

The SAN MATEO COUNTY ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY

September, 2008 553rd General Meeting Notice



EVENT HORIZON

Founded in 1960, the San Mateo County Astronomical Society is a non-profit organization for amateur astronomers. Family memberships are open to the public, and visitors are cordially invited to the Society's meetings, which are held on the first Friday of the month, September through June. Detailed information about our events and membership can be found at www.smcas.com

Membership includes a monthly bulletin, discounted subscriptions to calendars and magazines, monthly star parties, use of our loaner telescopes, tours, field trips and guest speakers, plus an invitation to join our online discussion group. To receive additional information, send a note to SMCAS@live.com or call (650) 862-9602.

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SPACE EXPLORATION IS HISTORY!!

(And vice-versa.)

Astronomy advocate and professor Darryl Stanford who, confusingly, heads the Astronomy Department at CSM instead of the university that bears his name, will take us through the history of space flight, with a spectacular series of visuals inside the vast dome of the Science Center. He might also address the question of the impact of Russia's possible end of cooperation in the building and supplying of the International Space Station. Could it be that space exploration is indeed history?

Come to the ISC on Friday, September 5, at 7:30 and find out.

(See p 2 for directions)

MONTHLY STAR PARTIES

**Crestview Park in San Carlos
Saturday, September 20 & 27**

See p 2 for directions

See p 9 bottom of calendar for rise & set times

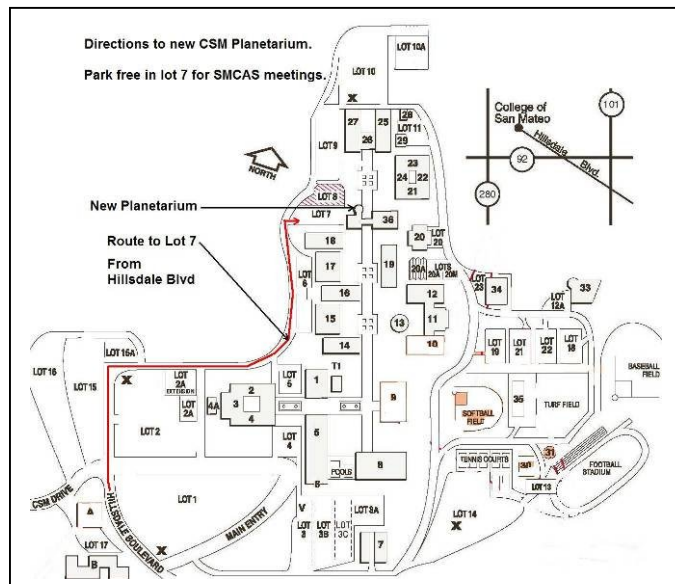
NOTICE: to continue receiving paper copies, you must OPT IN.

To save copying and mailing costs, we invite you to view our online Event Horizon at http://www.smcas.com/newsletter/event_horizon_-_current/ Starting in November, if you still prefer to receive a paper copy in the mail, you will have to fill out and return the form on page 8.

Reach for the stars
at **CSM**

With its planetarium, variety of astronomy courses, top-notch faculty and special events such as Star Parties when the College partners with the San Mateo County Astronomical Society ...or with CSM's many A.A., A.S. or certificate programs, its scenic and historic campus, the ease with which you can sign-up for classes online as a first-time or returning student...

COLLEGE of SAN MATEO
The possibilities are astronomical.
Visit us on the web at <http://gocsm.net>.



Directions to New Planetarium

After coming off HW92 at Hillsdale Blvd towards CSM, proceed up hill through the second and third sets of traffic lights until you come to the first stop sign, where you enter the campus, and continue straight. After the third stop sign, turn into the first parking lot on the right. This is Lot 7. The planetarium is directly ahead. Enter the building (36) through the door facing the parking lot.

Crestview Park

Come out and bring the kids for a mind-expanding look at the universe!

Bring your binoculars, telescopes, star guides, and lounge chairs for some informal star gazing at Crestview Park. Dress warmly and wear a hat. Visitors should park on the street or arrive before dark so that headlights don't affect the observers' dark adaptation. Bring small flashlights only, with the lens covered with red cellophane or red balloon. Please don't touch a telescope without permission. And parents, please watch your children.

