

ABOVE THE FOG

• BULLETIN OF THE SAN FRANCISCO AMATEUR ASTRONOMERS •

VOL. 54, No. 1 – JANUARY 2006

SFAA ANNUAL AWARDS DINNER

Saturday, January 21, 2006

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

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



Menu Choices

Prime Rib with Scalloped Potatoes & Vegetables (\$33.50)

Breast of Chicken Chasseur with Vegetables & Rice (\$24.00)

Vegetarian Pasta (\$20.00)

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

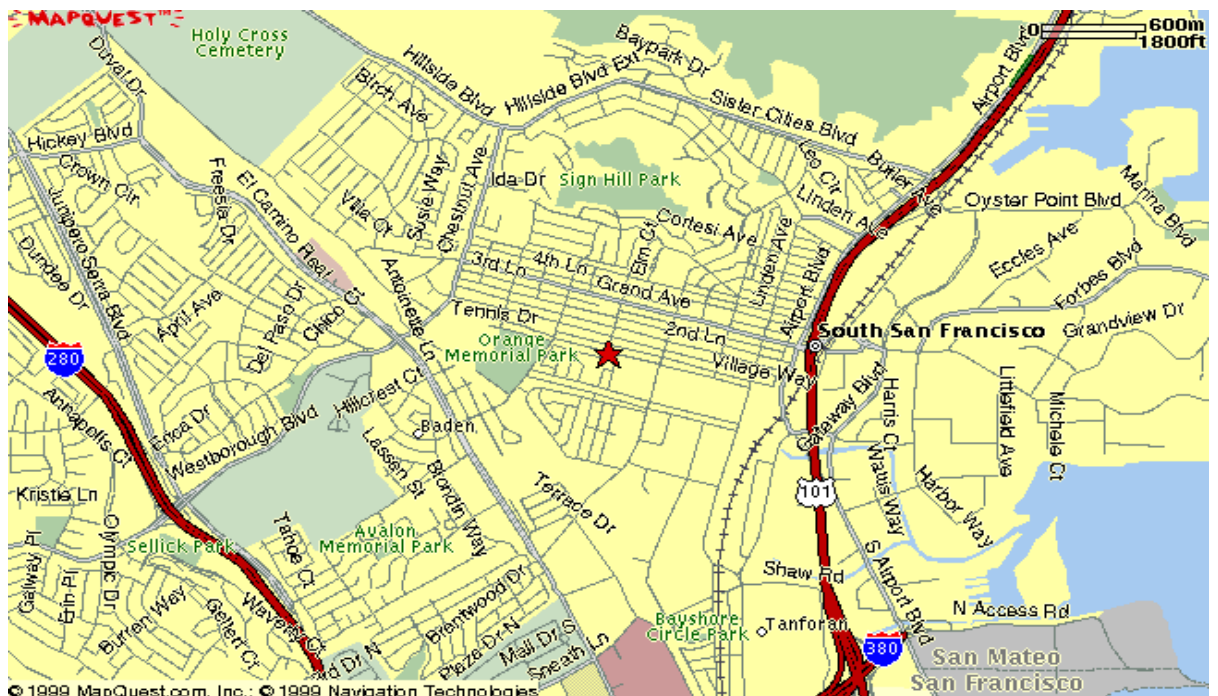
Please send a check or money order (made out to San Francisco Amateur Astronomers), along with your choice of entrée, to SFAA at P.O. Box 15097, San Francisco CA 94115 by **January 4, 2006**. **Any requests received after this date cannot be guaranteed.**

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

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



2005 CLUB OFFICERS & CONTACTS

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	Dirk Lammerts	(415) 242-1464
<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 (<mailto: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>

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 Phil Estrin at pestrin@dir.ca.gov.

CLUB TELESCOPES



The SFAA owns 4 club loaner telescopes, Dobsonian/Newtonian 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 & Sarah Goldie, 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>

THROUGH THE FINDER ...

Another winter solstice and another trip around the sun, or as Copernicus would say – Happy “Revolutionibus”!

The voting for a new Board of Directors for 2006 resulted in the approval of the slate proposed in last month’s newsletter. It included many familiar faces from the previous Board and two new ones. I look forward to working with our newest Directors, Elan Morpurgo and Karim Mokhtar, and welcome them a-Board.

Our Annual Dinner is at hand where we will recognize several members for special efforts this year - Observer of the Year, and our annual Service Award will be presented, as well as the awards for best Astrophotography and Astro-art. More importantly, this is a time to relax and socialize with members in broad daylight. By the time you receive this newsletter, you will have only a few days left to make reservations. So as soon as you finish reading this submit your dinner reservation, with menu choice and payment, to SFAA at PO Box 15097, SF, CA 94115.

