

★ ABOVE THE FOG

• BULLETIN OF THE SAN FRANCISCO AMATEUR ASTRONOMERS •

VOL. 48, No. 7 – July 2000

San Francisco
Amateur Astronomers



Sharing the Wonders
of the Universe



Information Hotline
(415) 566-2357

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

Carl Trost
Guest Speaker
General Meeting, July 19

Carl has been a member of our club for fifteen years, and is also a long-time member of the East Bay Astronomical Society. He has been a serious white-water rafter for the last forty years.

Carl likes to claim that his major at Cal was the Cal Band, not Electrical Engineering.

He chases solar eclipses worldwide, including India, of which he has some amazing photographs.

Carl is currently helping organize the North American Sundial Society Convention, here in San Francisco on August 8, 9 and 10.

Please join Carl in his “virtual” Bay Area tour of sundials and his stories about many of them. He will also talk about other archaic instruments used for observing the sun and telling time.

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**Toney Burkhart**  
**Speaker**  
**City Star Party, July 8**

Toney will be talking about various types of telescopes and how they function. Anyone who knows Toney will understand that this will be a lively and animated talk.

Please bring your telescopes, old and new, common and unusual. Toney will explain them all.

## SFAA Officers 2000

*President* Al Stern  
(510) 728-1851

*Vice-President* Bill Stepka  
(415) 928-2367

*Secretary* Renita Mock  
(415) 566-2357

*Treasurer* Chelle Owens  
(415) 479-5313

*Honorary Director* John Dobson

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### Alt. Board Members

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Jim Webster

### Star Party Coordinator

Bill Stepka (415) 928-2367

### Subscriptions & Membership

Chelle Owens (415) 479-5313

### Bulletin Editor

Lorrie Boen (415) 921-1432

### Telescope Loans

Ray Cash (415) 665-8666

## SFAA Website Update

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

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

## Club Telescopes



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

## CLUB DATES

### **Board Meeting - CANCELLED**

July 12 – 7:00 p.m. Western Addition Library – corner of Scott & Geary Sts. SF

### **SFAA Club Meeting**

July 19 at 7:30 p.m.

Morrison Planetarium, Golden Gate Park

### **City Star Party**

July 8 at 8:00 p.m.

### **Mt. Tam Star Party**

July 1 at 8:30 p.m.

July 29 at 8:30 p.m.

## From the President

A busy astronomy month is ahead, the club's Yosemite Trip, the ASP Annual Meeting, my own participation in Stellafane, and more. But, first looking back, our KQED Pledge Drive participation was a big success. Those who participate had fun. The evening was interesting and the pledge drive goals were met.

In addition to all these events, some new club activities are on the horizon. Dan Christian has volunteered to coordinate a mentor program for new members. Ideas for what the program should include are welcome, including what new members would like to see and what long-time members would like to contribute. New and long-time members alike are encouraged to contact Dan at his daytime phone – 415-586-8748.

Another happy wrinkle is that the Morrison Planetarium has given the San Francisco Amateur Astronomers permission to have refreshments at the General Meetings. The major stipulation is that we must clean up before we leave. We plan to phase this in over the next few meetings.

Yet another event coming up is our annual picnic! The tentative date is September 16. Watch this space for more information (or better information). Not now, next month!

As if that's not enough, don't forget to check out Comet LINEAR July 20<sup>th</sup> through the 25<sup>th</sup>. The information about it is everywhere.

With all this beehive of activity, most of the board will not be available for the next Board Meeting on July 12, so the meeting has been cancelled (most going to the ASP meeting in Pasadena).



## Mt. Tamalpais State Park Astronomy Programs

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

**JULY 1 at 8:30 p.m. DR. DANA BACKMAN**

Researcher, NASA-AMES/ Assoc. Professor, FRANKLIN & MARSHALL COLLEGE  
"Planets and Hints of Planets Around Nearby Stars: Is Our Solar System Unusual or Normal?"  
The list of known extrasolar planetary systems is steadily growing, yet none of them really resembles the one we live on. What does this mean for our understanding of how common or rare planets like the Earth may be?

**JULY 29-(8:30) DR. PHILIP SCHERRER**  
Professor of Physics, STANFORD UNIVERSITY

"Journey to the Center of the Sun"  
New understanding of the solar interior, based on recent observations from the SOHO spacecraft, has implications for the mechanisms that generate the solar sunspot cycle.

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

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

Morrison Planetarium's  
**Benjamin Dean Lecture Series**  
*Presents*

A Summer of Stellar Storytelling for the Family  
*Featuring Tales of the Sky and the Universe*

**18 July**  
***Mary Ellen Hill***

*"The Story of the Universe"*

Once upon a timeless time the Universe was dreamed into being. Enjoy our common origin story that blends contemporary science with ancient mythology while listening to the primal sounds of the didjeridu and the triple ocarina played by the composer Alan Tower.

