

# Sonoma Skies

Newsletter of the Sonoma County Astronomical Society  
A nonprofit scientific and educational organization

[www.sonomaskies.org](http://www.sonomaskies.org)



August 2006

Volume XXIX No. 7

## SCAS Star-B-Que Saturday, August 19

Come to the SCAS Annual Star-B-Que at the Robert Ferguson Observatory in Sugarloaf Ridge State Park! Get to know your fellow astronomers and their families in daylight! After dark there will be a sky tour, pointing out the different constellations and many interesting features and names in our Summer Sky.

It's a good time for beginners to get help learning the sky or using a telescope. Striking Sparks winners can get help adjusting their new telescopes. Bring your scope and its instruction manual, your planisphere, and a list of questions you'd like to ask.

**Times and what to bring:** We are allowed in at noon. Solar viewing will begin at 2 PM. The barbecue fire will be started about 5 PM so we can begin cooking around 6 PM. SCAS will provide the barbecue fire and marshmallows. You bring food to barbecue, a favorite potluck dish to share, other food, drinks and utensils, red cellophane for your flashlight, and a measure of good cheer.

**To camp overnight:** Immediately around the Observatory is the Group Campground parking area, campsites, running water, large barbecue pits, and outhouses. You may camp overnight (no RV hookups). Everyone must leave by noon Sunday. Please remember the Star-B-Que is for SCAS and YA members, Striking Sparks winners, their families and a few guests.

**Directions to Sugarloaf Ridge State Park:** Take Hwy. 12 from Santa Rosa toward Sonoma. Turn left onto Adobe Canyon Rd. just before you reach Kenwood. It is 8.6 miles from Fourth and Farmer's to the Adobe Canyon Rd. turnoff. From Sonoma, it's a right turn after Kenwood. The Park is 3.4 miles farther.

**Fees and Parking:** At the Park entrance kiosk, identify yourself as part of the Sonoma County Astronomical Society headed for the Star-B-Que at the Observatory. There will be no individual fees. Pets must be kept on a leash, with a \$1.00 charge for each animal. Parking is limited, so carpool if possible. To minimize jarring white light from backup lights after dark, please park by backing in. Park close together, with just enough room to open your door. Parking on pavement is prohibited. If you arrive after 8:30 PM, or if campground parking is full, park next to the group campsite entrance gate, about 100 yards away.

Call Len Nelson at 763-8007 or email [lennelsn@comcast.net](mailto:lennelsn@comcast.net) if you have questions. Hope to see you there!

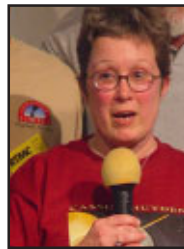
## Jane Houston Jones

Letter from Jane regarding July Presentation  
*By Jane Houston Jones*

Hi Sonomans,

Just got back to hot LA. Yesterday we saw the Monet exhibit at the SF Legion of Honor Museum, and saw a play at the Marin Art and Garden Center's Porchlight Theatre in Ross - another relative was in the cast. <http://www.porchlight.net/> Fun friends and family getaway.

Here are some links to the material I mentioned in my talk. I could also just post this to the Yahoo group if you'd like - just let me know.....



Here are some links to material covered in Jane's July 12th Cassini presentation:

A longer version of Jane's talk (plus many other Cassini presentations) in PDF format.

<http://saturn.jpl.nasa.gov/multimedia/products/product-presentations.cfm>

Cassini Images (use the drop down menu to select a single target such as Titan, Saturn, moons, rings, if you like) <http://saturn.jpl.nasa.gov/multimedia/images/index.cfm>

Cassini Science Section (lots of new material here) <http://saturn.jpl.nasa.gov/science/index.cfm>

Jane's outreach group, the Cassini Saturn Observation Campaign <http://soc.jpl.nasa.gov/index.cfm>

Jane's contact info for requests for more handouts or information  
-Jane Houston Jones

Senior Outreach Specialist, Cassini Program JPL - 4800 Oak Grove Drive, MS 230-205 Pasadena, CA 91109 818-393-6435 [jane.h.jones@jpl.nasa.gov](mailto:jane.h.jones@jpl.nasa.gov) Cassini Saturn Observation Campaign <http://soc.jpl.nasa.gov/index.cfm>

Thanks again Jane for th wonderful and informative talk, as well as the follow up information! We hope to see you again soon. Thank you, yur friends in SCAS.

