

# SJAA ephemeris

sept '80

- Sept. 6 SJAA star party at Mt. Umunhum. Last month's was so good we decided to do it again! Directions are in Observations.
- Sept. 9 New Moon
- Sept. 13-14 AANC conference at Cal State Hayward. Call Gerry Rattley at 732-0202, after 6, for information.
- Sept. 20 General meeting at the Los Gatos Red Cross Building, 18011 Los Gatos-Saratoga Rd., Los Gatos. This is a last minute change so please note. This will be a club slide night. Kevin and Denni Medlock will have slides of Stellafane and other astronomical aspects of their trip, Gerry Rattley will show slides of his Mt. Hopkins—MMT—Sacramento Peak trip, and Steve Greenberg and Patty Winter will have slides of their Kitt Peak tour. 8:00 pm. Take Hwy 9 off Hwy 17.
- Sept. 24 Full Moon
- Sept. 26 Board meeting at Jim van Nuland's, 3509 Calico Ave, San Jose'. 371-1307. 8:00 pm. Everyone welcome!
- Sept. 27 Indoor star party at the Los Gatos Red Cross building. 7:30 pm
- Oct. 4 Saturday morning grazing occultation expedition. (Local) More information in Observations.
- Oct. 4 Saturday night SJAA star party at Sanborn Canyon County Park, Saratoga. Upper parking lot.
- Oct. 8 New Moon
- Oct. 11 SJAA star party at Henry Coe State Park.
- Oct. 18 General meeting, site to be announced. The speaker will be Ron Potter on "Astrophotography with an Automatic Guider." This editor has seen some of the results of this unique new device and recommends attending to anyone interested not only in astrophotography but the beauty of the slides to be presented.
- Oct. 23 Full Moon
- Oct. 24 Board meeting at Chris & Shea Pratt's, 474 Safari Dr. San Jose'. 629-2994. 8:00 pm.
- Oct. 25 Indoor star party, Los Gatos Red Cross building. 7:30 pm.
- Oct. 26 End of Daylight Savings Time! Set clocks back 1 hour.

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When asked what the word Stellafane comes from George Scotten, president of the Springfield Telescope Makers replied, "I think it's an old Mohawk Indian term for 'rain on telescope.'" August 10, 1980

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President: Kevin Medlock 278-8475

Editor: Denni Medlock 278-8475

# Observations

Yes, the September bulletin is late getting out this month but it was held up for a very good reason. The Rosicrucian Planetarium, the club's meeting place for the last two years, has been lost to the SJAA for what appears to be political reasons on the part of the planetarium directors. Because the board was notified of this the day before the bulletin was going to the printers we held it up until the outcome of the Aug. 29th board meeting was known and a new site found. So, as of September 1st, this is the situation: The September meeting will be held at our old stand-by site, the Los Gatos Red Cross building. The Stan Kent lecture with the "Mars in 3-D" movie will be re-scheduled when we have a more appropriate site for a large turnout. Instead, it will be member slide night, (equipment, too, if you have something new to show off.) Frank Dibbell and Phil Hermsmeyer are working on two promising sites at the University of Santa Clara and DeAnza College, respectively. By the October bulletin the SJAA should have another general meeting locale. The board apologizes for this problem but they doubt if it could have been avoided.

So, on a much more positive note, this editor came back from the Stellafane conference to learn that the August 9th Mt. Umunhum star party was by far the best the club had seen in the last three years. (Let's face it, the weather's been terrible and when we do get a good night we get hit with an earthquake.) Chris Pratt and Jack Zeiders report, "The star party on Mt. Umunhum was well attended by approximately forty people, many new faces (including some of the site residents) as well as the old familiar faces. About twenty-five telescopes were set up on the helipad and surrounding paved area."

"The weather and seeing were excellent. We enjoyed shirt sleeve weather all night with enough breeze to ground the mosquitoes, but not enough to disturb the telescopes. San Jose set under a low overcast from about 1:00 am already excellent seeing and marginal transparency to the point we were able to glimpse 3 of the 5 galaxies in Stephan's Quintet with both the 12" and the 10".

