



AU AstroNews

The Newsletter of the Astronomical Unit

October 2020

Sponsored by the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History



“The Observer.” Artwork: Tom Ostwald. Photo credit: Tom Whittemore.

OUTREACH SUMMARY

Because of the ongoing pandemic, there was no public telescope outreach in September. Please stay safe and healthy by wearing masks, washing your hands frequently, and practicing physical distancing.

OUTREACH EVENTS

The SBAU radio hour on KZSB 1290AM at 9 AM on the second and fourth Monday of each month will continue as a phone-in show, thanks to the dedication of Baron Ron Herron. Otherwise, there will be no SBAU meetings, public telescope outreach, or school events.

Although the Museum has opened for a limited set of outdoor activities, star parties and club meetings are as yet too contact-intensive for this stage of the pandemic.

OCTOBER SKY SIGHTS

This is the month when Mars will put on its best show for the next couple of years, so get out and get a look at it! After 8 PM PDT on October 2 see Mars very close to the waning gibbous Moon. On October 6, the Red Planet will be at its closest to Earth, and show at its biggest in a telescope. On October 13, Mars is in opposition, rising at sunset, and visible all night.

On the night of October 20/21, catch the annual Orionid meteor shower, consisting of dust shed by Halley's Comet. This is one of the best showers most years, and the Moon sets as the shower nears its peak at 11 PM, leaving the prime viewing hours free of extra light.

On October 22, the near First Quarter Moon will join Jupiter and Saturn in a pretty triangle.

Halloween this year will have a Full Moon, and it will be a Blue Moon by the current definition of second Full Moon in a month. Don't expect to see any blue color, though - it's more likely to look reddish orange if there's smoke still in the air. The Moon will also be very near apogee, making this the smallest Full Moon of the year. Uranus will be at opposition, in Aries about 8 degrees up and right of the Moon.

WINSLOW'S A WINNER

SBAU member Winslow Barnwood, a junior at Dos Pueblos High School in the Engineering Academy, had two of his images shortlisted with one winning third place, 'Highly Commended,' in the Royal Greenwich Observatory's "Insight Investment Astrophotography of the Year -- Young

Competition 2020". The photos and award listing are shown here: <https://tinyurl.com/yxl7x9kf>

You can also see a photo of Winslow with his equipment and his images on Edhat: <https://tinyurl.com/y2es6tru>

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Jerry Wilson

Our Santa Barbara Astronomical Unit has suspended all gatherings for more than one person since March of this year due to the pandemic. Those gatherings include our monthly meetings in Farrand Hall, our business meetings in the classrooms next to Javier's office followed by the monthly star party, plus all the outreach that Chuck's team did at various schools, hotels, and events around town. We have even given up our Friday luncheons with the Baron at the elite eatery on Santa Barbara Street called Judge for Yourself. I'm back where I started in this hobby, many decades ago, out in my back yard, by myself late at night with my scope and camera.

The only communal event we've continued is the bimonthly radio show at KZSB 1290AM from 9:00 to 10:00AM on the second and fourth Monday of each month, hosted by our Vice President The Baron Ron Herron. But we have changed the format. We don't squeeze into the studio. We call in instead. It's fun and the hour passes very quickly. I have no idea the size of our audience. We are definitely flying below the Nielsen radar. The crew is Chuck McPartlin, Tom Totton, me (Jerry Wilson), and frequently Bruce Murdock and Tom Whittemore.

Normally we encourage people to call in with questions or comments, but since we now take up all the available lines, you'll need to send us a post card, text message, or email. Our contact info is at www.SBAU.org. So, keep those cards and letters coming in!

Now that the smoke is blowing away and the skies are clearing a bit, you can again go outside and see the sights we discuss on the air. The moon is waxing and passing the brighter planets, Jupiter, Saturn, and Mars as it travels the evening sky. The target-rich summer Milky Way is giving way to the bright winter constellations. These constellations include some of my favorite sights - starting with the double cluster in Perseus and the great nebula in Orion, M42. The Trapezium will test both your scope and your eyesight. Do you see more than four stars?



"What do you mean you don't understand the fundamentals of Kaluza-Klein Theory?" Photo credit: Tom Totton.



"I heard that a spoonful of this will put some backbone in my morning oatmeal." Photo credit: Tom Totton.

ARTS CORNER

Arcturus in Autumn

When, in the gold October dusk, I saw you near to setting,
Arcturus, bringer of spring,
Lord of the summer nights, leaving us now in autumn,
Having no pity on our withering;
Oh, then I knew at last that my own autumn was upon me,
I felt it in my blood,
Restless as dwindling streams that still remember
The music of their flood.
There in the thickening dark a wind-bent tree above me
Loosed its last leaves in flight --
I saw you sink and vanish, pitiless Arcturus,
You will not stay to share our lengthening night.

Sara Teasdale, 1926

The Falling Star

I saw a star slide down the sky.
Blinding the north as it went by.
Too burning and too quick to hold.
Too lovely to be bought or sold.
Good only to make wishes on.
And then forever to be gone.

Sara Teasdale



Bruce Murdock helps Winslow Barnwood fix his telescope mount at an earlier mirror-making workshop. Bruce offered considerable inspiration to Winslow's interest and success at astro-imaging. Photo credit: Tom Totton.



"That's right, sir. You can't go faster than the speed of light."
Photo credit: Tom Totton.

AU Information Box

President: Jerry Wilson 968-4056
jerryawilsonphd@gmail.com

Vice President: Ron Herron
vicepresident@sbau.org

Secretary: Carol Moore
secretary@sbau.org

Treasurer: Colin Taylor 967-8140
dancingmagpie@cox.net

Equipment: Art Harris 968-4017
n6is@cox.net

Outreach: Chuck McPartlin 964-8201
outreach@sbau.org

Newsletter: Tom Whittemore 687-2025
kometes@aol.com

Webmaster: Tom Totton 562-8795
webmaster@sbau.org

Merch Manager: Pat McPartlin 964-8201
parsnip7@yahoo.com

SBMNH Astronomy Programs Manager

Javier Rivera 682-4711x173
jrivera@sbnature2.org

AU AstroNews, the monthly publication of the **Astronomical Unit (AU)**, is mailed to the AU membership. For publishing consideration for the next month, submit astronomical items by the 20th of the current month!

AU annual membership rates:
Single = \$20 Family = \$25

AU mailing address:
Astronomical Unit
c/o Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History
2559 Puesta Del Sol Road
Santa Barbara, CA 93105-2998

On the Web: <http://www.sbau.org>

The Astronomical Unit

c/o Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History

2559 Puesta Del Sol Road

Santa Barbara, CA 93105-2998

October 2020

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12 TECH TALK KZSB (AM1290) 9-10 AM	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26 TECH TALK KZSB (AM1290) 9-10 AM	27	28	29	30	31