



Vol. 51, No. 12 - December 2003

Member's Night

This will be our last meeting at Morrison Planetarium. There is no scheduled speaker for the general meeting on December 17, 2003. This is your night to regale your fellow members with a short presentation on any astronomical subject that personally inspires you. If there is a particular topic in which you have done research, feel free to share it with us all. Please contact our club president, Michael Portuesi at (415) 550-9366 or president@sfaa-astronomy.org.

Astrophotography Award

Members are encouraged to submit astrophotographs (up to three entries per member) for judging in the astrophotography award. Submissions are accepted October, November or at the December general meeting. All entries will be exhibited at the December meeting and voted upon by the general membership. Entries must have been taken this year (2003) and be of an astronomical theme. Size should be reasonable (11' x 14' or less), mounted or unmounted.

The Astronomical Arts Award

This contest is open to all members and will be judged by the membership at the December General Meeting. We had several fine entries at the inaugural competition last year. Any art related to astronomy is welcome. Your drawings of astronomical objects are worth sharing with other club members, as well as craftwork, sculpture, jewelry, and paintings. There are almost no restrictions here. Size is a consideration since we have to fit all entries, and club members, in the Planetarium, alongside the Astrophotography Award entries. Also, no living critters, please. The Academy may frown on any living, breathing things that are not part of official exhibits. Live acts are restricted to the human kind. Please bring your entries to the Meeting on December 17, 2003. Any questions can be directed to club officers, listed on page two in this bulletin.

Observer of the Year Award

The Observer of the Year Award is given for noteworthy observing accomplishments during the year, such as qualifying for the Messier Award, the Herschel Club, observing all the planets, getting articles or photographs published, etc. Nominations will be accepted in October and November. Members may submit their own name or the names of anyone they feel is qualified. Candidates should prepare a list of their observing accomplishments in 2002 for judging by the December meeting.

Election Voting Deadline

The ballot for club officers and board members is later in this edition. Please take the time to cast your vote. You can return the ballot to the club address or bring it to the meeting.

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>	Linda Mahan	
<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>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>		
<i>Webmaster</i>	Joe Amato	

MEMBERSHIP DUES

The mailing label on the back of this issue shows the month and year through which your membership was paid. If the date has passed, your membership has expired. Members may receive no more than one bulletin after the expiration of membership.

Please renew soon if your membership is expiring.

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>

CLUB TELESCOPES

The SFAA owns 4 club loaner telescopes, Dobsonian/Newtownian reflectors: 6" f/10, 8" f/7, and 10" f/8 and a Starblast. 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 Christian.

For information on the course tapes themselves:

<http://www.teach12.com/ttc/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

2003 is now nearly over, and so is my first year as President of SFAA. I'd like to thank the members of the Board, as well as everyone who volunteered their time and effort to make our events this year successful. I'd also like to thank Morrison Planetarium and the Academy of Sciences for hosting our meetings and providing us a home for so many years. And I also want to thank the Randall Museum for offering us a home for 2004. Our first general meeting of 2004 will be in February, in the Randall's auditorium.

2003 has been a transitional year for SFAA. We have seen new faces in the group's membership, and are saying farewell to some fond friends. We reluctantly ended our relationship with the Astronomical League, and were forced to say goodbye to Morrison Planetarium in the wake of its closing this December. But even so, we managed to have a year filled with more events than ever. I hope you had a chance to enjoy our Fremont Peak trip, the Stanford Linear Accelerator Center, seeing Mars at Chabot or celestial wonders at Mount Wilson. Or perhaps you attended the Annual Picnic and the group star party afterwards. Maybe you are a new member who came to us offer

discovering one of our star parties or the Telescope Clinic. My biggest hope is that SFAA had something to offer you this year.

I'm hoping that 2004 will be even better than 2003. For starters, we will have twice as many star parties on Mount Tam as in previous years, and the additional dates - scheduled on new moon weekends - will be private events. Our revised City Star Party schedule will hopefully have us seeing more stars and less fog. And our Telescope Clinics, already a success in 2003, will expand to once every month in 2004. These changes should lead to a more productive - and fun - observing season for everyone.

Finally, don't forget to vote! The ballot is in this issue. And the Art and Photography competitions will be held at the December 17 General Meeting . Bring your entry to the meeting to win!