# Sonoma County Astronomical Society (SCAS)

## Membership Information

**Meetings:** 7:30 PM on the second Wednesday of each month, in the Multipurpose Room of Proctor Terrace Elementary School, 1711 Bryden Lane at Fourth Street, Santa Rosa, unless otherwise announced in this publication. The public is invited.

**Dues:** \$25, renewable June 1 of each year. New members joining between December 1 and May 31 pay partial-year dues of \$12.50.

**Star Parties:** See the Events section for dates and times.

**Rental Telescopes:** Members are eligible to borrow telescopes from the club. Five telescopes are available: 8" and 5" SCTs, 8" and 12.5" Newtonians on Dobsonian mounts; and an 80mm refractor. Contact John Roush at 792-1199, [jroush@spamlion.com](mailto:jroush@spamlion.com).

**Egroup URL:** Connect with other members about going observing, observing reports and chat about astronomy and news items from AANC and *Sky & Telescope*. Hosted by Robert Leyland at [r.leyland@verizon.net](mailto:r.leyland@verizon.net). Any SCAS member is welcome to join. Visit <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/scas> and click the "Join" button, or send an email to [scas-subscribe@yahoogroups.com](mailto:scas-subscribe@yahoogroups.com)

**Discount Subscriptions:** For *Sky & Telescope*, new subscribers may send a check for \$32.95 payable to "SCAS", with your complete mailing address, directly to: Larry McCune, 544 Thyme Place, San Rafael, CA 94903. For renewals, send him your check with the completed renewal card and return envelope. Discount subscriptions to *Astronomy Magazine* occur annually in October. Check *Sonoma Skies* for details.

**Library:** SCAS Librarian Joan Thornton hosts a library of astronomy books that may be checked out by members at SCAS meetings, to be returned at the next meeting. Videotaped lectures on astronomy may be rented for \$3 per month.

**Sonoma Skies** is the monthly newsletter of the Sonoma County Astronomical Society (SCAS). Subscription is included as part of membership. Articles and member announcements are welcome and are published on a first come, first served basis, space permitting, and may be edited. **The deadline for submissions is the last Wednesday of each month.** Mail to: Editor, SCAS, P.O. Box 183, Santa Rosa, CA 95402, or email [publications@sonomaskies.org](mailto:publications@sonomaskies.org)

## SCAS Elected Board

**President:** John Whitehouse, 539-5549 [jmw@sonic.net](mailto:jmw@sonic.net)

**Vice-President & Program Director:** Lynn Anderson, 433-1154  
[penumbra@sonic.net](mailto:penumbra@sonic.net)

**Treasurer:** Larry McCune, (415)492-1426 [llmccune@comcast.net](mailto:llmccune@comcast.net)

**Secretary:** Loren Cooper, 525-8737 [lorenco@sonic.net](mailto:lorenco@sonic.net)

**Membership Director:** Walt Bodley 823-5268,  
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**Community Activities Director:** Len Nelson 763-8007,  
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**Publications Director:** Chad Zalunardo 318-9356,  
[chadz@sonic.net](mailto:chadz@sonic.net)

**Striking Sparks Program Coordinator:** Dickson Yeager,  
539-2385 [sparks@sonomaskies.org](mailto:sparks@sonomaskies.org)