"Around sunset Jack Petersen amused himself by identifying aircraft types arriving and departing Bay Area airports with a C-90 while others enjoyed the view and the valley and sunset. The Perseid meteor shower was watched for by many people during the evening but was rather disappointing. (Jeff Lo, with his 6 camera menagerie on a tripod, manage to catch seven on film.)

"Getting to Mt. Umunhum was fairly easy on a well paved road that was in some places rather winding and steep. It was well worth the drive, however, with a large paved site and clear horizons.

"Let's hope we will be able to use this site more often as it is only about  $\frac{1}{2}$  hr from San Jose, and is excellent! Be forewarned, however, it is in rattlesnake country.

"Those who did not attend missed on of the best star parties in a very long time."

Okay! You all have a second chance! The September 6 SJAA star party is again to be held at Mt. Umunhum and as bulletin editor I apologize that some of you are going to get the news of this either Saturday or Monday in the mail. But have faith. If this star party works out we will be having a lot more of them up there.

Directions: Take Almaden Expressway to Guadalupe Dam where you turn right and follow the signs up to Mt. Umunhum. The first gate you come to will have the

SJAA combination lock on it. Use 4565 to unlock it. The second gate has a post twenty feet from it with a metal box on the bottom. Press the button in the box and the gate will open. The gate will close automatically after you drive through it. When leaving always lock the combination lock even if you are not the last person to leave! Important! See you there.

Jim van Nuland reports: "The August 20 graze expedition was a big success — 13 people braved the wind and dust to populate 9 stations; and all obtained data, one of the them 8 events! At least twenty events were timed. Many thanks to all who participated. A more complete report will be published when all reports are in.

"We may have a graze expedition Oct. 4, early A.M. here in the Santa Clara Valley someplace if I can find a proper street. I'll have a full page information page in the October bulletin for it. It's a very favorable graze—6.6 mag. star at 8° cusp angle on an 18% moon which is 30° up on a dark sky."

September 28th starts Carl Sagan's 13 part series, "Cosmos." Channel 9, 8:00 pm.

Rita Miram is continuing to do a great job providing coffee and goodies after the general meetings. If you would like to help her occasionally call her at 797-9916. Remember, the Suggestion/Donation box is always willing to accept donations towards the food cause.

Congratulations to Dave Ambrose and Mary Henderson on their Aug. 16 wedding. Congratulations to Aaron Haws on completing his 6" f/7 mirror. Congratulations to John Gleason for being Star & Sky magazine's color photograph runner-up. See his picture in the Aug. issue. Other members or club items in the news: the March SJAA Messier Marathon is written up on page 20 of the Aug. Star & Sky. Member Trudy Bell has an article on Space Interest Groups, and the Fremont Peak earthquake party report, are both in the Sept. issue of Star & Sky. Paul Zurakowski's picture appears in the September issue of Sky and Tel.

Astronomy Day has been scheduled nation-wide for May 9th.

More than 30% of the club members and subscribers have responded to the SJAA logo contest, an amazing percentage considering past questionnaires. The voting is close between two of the designs so please drop your ballot off at a general meeting, indoor star party, outdoor star party, or mail it to this editor. The winner will be announced in the October bulletin.

Well, I had a long article on Stellafane all written and then found out I had no room for it in this bulletin, so why don't you come to the Sept 20 general meeting and find out what happened? Sept. 21 will be the deadline for the October bulletin and thanks again to the many contributors of this month's.

Denni

## WANT ADS

Wanted: A 4 $\frac{1}{2}$ " reflector in the \$200. Call David Wol: evenings at (415) 592-8975.

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12 $\frac{1}{2}$ " Newtonian f/6 with a 4 $\frac{1}{2}$ " f/4 Newtonian finder. Custom Dobsonian mount made with walnut and birch. Meade tube, Keith Novak short 2" focuser, mirror cell and diagonal holder. Less the 6 months old. \$750. Call Tom Palmer at 267-8459

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For sale: 6" f/8 reflector with equatorial mount, guide scope, clock drive, manual declination slow motion and electric R.A. control, 6 oculars and barlow, color filters, camera mount, sun projection screen, Skalnate Atlas and Catalogue. \$400.00 Call Shaun Hogan at 591-2552.

