

★ ABOVE THE FOG

• BULLETIN OF THE SAN FRANCISCO AMATEUR ASTRONOMERS •

Vol. 55, No. 2 – February 2007

**DATE CHANGE FOR FEBRUARY GENERAL MEETING TO
Wednesday . February 14, 2007 . 7:00 p.m.
AWARDS NIGHT
RANDALL MUSEUM
199 Museum Way, San Francisco**

A VERY SPECIAL SFAA VALENTINE'S DAY MEETING



What better way to kick off the Astronomical New Year than to introduce the members of SFAA to their new Officers and Members of the Board at this special meeting! Without them, there would be no SFAA, and we are all proud and grateful for their contributions each year. We will be thanking those who are stepping down from their term of service and welcoming our new "team." We also will, no doubt, learn a few things about these friends of SFAA.

Our club has special honors bestowed annually to a few of our members. We recognize an individual's outstanding service to SFAA with the Service Award. You will learn more about this award and the deserving person who earned it for last year's service. We also will be presenting the Observer of the Year Award to the person who was the most outstanding astronomical observer. You will have the opportunity to learn why the award was earned by the outstanding honoree for last year's diligent work. Other Awards may also be presented.

There are two contests each year, held at the December meeting. Members compete in the Art Contest and the Astrophotography Contest. First and second prizes will be awarded in each category. You will meet the winners and see the winning entries, and perhaps they will provide inspiration for your own submission(s) in this coming December's contest.

All members are urged to attend this meeting, enjoy the refreshments and time with our friends and take advantage of the opportunity to convey thanks and appreciation for our contributions to San Francisco Amateur Astronomers.

NEWSLETTER DELIVERY

Commencing with the December 2006 issue, SFAA's official newsletter, ABOVE THE FOG, is being delivered to its membership via e-mail. When the newsletter becomes available, members receive an e-mail notification with a link to the online version. If you wish to receive the newsletter in hard copy format, please submit a request to treasurer1@sfaa-astronomy.org.

2007 CI ub Officers & Contacts

<i>President</i>	Kenneth Frank	(415) 789-0459
<i>Vice President</i>	Jorge Morales	(415) 244-9290
<i>Secretary</i>	Stefanie Ulrey	treasurer1@sfaa-astronomy.org
<i>Treasurer</i>	Stefanie Ulrey	treasurer1@sfaa-astronomy.org
<i>Speaker Chair</i>	Linda Mahan	doublestar@comcast.net
<i>City Star Party</i>	Randy Taylor	
<i>Membership & Subscriptions</i>	Mel Pritchard	
<i>Bulletin</i>	Phil Estrin	
<i>Editor-in-Chief</i>		
<i>Associate Editor</i>	Annette Gabrielli	
<i>Telescope Loans</i>	Pete Goldie	(415) 206-9867
<i>Honorary Director and Board Member Emeritus</i>	John Dobson	(415) 665-4054
<i>Board Members</i>	John Dillon	(415) 332-8096
	Robert English	(415) 383-6475
		sfaa@bogusnet.net
	Annette Gabrielli	
	Dirk Lammerts	(415) 383-2247
	Elan Morpurgo	(415) 242-1464
	Michael Portuesi	(415) 550-9366
	Peter Schumacher	(415) 566-6864
<i>Alternate Board Members</i>	Joe Amato	web-master@sfaa-astronomy.net
	Jason Simon	
<i>Webmaster</i>	Joe Amato	web-master@sfaa-astronomy.net

CI ub Tel escapes

The SFAA owns eight very fine, easy to use, loaner telescopes well-suited for deep sky, planets, and star parties. All scopes are available to any SFAA member. The loaner custodians for the majority of our fleet are Pete & Sarah Goldie. Please contact them at pg@lbin.com for details if you are interested in borrowing a scope or if you have items you can donate for the loaner program (eyepieces, star maps/books, red flashlights, collimator, etc.). Please contact the appropriate member indicated below if you are interested in borrowing one of the telescopes.