## SCAS Appointed Positions

**Amateur Telescope Making:** Steve Follett, 542-1561 [sfollett@sonic.net](mailto:sfollett@sonic.net)

**Young Astronomers Advisor:** Gary Jordan, 829-5288  
[SieraMolly@aol.com](mailto:SieraMolly@aol.com)

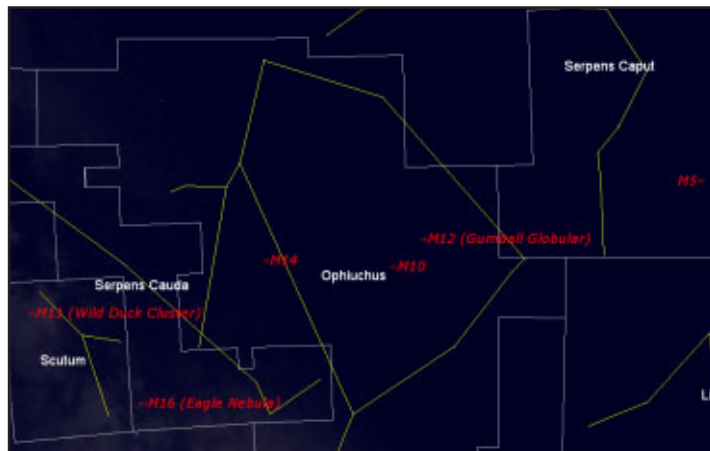
**Librarian:** Joan Thornton, 762-0594 [phonyjoanie@earthlink.net](mailto:phonyjoanie@earthlink.net)

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# August Star Hop

## Fun in and near Ophiuchus!

Below are some great targets in or near Ophiuchus, the serpent bearer. All of these targets will be very enjoyable in even a small scope. There are of course a few other objects of interest, but I have listed a few highlights that will be easier targets, and withing reach of small scopes. Start early to get the lower objects first, then move on to objects at higher elevations.



### M11 Wild Duck Cluster 18h 51.1m -6deg16.2'

Open cluster gorgeous in fast focal ratio scopes, wide field of view. Fun in binoculars too.

### M16 Eagle Nebula 18h 18.8m -13deg48'

Larger aperture a big plus, dark skies a must. This is a tougher one to spot. Try Narrowband and Broadband or OIII filters to help bring out nebula and darken background for improved contrast.

### M14 17h 37.6m -03deg14'

### M12 16h 47.2m -01deg56'

### M10 16h 57.1m -04deg05'

These are several globular clusters, fairly bright and large, easy targets for any size scope. All in Ophiuchus!

### M5 Globular Cluster 15h 18.5m -02deg04'

This one is big and bright, on par with the other big bright globulars like M4, M13, etc. Any size scope will do, the bigger the more stars you will be able to see. Try different magnifications if possible too, to see which brings out the most stars.

Ophiuchus, being located near the Milky Way's plane, has many treats for any size scope, the bigger the scope, the more you'll find. All of these combined are a rich evening of observing. Take time, maybe even try and draw a sketch, improve your observation skills. Then come back a week or so later and try again, they'll still be there.

## PLANETS THIS MONTH

**Jupiter-** Getting lower on the horizon this month and in the constellation Virgo, it remains a bright naked eye object in the night sky. A treat through the scope.

**Pluto-** This is located at the bottom of Serpens Cauda. You will need to look for this over several evenings, either making note of star positions or taking photos. Look for the moving star and presto, that's our planet Pluto.

**Neptune-** A bluish greenish greyish disk. You can see it as a disk though, and not just a point of light, as Pluto appears. Looks to be about 7.8 mag. This is in grasp of most scopes, but don't expect to see detail on the disk.

**Uranus-** This is a greyish greenish disk, brighter than Neptune. Located in Aquarius this month it has naked eye visibility from dark skies at near 6 mag.

## YOUNG ASTRONOMERS

**Meetings:** 7:30 PM the second Friday of each month of the school year, at Apple Blossom School, 700 Water Trough Road, Sebastopol, in the Multipurpose Hall. Open to all Sonoma County students. **Telescope viewing** is held in the upper parking lot after the meeting. **Directions:** From Hwy. 116 in Sebastopol, turn west onto Bodega Ave. Continue on Bodega Ave. almost two miles to Water Trough Rd. Turn left and go about 1/3 mile to the school, on your right. From Hwy. 12, go straight through Sebastopol, past Main Street, and continue as above.

