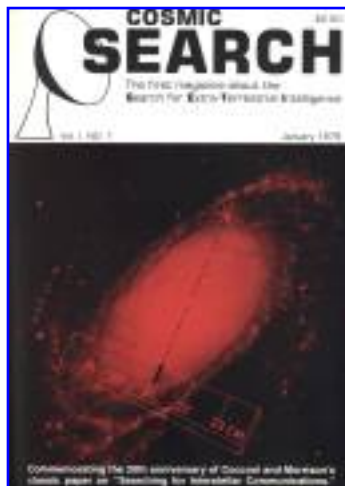




North American AstroPhysical Observatory (NAAPO)



Cosmic Search: Issue 1 (Volume 1 Number 1; January 1979)

[Article in magazine started on page 2]

Editorial: About COSMIC SEARCH and SETI

By: Robert S. Dixon and John Kraus, Editors

The Search for Extra-Terrestrial Intelligence (SETI) is an idea whose time has come. A decade or so ago only a handful of scientists were active in this area; actual searches were almost non-existent and few people had heard of SETI. But today hundreds of scientists are actively involved, a dozen radio observatories around the world are carrying out actual searches, and much serious thinking is being devoted to SETI.

This change in attitude and interest is highlighted in this premier issue of **COSMIC SEARCH** by commemorating the 20th anniversary of the trail-blazing paper on "Searching for Interstellar Communications" by Giuseppe Cocconi and Philip Morrison and the 19th anniversary of Frank Drake's pioneering project OZMA. Jocelyn Burnell's article on the discovery of pulsars adds a further historical note.

This and subsequent issues of **COSMIC SEARCH** will present articles about all aspects of SETI in a manner that the general reader will easily understand. **COSMIC SEARCH** will help a reader learn the real story of SETI as distinguished from the fantasy and pseudo-science which abound in the mass media *and* to find out that the facts can be more fascinating and amazing than any fiction.

We plan to publish articles involving the biology, sociology, philosophy, technology, theology and many other facets of SETI. We intend to make the articles enlightening, exciting and entertaining.

It has been aptly said that SETI is also a search for ourselves and that one of its most important immediate benefits will be to provide us a better insight into the solution of our own present problems here on earth.

When people first hear about SETI, they ask all the normal questions, like: How do we know there is anyone out there? Why should we try to find them? How could it benefit us? Even if we found them, how could we ever hope to understand their language? What good is it to talk to someone if it takes 1000 years for each exchange? There are good answers to all these questions, but there are no simple ones. These questions and many others will be dealt with at length by **COSMIC**

SEARCH authors.

Our distinguished Editorial Board members are not only currently active in SETI, but most have been for many years. We and our observatory staff are directly involved in one of the largest actual searches to date. This collective first-hand experience insures that **COSMIC SEARCH** will be both responsible and authoritative.

Mankind's most important question may well be whether, in all the vastness of the universe, we are alone. Paraphrasing Lee DuBridge, Science Advisor to President Eisenhower, "Either we are alone or we are not; either way is mind boggling."

The earth is mankind's cradle and although we are a very young, emerging civilization and still in our cradle, we are now adolescent enough to look beyond that cradle and acquire a cosmic perspective. Only by achieving a true view of ourselves as we relate to the planets and stars of our galaxy and the universe beyond can we attain maturity. SETI is a first step toward the growing up of mankind; COSMIC SEARCH is a step toward the growing up of SETI.

Robert S. Dixon and John Kraus, Editors

"Either we are alone or we are not; either way is mind boggling."

[HOME](#)

Copyright © 1979-2005 Big Ear Radio Observatory, North American AstroPhysical Observatory (NAAPO), and Cosmic Quest, Inc.

Designed by Jerry Ehman.

Last modified: August 31, 2005.