Directions to Crestview Park

Take Hwy 101 or El Camino to Brittan Avenue in San Carlos, and turn west (right from El Camino). From El Camino, follow Brittan about 2.3 miles to the intersection with Crestview Drive. **From Alameda**, go about 1.4 miles to Crestview. Turn right on Crestview. A small sign saying "Crestview Park" is a half-block ahead on the right. Look to the left for the park entry road, a small street between houses #998 and #1000. If after dark, please park on Crestview near the park entrance and walk in the short distance, to avoid safety issues and disturbing the telescope setup and viewing.

From Highway 280 to Edgewood Road. Go east (toward Bay) about 0.8 miles. Left on Crestview Dr. Go 0.5 miles uphill to the intersection with Brittan Avenue. Go one short block to the park entrance on the left.

Note: The park is residential, and adjacent to homes and backyards. Before inviting noisy groups, please call Ed Pieret or Leroy Amen.

For more information, call:
Leroy Amen: 573-0935
Leroy's cell: 504-5196
Ed Pieret: 595-3691

Membership Dues: Membership annual dues are payable yearly, on your renewal date which is shown on your Event Horizon mailing label. See the back page of the Event Horizon for mailing instructions. Members who are over 3 months past due will be removed from the Event Horizon mailing list until their dues are paid. Members who are over 6 months past due will be removed from the active membership rolls. These members will not be eligible for club privileges but can retain membership in the Yahoo group. We will try to contact the members personally prior to making them inactive.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

OUR DOME IS SEPTEMBER'S "GUEST" SPEAKER

Bring your kids and wake up your imagination!

Re-live the excitement of the early days of space exploration in an exciting 3-D display on our dome.

CSM Astronomy Professor Darryl Stanford will put the dome through its paces in the San Mateo (and possibly northern California) premiere performance of "Dawn of the Space Age." From the launch of the first artificial satellite sputnik, to the magnificent lunar landings and privately operated space flights, you'll be immersed and overwhelmed with this most accurate historic reconstruction of Man's first steps into space.

Who were these men and women that took part in these death defying endeavors? Witness their drive, their passion, and their perseverance to explore. Then ask yourself if you would have had what it takes to do what they did. Bring your entire family to the CSM show on Friday, September 5 at 7:30. This is a show you won't want to miss!



Event Horizon: Choose Paper or Electronic Version

Members of the SMCAS Yahoo Group who want to receive the Event Horizon electronically needn't do anything. Others please fill out and return this form.

I still need my mailed copy of the Event Horizon!

Member Name _____

I would like to receive the electronic copy but I don't know how to become a member of the Yahoo group. Please send instructions and an invitation to:

Member Name _____

Email Address _____

Mail to: SMCAS, at PO Box 974, Station A, San Mateo, CA 94403 or drop off at any club meeting or event.

NOTE: Due to copyright issues, the Abrams Calendars will no longer be included in the Event Horizon.

From the Prez:

I would like to thank those members who responded to the last **From the Prez** with suggestions for improving our organization. I have summarized and consolidated these suggestions and they can be found on Page 7. I would love to hear more ideas, suggestions and criticisms from members. If you have anything to contribute, contact me in person, via email at SMCAS@live.com or by telephone at (650)862-9602.

These suggestions are being carefully considered by the officers and board. Many are still being studied but some have already resulted in significant decisions. Highlights of these decisions are:

Dues will be restructured in order to allow us to improve quality of many of our activities including Member Only Events and major outreach events like Astronomy Day. The new structure will be multi tiered and is as follows:

- \$25 for Seniors and Students
- \$30 for regular members
- \$35 for new members and rejoining members. \$5 of that is a processing fee that may be waived at Astronomy Day and other major events.

We will be issuing membership cards to all members, which will be necessary for merchant discounts once we go to electronic delivery of the Event Horizon. We are considering synchronizing the expiration date of all memberships to facilitate issuing the cards and to eliminate confusion about membership expiration date. If any member has expertise or contacts that might help produce these cards, please contact me.