Michael Portuesi
president@sfaa-astronomy.org,
415-550-9366

SAN FRANCISCO AMATEUR ASTRONOMERS SPEAKERS 2004

As Speaker Coordinator for SFAA in 2004, I want to bring you up to date on the first few speakers we will have in our new home. The Randall Museum has kindly invited us to hold our meetings in their facility, and I sincerely hope that those of you who have attended the Planetarium meetings will continue to come, as well as many members who have yet to come and enjoy one of the very special benefits of membership in SFAA, our fine speakers.

On Feb. 18th, we will kick off being in our new location, the Randall Museum, with a festive evening and a special talk on Ancient Astronomy. John Dillon, of the Randall Museum will share his knowledge and love of this subject with us. We hope to have a few surprises. Make sure to be there for this "first".

On March 17th, our speaker will be John E. Westfall, author of: *Atlas of the Lunar Terminator*. John's background as a cartographer and his love and knowledge of the Moon will provide a timely talk. Because of the winter weather and the frequent availability of the Moon as our most prominent viewing target, this talk will inspire and inform us. Invite an interested guest for this talk.

On April 21st, our speaker will be Chuck Pullen, with the AAVSO, who will show us how to enjoy viewing Variable Stars. Note that variable stars can be viewed with the naked eye or binoculars. Chuck will teach us how to keep a log and be experienced for long summer night viewing. This is another talk to which you may want to invite a potential SFAA Member to join you.

Other upcoming Speakers will be Phil Plait, "the bad astronomer." Ken Lum, speaker coordinator of the Peninsula Astronomers, will talk on Barnard Schmidt and the Schmidt camera. Ken will also talk about his appreciation and knowledge of antique telescopes and his travels to see them.

If you have suggestions on topics or speakers you would like for our meetings, please contact me at: Linda Mahan 415-383-7916, or doublestar@ix.netcom.com

MORRISON PLANETARIUM MARKS END OF AN ERA

BY J. M. RYAN



Looking up, they see piercing stars amid ebon splendor. Mars shines in Aquarius, and Saturn in Gemini. The Milky Way, arching overhead, elicits murmurs of awe. Dark, cozy silence wraps warm about them like a blanket. A fireball streaks

toward the east, and a pulsing melodic swell of music greets the sunrise. With the 'Good Morning' greeting from the lecturer, they applaud, and join nearly 10 million others who've witnessed, over the past fifty-one years, a star show at Morrison Planetarium.

The black star projector, lit in primary colors by gleaming spotlights, sits ten feet above the audience, amidst the 65-foot star theatre, vaulted by a dome of white perforated aluminum higher than a four-story building. The great instrument is one of a kind; unique in the world, incredibly durable and, in the realism of its projected sky, still among the best ever. The salon-like theatre, warm and welcoming, features comfortable chairs, subdued lighting, and wafting music.

The plaques on the walls, the glass case with archival displays, the remnant of the original console with its red and black toggle switches, and the spotlighted bust of Alexander Morrison, convey a sense of history. Metal cutouts, artistically shaped as buildings, bridges, and landmarks form a familiar San Francisco skyline-in-silhouette around the periphery, where the arching dome meets the circular wall. In the gallery beyond the western wall of the theatre, the gleaming brass teardrop that is the Foucault Pendulum swings endlessly to and fro across a fenced circular pit, demonstrating the relentless turning of the Earth. Entranced visitors stand or lean for long minutes contemplating the ceaseless motion as they anticipate the periodic toppling of the vertical pegs, each delicately stood on end at its respective mark.

Unfortunately, this exquisite venue and the remarkable

machine at its heart will serve the public only through December 31st of this year. Anyone wishing to visit the historic planetarium and its outstanding artifacts, or to witness the fine, original shows still produced at Morrison, a rarity in today's world of standardized product, has just until year's end to do so.

The Academy, in process of creating a modern, facility for the 21st century, will soon relocate elements of its museum and aquarium to 875 Howard Street, while it demolishes, then rebuilds its 75-year-old home in Golden Gate Park. Morrison Planetarium, too, will be rebuilt, with a new projector, in the modern style of planetaria today. The new complex, though, will not open to the public until mid-2008. In the interim, Morrison will continue public outreach activities using inflatable domes, and offer lectures in other venues.