### YA ELECTED OFFICERS

**PRESIDENT:** Melissa Downey 632-5661

**VP/PROGRAM DIRECTOR:** Olivia Turnross [jtec@sonic.net](mailto:jtec@sonic.net)

**RECORDER:** Marie-Pierre Frigon 773-3206

**NEWSLETTER EDITOR:** Scott Grubb [fivegees@sonic.net](mailto:fivegees@sonic.net)

**LIBRARIAN:** Rachel Loughman

[stop\\_rachel\\_4\\_iansanity@yahoo.com](mailto:stop_rachel_4_iansanity@yahoo.com)

**ADULT ADVISER:** Gary Jordan 829-5288

## ROBERT H. FERGUSON OBSERVATORY

**Public Viewing Saturday, August 26th**

Solar Viewing: 12:00 AM - 4:00 PM

Night Viewing begins 9:00 PM

**The Observatory:** Three scopes are operating: The 14-inch SCT with CCD camera in the East wing, the 8-inch refractor under the dome and the 24-inch Dobsonian in the West wing. No admission fee for the solar viewing, but donations are appreciated. The Park charges \$6 per vehicle for entry. A \$2 donation is requested from adults 18 and over for admission to the observatory during night viewing sessions.

SCAS members may set up telescopes in the observatory parking lot to assist with public viewing. Auto access closes at dusk; late arrivals must carry equipment from the horse stable parking area.

### CLASSES, OTHER EVENTS

\$2.00 per person, under 18 admitted free

**Aug 26:** Public Solar Observing, noon - 4:00 pm

Free to the public

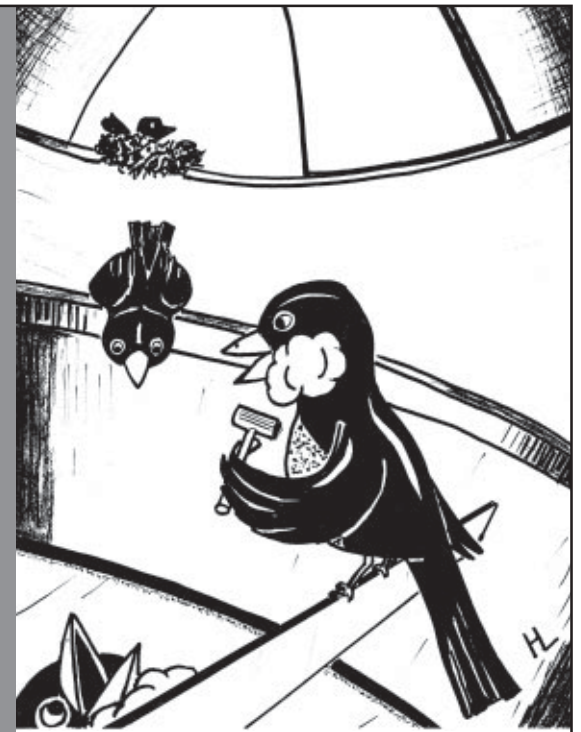
**Aug 26:** Public Observing Night: 9:00 pm

\$2.00 per person, under 18 admitted free

(707) 833-6979, <http://www.rfo.org> or [nightsky@rfo.org](mailto:nightsky@rfo.org)

## The Semi- Astronomer Series

by  
Herb  
Larsen



*"Son, one of the best perks about having a nest in an observatory is that there is almost always a good shaving mirror handy."*

## SOCIAL AMENITIES

Thanks to Artie Davis for providing coffee, cake, peach cobbler and watermelon to attendees of the June meeting.

## SCOPE CITY New Member Bonus!

Scope City at 350 Bay Street, San Francisco, is offering a **\$25 merchandise discount to new members**. Sam and the crew are ALWAYS awesome! Thanks guys.

Sam Sweiss has supported SCAS and Striking Sparks and offers a huge selection of telescopes, accessories and more.

Obtain a receipt from Walt Bodley, Membership Director, showing you have paid the \$25 SCAS membership dues. To arrange for your merchandise discount, contact Sam at 415/421-8800 or at [sanfrancisco@scopecity.com](mailto:sanfrancisco@scopecity.com)

## SCAS SCOPES AUCTION JULY 12

We will be auctioning the SCAS loaner scopes at the July meeting. We have an 8" Dobson that is *autographed by the man himself*, a 12" homemade Dobson reflector, and a 6" Orion Dobson reflector, an older version of the Striking Sparks scopes we awarded last year. Come take a look.

**Sonoma County  
Astronomical Society**

P.O. Box 183  
Santa Rosa, CA 95402



***Sonoma Skies***

**August 2006**

SATURDAY AUGUST 19TH

**STARBECUE!**

**Fun in the sun by day!**

**Astronomy by night!**