



AU AstroNews

The Newsletter of the Astronomical Unit

August 2005

Sponsored by the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History

The July Comet Crash

We had a great turnout of 17 scopes and about 35 people up at the Gun Club on the night of July 3 to watch the Deep Impact probe crash into Comet Tempel 1. If observing conditions hadn't been so good, we wouldn't have seen anything. As it was, the comet was barely perceptible through some of the bigger scopes before the impact time of 10:52 PM. By about 30 minutes after impact, even though the comet was lower in the sky, it was definitely easier to detect, and started showing a pinpoint nucleus, which had not been apparent previously. While it didn't live up to the "fireworks" hype, we were at least able to see a change. Subsequent reports from NASA put the amount of brightening at about two magnitudes, and there are some fantastic images of the approach and impact at deepimpact.jpl.nasa.gov.



Jeremy Schmit readies his homemade 10" scope for the impact.

AU Outreach for July

Since the last newsletter, AU outreach volunteers Bridget & Andy Allen, Warren Bitters, Frank Cassidy, Bill Clausen, Tim Crawford, Ruben Gutierrez, Laurence Harms, Art Harris, Juergen Hilmer, June Kelley, Gail Massey, Pat & Chuck

McPartlin, Edgar Ocampo, Helen Osenga, Craig Prater, Fred Strobach, Jim Williams, Paul Winn, and Tim Wittenburg showed cool stuff in the night sky to 626 happy customers.

AU Events for August

Friday, August 5, setup 8 PM

Slide show and telescopes for campers at Cachuma Lake.

Saturday, August 6, all night

Dark sky observing at Figueroa Mountain. Contact Joe Doyle for details.

Tuesday, August 9, setup 8 PM

Scopes for Family Camp at Paradise Campground.

Friday, August 12, setup 8 PM

Telescopes for campers at Refugio Beach State Park. Maybe we'll see some Perseid meteors!

Saturday, August 13, 6 PM

AU planning meeting in the classroom adjacent to Krissie's office at SBMNH. All members welcome.

Saturday, August 13, 8 PM

Monthly public star party at SBMNH.

Tuesday, August 16, setup 8 PM

Scopes for Family Camp at Paradise Campground.

Friday, August 19, 8 PM

Public telescope night at Westmont. The observatory is under construction for the installation of the new telescope, so we'll need volunteers with scopes!

Saturday, August 20, setup 7:30 PM

Slide show and telescopes for campers at Cachuma Lake.

Saturday, August 27, setup 7:30 PM

Slide show and telescopes for campers at Lopez Lake. If you can come, contact Chuck to arrange for a campsite.

The Perseids This Year

The Perseid meteor shower is predicted to peak at about 10 AM (PDT) on Friday, August 12, so we won't get a grand show, but with the moon not causing too much trouble, it might be worth a look between 10 PM Thursday and dawn on Friday. There may be a secondary peak at around 8 PM (PDT) on Friday the 12th, when it's still not dark, so that evening may be worth a shot, too. Next year the moon will be bright, so enjoy what you can see this year!

CSI, AU

Last year, we received as a donation most of the parts to a Russell Porter Garden Telescope. These beautiful statuary bronze instruments were meant to be installed in a garden, and when the mirror, secondary prism, and eyepieces were removed the framework looked like a flower. Ours is serial number 42 out of 53 known to have been produced in the 1920s. (See photo at right.)

We would like to restore this telescope to working condition, but we are missing the mirror (a six-inch f/4), secondary prism, eyepieces, and bottom-mounting base. The base is bronze, circular, about a foot across, and has "KEPLER GALILEO NEWTON" in raised lettering along its circumference. We have heard that this telescope was installed in the garden of a house in the Riviera neighborhood during the 1930s, and the base may still be attached to a rock in someone's back yard. If anybody knows the whereabouts of these parts, or sees them at a garage or estate sale, please contact the AU! We can fabricate replacements, but it would be nice to find the originals, so if any of you detectives out there can track them down, it would be great.

Observatory For Sale

Roll-off roof observatory shed, fork-mounted Celestron C14 SCT with Starbright coatings, TeleVue 3" refractor with Losmandy mount, and various eyepieces for sale – a super deal at \$3080.00. Contact Jay Towson at (805) 683-4850 for details.



Photo Courtesy of the Springfield Telescope Makers.

Poetry Corner

Jupiter

By Ibrahim Bin Salma

Strolling in a dark night one sees a wondrous sight.
As a luminous markab* in a dark ocean you glide,
and upon the crest of heavenly waves you ride.
You bow to the creator in gratitude, and revolve
about Shams** in full magnitude.

In a faraway constellation you reside in harmony
and perfect liberation. However distant you are,
Mozart still plays the music in my heart.

Your wobbly pearly shape is magnified through an
eyepiece of Newtonian design, reflected upon the
mirror like a full earthly moon.

Circling you, are comely moons: Io, Europa,
Ganymede, Callisto are but a few.

Like a diamond necklace wrapped around the neck of Zahra*** you silently sing heavenly and well-composed tones, despite the red spot and the violent storms.

When you traverse your orbital Jovian path the heavens play their music from the Pythagorean past.

If you were ten times your size another sun in our nightly sky would materialize.

How petrifying!

*Markab = Vessel/**Shams = Sun /***Zahra = Venus

First Light!



Tim Crawford introduces his 10" scope to the Heavens!

It was first light for Tim Crawford and his 10" scope at the Gun Club, Thursday, July 28th. Tim has been meticulously fashioning a picture perfect 10" mirror over the last year and a half, and it paid off. His telescope is truly a work of art. Congratulations, Tim, on your persistence and craftsmanship!

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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:

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On the Web: <http://www.sbau.org>

August 2005

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2	3	4	5 ● Cachuma Lake 8PM	6 Dark Sky at Figueroa Mt
7	8	9 Family Camp 8 PM	10	11	12 Refugio Beach 8 PM	13 ● Planning Meeting 6 PM SBMNH
14	15	16 Family Camp 8 PM	17	18	19 ○ Westmont 8 PM	20 Cachuma Lake 7:30 PM
21	22	23	24	25	26 ◐	27 Lopez Lake 7:30 PM
28	29	30	31			

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