



# AU AstroNews

## The Newsletter of the Astronomical Unit

March 2022

Sponsored by the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History



Tim Crawford works his magic at the mirror-making booth.  
Photo credit: Tom Totton.

### WELCOME BACK!

Lifetime SBAU member Krissie Cook has returned as the Astronomy Programs Coordinator at SBMNH.

### OUTREACH SUMMARY

There was no telescope outreach in February, thanks to the omicron variant. Please get vaccinated and boosted, then stay safe and healthy by wearing N95 or KN95 masks when necessary, washing your hands frequently, and practicing physical distancing.

The SBAU radio hour has been replaced by a weekly Zoom/YouTube Live event every Monday at 11 AM.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>>

Don't forget the weekly Telescope Workshop Zoom, every Tuesday from 7:30 PM to 9 PM. Check [sbau.org](http://sbau.org) for the link.

### OUTREACH EVENTS

On Friday, March 4, at 7:30 PM, we will have our monthly club meeting via Zoom again, with our speaker Briley Lewis, a NSF fellow and 3rd year graduate student at UCLA, studying Astronomy and

Astrophysics. Find out about her at <<http://www.briley-lewis.com>>. Watch for the Zoom link in email or on the SBAU web page.

**We will restart telescope outreach activities in March**, beginning with the second Saturday monthly SBMNH Public Star Party, starting at 7 PM on March 12 at their Palmer Observatory. Admission is free, and **masks will be required for all participants**. We will hold our club planning meeting before the star party, outdoors in the observatory circle, starting at 4:30 PM.

We will also host our monthly third Friday Public Telescope Night at the Keck Observatory at Montecito's Westmont College campus next to Thorrington Athletic Field, starting at 7 PM on March 18. Admission is free, and **masks will be required for all participants**.

SBAU volunteers must be fully vaccinated and masked, and have undergone the SBMNH background check to participate in outreach activities. To get vetted, contact SBMNH Volunteer Manager Rebecca Coulter <[rcoulter@sbnature2.org](mailto:rcoulter@sbnature2.org)>. It's quick and painless.

### MARCH SKY

March comes in like a Lion, and goes out like a Lamb. In Santa Barbara, where the weather rarely goes to extremes, it means that Leo is rising in the East, and Aries is setting.

Don't forget to spring ahead on the morning of March 13 as we start Daylight Saving Time. Spring officially starts with the Vernal Equinox at 8:33 AM PDT on March 20.

In the predawn sky of March 28, early risers can get a great view to the SE when the waning crescent Moon joins a triangle formed by Venus, Mars, and Saturn.

From March 14 through April 6, the International Space Station will be cruising through our evening skies. Its orbit may change from time to time, especially now that they have to dodge more space junk, so to get the latest and most complete predictions, visit Heavens Above <<https://tinyurl.com/y5yt22ch>>

## FROM THE PRESIDENT

Jerry Wilson

Despite the fact that we really need the rains here in SoCal, the drought does have a silver lining. The skies of January and February have been magnificent; at least for the central coast here at sea level. Only one night of fog and a few of wind at my place, but otherwise very dark and clear. We are entering the realm of galaxies with the arrival of March. The Virgo cluster along with Leo are in the evening sky.

The SBAU is entering a re-emergence of activities. We have restarted our second Saturday of the month administrative meetings via Zoom in December and on March 12, we will meet in person on the circular patio in front of the Observatory beginning at 4:30. The meeting will be supported by our local pizza delivery person.

After the meeting, we will set up our equipment for a star party, weather permitting. Also, COVID permitting. The local incidence of the Omicron variant is sharply declining. If this trend continues, then we are on track for the outdoor meeting and star party. If the infection rate reverses and starts back up, we will reassess the situation.

All participants at the star party, both SBAU members and visitors must be masked at all times, even though this is an outdoor event.

The SBAU is also resuming our public meetings on the first Friday of the month at 7:30 pm. Because these are traditionally indoor meetings, they will be restarted as Zoom meetings for the time being. The first was held as a "members night" on February 4, and the next will be on March 4.

It's time to dust off and recharge those deep cycle batteries and clean the spiders out of your outreach telescope. Hope to see everyone at our recharged outreach.

## ARTS CORNER

When we got to the tidy town on the plains of Colorado, all the aunts and uncles and cousins poured out of the grandmother's house, a great constellation of kindness come to meet us and welcome the family home. Someone mentioned that the Perseids would be putting on a fine display the following night, and someone else offered to bring blankets to the clan's usual spot on the prairie, and my boyfriend's father explained that I, a child of the damp, congealed air of Alabama, had never seen a night full of stars like the one I would see that night in the high, thin air above the plains of Colorado.

