



# AU AstroNews

## The Newsletter of the Astronomical Unit

April 2010

Sponsored by the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History

### APRIL MEETING SPEAKER

Our speaker for the April meeting is Dr. Vardha Nicola Bennert whose subject is “**The Co-evolution of Black Holes and Their Host Galaxies.**” Dr. Bennert received her Ph.D. from the University of Bochum, Germany, in 2005. From November, 2005 to August, 2008, she was a Postdoctoral Researcher at UC, Riverside, where she studied quasar host galaxies and the relevance of mergers for the fueling of quasars. She is currently a Postdoctoral Researcher at UC, Santa Barbara, where she investigates the cosmic evolution of Black Hole mass-scaling relations. Dr. Bennert writes: “During my career I have been using the major optical and radio facilities in the world, in particular the Very Large Telescope (Chile), the 10-meter Keck Telescope (Hawaii), and the Hubble Space Telescope. I also have a lot of teaching and public outreach experience.”



*La Toya Lopez collects the 2009 AU FREE Raffle Grand Prize - maybe this year it will be you! Photo credit: R. Gutierrez.*

### OUTREACH SUMMARY

Since the last newsletter, AU volunteers Andy Allen, Chad Caprio, Bill Clausen, Tim Crawford, Joe Doyle, Mike Farris, Ruben Gutierrez, Art Harris, Jürgen Hilmer, Jeremy Kerby, Chris Larson, Pat & Chuck McPartlin, Max Neufeldt, Edgar Ocampo, Bob Richard, Javier Rivera, Nancy Rohrer, Samantha Thompson & the Quasars, Tom

Totton, Tom Whittemore, Jim Williams, and Tim Wittenburg showed cool stuff in the sky to 844 customers.

### APRIL OUTREACH EVENTS

It's April, and this year that means International Astronomy Day, plus lots of school events. Come on out and give us a hand - it'll be good practice for the 2,000 Girls Scouts at Live Oak Campground on May 1!

We have school science nights that are ending before it really gets dark, but the kids still enjoy looking through the scopes at the landscape if the Moon isn't up, and the Sun is occasionally showing some action, so don't hesitate to join us. Here are the AU events scheduled so far. To get the latest information on schedules, or directions, just contact Chuck at 964-8201 or [macpuzl@west.net](mailto:macpuzl@west.net)

### THURSDAY, APRIL 1, 7 PM

Astronomy Art by school kids, in front of the Art Museum on State Street, for First Thursday.

### FRIDAY, APRIL 2, 7 PM

Monthly AU meeting in Farrand Hall at SBMNH. Start with a short planetarium show, then hear our speaker on black holes and galaxy evolution.

### WEDNESDAY, APRIL 7, 8 PM

Talk on exoplanets at the Kavli Institute for Theoretical Physics at UCSB.

Admission is free, seating is by RSVP only: e-mail: [events@kitp.ucsb.edu](mailto:events@kitp.ucsb.edu) or call (805) 893-6349 by April 1, 2010.

### THURSDAY, APRIL 8, SETUP 4:30 PM

Telescopes for Science Night at Vieja Valley School, at 434 Nogal Drive, from 5 to 7:30 PM.

### FRIDAY, APRIL 9, SETUP 5 PM

Telescopes for Science Night at Adams School, at 2701 Las Positas Road, from 5:30 to 7:30 PM.

**SATURDAY, APRIL 10, SETUP 8:30 AM**

Telescopes for Science Morning at Hope School, at 3970 La Colina Road, from 9 to 11 AM.

**SATURDAY, APRIL 10, 5:30 PM**

AU planning meeting in the classroom outside Javier's office at SBMNH.

**SATURDAY, APRIL 10, 7:30 PM TO 10 PM**

Monthly Public Star Party at the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History.

**WEDNESDAY, APRIL 14, SETUP 7 PM**

Telescopes for students from Mountain View School, who will be out at the Camino Real Marketplace. We'll set up in the plaza between Borders and the theater.

**THURSDAY, APRIL 15, SETUP 5:30 PM**

Telescopes for Washington Elementary School's Science Night. They're at 290 Lighthouse Road, on the Mesa by Lazy Acres. We'll set up on the playground, with access via Salida del Sol.

