

# Stockton Astronomical Society 2012 Striking Sparks Telescope Awards Program



Figure 1: *2011 Sonoma County Astronomical Society Striking Sparks Winners and Sponsors*

This is the introductory year of the Stockton Astronomical Society's Striking Sparks Telescope Awards Program. We aim to promote science education in San Joaquin County and engender an interest in Astronomy in our youth. We think it's time to strike some sparks of interest by providing telescopes and mentoring to open up the Universe to young minds.

Our program is based on the program of the same name run by the Sonoma County Astronomical Society. They have given away over 120 telescopes over the past 26 years. Some of those recipients are now professional astronomers and astrophysicists. Some have maintained a lifelong hobby interest in astronomy. Sparks were struck and fires were lit. We looked at their program and asked, "Why aren't we doing that?"

We will award the contest winners new, easy-to-use, reflecting (6-inch mirror), Dobsonian-mount telescopes to students that have been nominated by their teachers or by SAS members.

The contest is open to students in grades 1–12 who are either in San Joaquin County, or live in an area with an active Stockton Astronomical Society (SAS) mentor.

## Contest Procedure

### 1. Teachers:

- Select and nominate up to 2 students who have demonstrated genuine interest in science and astronomy. Consider whether or not the student will have parent/guardian support to participate in astronomy events.
- Make copies of pages 4–6 (Parents' Information Sheet and meeting attendance information) and send home with each nominated student.
- Fill out one nomination form (page 3) for each student you nominate.

**2. Students:**

- Attend two or more Sky Tours, Star Parties, Planetarium shows, or SAS Meetings, between now and February 9, 2012.
- Write an essay, up to 150 words, that describes your interest in astronomy and how having your own telescope will support that interest. Here are some questions for students to consider when writing their essay:
  - When did you become interested in astronomy?
  - What have you done to learn about astronomy?
  - Where would you use a telescope if you win one?
  - Are other members of your family interested in astronomy?
  - Have you ever looked through a telescope?
  - Describe any astronomy project you have completed.
  - Describe what you learned or experienced at an SAS event.

The essay is to be in your own words. It may be handwritten or typed. See page 6 for schedules, dates, times and places of possible events to attend.

3. **Teachers:** Carefully read each student's essay and then compose a required supporting statement and attach it to the Nomination Form (Page 3). Try to be specific as to how a telescope might 'Spark' the student's interest in astronomy. 'Spark' nominations without a teacher's supporting statement will not be judged.

4. **Teachers:** For each nominated student send:

- (a) SAS Striking Sparks Nomination Form (page 3).
- (b) Student's signed entry essay.
- (c) Student's attendance verification (page 5).
- (d) Teacher's supporting statement.

Send to:

**SAS, Striking Sparks Telescope Contest  
P.O. Box 243  
Stockton, CA 95201**

**All contest entries must be postmarked no later than Saturday, February 11, 2012.**

We will contact the winning students and teachers at home on or after Saturday, February 25, 2012. The telescopes will be presented to the contest winners at the Stockton Astronomical Society meeting on Thursday, March 8, 2012.

**Questions?** Call the Striking Sparks Coordinator:

Jerry Hyatt (209) 565-1424    Email: iamstillinthedark@gmail.com or

Jeff Baldwin (SAS President) (209) 594-1894    Email: baldjeff@comcast.net

## Striking Sparks Telescope Awards Program 2012 Nomination Form

**Teachers, please complete:**

Student's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade level: \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address (required) \_\_\_\_\_

Parents/Guardians first and last names: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

School: \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_ Principal: \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher's Telephone(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher's Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**Teacher's Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_

**Please staple all parts together securely in this order for each student:**

1. SAS Striking Sparks Nomination Form (page 3).
2. Student's signed entry essay.
3. Student's attendance verification (page 5).
4. Teacher's supporting statement.

Send to:

**SAS, Striking Sparks Telescope Contest  
P.O. Box 243  
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# Stockton Astronomical Society

## Striking Sparks Telescope Awards Program

### Parent/Guardian Information

Dear Parent or Guardian,

This is the introductory year of the Stockton Astronomical Society's Striking Sparks Telescope Awards Program. We aim to promote science education in San Joaquin County and engender an interest in Astronomy in our youth. We think it's time to strike some sparks of interest by providing telescopes and mentoring to open up the Universe to young minds.

Our program is based on the program of the same name run by the Sonoma County Astronomical Society. They have given away over 120 telescopes over the past 26 years. Some of those recipients are now professional astronomers and astrophysicists. Some have maintained a lifelong hobby interest in astronomy. Sparks were struck and fires were lit. We looked at their program and asked, "Why aren't we doing that?"