We will be using email to notify members of upcoming events and announce the availability of the electronic Event Horizon. We will not send the actual Event Horizon file because it is too large for many mailboxes. In the near future all active members will be contacted by telephone to verify email addresses and other contact information. If you do not wish to be contacted please send a note to SMCAS@live.com.

In another initiative, we will be establishing committees within the club to involve more members and share the burden of day-to-day activities. We will need volunteers interested in helping with publicity, school outreach, refreshments and event planning. I also would entertain any suggestions for an area you think a committee is needed.

We are also establishing Interest Groups within the club. As a start, there will be an Astrophotography interest group – if you would like to join see Chanan Greenberg.

There is a lot more in the works, but this is plenty to absorb for now.

I hope to see you at the September meeting – the show is something that has never been shown at a CSM public event. And if you have not attended a planetarium show since the new projectors have been installed, prepare to be amazed.

Ed Pieret, President - San Mateo County Astronomical Society



A Google for Satellites: Sensor Web 2.0

If you could see every satellite passing overhead each day, it would look like a chaotic meteor shower in slow motion.

Hundreds of satellites now swarm over the Earth in a spherical shell of high technology. Many of these satellites gaze at the planet's surface, gathering torrents of scientific data using a dizzying array of advanced sensors — an extraordinary record of our dynamic planet.

To help people tap into this resource, NASA researchers such as Daniel Mandl are developing a “Google for satellites,” a web portal that would make requesting data from Earth-observing satellites almost as easy as typing a search into Google.

“You just click on it and it takes care of all the details for you across many sensors,” Mandl explains.

Currently, most satellites are each controlled separately from the others, each one dauntingly complex to use. But starting with NASA's Earth Observing-1 (EO-1) satellite, part of the agency's New Millennium Program, Mandl and his team are building a prototype that stitches these satellites together into a seamless, easy-to-use network called “Sensor Web 2.0.”

The vision is to simply enter a location anywhere on Earth into the website's search field along with the desired information types — wildfire maps, vegetation types, floodwater salinity, oil spill extent — and software written by the team goes to work.

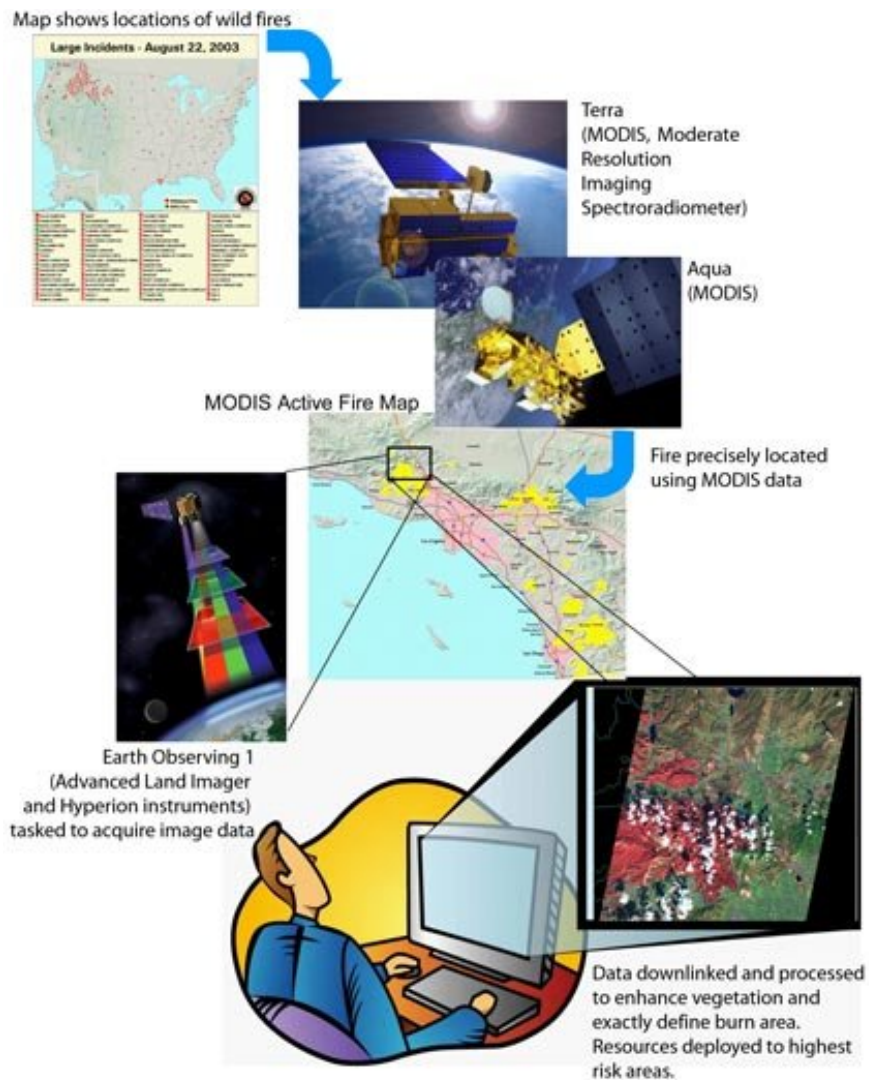
“Not only will it find the best sensor, but with proper access rights, you could actually trigger a satellite to take an image in the area of interest,” Mandl says. Within hours, the software will send messages to satellites instructing them to gather the needed data, and then download and crunch that raw data to produce easy-to-read maps.

