

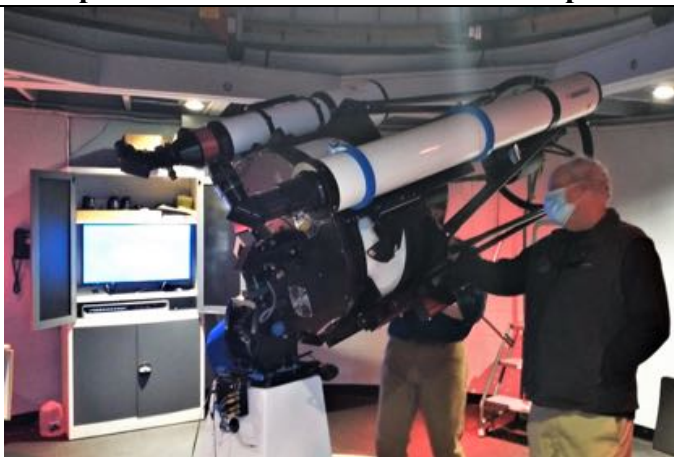


AU AstroNews

The Newsletter of the Astronomical Unit

April 2022

Sponsored by the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History



Back in business! Our first in-person public star party in more than two years at the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History. Photo credit: Tom Totton.

OUTREACH SUMMARY

To get full outreach credit, 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>. It's quick and painless.

In March, we restarted some public observing events. We had **518** people show up for the SBMNH Monthly Star Party! Volunteers from the AU, SBMNH, Westmont, SBCC, Girl Scouts, and the public were Brandy Ackermann, Rosie Avila, Farshad Barman, Tom Carroll, Krissie Cook, Raf Cottom, Tim Crawford, Joe Doyle, Steven Faulstich, Tessa Flanagan & Duff Kennedy, David Gay, Morgan & Brian Green, Sean Kelly, Ken Kihlstrom, Chris Larson, Pat & Chuck McPartlin, Janet & Martin Meza, Peggy O'Rork, Zachary Rider, Tom Totton, Annika Wagner, and Tom Whittemore, who showed the sky to **719** guests.

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The SBAU radio hour has been replaced by a weekly Zoom/YouTube Live event every Monday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

Masks are still required for all SBAU observing events

FRIDAY, APRIL 1, 7:30 PM

The SBAU monthly meeting will be on Zoom again this month. Our speaker will be UCSB graduate student, Mirek Brandt, who will talk about his specialty, exoplanet research. He conducts this research at the Las Cumbres Observatories.

FRIDAY, APRIL 1, SETUP 6 PM

Star party at Los Flores Ranch Park in Santa Maria, 6245 Dominion Road. Entry to the observing area is the next entrance toward Santa Maria from the main entrance.

THURSDAY, APRIL 5, SETUP 6:30 PM

Telescopes for fifth graders at Hope School, 3970 La Colina Road. We set up on their playground in back of the main buildings.

SATURDAY, APRIL 9, SETUP 6 PM

Monthly Public Star Party at SBMNH, next to Palmer Observatory.

FRIDAY, APRIL 15, SETUP 7 PM

Monthly Public Telescope Night at Westmont, at their Keck Observatory, next to the athletic fields.

FRIDAY, APRIL 22, ALL DAY

Earth Day. We've only got one planet, so let's take better care of it.

SATURDAY, APRIL 30, SETUP 7 PM

Telescopes for the Kaleidoscope Girl Scout campout. Come early to partake in the 6 PM pasta dinner. Please notify Chuck if you plan to attend. Volunteers must pass the additional online background test conducted by the Girl Scouts to be admitted to the site.

APRIL SKY

The International Space Station will be making a few visible passes through Santa Barbara's skies in the first week of April, weather permitting. Its orbit may change from time to time, so to get the latest and most complete predictions, visit Heavens Above <<https://tinyurl.com/y5yt22ch>>

In the predawn sky of Thursday, April 5, look to the southeast to see Saturn and much dimmer Mars only 0.4° apart.

On Friday, April 8, between about 2 PM and 4:35 PM PDT, look for the Lunar X feature along the terminator, the line between night and day on the Moon. The intersecting rims of craters form an illuminated X protruding into the part of the Moon still in darkness.

