



AU AstroNews

The Newsletter of the Astronomical Unit

August 2023

Sponsored by the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History



“A Bacara moment.” Photo credit: Charles Schueler.

OUTREACH SUMMARY

SBAU volunteers must have undergone the SBMNH background check, and conform with the SBMNH policies for dealing with the public, to participate in outreach activities. To get vetted, contact SBMNH Volunteer Manager Rebecca Coulter <rcoulter@sbnature2.org>. It's quick and painless.

Since the last newsletter, certified SBAU/SBMNH volunteers Brandy Ackerman, Krissie Cook, Tim Crawford, Joe Doyle, Tessa Flanagan & Duff Kennedy, Sean Fox, Brian Green, Art Harris, Ron Herron, David Larson, Pat & Chuck McPartlin, Janet & Martin Meza, Bonnie & Bruce Murdock, Ron Nixon, Edgar Ocampo, Javier Rivera, Charles Schueler, Tom Totton, Pat Forgey & Jerry Wilson, Haley & John Winckowski, and Andre Yew showed the sky to **2025** guests. Matt Hall helped out.

OUTREACH EVENTS

THURSDAY, AUGUST 3, SETUP 7 PM

Telescopes for the Ritz-Carlton Bacara. We set up on the blufftop lawn by the Angel Oak restaurant.

FRIDAY, AUGUST 4, 7 PM

Quick planetarium show, with the **new high resolution projectors!** Then at 7:30, our monthly meeting in Fleischmann Auditorium at SBMNH. This will be a hybrid meeting, also on Zoom. Watch your email or find the link on the SBAU web page. Our speaker will be Dr. Peter Love on the James Webb Space Telescope.

SATURDAY, AUGUST 5, SETUP 7:30 PM

Slide show and telescopes for campers at Cachuma Lake. We set up in the field at Dakota Plains.

THURSDAY, AUGUST 10, SETUP 7 PM

Telescopes for the Ritz-Carlton Bacara. We set up on the blufftop lawn by the Angel Oak restaurant.

FRIDAY, AUGUST 11, SETUP 8 PM

Telescopes for campers at Refugio State Beach, setup in the southwest corner of the day use parking lot.

SATURDAY, AUGUST 12, 5 PM

AU monthly planning meeting on Zoom. Watch your email for the link.

SATURDAY, AUGUST 12, SETUP 7:30 PM

Monthly Public Star Party at SBMNH, next to Palmer Observatory, 8:30 to 10 PM.

SUNDAY, AUGUST 13, 1 AM

Peak of the Perseid Meteor Shower!

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 16, SETUP 8 PM

Telescopes and slide show for campers at Carpinteria State Beach. We set up on the sidewalk towards the beach from the entry kiosk.

THURSDAY, AUGUST 17, SETUP 7 PM

Telescopes for the Ritz-Carlton Bacara. We set up on the blufftop lawn by the Angel Oak restaurant.

FRIDAY, AUGUST 18, SETUP 7 PM

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

SATURDAY, AUGUST 19, SETUP 7:30 PM

Slide show and telescopes for campers at Cachuma Lake. We set up in the field at Dakota Plains.

TUESDAY, AUGUST 22, SETUP 7 PM

Telescope Tuesday at the Camino Real Marketplace, in the plaza by the theater.

THURSDAY, AUGUST 24, SETUP 7 PM

Telescopes for the Ritz-Carlton Bacara. We set up on the blufftop lawn by the Angel Oak restaurant.

FRIDAY, AUGUST 25, SETUP 8 PM

Telescopes for campers at Refugio State Beach, setup in the southwest corner of the day use parking lot. Chuck and Pat will not be able to attend, so if you can, please come out and help!

SATURDAY, AUGUST 26, SETUP 7:30 PM

Slide show and telescopes for campers at Cachuma Lake. We set up in the field at Dakota Plains. Chuck and Pat will not be able to attend, so if you can, please come out and help!

THURSDAY, AUGUST 31, SETUP 7 PM

Telescopes for the Ritz-Carlton Bacara. We set up on the blufftop lawn by the Angel Oak restaurant. Chuck and Pat will not be able to attend, so if you can, please come out and help!

Farewell to a Good Friend

Bob Brown

Jim Williams was an architect, astronomer, photographer, and all around good guy. I've known Jim since the early days of the Astronomical Unit's existence in the mid 1980s. As students in Fred Marschak's SBCC Astronomy classes, we were automatically signed up as members of the Astronomical Unit, enabling us to attend monthly meetings where Fred always had interesting speakers or lectures to further our interest in Astronomy.