- 1) 6" f/10.3 Dobsonian/Kenneth Frank/ kennethfrank@planitarium.net
- 2) 8" f/7 Dobsonian/Pete Goldie/pg@lbin.com
- 3) 8.5" f/6 Dobsonian/Pete Goldie/pg@lbin.com
- 4) 10" f/8 Dobsonian/Pete Goldie/pg@lbin.com
- 5) 114mm f/4 Newtonian StarBlast/Pete Goldie/pg@lbin.com
- 6) 8" f/10 Celestron SCT/Annette Gabrielli/agabrielli-sfaa@sbcglobal.net
- 7) 8" f/10 Meade SCT/Stefanie Ulrey/secretary1@sfaa-astronomy.org
- 8) 9.5" f/5.6 Celestron Newtonian/Ken Frank/kennethfrank@planitarium.net

CI ub 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. For information on the course tapes themselves:



<http://www.teach12.com/ttc/assets/coursedescriptions/180.asp>

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.

SFAA WEBSITE AND ONLINE SERVICES



The SFAA web site at sfaa-astronomy.org is provided to our members and the general public for the sharing of club information and services. The web site contains links for club [star parties](#), [events](#), [newsletters](#), [lectures](#) and [meetings](#). If you wish to interact with other people who are interested in astronomy, the SFAA web site offers public and members only [bulletin board forums](#). If you wish to remain up-to-date on club activities, then we encourage you to subscribe to one or both of our public [mailing lists](#), which will allow you to receive our newsletter and/or club announcements via email. Other useful and interesting information and services are available on the site such as [observing location reviews](#), member [astronomy photos](#), and [members only telescope loans](#). Information about SFAA's membership, organization and by-laws are available at the club's online public document [archive](#). If you need to contact a representative of the SFAA, then please visit our [contacts](#) page to help in finding the right person to answer your questions.

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 20th day of the month.** Send your articles to Editor@sfaa-astronomy.org.

Focal Point

Hello members of the SFAA. Ken Frank here to help steer a course for the club this year. I'm certainly not John Dillon, Mike Portuesi, Al Stern, Toney Burkhart or John Dobson, but will try in my own relaxed and jovial way to guide us through another cycle around our nearest star.

You make the club what it is. Volunteering as a speaker for a City Star Party, taking the VIP training for Mt. Tam, assisting with the SFSA clinic <http://sfsidewalkastronomers.org/telescopes/clinic/> one hour before sunset or setting up snacks for a general meeting are some examples of what we need for the year; you don't need to be a board member either. Won't you help? Enough said.

A few weeks ago, I received an iPod nano for a birthday gift. Well, this nifty gadget may not be an iPhone but, for me it's enough. I was noodling around on the San Francisco Sidewalk Astronomers site maintained by Michael Portuesi and came upon <http://sfsidewalkastronomers.org/link/podcasts/>. Michael has done a great job of reviewing what's out there, so I'll keep it brief. My fave is Astronomy Cast <http://www.astronomycast.com/>. The pointed queries are served up by Fraser Cain, the publisher of Universe Today, and are rightly answered by Dr. Pamela L. Gay, a Visiting Assistant Professor at Southern Illinois University, Edwardsville. Dr. Gay has the keen knack of being able to answer what's waaay out there, down to Earth. As a lark, I purchased an audio book, Six Easy Pieces: Essentials of Physics Explained By Its Most Brilliant Teacher, a two-part download of six lectures by Richard P. Feynman. The quality of the audio starts out poor but gets better as the series progresses. These lectures were given in 1961 at Cal Tech. It's well worth the listen to this thick Brooklyn accented charismatic intellectual.