## COMET COMMENTS

As advertised, the next four months will bring at least three comets into the reach of medium size telescopes. In the past month three more comets have been recovered and one has been discovered. Of the 11 comets picked up so far this year 7 have been recoveries of old comets, 3 have been new, faint discoveries by professional astronomers who were involved in some other work, and one has been an amateur discovery. One almost needs a score card to keep track of them all!

Periodic Comet Tuttle (1980h): Recovered on July 14 by C.-Y. Shao and G. Schwartz of the Harvard Agassiz station, this comet was a 20 magnitude object in Cassiopeia. It has a period of 13.6 years. It will curve north, and the southward in the morning sky. In November, it should attain magnitude 9.

Periodic Comet Borrelly (1980i): Recovered by H.-E. Schuster of the European Southern Observatory in Chile at magnitude 18, this comet is expected to remain out of reach of all but the largest scopes.

Periodic Comet Kohoutek (1980j): This was also recovered by Schuster, on August 6, at magnitude 19. Picked up in the constellation Pisces, it is expected to remain faint. This is not the bright Comet Kohoutek observed in 1973-4, but rather one that he discovered in Feb. 1975 and has a period of 5.6 years.

Comet Chernis-Petrauskas (1980k): At first reported by the USSR as a ninth magnitude comet in the evening sky, this comet is actually magnitude 11 and moving at more than twice the rate they predicted, (which is why we didn't pick it up at the August 9th star party). It reached perihelion on June 22 at 0.52 A.U. and is now moving away from both the sun and the earth. It will remain in the evening sky for the next few weeks as it fades from magnitude 11-12. I don't know if these are amateurs or professionals who discovered this one (is there a difference in the USSR?), so I suspect it's amateurs. It was discovered on July 31 and remained unconfirmed for more than two weeks.

### EPHEMERIS

Comet Chernis-Petrauskas (1980k)

8-19	13hr	24.4m	+30°	06'
8-24	13	46.1	+28	55
8-29	14	06.2	+27	39
9-3	14	24.6	+26	21

magnitude: fading from 11-12  
(from a SAO telegram)

Comet Stephan-Oterma (1980g)

8-19	03h	21.6m	-02°	06'
8-19	03	39.1	-01	23
9-08	03	56.5	-00	39
9-18	04	13.4	+00	06
9-28	04	29.6	+01	01

magnitude: brightening from 13.0-11.8  
(IAUC 3488)

### Comets in Their Eyes:

Leslie Peltier (1900-1980): This American amateur discovered 12 comets between 1925-54, 10 are named after him. Searching from Ohio, and using a 6" refractor for most of his discoveries, he was also very much involved in nova-hunting (discovering 4) and in variable star (making 130,000 estimates.) His autobiography, "Starlight Nights," is now being republished. Leslie died in May of this year—while he lived he held the distinction of the American amateur with the most comet discoveries. He was employed in a toy-furniture factory. After my comet discovery he wrote me and closed his letter as such: "Best wishes. May more comets come your way."

Edgar Everhart (1920- ): Living in Colorado, Edgar has discovered two comets—more than any American amateur alive today. These discoveries were in 1964 and 1967 and for the second he used his present telescope: a 12½" Wright reflector stopped to 9" at 45X. He observed from a 50' tower in his back yard in the mountains some 50 miles SW of Denver. At one time a nuclear physicist, he is now an Astronomy Professor at the University of Colorado at Denver. In the past 15 years he has published many papers on comets, some very helpful for those wishing to seek comets. In the past years he has also helped by confirming (observing and reporting on) new comet discoveries.

