

WINNER OF *CARL SAGAN PRIZE FOR SCIENCE POPULARIZATION* ANNOUNCED

SAN FRANCISCO — Wonderfest, the 22-year-old Bay Area Beacon of Science, announced today that astronomer Dan Werthimer has won the 2019 *Carl Sagan Prize for Science Popularization*.

Wonderfest's Sagan Prize is presented specifically to recognize and encourage researchers who "have contributed mightily to the public understanding and appreciation of science." Past Sagan Prize winners include UC Berkeley biochemist Jennifer Doudna, Stanford neuroscientist Robert Sapolsky, and Nobel Laureate Paul Berg. The prize includes a \$5000 cash award, and will be formally presented at a by-invitation event in San Francisco on November 9th, Carl Sagan's birthday.

"Wonderfest was born in 1997, just a few months after the death of researcher and popularizer Carl Sagan," notes the organization's founding executive director, Tucker Hiatt. "Wonderfest's work has been dedicated to Sagan's memory ever since. Sagan would be proud to know that Dan Werthimer, so accomplished in astronomy research and outreach, has received Wonderfest's Sagan Prize for 2019."

Wonderfest is a nonprofit corporation dedicated to informal science education and popularization, particularly among adults in the San Francisco Bay Area. Several times every month, Wonderfest produces in-person science events — with accompanying online videos — in an effort to "enlarge the concept of *scientific community*." Wonderfest also produces "Science Envoy" workshops to develop the science communication skills of Bay Area PhD students.

Werthimer is the Marilyn and Watson Alberts Chair and Chief Scientist at the Berkeley SETI Research Center (BSRC). BSRC conducts experiments searching for electromagnetic signatures of hypothetical intelligent extraterrestrial civilizations. Affiliated with the University of California at Berkeley, BSRC may be best known for its SETI@home volunteer computing software and for its 10-year, \$100-million Breaththrough Listen project.

Werthimer earned a BA degree at San Francisco State University, and did post-graduate work at UC Berkeley. He became an associate professor in both the engineering and physics departments at SF State, and a visiting professor at universities in China, France, and Hungary.

As cofounder and principal investigator of SETI@home, Werthimer has helped to inspire eight million volunteers in 226 countries to take part in the search for extraterrestrial intelligence (SETI). Werthimer has given over 500 public talks spanning 40 years, is featured in some 100 television documentaries, and has testified to the US Congress House Committee on Science, Space, and Technology. He has also worked with the Lawrence Hall of Science to develop a curriculum about life in the universe and SETI that is used by roughly a million elementary and middle-school students.

Upon receiving news that he is the 2019 Sagan Prize winner, Werthimer replied: "I'm enormously pleased and grateful. Carl Sagan's inspiring books were a huge influence in my youth, leading me into SETI, astronomy, and science education/outreach."

Additional information: <https://wonderfest.org/sagan-prize>
<https://seti.berkeley.edu>

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