Naught for McNaught, I've tried and tried, but I'm no Herman Fast. Has anyone else seen this brightest comet for the past 30 years yet? Sausalito is in the way of my western horizon; things could be worse. Ok, for an update, some CSP (City Star Party) goes on Saturday, January 13th, were fortunate and patient enough to see a wonderful apparition. This the 31st comet discovered by astronomer Robert H. McNaught. CCD images were obtained with the Siding Spring observatory's Uppsala Schmidt telescope. Back in San Francisco, our own Bill Cherrington set up his patch of carpet to sit on by the SS San Francisco memorial just as the Sun set with a group of 50 or so onlookers. We passed around binoculars and garnered views from the loaner 6" f/10.3 scope. David Frey & Doug Smith from this year's Dobson telescope making class were there with David's class built Dob, as were Elan and his practical new scope, Michael and James with their APO Megrez 80 and binocs on a parallelogram mount and possible new member and clinic recipients, Wayne and Carly Loeb, with their newly-collimated Dob and giant binoculars also gave great views of the comet and Venus to the general public.

We have two new junior members of SFAA: Joshua Joohyun Thomas, son of Jung and Jinsook Thomas, and Lorcan Kawela Dailey, son of Alex and Liana. Welcome to planet Earth you two!

Dust off those old Mars bars...Jayni, while traveling to work listening to NPR clued me in to a film being shown at the Sundance Film festival entitled "In the shadow of the Moon." It's about the Apollo Space Program showing awe-inspiring footage and candid interviews with the astronauts who visited the moon.

See you on Valentine's Day Night at the Randall, where we will introduce the new (and old) officers, and recognize award winners and have some sweet and savory bits.

Ken Frank
President, SFAA

IMPORTANT DATES

SFAA GENERAL MEETINGS & LECTURES

Wednesday, February 14

Wednesday, March 21

Wednesday, April 18

7:00 p.m. Doors open. 7:30 p.m. Announcements. 8:00 p.m. Speaker
Randall Museum, 199 Museum Way (Near 14th Street and Roosevelt)

BOARD MEETINGS

Tuesday, February 13

Tuesday, March 13

Tuesday, April 10

7:00-8:30 p.m.

Randall Museum, 199 Museum Way
(Near 14th Street and Roosevelt)

CITY STAR PARTIES - Telescope Clinic one hour before sunset

Saturday, February 24, 5:52 p.m. at Land's End (Point Lobos) **VOLUNTEERS NEEDED**

Saturday, March 24, 7:18 p.m. at Randall Museum

Guest Speaker KENNETH FRANK, President, SFAA – "A BRIEF HISTORY OF SFAA"

Saturday, April 28, 7:49 p.m. at Land's End (Point Lobos) **VOLUNTEERS NEEDED**

Map and directions – Land's End (Pt. Lobos) <http://www.sfaa-astronomy.org/clubarchive/directions-pointlobos.php>

Weather may cancel the City Star Party. Call the SFAA Hotline at (415) 289-6636 AFTER 4 PM to learn the status of the event and the location. If the hotline announces the Star Party is cancelled, the Telescope Clinic and Lecture are cancelled as well. However, if the Hotline does not cancel the Star Party, be assured that the Lecture will proceed as scheduled even given less-than-perfect telescope conditions.

Please also note that while City Star Parties WILL ALWAYS be held on Saturdays, some will be closer to the last quarter phase of the moon, while others will be close to first quarter. This is so we can work around dates for Mt. Tam public star parties as well as our members-only events on Mt. Tam.

MT TAM STAR PARTIES – SPECIAL USE PERMIT – MEMBERS ONLY

SATURDAYS -- February 17, 5:44 p.m. – Gatekeeper **VOLUNTEER NEEDED**

March 17, 7:12 p.m. – Gatekeeper **VOLUNTEER NEEDED**

April, 14, 7:37 p.m. – Gatekeeper **VOLUNTEER NEEDED**

UPCOMING SPEAKERS

MARCH GENERAL MEETING - MARCH 21

R. JAY GABANY - POSTCARDS FROM THE UNIVERSE

Take a tour with one of the Bay Area's finest astrophotographers. Imaging from New Mexico and Australia, R. Jay GaBany presents Cosmotography. His tireless attention to detail reveals stunning new vistas, described with a poet-philosopher's sensibility. You will see deep sky objects in a new and exciting way. Be sure to attend this special event!