Don Machholz  
448-7077

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I want to formally apologize to Jay Freeman for attacking his box of Mystic Mint cookies at the last indoor star party. Forgive me, Jay. Denni

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## ASTROPHOTOGRAPHY

by Bob Fingerhut

This is a continuation of the article on prime focus astrophotography which was strated in the July bulletin. As I stated earlier the commercially available films will not produce good prime focus pictures with a slow system such as a Celestron, which is f/10, unless some sort of sensitization technique is used. The two most popular techniques are gassing and freezing the film. Gassing, or soaking the film in a gas such as hydrogen or nitrogen is done before the film is exposed and permits the use of an ordinary camera. Several people in the SJAA have gassing equipment, including myself, and would be willing to treat film for members. I am using forming gas which is a non-flamable mixture of hydrogen and nitrogen. Soaking in hydrogen gave dramatic improvement to the old E4 type color films which are no longer available. The improvement with the E6 type color films is less but there is still a lot of experimenting to be done on such things as soak times and temperatures. The improvement in the

black and white fine grain film SO-115 is excellent. I strongly recommend this film for prime focus work.

As simple as gassing is I still prefer the results that I am getting with the cold camera. The cold camera permits the film to be chilled by dry ice during the exposure. The results are worth the extra work involved. I will not go into the whole process here but will be glad to show it to anyone who is interested. I usually have it at the indoor star parties. There are several types available commercially as well as some made by SJAA club members. The one that I am using is a Celestron Williams cold camera with numerous modifications, all of which are easy to do. The Celestron camera has the disadvantage of using 3 or 4 inch pieces of film. Commercial photo labs will not process these chips so you must do it yourself. Processing color slides at home is easy so I do not mind.

The key to good prime focus photography is a good polar alignment, a sharp focus, and good guiding. There are as many methods of polar aligning a telescope as there are astronomers. I therefore recommend that you use any technique that you like to get a rough alignment but before photographing I suggest that corrections be made by doing a guiding alignment. This is done by observing a star drift in declination to determine the location of your polar axis with respect to the pole. It takes about 45 minutes but gives a very accurate alignment. To get your position east or west of the pole, guide on a star on the meridian but in the southern part of the sky. If the star drifts north in declination you are west of the pole and should make a azimuth correction. Make repeated corrections until there is no drift for about five minutes when observing at your guiding magnification. To correct your north south alignment, guide on a star on the equator in the eastern sky. If the star moves north in declination you are north of the pole. Make a correction in latitude. This method of aligning will make your guiding much easier and will prevent field rotation in your pictures.

Focus can make a world of difference in the quality of your photos. I use an aerial technique which I will describe here. There are other methods, though, which are used. I focused an eyepiece on a scratch on a piece of clear plexiglass. I did this with my left eye without glasses. I always focus the camera now this way. Of course you should use which ever eye you are comfortable with. Once this focus was made I locked the eyepiece in place. It takes out all of the errors due to my nearsightedness. I then put the plexiglass and eyepiece at the back of the camera with the scratch where the image is to be focused. By focusing the telescope while looking through this eyepiece I get an aerial image at the film plane. To improve this method's accuracy greatly I use the following technique. Set a finderscope at infinity (on a star) and then focus the eyepiece by putting the finder at the back of the eyepiece and looking through both. Do this while focusing the telescope also. The increased sensitivity will greatly help you to make a crisp clear focus.

The third key to good photos is constant, attentive guiding. No amount of movement of the guide star is permitted. Murphy's Law is always waiting for you to look away to rest your eye or enjoy the Milkyway.

Good photos don't come easy but you can get them if you're willing to work for them. I am willing to help or share ideas with anyone who is interested in astrophotography. You can usually find me at the indoor star parties at the Red Cross Building.

