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SETI League Considers Interstellar Visitation

From: SKvs <bradford@globalserve.net> [Sue Kovios]
Date: Sun, 17 May 1998 10:22:05 -0400
Fwd Date: Sun, 17 May 1998 11:41:37 -0400
Subject: SETI League Considers Interstellar Visitation

Date: Sun, 17 May 1998 10:31:08 +0200
To: cydonia@majordomo.pobox.com
From: JJ Mercieca <mufor@maltnet.net>
Subject: [M-TRAC - MSAA] SETI league considers interstellar visitation

(forwarded with permission from CNI News)

SETI LEAGUE CONSIDERS INTERSTELLAR VISITATION
A Radical Departure From Previous SETI Position

In an editorial posted to the website of the SETI League, (see <http://www.setileague.org/editor/travel.htm>) Dr. Peter Schenkel proposes that SETI, the scientific search for extraterrestrial intelligence, should pay heed to changing views among physicists and space propulsion experts and consider the possibility that some advanced ET races might achieve faster-than-light travel, thus enabling them to visit the earth.

This represents a dramatic contrast to official SETI orthodoxy, which holds that interstellar travel is by definition impossible, as is ET visitation. It should be noted that Dr. Schenkel is offering only his own opinion, not rewriting SETI dogma. Still, inasmuch as the SETI League, a respected international association of professional and amateur astronomers, is featuring Dr. Schenkel's views in their guest editorial of the month, it does seem that a shift is in the wind.

The SETI League maintains close ties with the better known SETI Institute, but is a separate organization. CNI News is not aware that the SETI Institute has responded to the SETI League's posting.

Excerpts from Dr. Schenkel's editorial follow:

Should SETI Protocols Consider Interstellar Travel?
by Dr. Peter Schenkel (schenkel@ecnet.ec)

The question is far less academic than it may appear. It has been argued that because of energy requirements, interstellar travel is "Impossible." Also for other intelligences. But most space propulsion specialists disagree. According to a preliminary CIESPAL survey, 80 percent of those interviewed feel confident that we will reach low c velocities in less than two centuries. NASA director Dan Goldin spoke of plans to send a craft to Alpha Centauri in 20 to 25 years.

Therefore, to think that civilizations thousands or millions of years more advanced technologically and scientifically than we

would not have a spacefaring capability seems extremely farfetched, to put it mildly. Both Carl Sagan and Arthur C. Clarke have emphatically advocated a much more optimistic view.

If we have reason to believe that much older intelligences abound in the universe, then we must admit that the probability that such aliens might send spaceships or automatic probes to explore the Galaxy and stray upon our expanding electromagnetic wavefront is neither greater nor smaller than the chance to find "the needle in the haystack" via radioastronomy. Contact could occur either way. [T]he possibility should not be ruled out that an alien craft or probe may enter our solar system and attempt an encounter with us.

Since the impact and consequences of this contact scenario would be incomparably greater than [radio contact], ...mankind should be prepared politically, legally, communicationally and psychologically for all contact scenarios, not just for one.

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Mars Surface Anomaly Analysis
Possible artifacts on Mars
<http://www.mufor.org/ares/>

The M-TRAC Project
A private, unmanned mission to Mars
<http://www.mufor.org/mtrac/>

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