We will purchase new 6-inch Newtonian Reflecting Telescopes and present them to students who are the winners in our Striking Sparks Telescope Contest. These are quality entry level telescopes. The optical tube is 6.5" in diameter and 46" long and mounts on an easy-to-use Dobsonian mount. Total assembled weight is 34.4 pounds. The telescopes are financially sponsored by interested individuals or businesses.

Along with the telescope, each winning student receives a one-year family membership in the Stockton Astronomical Society (SAS). Students should participate in the SAS meetings, star parties, or other special events where they will receive telescope instructions and learn more about astronomy.

### Contest Procedure

1. Teachers will nominate students who have demonstrated genuine interest in science and astronomy, and who have the support of their parents/guardians in their studies.

#### 2. Students:

- Attend two or more Sky Tours, Star Parties, Planetarium shows, or SAS Meetings, between now and February 9, 2012.
- Write an essay, up to 150 words, that describes your interest in astronomy and how having your own telescope will support that interest. Here are some questions for students to consider when writing their essay:
  - When did you become interested in astronomy?
  - What have you done to learn about astronomy?
  - Where would you use a telescope if you win one?
  - Are other members of your family interested in astronomy?
  - Have you ever looked through a telescope?
  - Describe any astronomy project you have completed.
  - Describe what you learned or experienced at an SAS event.

The essay is to be in your own words. It may be handwritten or typed. See page 6 for schedules, dates, times and places of possible events to attend.

- Return your essay and your Attendance Verification Form (page 5) to your teacher. Your teacher will need ample time to complete your application, so don't wait until the deadline.
- 3. The teacher will then write a supporting statement, assemble the entry packet, and return it to the SAS.
- 4. **All contest entries must be postmarked no later than Saturday, February 11, 2012.**
- 5. We will contact the winning students and teachers at home on or after Saturday, February 25, 2012. The telescopes will be presented to the contest winners at the Stockton Astronomical Society meeting on Thursday, March 8, 2012 (location to be announced).

**Questions?** Call the Striking Sparks Coordinator:

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## Attendance Verification Form

(submit with application)

Students who enter the contest must attend at least two SAS events (meetings, star parties, planetarium shows) between now and February 9, 2012. The Attendance Verification Form is to be signed by an SAS Board Member, or appropriate event leader, while attending the event. Enclose the signed Attendance Form with the Striking Sparks application.

Event: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

SAS Board Member: \_\_\_\_\_

Event: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

SAS Board Member: \_\_\_\_\_

Event: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

SAS Board Member: \_\_\_\_\_

Event: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

SAS Board Member: \_\_\_\_\_

## Upcoming Astronomy Events

Date	Event	Location
Aug 11	SAS General Meeting	Delta College Clever Planetarium
Aug 20	Pardee Reservoir Star Party	see <a href="http://stocktonastro.org">stocktonastro.org</a>
Sep 2	Sky Tours	Delta College, Shima 2 Parking
Sep 8	SAS General Meeting	UOP, Olson 120
Sep 24	Hwy 4 Star Party	see <a href="http://stocktonastro.org">stocktonastro.org</a>
Sep 30	Sky Tours	Delta College, Shima 2 Parking
Oct 1	<b>Astronomy Day Star Party</b>	Oak Grove Park
Oct 13	SAS General Meeting	UOP, Olson 120
Oct 22	Highway 4 Star Party	see <a href="http://stocktonastro.org">stocktonastro.org</a>
Nov 4	Sky Tours	Delta College, Shima 2 Parking
Nov 10	SAS General Meeting	UOP, Olson 120
Nov 19	Highway 4 Star Party	see <a href="http://stocktonastro.org">stocktonastro.org</a>
Dec 2	Sky Tours	Delta College, Shima 2 Parking
Dec 8	SAS General Meeting	UOP, Olson 120
Dec 17	Highway 4 Star Party	see <a href="http://stocktonastro.org">stocktonastro.org</a>
Dec 30	Sky Tours	Delta College, Shima 2 Parking

The Astronomy Day Star Party on Saturday, October 1 will be our biggest star party of the year and is highly recommended for the whole family.

Check the Valley Skies Newsletter (available at [stocktonastro.org](http://stocktonastro.org)), the Delta College Clever Planetarium schedule ([deltacollege.edu/dept/planetarium/PublicShows.html](http://deltacollege.edu/dept/planetarium/PublicShows.html)), and other planetarium schedules for more upcoming events.