As reported earlier, we now have permission to use the Rock Springs site on Mt. Tam each month of the year, not just the six months when there is a public lecture and star party. Between winter storms the skies are often super clear - so check our Calendar for the new moon, members-only, Mt Tam star Parties. And for those who find it difficult to make it to the top of Mt. Tam, the Board has been searching for a City Star Party site that is more accessible and more fog-free than Land’s End. Several options are being considered and we will be resolving this in short order.

So, I hope to see you at our annual dinner. And after that - See you in the dark,

John Dillon
President
San Francisco Amateur Astronomers

IMPORTANT UPCOMING DATES

BOARD MEETINGS

Tuesday, February 14

Tuesday, March 14

7:00-8:30 p.m.

Randall Museum, 199 Museum Way

(Near 14th Street and Roosevelt)

SFAA Annual Awards Dinner

Saturday, January 21, 2006

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

Basque Cultural Center . 599 Railroad Ave . South San Francisco

SFAA GENERAL MEETINGS & LECTURES

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 15

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 15

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)

CITY STAR PARTIES

(NO STAR PARTY IN JANUARY)

Saturday, February 18, 6:00 p.m. – Telescope Clinic one hour before sunset

Saturday, March 18, 6:30 p.m. – Telescope Clinic one hour before sunset

LOCATION TO BE ANNOUNCED – NOT AT LAND’S END

Map and directions <http://www.sfaa-astronomy.org/sfaa/starparties/cspmap.shtml>



350 Bay Street
San Francisco
(415) 421-8800
www.scopecity.com

MEADE DAY

Saturday, January 21, 2006
10:00 am to 6:00 pm

MEET MEADE'S REPRESENTATIVES
SEE THEIR PRODUCT LINE FOR 2006

MEADE TECHNICIANS WILL PERFORM:
OPTICAL CLEANING, MECHANICAL & OPTICAL INSPECTION
ON ALL MEADE TELESCOPES FOR **FREE!!**

SPECIAL: TRADE-IN OFFERS OF YOUR
TELESCOPE FOR ANY NEW MEADE TELESCOPE

RAFFLE RAFFLE RAFFLE

**All proceeds shall be donated to local
astronomical associations and clubs in Northern California**

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, treasurer@sfaa-astronomy.org. Contact Sam Sweiss at Scope City to arrange for your discount.

ASK A SCIENTIST - WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 11, 2006, 7:00 PM

The Bazaar Cafe, 5927 California St. (21st Avenue) San Francisco

Andrew Fraknoi; Chair, Astronomy Program, Foothill College
**BLACK HOLES, SPACE WARPS, TIME MACHINES:
EINSTEIN'S UNIVERSE IN EVERYDAY LANGUAGE**

Welcome to the bizarre and wonderful world of black holes - collapsed stars where gravity has overwhelmed every other force in the universe. In the neighborhood of these stellar corpses, strange things happen to space, time, and the unwary visitor. Learn why falling into a black hole is definitely a once-in-a-lifetime experience, how black holes make a serious kind of time machine possible, and how new instruments have allowed astronomers to detect the presence of these elusive dark objects in our galaxy and beyond.

<http://www.askascientistsf.com/calendar.html>

CITY STAR PARTY LECTURES

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

GOODBYE TO LAND'S END THE LOCATION OF THE CITY STAR PARTIES IS CHANGING



As you may have heard or noted, the weather pattern at Land's End has only been getting worse. For the last several months of 2005, your board was checking out alternative locations, and we now have two good sites vying for our use. For 2006, we will probably be alternating between the RANDALL MUSEUM and the new site we are trying out, INSPIRATION POINT in the Presidio. Inspiration Point is reached by driving north along Arguello as it passes the Arguello Gate in to the Presidio and then begins to wind downwards; the lookout, on the right side of the road, has a small parking area next to an excellent "telescope stage."

PLEASE CHECK THE HOTLINE AT (415) 289-6636 OR THE WEB SITE for the location of each month's star party.

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.

February 18, 2006, 6:00 p.m.

SATURN

Speakers: Michael Portuesi & Kenneth Frank

March 18, 2006, 6:30 p.m.

TYPES OF TELESCOPES

Speaker: Jorge Morales

MT. TAM MEMBERS ONLY SPECIAL USE PERMITS NIGHT

January 28, 2006 – 5:30 p.m.

SATURN OPPOSITION

<http://sfaa-astronomy.org/sfaa/calendar/pubevent.shtml?drawevent:sfaa:555>

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.