APRIL GENERAL MEETING – APRIL 18

DARREN CROTON – GALAXIES AND SUPER-MASSIVE BLACK HOLES IN THE NEAR AND DISTANT UNIVERSE

Darren Croton, UC Berkeley, is a member of the International DEEP 2 Galaxy Red Shift Survey. Using the largest telescopes, the results of the measurements and positions of galaxies have led to unexpected discoveries in galaxy evolution and black holes.



NEW SFAA MEMBERS

Scope City is offering to new members a \$25 credit toward the purchase of telescopes and binoculars.

Obtain a receipt for dues payment from
Stephanie Ulrey, Treasurer,

treasurer1@sfaa-astronomy.org

Contact Sam Sweiss at Scope City
to arrange for your discount.

SFAA 2007 Calendar of Events

Mount Tam Public Events

Public nights on Mount Tamalpais start with a lecture in the Mountain Theatre, followed by public viewing in the Rock Springs parking lot. SFAA members may view privately after crowd departs, approx. 11 pm-2 am. Note that access to SUP private events is contingent on our participation in the public events.

- April 21, sunset 7:42 pm
- May 19, 8:08 pm
- June 23, 8:26 pm
- July 21, 8:19 pm
- August 18, 7:51 pm
- September 15, 7:11 pm
- October 13, 6:29 pm

Mount Tam SUP Events

SUP (Special Use Permit) observing nights on Mount Tamalpais are open *only* to SFAA members. Please arrive by sunset (times listed below). A permit is required for each car. We must vacate the mountain by 2 am except on specially approved nights (such as Messier Marathon).

- January 20, 5:14 pm
- February 17, 5:44 pm
- March 17 (Messier Marathon night), 7:12 pm
- April 14, 7:37 pm
- May 12, 8:01 pm
- June 16, 8:25 pm
- July 14, 8:23 pm
- August 11, 7:59 pm
- September 8 (Picnic night), 7:21 pm
- October 6, 6:39 pm
- November 10, 4:56 pm
- December 8, 4:44 pm

City Star Party

CSP events start at sunset (times listed below) with a public lecture, followed by public viewing. Land's End (LE) and the Randall Museum (RM) are the locations for the CSP this year.

- January 13 (LE), 5:06 pm
- February 24 (LE), 5:52 pm
- March 24 (RM), 7:18 pm
- April 28 (LE), 7:49 pm
- May 26 (LE), 8:13 pm
- June 9 (RM), 8:22 pm
- July 7 (LE), 8:26 pm
- August 25 (LE), 7:42 pm
- September 22 (RM), 7:00 pm
- October 20 (LE), 6:19 pm
- November 17 (LE), 4:51 pm
- December 15(RM), 4:46 pm

Board Meetings

2nd Tuesday of every month, at the Randall Museum. 7 pm. All SFAA members are invited.

- January 9
- February 13
- March 13
- April 10
- May 8
- June 12
- July 10
- August 14
- September 11
- October 9
- November 13
- December 11

General Meetings

3rd Wednesday of every month (except January) at the Randall Museum. Doors open 7 pm, announcements 7:30 pm, guest speaker 8 pm. All are invited.

- February 14 (special date)
- March 21
- April 18
- May 16
- June 20
- July 18
- August 15
- September 19
- October 17
- November 21
- December 19

Other SFAA Events

- Messier Marathon, March 17 (Alternate night March 24)
- Astronomy Day, April 21
- Fremont Peak, May 11-12
- Annual Picnic, September 8
- Yosemite Weekend, TBA

Other Astronomy Events

- Riverside Telescope Maker's Conference, May 25-28
www.rtmcastronomyexpo.org
- Grand Canyon Star Party, June 9-16
www.tucsonastronomy.org/gcsp.html
- Shingletown Star Party, July 11-16
www.shingletownstarparty.org
- Oregon Star Party, August 16-19
www.oregonstarparty.org
- Fremont Peak Star-B-Q, TBA
www.fpoa.net
- Calstar (Lake San Antonio), October 11-14
www.sjaa.net/calstar

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, POB 15097, San Francisco CA 94115

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.