Though it was August, we had to put on sweaters when they woke us deep in the night, and though we were all still so tired from two days of driving in the heat, my boyfriend and his sister didn't quarrel, laughing instead to remember another childhood trip to see another meteor shower, and when we turned off the road and onto the grass, the soil of the prairie was not at all flat and smooth but jarred us till our heads bumped the roof of the station wagon. Everything surprised me. I understood that I understood nothing at all.

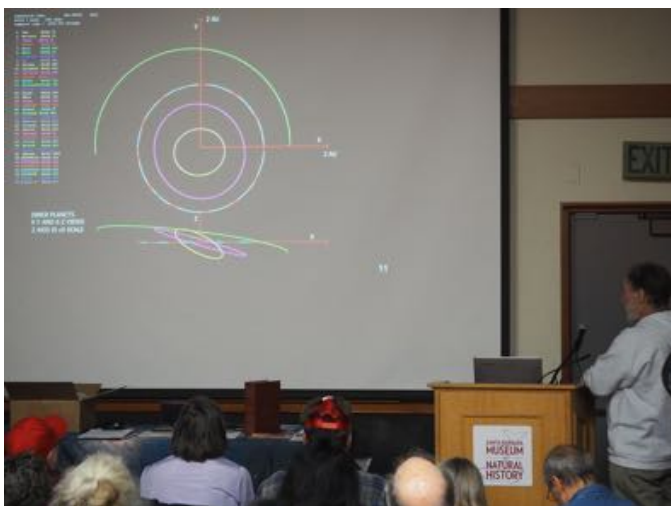
And, oh, the stars were like the stars in a fairy tale, a profligate pouring of stars that reached across the sky from the edge of the world to the edge of the world to the edge of the world. Even before the first meteor winked at the corner of my eye, I tilted my head back and felt the whole planet spinning, and instantly I dropped to the ground and hunted for something to hold fast to before the prairie tilted and tossed me into the black void that holds this tiny blue world.

In silence the family lay together, quilts set edge to edge. Across the grass I could hear the mother still trying to coax one of the younger boys out of the car, telling him she would hold him tight, but he would not budge. "I'm too little," he said. "It's too big and I'm too little."

*Excerpted from "Late Migrations" by Margaret Renkl*



“That’s right. If you remove the mirror, it makes a great washtub.” Photo credit: Tom Totton.



“Good point. Without the moon, we’d be in for one rocky ride!” Photo credit: Tom Totton.

### AU Information Box

- President:** Jerry Wilson 968-4056  
[jerrywilsonphd@gmail.com](mailto:jerrywilsonphd@gmail.com)
- Vice President:** Ron Herron  
[vicepresident@sbau.org](mailto:vicepresident@sbau.org)
- Secretary:** Colin Taylor  
[dancingmagpie@cox.net](mailto:dancingmagpie@cox.net)
- Treasurer:** Colin Taylor 967-8140  
[dancingmagpie@cox.net](mailto:dancingmagpie@cox.net)
- Equipment:** Art Harris 968-4017  
[n6is@cox.net](mailto:n6is@cox.net)
- Outreach:** Chuck McPartlin 964-8201  
[outreach@sbau.org](mailto:outreach@sbau.org)
- Newsletter:** Tom Whittemore 687-2025  
[kometes@aol.com](mailto:kometes@aol.com)
- Webmaster:** Tom Totton 562-8795  
[webmaster@sbau.org](mailto:webmaster@sbau.org)
- Merch Manager:** Pat McPartlin 964-8201  
[parsnip7@yahoo.com](mailto:parsnip7@yahoo.com)

### SBMNH Astronomy Programs Manager

Krissie Cook 682-4711 ext. 164  
[kcook@sbnature2.org](mailto:kcook@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.or>

# The Astronomical Unit

c/o Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History

2559 Puesta Del Sol Road

Santa Barbara, CA 93105-2998

## March 2022

| Sunday                        | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday     | Thursday        | Friday                               | Saturday  |
|-------------------------------|--------|---------|---------------|-----------------|--------------------------------------|---|
|                               |        | 1       | 2<br>NEW MOON | 3               | 4<br>MONTHLY<br>MEETING<br>ON ZOOM   | 5   |
| 6                             | 7      | 8       | 9             | 10<br>FQ MOON   | 11                                   | 12<br>PLANNING<br>MEETING<br><br>SBMNH PUBLIC<br>STAR PARTY |
| 13<br>DAYLIGHT<br>SAVING TIME | 14     | 15      | 16            | 17<br>FULL MOON | 18<br>WESTMONT<br>TELESCOPE<br>NIGHT | 19  |
| 20<br>VERNAL<br>EQUINOX       | 21     | 22      | 23            | 24<br>LQ MOON   | 25                                   | 26  |
| 27                            | 28     | 29      | 30            | 31<br>NEW MOON  |                                      |   |