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12421	LOLLY CT	SARATOGA	95070	996-8670
61	ECHO HILL RD	AMHERST, MASS.		
4403	RIVERSIDE BLVD.	SACRAMENTO	95822	
585	DARTMOUTH AVE	SAN CARLOS	94070	592-2166
367	21st AVE.	SAN FRANCISCO	94121	752-9420
P.O.	BOX 1108	CAMBRIA	93428	
1230	ORANGE AVE.	MENLO PARK	94025	
29300	PACK TRAIL RD.	SONORA	95370	
144	EDDY ST.	SAN FRANCISCO	94102	
258	THOMPSON AVE.	MOUNTAIN VIEW	94040	967-0228
P.O.	BOX 3008	SANTA CRUZ	95063	423-2046
13,	GAINFORD GARDENS, MOSTEN, MANCHESTER, ENGLAND		M1096M	
865	SO 8th ST.	SAN JOSE	95112	294-3227
1533	W 7th ST.	TEMPE, ARIZONA	85285	602-966-3920
981	LAGUNA ST.	LIVERMORE	94550	1443-7579
1840	YOSEMITE DR.	MILPITAS	95036	262-1457
2751	MONUMENT BLVD #222	CONCORD	94520	682-6302
16	RESERVOIR RD.	SPRINGFIELD, VT	05156	
1216	SERENE VALLEY CY	SAN JOSE	95120	268-6354
P.O.	BOX 362	SARATOGA	95070	
24405	LOMA PRIETA AVE.	LOS GATOS	95030	
1028	ZAMORA DR.	PACIFICA	94044	
P.O.	BOX 60673	SUNNYVALE	94086	
1255	POST ST. #609	SAN FRANCISCO	94109	282-3318

# rattley rattles

It's been awhile since Rattley has rattled in the bulletin, but now that the main pressures of being President of the SJAA are off of me, I'm going to start to get back to doing what I like best, Astronomy. Good luck to our new slate of officers, especially Kevin, though I'm sure he'll do a good job for us.

Enough of that, now let's get down to business. I am still the SJAA's representative to the AANC and it's been a while since I've reported on what's happening there. Currently the AANC is putting most of its efforts into its upcoming 1980 Conference at Cal State Hayward. This will be a two day event, Sept 13-14, and late comers will be able to get in at the door. The fee for the conference is \$7 if you pre-register and \$8 at the door. The conference is going to feature almost all professional talks on such topics as the geology of Mars, robotics and mechanical intelligence, a shuttle update, an early look at the Voyager-Saturn flyby, the birth of stars, the death of the Dinosaurs, and the far future of the Universe. There will be a swap meet on Saturday, an awards banquet on Saturday evening, telescope competition, exhibits, door prizes and much more. I'm already registered and hope to see everyone there. So far pre-registration is far above expected, so we will surely have a good turn out at this years event.

Also, happening with the AANC, the date for next years Astronomy Day has been tentitively set at May 9, pending on agreement by the Astronomical League and Norm Sperling of Sky & Telescope. May 9 will provide us with a first quarter Moon, (Mars? Jupiter and Saturn as show pieces. Next years AANC Conference will be in the fall again and will be hosted by the Sonoma County Astronomical Society. In 1982 the AANC Conference will be host of the WAA at the U.C. Santa Cruz campus and will involve Lick Observatory.

This years WAA Winter Board Meeting is going to be held at a restaraunt near the Oakland Airport or at Chabot Observatory. I'll keep you informed on the exact location when it is selected. The date will probably be Sunday, January 25, 1981, but this is not settled as yet, either. Anyone interested may attend.

There are no more AANC Star Parties scheduled for this year.

Now I'd like to get down to giving you a report on my trip to the 1980 WAA Conference at the University of Arizona in Tucson. Early Friday morning, July 4, I picked up my passenger, Dennis Gallagher of the Chabot Telescope Makers Workshop, and the long trip began. Friday afternoon we arrived at Death Valley and went for a hike on the famous sand dunes in a temperature of 110°. That evening, being the 4th of July, we were treated to fireworks provided by the park. It was a spectacular show, especially when the park rangers succeded in setting three trees on fire (a fire truck was there to put them out).

It was still in the 90's the next morning as we visited the Devil's Golf Course, Bad Water (282 feet below sea level, with 11,045 foot Telescope Peak towering over it to the West), the Artist's Drive, and Zabriskie Point. We did not attempt the 5500 foot climb to Dante's View because my van was overheating (Dante's View is best left to winter trips).

Rattley Rattles On . . .

Five miles out of Death Valley Junction we paid a visit to the old quarry that some of the SJAA members used for Astrophotography some years ago. It's still there and still the same. Dennis set up his solar coronagraph and we had a solar star party. No corona was seen, but the Sun was spectacular in H- $\alpha$ , with many fine prominences.