**FRIDAY, APRIL 16, SETUP 7 PM**

Monthly Public Telescope Night at Westmont's new observatory, next to the baseball field.

**SATURDAY, APRIL 17, SETUP 6 PM**

Telescopes for a group of residents and students at Midland School, at 5100 Figueroa Mountain Road near Los Olivos. Dark skies!

**TUESDAY, APRIL 20, SETUP 7 PM**

Telescope Tuesday at the Camino Real Marketplace in Goleta, in the plaza between Borders and the theater.

**SATURDAY, APRIL 24, SETUP 9 AM**

International Astronomy Day at SBMNH, with solar viewing, astronomy activities, telescope giveaways, telescope clinic, and star party, 10 AM to 10 PM, with a break between 5 and 7 PM for dinner.

**WEDNESDAY, APRIL 28, SETUP 7 PM**

Telescopes for a star party at the Biltmore Hotel, on the Monte Vista Lawn.

**ARTS CORNER**

**DARK**

Spending one's life seeking light,  
Avoiding dark and its beauty;  
Stars are only seen in its presence.  
Ibrahim Ibn Salma

**CANIS MAJOR**

The great Overdog,  
That heavenly beast  
With a star in one eye,  
Gives a leap in the east.  
He dances upright  
All the way to the west,  
And never once drops  
On his forefeet to rest.  
I'm a poor underdog,  
But to-night I will bark  
With the great Overdog  
That romps through the dark.  
-Robert Frost, 1928

**Waiting To Observe, by A.U. Poe**

We watched  
As the bolder suns of twilight  
Bored their age-old paths to shine.  
Starstuff we,  
Bathed in gentle rays of yet to be.  
Then night,  
And blackness strewn with diamonds for our feast.



*The "2010 Messier Marathon Quartet" Photo credit: T. Whittemore*



**From The President's Pen**  
**By Ruben Gutierrez, 2010 AU President**



**International Astronomy Day, Saturday, April 24, 2010**

**Some History:**

The Santa Barbara Astronomical Unit's premier event for the year has finally arrived this month with the celebration of International Astronomy Day on April 24th! This event is a grass roots movement designed to share the joy of astronomy with the general population by "Bringing Astronomy to the People." Astronomy Day had its beginning here in California in 1973. Doug Berger, then president of the Astronomical Association of Northern California (AANC), decided that rather than trying to entice people to travel long distances to visit observatory open houses, the AANC would set up telescopes at sites more easily accessible. Well, this strategy certainly worked well.

Astronomy Day now goes by the name of International Astronomy Day as events not only take place across the United States, but also in numerous countries throughout the planet. On this day, thousands who have never looked through a telescope will have the opportunity to see first-hand what so many amateur and professional astronomers enjoy.

**This Year:**

With the ever-present support and sponsorship from the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History, the AU will once again put on an exciting International Astronomy Day on the beautiful grounds of the Museum. With the passing of every year (especially International Year of Astronomy 2009), the AU has been able to put on an even better first-class event than the previous year.

**Freebies All Day in Front of the Museum's Iron Gates:**

So, 2010 is no exception. Starting at 10:00 AM on Saturday, April 24, 2010, the AU will have telescopes available for safe viewing of the sun, as well as a radio telescope, and a jumbo pair of binoculars (to take a close look at our towering mountains). All of these instruments will be staffed by AU members, who will happily explain how each machine works. There will also be a mirror-grinding demonstration booth. At this site, you'll be able to see the skilled craftsmen of the AU actually making a mirror that will then be used to make a reflecting telescope! At another booth, visitors will be able to take home a genuine "Galileoscope." This special telescope, which was designed to be distributed as a kit, will be given for free to 40 lucky children. There will be assembly workshops (at 10:00AM and 2:00 PM), where Museum Astronomy Manager Javier Rivera will show recipients how to construct their scopes. Remember, AU exhibits, activities, and of course, the raffle, in front of the iron gates of the Museum, are all Free. (Note: to enjoy other events that are inside the Museum, like a display of meteorites and several planetarium shows, non-Museum members will need to pay entrance fees at the Museum's reception desk.)