But there's been no word concerning the preservation, display, or transfer of the projector and the other historic fixtures. Architectural models of the planned new facility show no space allocation to display these historic artifacts. There's been no public comment, but the Academy is seeking a home where the projector, at least, can be operated or displayed. It might appreciate knowing the thoughts and preferences of members, patrons, and interested advocates.

Citizens of the San Francisco Bay region share a vested interest in the outcome. The planetarium was a landmark exercise in the power of citizen involvement and initiative. School children famously donated their pennies to help make it a reality. And it has, for decades, been a favorite field trip for school classes around the Bay, and across the state.

For those who've admired or even loved Morrison Planetarium, time is short and opportunity fleeting. Those interested in enjoying the unique ambience of the star theatre should plan to visit before final shutdown on December 31st. The planetarium will present shows every day except Thanksgiving and Christmas. The regular show schedule terminates on Sunday, December 28th. From Monday, December 29th through Wednesday, the 31st, the Academy and Planetarium will offer a three-day open house, waiving admission fees. Morrison will feature the live program "The Sky Tonight" eleven times a day, every hour from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. The timing will allow the opportunity for questions and picture-taking. The Wednesday show at 8 p.m. will be the last.

Mr. Ryan is one of those for whom a visit to Morrison Planetarium as a young child in 1953 kindled an abiding interest in astronomy. He has been a lifelong amateur astronomer and astronomy educator, an aerospace researcher and engineer. He has also twice worked for Morrison.

OBSERVING WITH THE MOUNT WILSON 60-INCH OCTOBER 18, 2003



Ken Frank observing through the Mt Wilson 60-inch.

A trip to Mount Wilson is always amazing. The sunset colors the 100-inch Hooker telescope dome to a subtle shade of pink. A walk on the wooden walkways between the 60 and 100-inch domes trace the steps of famous astronomers of the past and present.

After sunset this time of year, the sky darkens quickly. By 7:30 p.m. October 18, 2003 we were observing through the historic 60-inch George Ritchey f/16 telescope. You can read more about the telescope and the others on the mountain in Mount Wilson Observatory Association VP Mike Simmon's article on the Mt. Wilson webpage. <http://www.mtwilson.edu/>

Our telescope operator for the night was Dave Jurasevich and Mike Simmons assisted him. Virginia Bogdanovich, who operates the adjacent Mt. Wilson 16-inch, and is the LAAS VP too, also helped out and showed me her Mars sketches. We had a small group on this SFAA club night - just 8 observers - so that meant we got to view many more objects than usual between dusk and dawn. Groups can reserve the telescope for nights such as this. Details are on the MWOA website.

Our first targets in the 60-inch were Epsilon Lyra, M 13 and Campbell's Hydrogen Star, Pk 64+5.1, 19h 34m 45.2s +30 31.01" in Cygnus. This small planetary, shows a small red disk around the orange star. In amateur telescopes this is one object that responds well to a H-Beta filter. 240X using the 100mm (4-inch diameter) Kellner eyepiece.

Next we moved to the Ring Nebula, M57. My sketch revealed two stars in the center. The mag 15.7 central star, a planet-sized white dwarf, and a fainter companion. I also observed knots and bright spots in the shell around the star. Mike and Dave pulled up Brian Skiff's Ring Photometry and we compared my sketch to the chart. I saw and

sketched the mag 14.7 and 14.9 double stars north of the planetary nebulae, and the mag 15.6 star on oneside. Here's a nice chart for this project. http://c3po.cochise.cc.az.us/astro/images/M57!dss2_3.jpg. 240X using the 100mm (4-inch diameter) Kellner eyepiece. 400x using the 4-inch diameter 60mm Erfle.

The dome was rotated and our next targets were Neptune and its moon Triton, Mars and Deimos, and Uranus showing 4 moons, mag 14 Titania, mag 14.2 Oberon, mag 14.4 Ariel and some of us saw mag 15.1 Umbriel. We did not see mag 16.6 Miranda. I thought I saw a lighter area on the planet disk, but it could have just been that the opposite limb darkening made the rest of the planet look lighter.

