. At present there are two email lists -- an unmoderated list for use primarily for business and discussion by the Board of Directors (but open to all members), and a moderated announcement list for all SFAA members. If you would like to be added to the SFAA-announce email list, please contact the secretary (secretary@sfaa-astronomy.org) and let him know. You can also sign up for the list yourself at this URL: <http://www.whiteoaks.com/mailman/listinfo/sfaa-announce>

Calling all Amateur Astronomers!

Take this opportunity to complete the new Astronomical Society of the Pacific (ASP) survey and have a chance to win a \$100 gift certificate to the ASP Catalog! You will be assisting ASP in developing training and materials for amateur astronomers to help the public understand concepts of astronomy. In addition, the survey is collecting your experiences with any astronomy misconceptions you have come across in your encounters with the public. Click on this link to access the survey: <http://fs8.formsite.com/astrosociety/AstroSurvey/index.html> Or from the ASP web site: <http://www.astrosociety.org/> As an added bonus, if 15 or more of your club members respond to the survey, you will receive a copy of your club's responses (no names or other identifiers will be included). This could help in planning programs for your club and can serve as a topic of discussion at a club meeting. Just have your members put your club's full name on the form where they enter their name for the drawing. We're expecting to close the survey by the end of August or September and will distribute club responses within six to eight weeks after that. To find out more about the survey and to access it, click on this link:

<http://fs8.formsite.com/astrosociety/AstroSurvey/index.html> Thank you for your participation and your contribution to research in amateur astronomy outreach! Marni Berendsen Education Project Coordinator
Astronomical Society of the Pacific and Member of Mount Diablo Astronomical Society.

Telescope Clinics from Sidewalk Astronomers and SFAA



The Sidewalk Astronomers and SFAA are pleased to offer free personal assistance to new telescope owners at the monthly City Star Party, hosted by the Golden Gate National Recreation Area at Land's End in San Francisco. Experienced amateur astronomers from the SFAA and Sidewalk Astronomers will help new telescope users with setup, optical alignment, and operation of their telescopes and mounts.

The telescope clinics are held Saturday evening, an hour before the City Star Party at Land's End, San Francisco. Future events are scheduled on June 7, July 5, August 2, and October 4.

New (or "new again") telescope owners who would like to attend the clinic are encouraged to give advance notice by sending email to http://ww.clinic@sfsidewalkastronomers.org/, or by leaving a telephone message on the Sidewalk Astronomers' hotline, (415) 289-2007. Questions are welcome at the email address.

Gatekeepers Needed at Mt. Tam Star Parties

Attention all SFAA members who attend the Mt. Tam star parties! You too can be an official gatekeeper. Help out with the park gate and traffic control and you can stay on the mountain as long as you like after the public has left. All you need to do is attend a brief (1.5 to 2 hour) orientation session with the Mount Tam Interpretive Association and the park rangers to learn about the park and fill out a few forms. These sessions usually happen infrequently, but the rangers are willing to schedule a special session for SFAA if we get enough people to volunteer. Several members have already expressed an interest, but we could use a few more! If you would like more information or to sign up to attend, contact **Mike Portuesi** (president@sfaa-astronomy.org) or **Jim Mace** (jamesmace@mac.com)

Speakers Needed for City Star Parties

Do you have some knowledge you'd like to share with other SFAA members and the general public? Do you enjoy informal public speaking? If so, perhaps you'd like to be a speaker at one of our City Star Parties. You can speak about any topic that's astronomically related. Each talk is about 15-20 minutes in length. If interested, please contact **Randy Taylor**, our CityStar Party coordinator, at (415) 255-8670 for scheduling.

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, 765 Geary St., #302, San Francisco CA 94109

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

- \$10 enclosed, youth/student membership
- \$25 enclosed, individual membership
- \$30 enclosed, family or foreign membership
- \$40 enclosed, institutional membership
- \$75 enclosed, supporting membership

Select one category:

Name: _____ Telephone: _____

Address: _____

Email address: _____

San Francisco Amateur Astronomers Membership Application

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



Information Hotline: (415) 566-2357

Web Page: www.sfaa-astronomy.org

Sharing the Wonders of the Universe

Has your membership expired? Your mailing label includes the month and year through which your membership is paid. If it is past, your membership has expired and this may be your last issue.