**8 August**  
***Olga Loya***

*"Sky Stories from Latin America"*

Celebrate the magic of stories of the heavens from the Aztecs, the Incas and the Mayans, in a bilingual presentation featuring drums and audience participation.

DEAN LECTURE INFORMATION LINE at (415) 750-7141



## ***The Sky Guide***

The Columbus Astronomical Society has just completed a new website – [www.theskyguide.com](http://www.theskyguide.com). It covers many aspects of amateur astronomy, including all levels of observing equipment, telescope making, astrophotography and news. Check it out!

If you see any interesting websites, please let us know.

The Astronomical Society of the Pacific *presents*

# Universe 2000 Expo

July 15-16, 2000

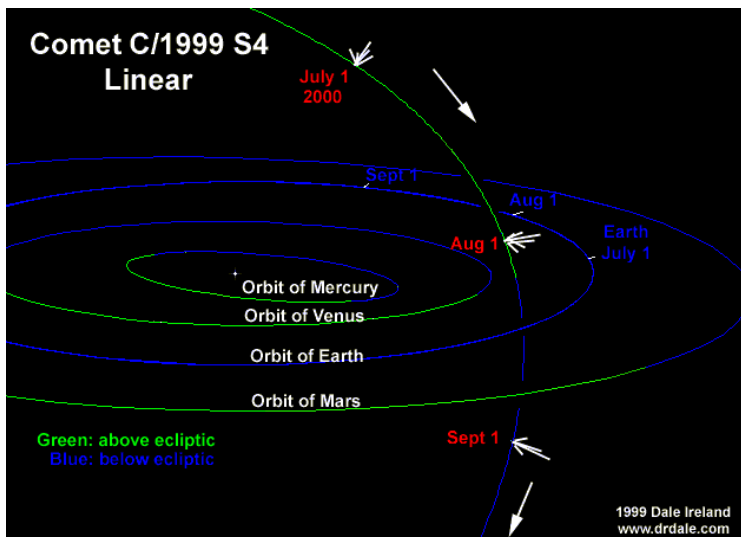
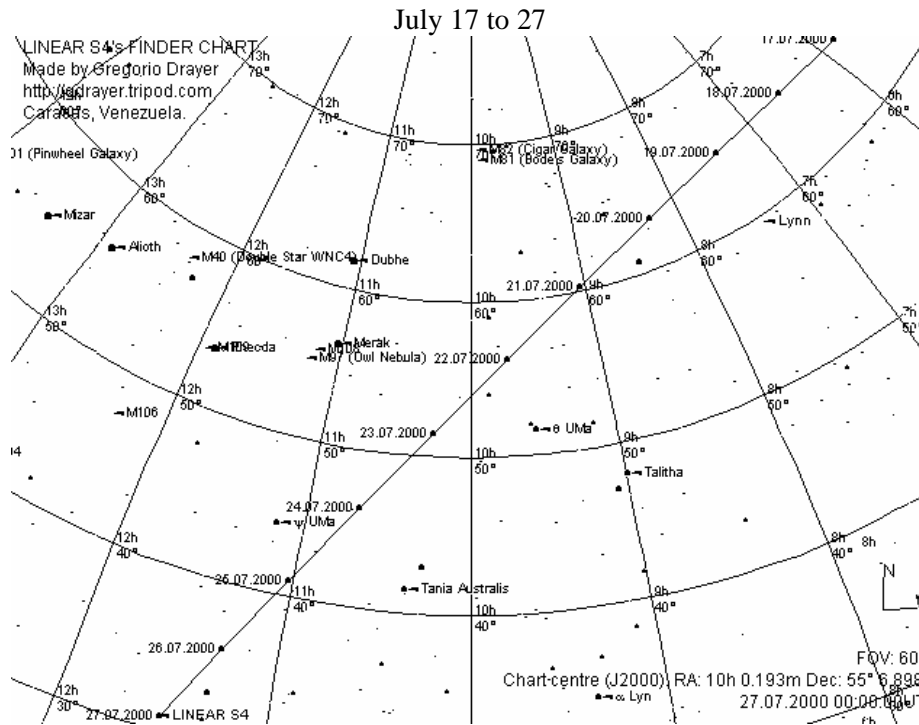
Pasadena Convention Center, Pasadena, California

For more information, visit the web site at [www.aspsky.org/meetings.html](http://www.aspsky.org/meetings.html)

Or write to ASP, 390 Ashton Avenue, San Francisco, CA 94112

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## Comet C/1999 S4 LINEAR



## Upcoming Speakers at the General Meeting

|                                                         |                     | Topic                                           |
|---------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|-------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Carl Trost</b><br>Sundial & Solar Eclipse enthusiast | <b>July 19</b>      | <b>Sundials of the Bay Area</b>                 |
| <b>Lynette Cook</b><br>Artist at Morrison Planetarium   | <b>August 16</b>    | <b>Creating Space Art</b>                       |
| <b>Joe Tenn</b><br>College Professor and History Buff   | <b>September 20</b> | <b>Astronomy in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century</b> |
| <b>Paul Mortfield</b><br>Astrophotographer              | <b>October 18</b>   | <b>The Good, the Bad and the Fuzzy</b>          |