From there we went through Los Vegas and across the Hoover Dam into Arizona. We didn't arrive at the Grand Canyon until after sunset. The next morning we stopped at many of the rim view points to admire the magnitude and beauty of this marvel of nature. From the Grand Canyon, we went through Flagstaff and over to the Barringer Meteor Crater. 22,000 years ago an 80 ton mass struck the Earth and gouged this monument, almost a mile across and 60 stories deep, for us. It's a magnificent sight and a must for any amateur astronomer traveling through this area. We wanted to stop at the Lowell Observatory, but we didn't have the time. We wanted to make it to Pete Manly's new home in Mesa, outside Phoenix, in time for dinner. At Pete's we swapped stories and updated the club's CCD camera manuel.

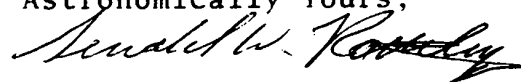
The next morning we made it into Tucson and checked into the conference. That evening featured a fine lecture on the Mikly Way by Bart Bok. The next day there were many talks and a luncheon which featured a lecture on the 10 meter telescope project. The Tucson campus featured many fine walking tours of such places as the Optical Science Center, the Space Imagery Center, and the Flandrau Planetarium. Wednesday I went on the tour to see the MMT on Mt. Hopkins, and on Thursday I went on the tour to Kitt Peak National Observatory. Both tours were in depth and well handled. On Thursday evening, I attended the WAA Summer board meeting representing both the SJAA and the AANC. A new President for the WAA was selected, John Sanford from Orange County, and Terry Terman from the bay area was elected Secretary.

Dennis Gallagher got an invitation from Lou Gillium of the Sacramento Peak Solar Observatory in New Mexico to come up for a visit, so, he and I left Thursday evening for the 800 mile side trip. We traveled all night through the desert lightning storms to arrive at Sac Peak early the next day. We meet Lou up there and got a personal tour of the place. Lou had helped Dennis build his coronagraph and was interested and pleased with the results. After this exciting and informative tour, we returned to the WAA Conference on Saturday in time to attend the luncheon. We saw Paul Zurakowski of the Chabot Telescope Makers Workshop recieve his G. Bruce Blare Metal and listened to the banquet speaker who was none other than Clyde Tombaugh, the discoverer of Pluto. This ended the conference for us and Dennis and I started on our long journey home bringing with us almost too many good memories to remember. We certainly crammed a lot into a week's trip.

As a parting note I would like to express my disapointment at the low turn out for this years WAA Conference. This conference offered many times more than any conference I've ever known of, and may never be equaled again (unless Tucson hosts another one) and yet the WAA attendance was only around 100, the ASP, who were also there, had another 150 to 200. Representing the Bay Area, I remember seeing, besides Dennis and myself, Paul Zurakowski, Ken Wilson, Kingsley Wrightman, Andy Fraknoi, Jack Marling and Frank Miller, and, of course, Harry Leitner. It really wasn't that hot and it would have been a week well spent.

Well, that's all for this time!