For example, during the recent crisis in Myanmar (Burma) caused by Cyclone Nargis, an experimental gathering of data was triggered through Sensor Web 2.0 using a variety of NASA satellites including EO-1. “One thing we might wish to map is the salinity of flood waters in order to help rescue workers plan their relief efforts,” Mandl says. If the floodwater in an area was salty, aid workers would need to bring in bottled water, but if flood water was fresh, water purifiers would suffice. An early and correct decision could save lives.

Thus far, Mandl and his team have expanded Sensor Web 2.0 beyond EO-1 to include three other satellites and an unmanned aircraft. He hopes to double the number of satellites in the network every 18 months, eventually weaving the jumble of satellites circling overhead into a web of sensors with unprecedented power to observe and understand our ever-changing planet.

To learn more about the EO-1 sensor web initiatives, go to <http://eo1.gsfc.nasa.gov/new/extended/sensorWeb/sensorWeb.html>. Kids (and grown-ups) can get an idea of the resolution of EO-1's Hyperion Imager and how it can distinguish among species of trees—from space at http://spaceplace.nasa.gov/en/kids/eo1_1.shtml.

This article was provided by the Jet Propulsion Laboratory, California Institute of Technology, under a contract with the National Aeronautics and Space Administration.



A "Google for satellites" type of web portal will allow users to request real-time data from Earth observing satellites.

To boost tourism now that 2008 Olympics have ended, China leaders plan solar eclipse for July 22, 2009

If any members are thinking about chasing this long-duration TSE, better start planning now. Tours are already starting to book up. One tour of interest in terms of itinerary and price has the following website: <http://www.eclipse-chasers.com/esafari/default.htm>. Rick Brown has been an eclipse chaser since 1991, and reporter Jake Silverstein accompanied his group to Turkey in 2006, writing up the trip in the June/July 2006 issue of Seed Magazine. Other tours are also worth checking out, and can be found by Googling China Eclipse 2009 Tours.