We next tried some faint globulars within galaxies.

G1 or Mayall II, 00 32 46.5 +39 34 41 Mag 13.7. A globular cluster in the Andromeda galaxy definitely looked just like Roland Christian's image here. <http://voltaire.csun.edu/roland/mayall2.html> A fuzzy oval with two fainter stars made a triangle. The two fainter stars are mag 15 to the SW and an even fainter star to the NW. Deep Sky Magazine issue 32, has a great article and finder charts by Paul Hodge, which I have used on previous observing nights with my 17.5 incher to see these objects..

G156 00 42 25.3 +40 57 18 Mag 15.6 was very near the core of M32. Faint stellar object in-between two stars.

Then we observed G57 in M110. Exactly 5 years ago to the date, I observed these same globulars at Fiddletown! <http://www.sjaa.net/eph/9812h.html> I was really enjoying these but everyone else wanted to get back to the big and the bright, so on we moved.

High surface brightness objects look best through this telescope, so we looked at several planetary nebulae and I sketches some of them. Two planetaries are worth noting: NGC 1514 in Taurus was visible while holding an OIII filter between eye and eyepiece. IC 418 (the red Planetary) in Taurus is a great object showing two shells, the outer one red.. We also observed the Saturn Nebula, the Blue Snowball (everyones favorite), the Perseus Double Cluster, M76, M42, Sirius B, Gamma Andromeda, and later Jupiter and Saturn.

Our last target was the moon. It was aimed at Copernicus everyone thought, except when I took a look, I noticed it was Buliades (RUKL 53), another deep crater with a crumpled rim and debris all around. So I showed everyone Kies and the dome Kies Pi and another unnamed dome nearby. Then we moved the telescope to Copernicus, and observed the many lunar domes in the region. (RUKL 31). Dawn was brightening the sky. It was after 6:00 a.m. It was time to call it a night.

My sketches from this Mt. Wilson trip are here: <http://www.whiteoaks.com/sketches/60inch.html>

Date: October 18/19, 2003

Location: Mount Wilson, San Gabriel Mountains 34 13.6N 118 3.4W

Altitude: 5,715 feet

Instrument: 60-inch f/16

Ocular 50mm Zeiss 480x, 60mm Erfle 400x 100mm Kellner 240x

Seeing: poor with some moments of steadiness

Transparency: LM 4.0, third quarter moon and LA light pollution

Jane Houston Jones . San Rafael, CA

jane@whiteoaks.com . <http://www.whiteoaks.com/>

SFAA ANNUAL AWARDS DINNER

Saturday, January 24, 2004

6:00 p.m. - No-host Bar 7:00 p.m. - Dinner

Basque Cultural Center . 599 Railroad Ave . South San Francisco . (650) 583-8091



Prime Rib with Scalloped Potatoes & Vegetables (\$32.00)
Breast of Chicken Chasseur with Vegetables & Rice (\$23.00)
Vegetarian Pasta (\$18.50)

Soup, salad, bread & butter, ice cream and coffee included.
Tax and gratuity included.