The AU will also have over 100 square feet of astro-photography that will simply amaze you. This, along with literature, handouts, astronomy-related clothing for sale, and a

telescope and astronomical equipment swap meet (where you may find that one piece of equipment, or telescope, you've been looking for) makes for a fun-packed day. But wait, that's not all.

### **Free Raffle Goodies:**

The Club's now famous and much anticipated **FREE** raffle will be better than ever this year. Our Grand prize is an 8-inch Zhumell Dobsonian telescope. This Deluxe scope comes with a 2-inch Crayford-style focuser and eyepiece, a second 1.25-inch eyepiece, a laser collimator, a 50-mm right-angle finder scope, and built-in mirror-cooling fan. Wow, but wait until you hear about our "second" prize. It's the 2008 Sky & Telescope Invention Of The Year: a Celestron Skyscout! Yes, this incredible hand-held unit (which is about the size of a camcorder) is able to identify just about anything celestial in the sky. You simply point the Skyscout at an object, while looking through the viewing portal and clicking the button. The Skyscout will also find just about anything up in the sky. Simply click what you want it to find in its self-contained database that has thousands of objects, and it will actually guide you to it! It's that easy. The AU has even included a database upgrade card that will enable the unit to provide you with astronomy lessons: incredible! All you have to do to win one of these prizes, plus 8 other prizes, is be present when the tickets are drawn. (No AU members, please! This is for the Public!) Raffle tickets will be given out on-site. The only drawing will take place at 3:00 PM.

### **More Free Activities on the Night of 4/24/10:**

To end International Astronomy Day, there will be a telescope clinic, which starts at 7:00 PM. Just follow the signs from the iron gates to the side driveway. Here, you'll be able to bring your own telescope and learn from the AU's experts how to use it. Then, at 8:00 PM, there will be a Star Party, where members of the AU will have a multitude of telescopes that will be available for all participants to enjoy. See you there!

### **Membership Drive and free AU cap:**

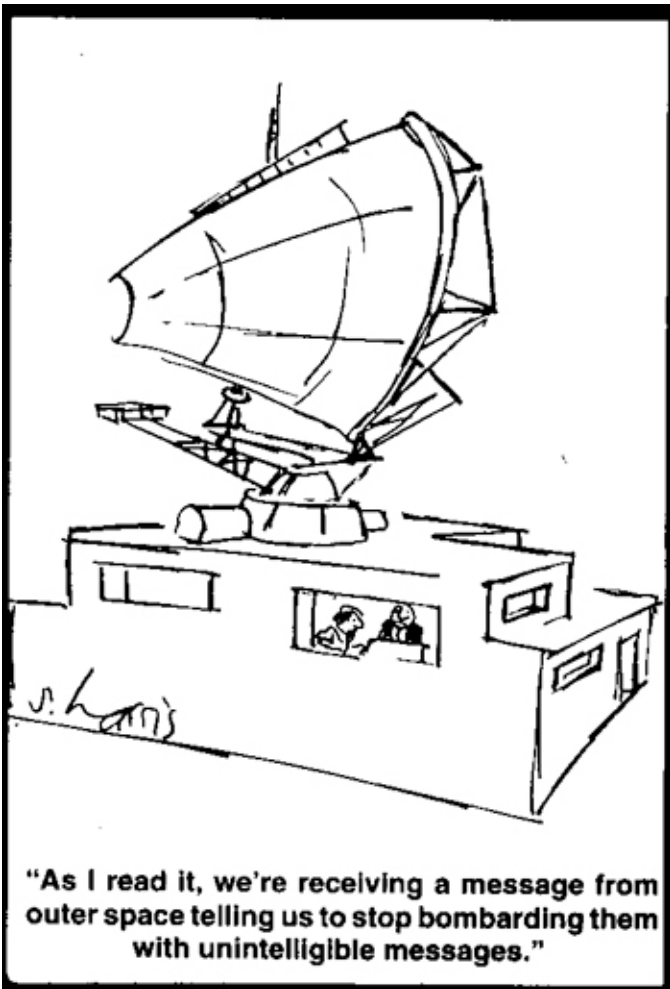
The AU's membership drive (from 3/5/10, until International Day of Astronomy, 4/24/10) is in full swing and picking up steam. Keep in mind that with every new individual or family membership, you get an official SBAU Cap (if you joined in this time period and didn't receive a cap, please contact AU Secretary/Treasurer Pat McPartlin).