Ideas for Improving Club Operations

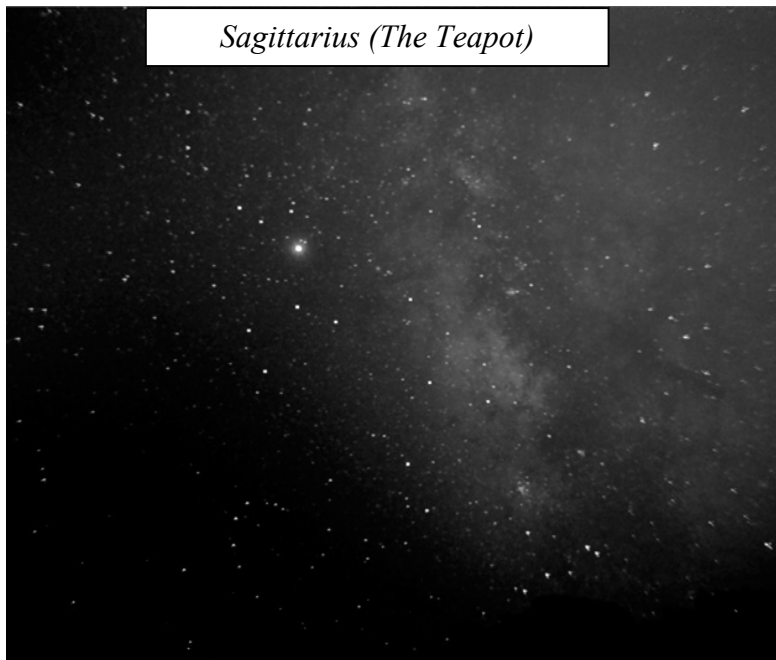
Here is a summary of the key ideas taken from member suggestions. The board is working on prioritizing and implementing these ideas. If you have additional suggestions or if one you have already made has been missed, please let us know at SMCAS@live.com or (650) 862-9602

- 1) At CSM public events should have a manned desk with attractions like models, posters and a running planetarium program. The following items can be distributed:
 - a) Membership Application
 - b) Article reprints
 - c) Star Chart
 - d) How to choose a telescope
 - e) Astronomy as a Hobby
 - f) How not to get into astronomy
 - g) Most recent Event Horizon
- 2) Set up and staff information booths at local fairs and celebrations as above.
- 3) Send members email reminders of meetings, star parties and club events.
 - a) Verify email list and other information through personal telephone calls
- 4) Routinely publicize events 3-4 weeks in advance through local papers, community calendars, and local school science departments.
- 5) Solicit local corporations to provide SMCAS membership as inexpensive corporate benefit.
- 6) Make pitch about astronomy as a hobby to adults attending star parties and other events.
- 7) Seek linkage from other popular astronomy and hobby websites.
- 8) Routinely post notices in science, toy, kids', and hobby stores.
- 9) Have an officer or board member contact all new members by telephone to find their interests and to invite them to star parties and other club events.
- 10) Call non-renewing members to find out how the club could better serve them.
- 11) Solicit members to investigate astronomically-related subjects and either present the information to the membership or write an article for the Event Horizon.
- 12) Restructure the dues to provide funds for improving functions and to encourage payment by new and renewing members.
- 13) Establish interest groups within club such as Astrophotography and Telescope maintenance.
- 14) The Banquet and Christmas Party tend to be dull – improve them or eliminate them.
- 15) In our relationship with CSM accept the fact that they don't need us in a leadership role. We should provide value through supporting their public activities.
- 16) Be sensitive to the fact that not all of our members are as experienced in Astronomy or business as the officers and board members are and limit criticism, including the constructive type
- 17) Resurrect a committee activity structure in SMCAS to involve more members and spread the burden of club activities.
- 18) Better serve families with school age children through instruction and activities designed for the entire family.
- 19) Sponsor and support an independent young Astronomer's Club
- 20) Increase contacts with local schools, scouts and other youth groups and offer presentations, exhibits and private star parties.
- 21) Seek out opportunities for public presentations like the Mount Tamalpais lecture series SFAA sponsors.
- 22) Establish member only events and facilities such as the Yosemite star parties offered by a number of other clubs.