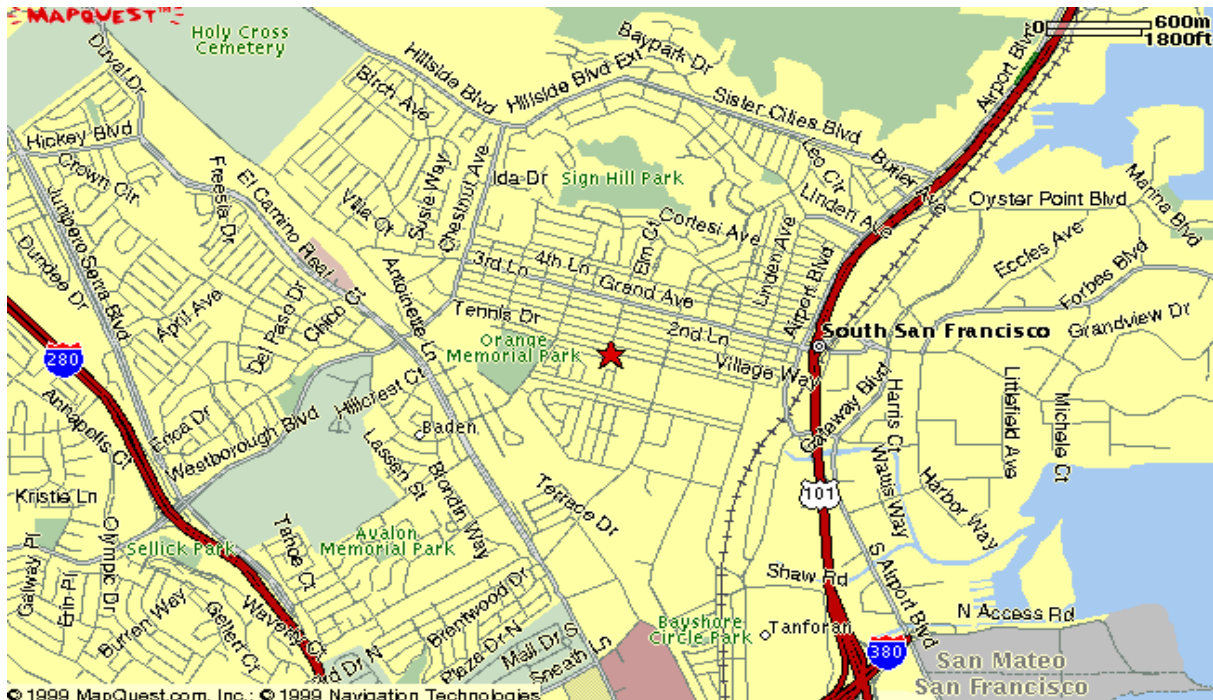
Please send a check or money order, along with your choice of entrée, to Lorrie Boen at 765 Geary Street #302, San Francisco, CA 94109 by **January 9, 2004**. Any requests received after this date cannot be guaranteed.

Basque Cultural Center From Highway 280: Take Highway 280 North to the Avalon Drive Exit in South San Francisco. Continue on Junipero Serra Boulevard to Westborough Blvd. Turn right and proceed to El Camino Real. Turn right and proceed to Orange Blvd. Turn left., and proceed to Railroad Ave. Turn right. Continue to 599 and turn right into parking lot.

From San Francisco, take Highway 280 South. From Highway 280, take the Westborough Exit, following the same directions as above after Westborough Blvd.

Basque Cultural Center From Highway 101: Take Highway 101 North to South San Francisco Grand Avenue Exit, turn right.. Turn right on East Grand Avenue, then left on Grand Avenue. Turn left on Magnolia and proceed for two blocks. Cross Railroad Avenue into the Basque Cultural Center parking lot.

From San Francisco, take Highway 101 South to the Grand Avenue Exit in South San Francisco. Continue on Grand Avenue. Turn left on Magnolia and proceed two blocks. Cross Railroad Avenue into the Basque Cultural Center parking lot.



BENJAMIN DEAN LECTURE SERIES, MORRISON PLANETARIUM

California Academy of Sciences, Golden Gate Park San Francisco, CA 94118

Series theme is Cosmology.

Details on the series: <http://www.calacademy.org/planetarium/special.html-dean> Info (415) 750 7141

December 16 - 7:30 p.m. Dr. Jessica Rosenberg, University of Colorado, Boulder
"Galaxies and What Lies Between Them"

The universe is filled with tenuous filaments of gas and dark matter with galaxies and galaxy clusters residing at the intersections. Is the gas between the galaxies a reservoir of pristine material still in the process of forming galaxies or is it the refuse of star formation in galaxies? What is the connection between galaxies and these intergalactic filaments?

JOURNEY TO MARS AT THE EXPLORATORIUM

from Raphael Rosen <mailto:raphaelr@exploratorium.edu>

JOURNEY TO MARS OVERVIEW

MARS SPIRIT LIVE AT THE EXPLORATORIUM FROM ROBOTS AND "MARS YARDS" TO SPECIAL EVENTS AND LIVE WEBCASTS

January 3&4, 6-11, 13-18, 23-25

In museum and online at <http://www.exploratorium.edu/marsrover>

Spirit, the new, rugged Mars Exploration Rover (MER), lands on Mars, January 4, 2004, to find out what happened to the water once believed to be on Mars and to identify any evidence of life. The entire month of January at the Exploratorium is dedicated to this Mars exploration from the first Spirit images webcast from the Exploratorium, to visitor-controlled robots that can go on missions in "Mars yards" in the museum, to a full-scale model of MER, as well as almost daily in-museum events/webcasts and special weekend programs and films. All events and special weekend programs are free with museum admission. This program is made possible by the National Science Foundation, with support from the McBean Family Foundation. Go to: <http://www.exploratorium.edu/pr/documents/04-1Overview.html>

