



AU AstroNews

The Newsletter of the Astronomical Unit

October 2021

Sponsored by the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History



Looking back at an Astronomy Day at the SB Museum of Natural History. Photo credit: Tom Totton.

OUTREACH SUMMARY

There was minimal outreach in September - mainly slide shows at campgrounds. Please get vaccinated, then stay safe and healthy by wearing masks when necessary, washing your hands frequently, and practicing physical distancing.

OUTREACH EVENTS

The SBAU radio hour has been replaced by a weekly Zoom/YouTube Live event every Monday at 11 AM. If you watch, the Live video should be able to take comments and questions in its Chat area: <<https://tinyurl.com/2vss2yam>>

For October, there will be no in-person SBAU meetings or public telescope outreach.

Although the Museum has opened for a limited set of activities, star parties and club meetings are as yet too contact-intensive. But don't forget the weekly Telescope Workshop Zoom, every Tuesday from 7:30 PM to 9 PM. Check sbau.org for the link.

OCTOBER SKY SIGHTS

The International Space Station will be making some nice visible evening passes between October 1

and October 9, followed by predawn passes into November. Its orbit may change from time to time, so to get the latest and most complete predictions, visit Heavens Above

<<https://tinyurl.com/y5yt22ch>>

Mars is now in conjunction with the Sun, but will be back for a nice appearance at a decent altitude in December of 2022. On Saturday, October 9, catch a beautiful gathering of a slim crescent Moon, brilliant Venus, and the red supergiant star Antares just after sunset. A week later, on October 16, it's International Observe the Moon Night.

The Moon is full on Wednesday, October 20, and will unfortunately be there to drown out the Orionid meteor shower the next morning. If you do see any bright meteors around that date, you're seeing pieces of Comet Halley.

Halloween this year will have a moonless evening sky.

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Jerry Wilson

Summer is subtly transitioning to fall. The summer triangle and the core of our Milky Way are setting earlier and earlier. And, with the late night sky dominated by Cygnus, Cassiopeia, Pegasus, and the Double Cluster in Perseus - it's CalStar season! CalStar is the California Star Party held at lake San Antonio. Located about an hour west of Paso Robles, it's a dry arid landscape of oak trees and scrub brush. The surroundings are lush with wild game: deer, wild turkeys, quail, beautiful birds, and occasional tarantulas abound. When I'm there I can hear coyotes, but I've never seen one.

The San Jose Astronomical Association has reserved an overflow campground as a 'dark enforced' area for astro imaging. If the weather is nice the sky at night is spectacular. There's just a

hint of light on the horizon from Paso. One night as I was getting ready to focus my camera I looked up to get my bearings and my heart sank as a large cloud was forming in the best part of the sky. There was something strange and familiar about the cloud. Then I realized it was the Milky Way.

There is a store at the lake itself stocked with Diet Pepsi and all sorts of expensive ice cream bars. Next door is an RV campground - which is closed this time of the year – which has electrical outlets to recharge your spent deep cycle battery as well as showers with hot water. Dark skies and luxurious creature comforts. What more could you ask?

Now to get those spectacular nights, one frequently has to get through days of temperatures well into the hundreds. Gary and I drove back to Paso just before noon to get away from the heat. We went to the first movie theater that advertised air conditioning. We watched “Lawless” with Gary Oldman. A bit violent for my taste, but basically a good movie. We ate dinner at Bubba’s Burgers and got back to camp just before sunset. By that time it was 105 degrees. It wasn’t until after 1:00 AM that I needed to put on a sweatshirt. Until then it was shorts, t-shirt, and sandals. It was a spectacular night.

I imaged the Andromeda Galaxy and NGC 7331 in Pegasus along with several others. On this occasion I was using a Canon DSLR body on a 12.5 inch f/6 Newtonian that I had built. My mount was an Astro Physics 1200GTO.

Many SBAU members were there on that occasion including the ubiquitous Joe Doyle, Paul Winn, John West, Gary Peterson, and me, plus Albert Highe, Kent Wallace, and many friends from other clubs. This year, 2022, CalStar is from Oct 7 to 10.



“I swear, folks. A trio of space aliens beamed me here!”
Photo credit: Tom Totton.

ARTS CORNER

“Our planet is a lonely speck in the great enveloping cosmic dark.”

Carl Sagan

Lobocraspis griseifusa

Ted Kooser

This is the tiny moth who lives on tears,
who drinks like a deer at the gleaming pool
at the edge of the sleeper’s eye, the touch
of its mouth as light as a cloud’s reflection.

In your dream, a moonlit figure appears
at your bedside and touches your face.
He asks if he might share the poor bread
of your sorrow. You show him the table.

The two of you talk long into the night,
but by morning the words are forgotten.
You awaken serene, in a sunny room,
rubbing the dust of his wings from your eyes.

Starlight

Ted Kooser

All night, this soft rain from the distant past.
No wonder I sometimes waken as a child.



“I know it’s hard to fathom, but I think there’s a huge atom at the center of our galaxy!” Photo credit: Tom Totton.



“You know, Joe? These just might work in a game of ring toss.” Photo credit: Tom Totton.



“What do you mean that I need a permit to operate this baby?” Photo credit: Tom Totton.

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October 2021

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1	2
3	4	5	6 NEW MOON	7	8	9
10	11	12 FIRST QUARTER MOON	13	14	15	16 IOMN
17	18	19	20 FULL MOON	21 ORIONIDS	22	23
24	25	26	27	28 LAST QUARTER MOON	29	30
31 HALLOWEEN						