It wasn't long until Jim developed a simple black and white logo for the AU, which stood for many years until he topped that with a beautiful, full color update that is still in use by the AU today.

Jim lived in Lompoc and regularly made the drive to Santa Barbara to attend AU events, even braving stormy evenings to do so. He had his opinions, which he made known and they often added new angles to any conversation he was in.

Jim and I shared a love of medium-format film photography. He had a prized Hasselblad 500C

Series camera that brought him great joy. I had (and still use) a pair of Rolleiflex Automat twin-lens reflex cameras from the mid 1950s that I bought on eBay. I called them my "poor man's Hasselblads" as they were less sophisticated and pricey than Jim's Hassy, but still brought forth the same result. I had two, one loaded with color film and one with black & white. Jim's camera had interchangeable film backs, so he could easily swap film types without having to change the whole camera, even in the middle of a roll. We always discussed our cameras and recent shooting adventures with them when we met up. In Jim's words, with the large film size of 2-1/4" square, the resolution was so good that "You could literally step into the scene". That phrase will always stay with me.

As an outgrowth of his work as an architect, Jim was very knowledgeable about handicap access issues. He brought his design skills to bear in the fabrication of a telescope-holding fixture with room underneath so a wheelchair-bound observer could enjoy celestial viewing while seated. He named it "UC2", a nod to including handicapped observers who may not have been able to see the heavens without such a device. It consisted of a rolling motorcycle maintenance stand onto which Jim attached a custom aluminum arm that served as a mount for a Celestron C8 scope. The stand had a hydraulic elevating system that enabled raising or lowering of the eyepiece to suit the observer's needs.

Well done my friend... you've left a lasting legacy that won't be forgotten.



Jim and his outreach creation, the UC2. Photo: Bob Brown.

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Jerry Wilson

Since the James Webb went into its orbit a million miles out from the Earth, it has returned a steady stream of spectacular images and new discoveries. Its sensitivity in the far infrared and larger-than-Hubble aperture have allowed observation of objects with very high redshifts (very old).

Among these images are bright blobs that appear to be galaxies, but they are not what we expect of early galaxies. They are gigantic and are a part of a very young universe: a universe that is less than a billion years old. Present models of galaxy formation indicate these large galaxies should take billions of years to grow.

Popular articles in the press use attention-getting headlines and sensational stories to attract readers. We see claims of “the big bang is wrong” and “the objects violate known physics.” Such sensationalist claims are distracting and way oversimplified. But there is interesting physics here.

These bright objects shed their light to us around 13 billion years ago. The universe was much different then. It was smaller, more dense, and made out of hydrogen, helium, and a little lithium and beryllium. Bigger stars formed quickly and died sooner in massive supernovae. Galaxies may have been bigger and formed faster, but there are alternatives being looked at. These may be quasars aimed right at us, for example. Unfortunately, we cannot resolve them.

I wonder whether the universe was more relativistic then, compared to now. Even in our present universe, time does not pass at the same rate everywhere. How it passes depends on where you are and how fast you're moving. After all, the big bang was not an explosion as is commonly portrayed. It is a sudden conversion of a lot of energy into a lot of matter. In the early universe time may have passed more slowly than now, making interpretation of events a little more subtle than at first glance.

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AUGUST 2023

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1 FULL MOON	2	3 RITZ-CARLTON BACARA 7PM	4 "HYBRID" AU MONTHLY MEETING 7PM	5 CACHUMA LAKE 7:30PM
6	7	8 LQ MOON	9	10 RITZ-CARLTON BACARA 7PM	11 REFUGIO STATE BEACH 8PM	12 ZOOM PLANNING MEETING 5PM STAR PARTY 7:30PM
13 PERSEID PEAK 1 AM	14	15	16 NEW MOON CARPINTERIA STATE BEACH 8PM	17 RITZ-CARLTON BACARA 7PM	18 WESTMONT PUBLIC STAR PARTY 7PM	19 CACHUMA LAKE 7:30PM
20	21	22 "TELESCOPE TUESDAY" AT CAMINO REAL MARKETPLACE 7PM	23 FQ MOON	24 RITZ-CARLTON BACARA 7PM	25 REFUGIO STATE BEACH 8PM	26 CACHUMA LAKE 7:30PM
27	28	29	30 FULL MOON	31 RITZ-CARLTON BACARA 7PM		