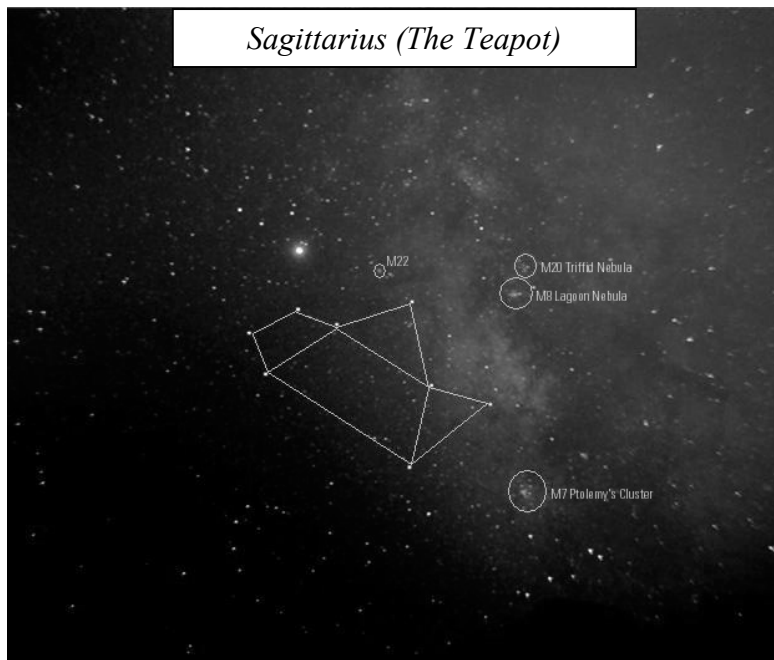
Recent Night Sky Photographs by Members

Please note that the images in the printed copy have been inverted (turned to a negative) for printing. To get the full impact of these images in color, go to www.smcas.com and click the Newsletter tab to get the online version of the Event Horizon.

Sagittarius (The Teapot)



Sagittarius (The Teapot)



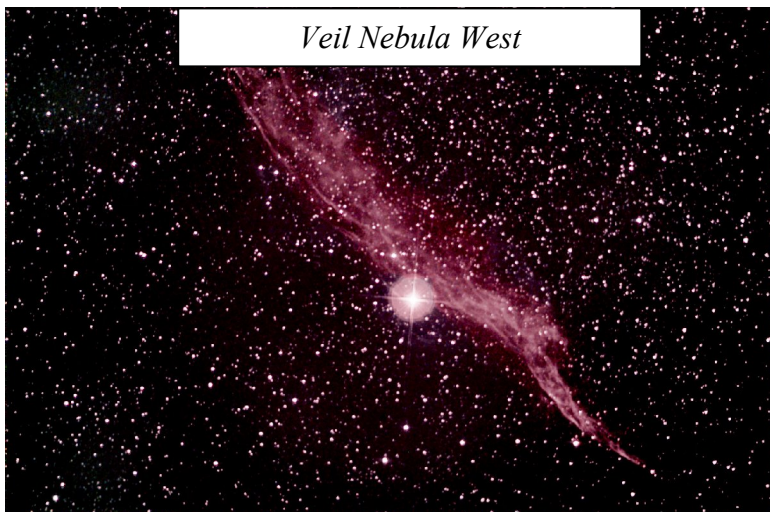
These images were taken by club members using readily available commercial equipment. The picture of Sagittarius was taken by Leroy Amen using a Digital SLR camera and processed by Chanan Greenberg. It reveals objects that are readily visible through binoculars.

The other three images were taken and processed by Chanan Greenberg. If you are interested in Astrophotography and would like more details about equipment and techniques, please see Chanan and join the Astrophotography interest group.

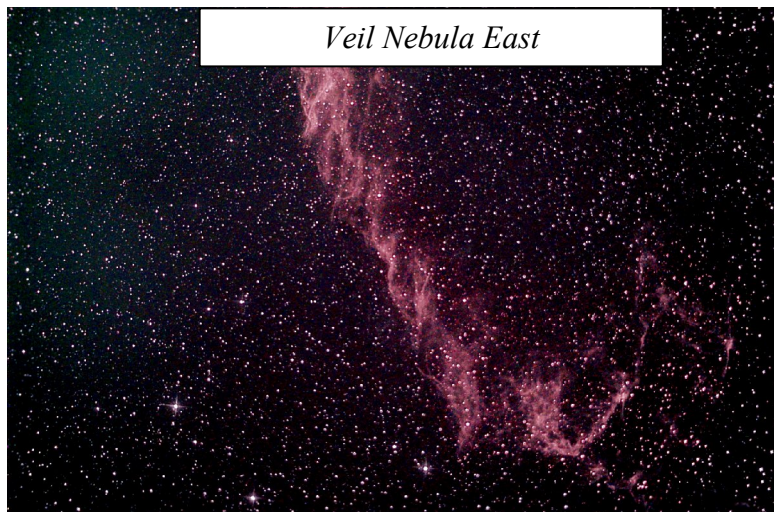
Jupiter with Red Spot, Callisto's shadow and Io about to go behind the planet