JOURNEY TO MARS

WEEKEND SPECIAL EVENTS

January 3, 10 & 11, 17 & 18, 24 & 25

As robotic rovers begin to explore the Martian terrain in January 2004, the Exploratorium offers zany and substantive special weekend events designed to bring the distant red planet and the science and art of Mars exploration to light for everyone here on Earth. All events are free with museum admission. Simulate the challenges faced by NASA scientists by designing a contraption to protect an egg when launched from heights of fifteen feet. Meet the author of the definitive book on mapping Mars's fascinating terrain. Watch insect-like robots clamber over obstacles; marvel at a fire that burns without oxygen; cheer on robotic rovers made from LEGO's, as well as their school-aged inventors, and cartoon your own version of Mars. Go to: <http://www.exploratorium.edu/pr/documents/04-1Journey1.html>

JOURNEY TO MARS

LIVE IN-MUSEUM AND ONLINE WEBCAST SCHEDULE

Come to the Exploratorium or go to <http://www.exploratorium.edu/marsrover>

In conjunction with Journey to Mars, talk with Exploratorium senior scientists about the history of Mars exploration; see images taken by Spirit, which just landed on the Martian surface; learn how Spirit transmits its images from Mars to Earth; discover what humans would actually experience camping on Martian soil; touch Mars snowflakes, and find out why scientists are so eager to learn whether water ever existed on Mars. Go to: <http://www.exploratorium.edu/pr/documents/04-1Journey1.html>

EXPLORATORIUM OPEN FOR MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.'S BIRTHDAY, MONDAY, JANUARY 19
OPEN FROM 10AM UNTIL 5PM. THE EXPLORATORIUM IS REGULARLY OPEN TUESDAY-SUNDAY, 10AM-5PM.

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Contact: LINDA DACKMAN (415) 561-0363 / Leslie Patterson (415) 561-0377

BIG NEWS FROM YOUR FEARLESS CORRESPONDENT

JANE HOUSTON JONES

I've been real interested in Cassini lately. Cassini the crater, Cassini the division, and Cassini the mission. We aimed our telescope at the 8 day waxing moon on the sidewalks of San Francisco Sunday night. Vallis Alpes and Montes Alpes - the Alpine Valley and the Alps - are in one of my favorite areas of the moon near the north pole. Just south of the Alps is the Cassini crater. It's a 57km (35 mile) diameter crater. It's an odd looking little crater, with slumping or terraced walls, two craters on the flooded crater basin, and a crack in the wall.

When I observe I often wonder about the men and women whose names are immortalized in our universe. Giovanni Cassini was an Italian-French astronomer who lived between 1625-1712. He discovered that Saturn's rings are split into two parts and the gap between them is called the Cassini Division. He also discovered Tethys, Dione, Rhea and Iapetus, four of Saturn's moons. He also discovered the zodiacal light and the polar caps on Mars! Two hundred eighty five years after his death, the Cassini Mission launched. It's been flying through the solar system since 1997. On July 1, 2004 Cassini will begin a 4 year orbit of Saturn and will release its piggybacked Huygens probe about six months later for descent through the thick atmosphere of the moon Titan.

Soon, I'll be watching Cassini's progress from my new office at the Space Flight Operations Facility at JPL in Pasadena. Yes, I am going to work in the Cassini Division! Mojo and I are moving to Pasadena Thanksgiving week, and I started my new job as Senior Outreach Specialist for the Cassini-Huygens mission to Saturn and Titan on the 24th of November.