## ***Calling all Writers and Literary Types!!!***

### ***Enter the inaugural SFAA Literary Award***

*We, and that's not the royal "we", want to know about your adventures in astronomy! Share them with all of our club members. Let us know about the fabulous objects you have seen, both near and far. Tell us about fun observing excursions into the darkness.*

*You need write only 750 word s (they can have as many syllables as you like), but please, no more than that. Time and space are of the essence. And, speaking of time, your entry needs to be on its way to us by email or snail-mail no later than August 31, 2000. All entries need to be in print ready format, on a 3.5" diskette or zip disk, or as an attachment to an email. Please do not type your article in the body of the email, attach it as a Word (any version) document or in rich text format. All disks will be returned to the owners. Entries on disk can be mailed to Lorrie Boen at 765 Geary Street #302, San Francisco, CA 94109, or email entries can be sent to [LorrenLee@aol.com](mailto:LorrenLee@aol.com).*

*Everyone in the club will get to read and vote on every entry, so please keep the language clean. There may be children reading it! The winners will be announced at the December 20 General Meeting and the awards will be presented at the SFAA Annual Awards Banquet in January 2001.*

*If we have already seen your prose in "Above the Fog" in 2000, that's okay. It can still be submitted, provided it is within the 750-word limit. Authors may edit longer articles in order to enter them.*

*And, you never know, this could be the beginning of a new career!*

Sponsored by our friends at



## Y2K - Yosemite Star Party

We have been very fortunate to draw the June 30th, July 1<sup>st</sup>, and July 2nd weekend, for a full, three day weekend in Yosemite. **The moon will be a new moon on Saturday night.** This new moon weekend is the only new moon weekend during the entire Glacier Point Y2K summer program. Please join us for this very special astronomical event.

The rules to apply for this SFAA function are still very simple:

1. This trip is **open to SFAA members, their immediate families and their significant others, only**; friends, neighbors, relatives, etc. are specifically **not** invited. SFAA is providing service in astronomy to the rangers in return for free camping facilities with guaranteed reservations; it is not meant to be a free vacation for SFAA members or non-SFAA guests.

2. Each SFAA member must **bring at least one astronomical grade telescope to operate** and share with the general public on all three nights. The ranger's and the SFAA rules strictly prohibit tagging along without a telescope or bringing a telescope and not participating. Binoculars will not be accepted in lieu of this one telescope requirement, noted above.

3. The total amount of adults permitted in this group campsite is **strictly limited to 30**. Children 15 years and under are not counted towards the 30 maximum. Please, **no pets**. This year, the SFAA will be required to present names of the participating astronomers, in advance, for posting at the entrances to the park. **Those who do not have their name posted will have to secure their own site for camping.**

4. Cut off and **return the application stub below** with the correct fee to save your reservation. This is on first come - first served basis with a preference for those who have contributed to the trips in the past. A basic fee of \$5.00 is charged per adult (children 15 years and under are free). This fee is not refundable. The money will go into our Yosemite General Fund. Yosemite Park fees have been waived for us during our stay.

5. Remember, camping on **Glacier Point, in July, will have temperatures into the low 30's at night (3:00am / 4:00am)**. Prepare for this mountain environment. Since we can park our cars near our tents, bring plenty of warm clothing and sleepware; you may need it. Also, quiet hour at Yosemite begins at 10:00 pm, and we have to be at Glacier Point, with our telescopes ready at 7:30 pm. **Leave yourself time to unload your telescope and equipment at the turnaround and take your vehicle to the parking lot. There is no parking in the turnaround area. Due to this noise restriction, we will not be allowed to set up our tents or camp after the star party concludes. Please arrive at our campground in the early evening - early enough to set up camp before 7:00 pm or you will be required to sleep in your vehicle. There are no exceptions to these rules. The SFAA will strive to be good neighbors in Y2K.**

Cut here

.....  
SFAA Member.....Telescope.....

No. of adults @ \$5.00 ea. =.....Total enclosed.....

Make checks payable to: **San Francisco Amateur Astronomers**

Send checks to: **Bob Levenson, Yosemite Trip Coordinator  
237 Bellevue Avenue  
Daly City, CA 94014**

Any questions?? Call Bob Levenson, Yosemite trip coordinator, **(415) 584-5756**

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

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

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

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

**Select one category:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Email address:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Address:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name: Telephone:

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

### **San Francisco Amateur Astronomers**

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

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**In This Issue of SFAA's  
Above the Fog**

- **Mt. Tam Speakers**
- **Comet LINEAR**
- **SFAA Literary Award**
- **General Meeting Speakers**
- **Yosemite Star Party – last chance!**