On the night/morning of April 21/22, look for Lyrid meteors radiating from near the bright star Vega, which will be near the zenith at 5 AM. The Moon will be near Last Quarter, so it will drown out the dimmer meteors. The shower is active from about April 16 to April 25.

On Wednesday, April 27, the predawn sky to the southeast will feature a thin waning crescent Moon near bright Venus and Jupiter. On Saturday morning, April 30, Venus and Jupiter will be half a degree apart.

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Jerry Wilson

This year has had its share of bad news, with the Omicron variant and now the OmicronB, along with the war in Ukraine. But there have been positive things to focus on.

The James Webb telescope was successfully launched, inserted into its L2 orbit, and placed in the final stages of optical alignment, with first science data projected for May.

SpaceX has announced its plan to make the first orbital launch of its revolutionary Starship in the next "few months." NASA plans to use Starship to send astronauts back to the surface of the moon, and Musk hopes it could put [footprints on Mars by the end of the decade](#).

Much closer to home, I don't recall a period of so many dry, clear, calm nights here on the coast as we have experienced so far in 2022. Unfortunately the stunning nights have occurred while we are renovating our back yard to reduce water-consuming turf and increase patio space. I also managed to get a small 8 x 8 foot roll-off roof observatory in the bargain. The observatory will be finished by early April.

We are assembling a new telescope for the observatory: an 18' f/3.8 Newtonian astrograph. The scope is the culmination of a long-term project of designing and fabrication started in 2014. The 1.75"-thick, 18"- diameter primary was done in my garage. The glass weighs 32 pounds and is the heaviest component. It rides in a custom designed and machined aluminum mirror cell. The tube is carbon fiber, 22 inches in diameter, 72 inches long, and with 4mm walls. Surprisingly, the tube is quite easy to drill. It drills like wood. The tube is from CarbonScopeTubes.com.

The secondary, holder and spider are from Astrosystems and the focuser is from Optec. Key to making sharp images over a wide field is the Gen2 Paracorr (coma corrector) from TeleVue.

It looks like the scope and observatory are coming together in the next two weeks. If the weather holds we'll be having 'first light' in early April.

SBAU MERCHANDISE!

Remember to let Pat McPartlin, SBAU Merchandise Manager, know about any club merchandise you would like to buy. See the "Store" tab on the website for the items available. Email her at: merchmgr@sbaa.org to order and arrange how to meet with her to receive your item(s).

Also, the club can only take cash or checks at this time. Please make checks payable to the Museum (not the club) at "SBMNH" with memo: "SBAU merch."

Thank you!



"No wonder my scope didn't track tonight. This isn't a wire. It's a bungee cord!" Photo credit: Tom Totton.

ARTS CORNER

We had the sky up there all speckled with stars and we used to lay on our backs and look up at them and discuss about whether they was made or just happened.

- Mark Twain, The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn

You know Orion always comes up sideways.
Throwing a leg up over our fence of mountains,
And rising on his hands, he looks in on me.

- Robert Frost

Earth's the right place for love:
I don't know where it's likely to go better.

- Robert Frost



"You're kidding, Art. You placed a bet on Betelgeuse going supernova tonight?" Photo credit: Tom Totton.

AU Information Box

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

Vice President: Ron Herron
vicepresident@sbau.org

Secretary: Colin Taylor
dancingmagpie@cox.net

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

Krissie Cook 682-4711 ext. 164
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.org>

The Astronomical Unit

c/o Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History

2559 Puesta Del Sol Road

Santa Barbara, CA 93105-2998

April 2022

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1 AU MONTHLY MEETING ON ZOOM 7:30 PM	2
3	4	5 HOPE SCHOOL 6:30 PM	6	7	8 FQ MOON	9 MONTHLY STAR PARTY SBMNH 6:00 PM
10	11	12	13	14	15 WESTMONT PUBLIC STAR PARTY 7:00 PM	16 FULL MOON
17	18	19	20	21	22 EARTH DAY ALL DAY	23 LQ MOON
24	25	26	27	28	29	30 NEW MOON GIRL SCOUT KALEIDOSCOPE 7:00 PM