Although we've left the area, but our email list will remain. I'll rely on a couple of the local amateur astronomers on the list to summarize and post announcements of local astronomical events to you all. Volunteers?? And we hope some more people will want to take telescopes out on the sidewalks. It's a ton of fun! I'll continue to regale you with information on meteor showers, eclipses and other astronomical events you can see from here. But now I'll also be able to tell you all about some of the unmanned space missions that are managed out of JPL, including my own project, the Cassini mission to Saturn. In January the Spirit and Opportunity - the two Mars rover missions will study the red surface of Mars. Also in January, the Stardust spacecraft encounters Comet Wild 2. And in July, Cassini begins its orbit of Saturn, and 6 months later it will drop the Huygens probe through the atmosphere of Saturn's largest moon Titan. I'll be telling you all about all these missions as well. You can read all about them right here right now: <http://www.jpl.nasa.gov/> One of my job responsibilities will be to work on outreach ideas to share Saturn with inner city kids, and run the Saturn Observing Campaign. This program gives sky enthusiasts of all abilities the opportunity to share the splendor of Saturn with their local community. Since it is right on the main page of the Cassini website, you know its important! So I hope to deputize all of you as participants in the campaign once I get started on my job. You don't have to have a telescope. Just an interest in the universe will do. Here's the Cassini website with the Saturn Observing Campaign linked at the bottom.
<http://saturn.jpl.nasa.gov/index.cfm>

Jane Houston Jones
San Rafael, CA

<mailto:jane@whiteoaks.com>
<http://www.whiteoaks.com/>

IMPORTANT UPCOMING DATES

Board Meeting

December 10 - 7:00 p.m.
January 14 - 7:00 p.m.
February 11 - 7:00 p.m.

*Western Addition Library
Scott & Geary Streets, San Francisco*

SFAA General Meeting & Lecture

December 17 - Elections & Member's Night
*Morrison Planetarium, Golden Gate Park
Refreshments 7:00 p.m. . Speakers begin at 7:30 p.m.*
January 24 - Awards Dinner
6:00 p.m. Open Bar - 7:00 p.m. Dinner
February 18
*Randall Museum, 199 Museum Way
(near 14th Street and Roosevelt)*

City Star Party

January 31 - Sunset, 5:32 p.m.
February 28 - Sunset, 6:02 p.m.
Telescope Clinic starts one hour before Star Party

CANDIDATE FOR SFAA BOARD

Hi - My name is Steve Bryson. I'm new to SFAA, but am intrigued by the possibility of serving on the board of directors. Please allow me to tell you a little about myself.

I have been an amateur astronomer since I was 14 years old in Chicago. While in high school in 1973, I re-founded the Chicago Astronomical Society Student Group. I worked my way through college at the Adler Planetarium in Chicago, where I ran the planetarium projector, operated the public telescope, taught children's classes and composed music tracks for sky shows. I moved to the Bay Area in 1981, and have been working at NASA Ames Research Center since 1987 as a research scientist. My current work involves scientific computation (in which I'm in the finishing stages of a PhD at Stanford), such as simulating phenomena in the solar atmosphere. In the early 90's, I co-founded the Ames Amateur Astronomical Association with Kalpana Chawla, who, sadly, was on the crew of Columbia last January. Since 1985 I have taught youth and adult courses at the California Academy of Sciences, covering astronomy and physics topics. I have been in leadership positions in several volunteer professional organizations, mostly with the Institute of Electronic and Electrical Engineers (IEEE), for which I chaired two large conferences, and the Society for Industrial and Applied Mathematics (SIAM). I feel that this experience puts me in a good position to help the SFAA. Finally, and most importantly, I am recently returning to amateur astronomy in a fairly serious way, and own a soon-to-be-motorized 12.5" Dobson and a Meade ETX-125.

You can find out even more about me and see my growing astrophoto collection at <http://homepage.mac.com/stevepur>.