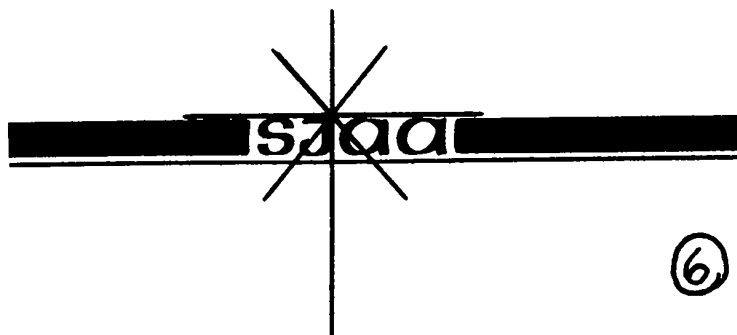
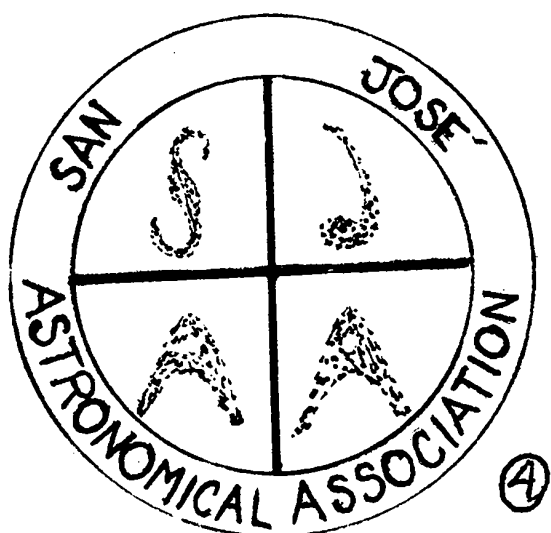
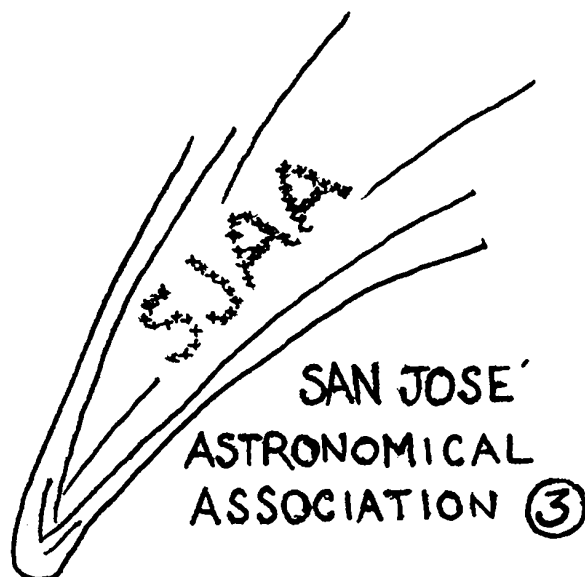
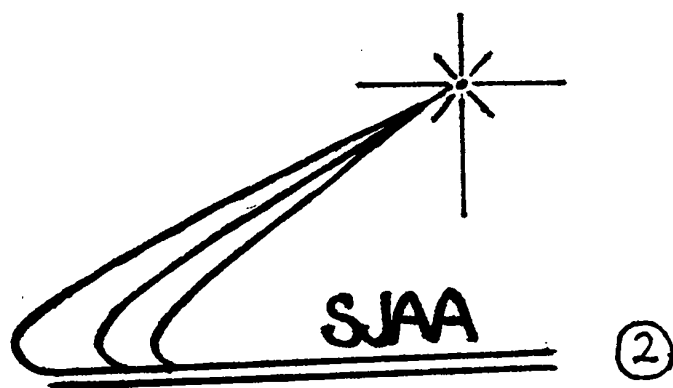
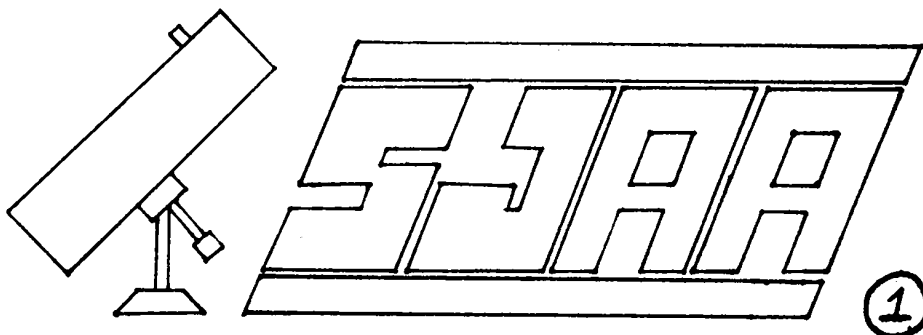
Astronomically Yours;





# LOGO CONTEST

It was decided at the picnic to let the general membership have a vote at the SJAA logo. Just place the number of your selection on the ballot and drop the ballot off at the next general meeting or indoor starparty in the suggestions box. I'll announce the winner in the October bulletin so you have two months to vote, but PLEASE VOTE!!



## LOGO CONTEST

I select number \_\_\_\_\_ to be the new SJAA logo.