



April 2010

Dear Friend of the ASP:

I'm pleased to write to you today, to encourage your support of the excellent work of the Astronomical Society of the Pacific (ASP) through its 2010 Spring Campaign.

What are you passionate about in your life and work? In my professional life, my passion is the universe. I spend my days (and nights!) studying the most exotic and exciting objects in the universe: quasars, gamma-ray bursts, black holes, and both nearby and distant supernovas that have helped us to realize that our expanding universe is actually now accelerating, driven by a mysterious "dark energy." But I'm equally passionate about sharing the excitement of cosmic discovery with my students: the future scientists who will carry on the work, as well as the many undergraduates in whom I strive to instill a love for science that will carry into their everyday lives no matter what their career aspirations.

The Astronomical Society of the Pacific, with which I've been associated as a longtime supporter and past Board President, is an essential ally in this effort. It is through the many programs and initiatives of organizations like the Society that the students I teach often receive that first spark of interest in the sky, in science, and in the world around them. By providing teachers with training and resources, as well as astronomer partners for the classroom, the ASP works to improve science teaching for those students. Through its professional development opportunities for museum and nature center educators and park rangers, the Society increases the capacity for good astronomy experiences in informal settings for all. By offering activities and training to amateur astronomers across the country, the ASP helps a marching army of enthusiasts to expand their outreach efforts and scientifically inspire the public on starry nights.

But none of this happens without good people like you, who believe in our cause of advancing science literacy through astronomy and who are willing to directly support our efforts with your donations. I recognize that these continue to be challenging economic times in which to give — but this makes your contribution all the more important. I ask for your financial support of the ASP as an investment in our science future — for the kids who will be inspired to become tomorrow's scientists, for the public benefit of having a scientifically literate society, and for the planet itself as we work on the science and technology solutions to the challenges that lie ahead.

It's all about passion. If you love the sky as we do and believe that astronomy can be an exciting avenue in helping to inspire a passion for science and the adventure of discovery in our children and the public, please act today. The universe won't wait; it just gets bigger every second, and we have so much more to learn!

I hope we can count on your generous support.

Sincerely,

Alex Filippenko
Professor of Astronomy
University of California, Berkeley

P.S. Please invest in the ASP and our science future by making a gift to the Society today!