

Dear Friend:

A few years ago, the Fleet was proud to host a city-wide "star party" as one of our first steps in evolving from a museum in Balboa Park to a county-wide organization reaching San Diegans where they live, work and play. In partnership with the San Diego Astronomy Association, the Fleet set up observing sites at schools, on sidewalks and in parks across the city. People could walk out their own front door and access a host of telescopes and amateur astronomers to help them explore the heavens. That day, we were exploring Jupiter and its moons.

While I expected to visit each of the observing sites, I never made it past the first location. After welcoming folks to the parking lot of their neighborhood school and introducing the astronomers, I found myself literally backed against the bed of a pickup truck by a group of eight 5th-graders. They spent the next two straight hours firing questions at me, ranging from why they can sometimes see the moon during the day to where all the aliens are hiding.

Eventually, the crowd of middle school inquisitors thinned out, folks began to make their way back home and we began to pack up the equipment. I was approached by a woman who wanted to thank the Fleet for bringing this opportunity to her community. She told me how she had always been fascinated with space and that she avidly read articles in the paper and watched programs on TV but that "seeing it, with my own eyes, that, that was a life moment...right up there with the birth of my kids."

Now, I have to admit, that I initially put that last phrase down to a moment of hyperbole. However, as I was leaving the site, I passed by this woman as she was talking to her friends and overheard, once again: "right up there with the birth of my kids." I stopped, glanced back at the place where the final

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Spotlight Event

**TUESDAY,
FEBRUARY 4
6:30 P.M.**

Are we alone? The search for life beyond earth...



Since the beginning of history, humans have been looking to the stars and wondering if anyone- (or anything-) is looking back at us. Is there life on Mars, the moons of Jupiter or any of the other 4,000 planets we have discovered orbiting other stars? Why is it so captivating to think about the possibility of

telescope box was being loaded into the car, and flashed back to the night some forty years earlier when I first saw Jupiter with my own eyes. I remembered the thrill of discovery and the sense of incredible wonder. I remember the sense of the universe being infinitely large and incredibly understandable all in one moment. It was indeed a life moment.

I share this story with you today because it serves as reminder of the immense power of an authentic science experience in our communities. It is these transformative moments that we strive to create, whether it is in a neighborhood park, local library or at our Balboa Park facility.

Above all, science is not something restricted to the researcher in the lab, to an explanation in a book, to a lecture in a class. It can be available to all, at any time and in any place. Science is a gateway to experience that which is unlike any other and has the power to transform our lives, all in the briefest of moments.

Thanks to you - our supporters and friends - for working with us to connect all of San Diego the power of science. To this end, I hope you will have the opportunity to join me at the Fleet on **February 4 at 6:30pm** for [Are We Alone? The Search for Life Beyond Earth](#), featuring experts from SETI Institute, UCSD, and The Scripps Research Institute. We look forward to exploring the universe with you.

Sincerely,



Steve Snyder, Ph.D.
Chief Executive Officer

extraterrestrial life? What would finding "alien life" mean for us? And how are NASA and SETI searching for life in this vast universe? Join us for a thought-provoking discussion with scientists on the frontiers of this work to explore these questions and to raise your own.

[CLICK HERE for event details and ticket options](#)

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