Veil Nebula West



Veil Nebula East



San Mateo County
Astronomical Society

September 2008

Pacific Daylight
Saving Time

<i>Sunday</i>	<i>Monday</i>	<i>Tuesday</i>	<i>Wednesday</i>	<i>Thursday</i>	<i>Friday</i>	<i>Saturday</i>
	1	2	3	4	5 SMCAS Meeting!!	6 Jazz Under the Stars @ CSM.
7 FQ 7:04 AM	8	9 Perseid meteors.	10	11	12 Planetarium show @ CSM. Uranus @ opposition 7PM.	13
14	15 FM 2:13 AM	16	17	18	19	20 Star Party @ Crestview
21 LQ 10:04 PM	22 Equinox @ 8:44 AM.	23	24	25	26	27 Star Party @ Crestview Sextanid meteors.
28 Delta Aurigid meteors.	29 NM 1:12 AM	30				

Object

		<u>Sep 20 Rise</u>	<u>Sep 20 Set</u>	<u>Sep 27 Rise</u>	<u>Sep 27 Set</u>
Sun	Equinox on 22	6:56 AM	7:08 PM	7:02 AM	6:57 PM
Moon		10:31 PM	1:09 PM	5:21 AM	6:02 AM
Mercury	Low at sunset	8:58 AM	7:50 PM	8:27 AM	7:21 PM
Venus	Evening	9:14 AM	8:17 PM	9:29 AM	8:11 PM
Mars	Sunset	8:48 AM	8:04 PM	8:43 AM	7:49 PM
Jupiter	Well placed	3:14 PM	12:49 AM	2:48 PM	12:24 AM
	9 PM, E on left	c g J i e		g J i e c	
	red spot transit	4:04 PM		4:52 PM	
Saturn	Conjunction with sun on 4th	5:43 AM	6:39 PM	5:20 AM	6:13 PM
Uranus	Opposition on 12	6:45 PM	6:21 AM	6:17 PM	5:52 AM
Neptune	Well placed	5:29 PM	4:01 AM	5:01 PM	3:33 AM
Pluto	Evening	1:51 PM	12:08 AM	1:24 PM	11:41 PM

- It seems like every year in September there's an equinox and this year is no different.
- The planets Venus, Mercury, and Mars form a loose group from about the 5th to the 15th in the evening twilight.-- RC

Membership Application

To join the San Mateo County Astronomical Society, or to renew your membership please send \$35.00 dues (make check payable to "SMCAS") with this form to:

SMCAS, at PO Box 974, Station A, San Mateo, CA 94403

Check one: () New member () Membership renewal () Address or info change

NOTE TO EXISTING MEMBERS: do not fill in address etc. unless it's changed!

Name(s) _____

Address/City/Zip: _____

Phone(s) _____ Email _____

Meetings of the San Mateo County Astronomical Society are held the **first Friday of the month (except in July and August)** in the Planetarium at the College of San Mateo, located at 1700 West Hillsdale Blvd. in San Mateo. Exit Hwy. 92 at West Hillsdale Blvd. and, proceed uphill through the second and third sets of traffic lights until you come to the first stop sign, where you enter the campus, and continue straight. After the third stop sign, turn into the first parking lot on the right. This is Lot 7. The planetarium is directly ahead. Enter the building (36) through the door facing the parking lot.

Officers: President: Edmund Pieret; **Vice-President:** Chanan Greenberg; **Secretary:** Helen Asker; **Treasurer:** Bob Franklin

Board Members-At-Large: Bob Frommer, Ken Lum, Mike Ryan., Marion Weiler, and John Fiske.

Membership: Hank Washauer. **Newsletter:** Dave Wolf, Ron Cardinale, Darryl Stanford, John Garis, Bob Fies.

Program: Marion Weiler, **Publicity:** Helen Asker; **Reporter:** open position

Event Horizon Editor: Dave Wolf **NOTE:** We welcome articles and photos submitted by the 15th of the month prior to publication.

Contacts:

Website: <http://www.smcas.com>

Email: SMCAS@live.com

Telephone: Ed Pieret at (650) 862-9602

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