SFAA 2004 CALENDAR

JANUARY

14 - 7 PM Board Meeting
24 - Awards Dinner
6 PM Open Bar
7 PM Dinner
31 - 4:30 PM Telescope Clinic
31 - Sunset 5:32 PM City Star Party (CSP)

FEBRUARY

11 - 7PM Board Meeting
18 - 7PM General Meeting
28 - 5PM Telescope Clinic (CSP)
28 - Sunset 6:02 pm City Star Party

MARCH

10 - 7PM Board Meeting
17 - 7PM General Meeting
27 - Sunset 6:29 PM City Star Party
27 - Mount Tam Telescope Clinic
27 - Mount Tam Public Star Party

APRIL

14 - 7PM Board Meeting
17 - Sunset 6:48 PM Mount Tam SFAA-only Star Party
21 - General Meeting 7 pm
24 - Mount Tam Telescope Clinic
24 - Mount Tam Public Star Party

MAY

12 - 7PM Board Meeting
15 - Sunset 8:13 PM Mount Tam SFAA-only Star Party
19 - 7PM General Meeting
22 - Mount Tam Telescope Clinic
22 - Mount Tam Public Star Party

JUNE

9 - 7PM Board Meeting
16 - 7PM General Meeting
12 - Sunset 8:32 PM Mount Tam SFAA-only Star Party
26 - Mount Tam Telescope Clinic
26 - Mount Tam Public Star Party

JULY

14 - 7PM Board Meeting
17 - Sunset 8:30 pm Mount Tam SFAA-only Star Party
21 - 7PM General Meeting
24 - Mount Tam Telescope Clinic
24 - Mount Tam Public Star Party

AUGUST

11 - 7 PM Board Meeting
14 - Sunset 8:03 PM Mount Tam SFAA-only Star Party
18 - 7PM General Meeting
21 - Mount Tam Telescope Clinic
21 - Mount Tam Public Star Party

SEPTEMBER

8 - 7PM Board Meeting
11 - Sunset 7:23 PM Mount Tam SFAA-only Star Party
15 - 7PM General Meeting
18 - Mount Tam Telescope Clinic
18 - Mount Tam Public Star Party

OCTOBER

9 - Sunset 6:40 PM Mount Tam SFAA-only Star Party
13 - 7PM Board Meeting
16 - Mount Tam Telescope Clinic
16 - Mount Tam Public Star Party
20 - 7PM General Meeting
23 - Sunset 6:21 PM City Star Party

NOVEMBER

10 - 7PM Board Meeting
17 - 7PM General Meeting
20 - 4PM Telescope Clinic (CSP)
20 - Sunset 4:55 PM City Star Party

DECEMBER

8 - 7PM Board Meeting
15 - 7PM General Meeting/Member's Night
18 - 4PM Telescope Clinic (CSP)
18 - Sunset 4:53 PM City Star Party



San Francisco Amateur Astronomers

SFAA
P.O. Box 15097
San Francisco, CA 94115
Tel: (415) 566-2357

BALLOT

2004 OFFICERS AND BOARD OF DIRECTORS

OFFICERS

_____ President	Michael Portuesi
_____ Vice-President	Nancy Cox
_____ Secretary	James Mace
_____ Treasurer	Lorrie Boen
_____ Write-ins	_____
_____ Write-ins	_____

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

_____ Jim Webster	_____ Slava Evanikoff
_____ Cheryl Schudel	_____ Dan Christian
_____ Randy Taylor	_____ Alternate 1 - Phil Estrin
_____ Ken Frank	_____ Alternate 2 - John Dillon
_____ Steve Bryson	
_____ Write-ins	_____
_____ Write-ins	_____

VOTING INSTRUCTIONS

The club members listed above are candidates for Officers and Board of Directors of SFAA for the year 2004. Please vote for a total of four officers and a total of seven board or directors including write-ins. Voting for more than four officers or for more than seven board members per ballot will invalidate the entire ballot. Family memberships must submit a separate ballot for each voting family member. Write-ins for officers must include the candidate's name and office for which he or she is nominated.

All candidates, including write-ins, must have committed to attending at least seven board meetings and may not miss more than two consecutive meetings during the calendar year for which they are nominated.

The seven board of directors' candidates who receive the highest number of votes will become regular board members. The two candidates receiving the next highest number of votes will become alternate board members. The new Officers and Board of Directors will be installed at the Annual Awards Dinner in January 2004.

Please return your ballots to: SFAA Secretary, at the address above. Ballots must be received no later than the general meeting on Wednesday, December 17, 2003.

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:

Email address:

Address:

Name: Telephone:

San Francisco Amateur Astronomers Membership Application

San Francisco Amateur Astronomers
P.O. Box 15097
San Francisco, CA 94115



Information Hotline: (415) 289-6636

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.