I take great pleasure in welcoming the following new individual memberships: Mark Brickley, Brian Holodnak, Jeremy Kerby, Michael J. Lopez IV, Edwin Potts, and William Theeringer. New Family memberships are: Marc Fisher and Family, and Steve Lange and Family (Steve, Tessa, José Luis, and Paulo Lange). Welcome aboard!

I also wish to give my appreciation to the following people who renewed their memberships this past month. Individual memberships are: Ibrahim Khogeer, Paula Kislak, Phyllis Mlynek, Erin O'Connor, Mark Parker, and Rosalind Perry. Family Memberships are: Dale and Pierina Lowdermilk, as well as Craig Prater and Family (Craig, Yvonne DeGraw, Kenyon, and Tenaya). Thank you for your support and common fascination with the science of Astronomy and the Santa Barbara Astronomical Unit!

## I KNOW THE STARS

I know the stars by their names,  
Aldebaran, Altair,  
And I know the path they take  
Up heaven's broad blue stair.  
I know the secrets of men  
By the look of their eyes,  
Their gray thoughts, their strange thoughts  
Have made me sad and wise.  
But your eyes are dark to me  
Though they seem to call and call --  
I cannot tell if you love me  
Or do not love me at all.  
I know many things,  
But the years come and go,  
I shall die not knowing  
The thing I long to know.  
*Sara Teasdale*



### AU Information Box

**President:** Ruben Gutierrez 450-7451  
[rubenalvag@aol.com](mailto:rubenalvag@aol.com)  
**Vice President:** Mike Farris 637-3300  
[mike@mikewfarris.com](mailto:mike@mikewfarris.com)  
**Secretary/Treasurer:**  
Pat McPartlin 964-8201  
[parsnip7@yahoo.com](mailto:parsnip7@yahoo.com)  
**Outreach:** Chuck McPartlin 964-8201  
[macpuzl@west.net](mailto:macpuzl@west.net)  
**Webmaster:** Paul Winn 886-2319  
[paul@sbau.org](mailto:paul@sbau.org)  
**Newsletter:** Tom Whittemore 687-2025  
[kometes@aol.com](mailto:kometes@aol.com)  
**Equipment:** Art Harris 968-4017  
[n6is@cox.net](mailto:n6is@cox.net)

### AU Astronomy Information Pager

(Leave a short message) 564-9002

### SBMNH Astronomy Programs Manager

Javier Rivera 682-4711x173

[jrivera@sbnature2.org](mailto:jrivera@sbnature2.org)

### SBMNH Astronomy Program Tape

Updated monthly 682-4711x405

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 = \$15 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>

**April 2010**

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1 FIRST THURSDAY: ART MUSEUM 7PM	2 AU GENERAL MEETING 7 PM	3
4	5	6 	7 KAVLI INSTITUTE TALK 8PM UCSB	8 VIEJA VALLEY SCHOOL 5 PM	9 ADAMS SCHOOL 5PM	10 HOPE SCHOOL 8:30AM PLANNING MEETING 5:30 PM SBMNH STAR PARTY 7:30 PM
11	12	13	14 MOUNTAIN VIEW SCHOOL 7PM 	15 WASHINGTON ELEMENTARY 5:30PM	16 WESTMONT COLLEGE 7PM	17 MIDLAND SCHOOL 6PM
18	19	20 CAMINO REAL MARKETPLACE 7PM	21 	22	23	24 INTERNATIONAL ASTRONOMY DAY SBMNH 9AM
25	26	27	28 BILTMORE HOTEL 7PM 	29	30	

**The Astronomical Unit**  
 c/o Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History  
 2559 Puesta Del Sol Road  
 Santa Barbara, CA 93105-2998