Jill Tarter

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Director, Center for SETI Research

Free and open to the public

Friday, October 10, 2003

7:00 - 8:30 p.m.
175 Willey Hall, 225 19th Avenue South
U of M West Bank Campus

Life, the Universe, and SETI* In a Nutshell
*Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence

Another summer, another “blockbuster” movie about aliens ... but do they really exist? The real scientific search for evidence of life, and particularly, intelligent life elsewhere in the cosmos, is just as exciting as the “reel” version, and a lot more logical. So far, we have only life-as-we-know-it to guide our speculations and observations. But new technologies, a new appreciation of the tenacity of life and a growing respect for the world of microbes, new spacecraft and missions, and new observatory facilities are rapidly expanding our viewpoint and surprising us. We can expect more surprises. In the next few decades we will take a much closer look at the places within our solar system where liquid water (even vast oceans) may exist and harbor life. We will probe the closest stars to see if other ‘Earths’ and ‘biospheres’ exist. SETI will broaden its strategies and extend its range out into the galaxy, looking for evidence of someone else’s technology. We don’t know what we will find; that’s part of the excitement.