



AU AstroNews

The Newsletter of the Astronomical Unit

March 2021

Sponsored by the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History



Westmont professor, Ken Kihlstrom, gives some pointers to the "Third Friday" crew at Westmont's observatory. Photo credit: Tom Totton.

OUTREACH SUMMARY

Because of the ongoing pandemic, there was no public telescope outreach in February. Please stay safe and healthy by wearing masks, washing your hands frequently, and practicing physical distancing. Get vaccinated when you can!

OUTREACH EVENTS

The SBAU radio hour on KZSB 1290 AM has gone away. Our host, Baron Ron Herron, has retired from a lifetime of radio broadcasting. Thanks, Ron, for all you've done for us and the Santa Barbara community. Enjoy your retirement!

For March, there will be no SBAU meetings, public telescope outreach, or school events. It's been a year, but things are finally looking hopeful.

MARCH SKY

March comes in like a Lion, and goes out like a Lamb. In many places, that's a reference to the unstable weather in Spring. Here in Santa Barbara, where the weather rarely goes to extremes, we can look to the night sky. Leo is rising in the East, and Aries is setting.

Don't forget to spring ahead on the morning of March 14 as we start Daylight Saving Time.

With the ecliptic more nearly perpendicular to our horizon as the Spring Equinox arrives (2:37 AM PDT on March 20 for us), now is the time to look for the pyramid of zodiacal light in the West as evening twilight ends. This is light being scattered by dust left behind by comets and asteroids. And on March 20 between 5 and 6 PM PDT, look for the Lunar X along the terminator as the Sun rises on the tall intersecting rims of craters still in darkness.

From March 15 through March 21, the International Space Station will be cruising through our evening skies. Its orbit may change from time to time, so to get the latest and most complete predictions, visit Heavens Above <https://tinyurl.com/y5yt22ch>. The ISS will return to our evening sky in mid-March, but in the interim, it will have some bright predawn appearances that you may find at the Heavens Above link.

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Jerry Wilson

We had an excellent turnout for the SBAU's Zoom Telescope Workshop this last Tuesday evening, February 23. The main attraction was a presentation by club member Bob Richard. As you may know he recently, well not too recently, moved from Santa Barbara to Scottsdale Arizona and has adapted his interest in Astroimaging from faint fuzzies to lunar and planetary targets.

His earlier work here in Santa Barbara took advantage of the (relatively) lower city light pollution at his home and at Mount Pinos, where he was a regular. But as we are well aware, we here are at sea level and the air is humid and generally unsteady. In Arizona, by contrast, the air is very dry and steady, so the seeing is very good, but Scottsdale is on the outskirts of Phoenix so the sky is heavily light polluted. Bob showed many excellent images of the Moon, Venus,

Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, and Neptune. Mercury is on his bucket list. He uses CMOS-based single shot color cameras including DSLRs and dedicated planetary cameras. Many were single frame images and some were software stacked. His earlier work on our favorite faint fuzzies, shot from his back yard in Santa Barbara and at Mount Pinos were stunning. He used primarily an 8 inch or an 11 inch Celestron brand Schmidt Cassegrain scope. F/#s ranged from f/10 to f/6 and f/2 with Starizona's Hyperstar. For the planets, a Barlow lens was used for ratios up to 25. For complete details of equipment and software used, the session was recorded and is available through a link on our website at www.SBAU.org.

I consider our resurrecting the Telescope Workshop via Zoom to be highly successful. Thank you to the Santa Barbara Natural History Museum for making the Zoom account available to us. Following on this success the club is now considering either a PodCast or Recorded Zoom session based on the format used in our recently concluded radio show. We will try a Zoom based version first, recorded and posted on Youtube and linked to our website. At least that's the talk on the street. The cast will be the same as the radio show. Stay tuned.

ARTS CORNER

At Dawn
Ted Kooser
I watched
a junco
climb a spruce
as if upon
a spiral stair
as branch to
branch it hopped
up round
and round
through green
not lifting wing
to touch
the banisters,
gray bird
with pearly breast,
all purpose,
who had soon
achieved the topmost
bobbing step
and, as if it

thought of it
the whole way up,
hopped off
upon the sky
and flew away.

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Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20 SPRING EQUINOX
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			