



AU AstroNews

The Newsletter of the Astronomical Unit

August 2007

Sponsored by the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History

AU OUTREACH REPORT

July was a very busy month and we had a huge turnout for the Harry Potter book event at The Camino Real Marketplace, bringing our total number of customers since the last newsletter up to **1238**. Helping to show those folks cool stuff in the sky were AU volunteers Bridget & Andy Allen, Warren Bitters, Chad Caprio, Bill Clausen, John Cotton, Jason & Tim Crawford, Carolyn & Ed Edwards, Mike Farris, Ruben Gutierrez, Art Harris, Jürgen Hilmer, Pat & Chuck McPartlin, Edgar Ocampo, Helen Osenga, Javier Rivera, Nancy Rohrer, Tom Whittemore, and Tim Wittenburg.

AUGUST AU OUTREACH

August is a quiet month so far for outreach events. Events are subject to change and cancellation, so contact Chuck at 964-8201 or macpuzl@west.net for the latest information. Here's what's scheduled so far:

SATURDAY, AUGUST 4, SETUP 7:30

PM

Show the sky to campers at Refugio Beach State Park, in the day use parking lot.

SATURDAY, AUGUST 11, 6 PM

AU Planning Meeting in the classroom outside Krissie's office at SBMNH. Come help plan your club's activities.

SATURDAY, AUGUST 11, 8 PM

Monthly Public Star Party at SBMNH. It's always fun!

SUNDAY, AUGUST 12, SETUP 8:30 AM

Solar scopes for the Santa Barbara Amateur Radio Club's Hamfest event at the Elk's Club in Goleta.

See their event description at

<http://www.sbarc.org/annual/hamfest/>

FRIDAY, AUGUST 17, 7:30 PM

Monthly Public Telescope Night at the observatory at Westmont College.

SATURDAY, AUGUST 18, SETUP 8 PM

Slide show and telescopes for campers at Cachuma Lake Campgrounds. We'll be setting up in the field at Dakota Plains.

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 22, SETUP

7:30 PM

Telescopes for campers at Refugio Beach State Park, in the day use parking area.



WHAT'S UP WITH THE PLANETS?

Jupiter is the only bright planet easily visible after the Sun goes down this month. Shining at magnitude – 2.3 and showing a diameter slightly less than 40", it nevertheless dominates the south-southwestern sky at dusk. On August 7th, Jupiter becomes stationary in right ascension – the same right ascension as Antares – and thus comes into a true conjunction with the red heart of the scorpion. The least distance between Jupiter and Antares is just over 5° on August 21st, after which time Jupiter's prograde motion carries it far eastward away from Antares. Jupiter is just 24' south of the

asteroid, *Vesta*, on the evening of August 29th. Look for these two in the same field-of-view in your telescope with a low power eyepiece. Since *Vesta* shines at magnitude +6.5, it should also be easily visible along with Jupiter in a steadily held pair of binoculars! *Neptune* comes into opposition in Capricorn on August 23rd, but it still only shines at magnitude +7.8 and is a tiny dot just 2.3" wide. *Mars* rises a little before midnight by month's end. Now that it has swelled in size to just over 8", it might offer a few surface features on a steady night of good seeing. *Saturn* and *Mercury* are still too close to the Sun all month for proper observations. *Venus* is lost in the Sun's afterglow at the beginning of the month, but by month's end rises 1.5 hours before the Sun. With optical aid an astute observer will find the planet 53" tall and 7% illuminated. Despite all the acrobatics of the planets this month, it is our *Moon* who steals the show. On the morning of the 28th, the Moon undergoes a *total eclipse* for us on the West coast! At 1:20 AM the Moon first enters Earth's penumbral shadow, passes through darkest totality at 3:37 AM, and exits the penumbral shadow at 5:55 AM. This event is one NOT to miss!

THE GRIFFITH TRIP (photos courtesy of Anthony Galvan III)



In Memoriam...

A good friend of mine, Tom Mudd, passed away on July 13th. If there is one individual who gave me my astronomical direction in life, it is Tom. We met only 10 years ago when I was entertaining the idea of building a telescope from scratch with a factory-made mirror. At this time Tom was taking a mirror-making class under the direction of John Dobson in San Francisco. Fascinated by Tom's enthusiasm for his project, I started working on a mirror of my own, but it wasn't a very good one. And Tom wasn't really satisfied with the images he was getting from his 10" mirror. Together we started making the regular Friday evening trips across the Dumbarton Bridge to the Chabot Science Center in Oakland where we learned the art and science of fashioning high-quality mirrors. Later we made a precise tester in Tom's machine shop, where one mirror followed another. And one telescope followed another. I was so taken with our work together that I started a number of mirror-making workshops in the Bay Area, and after my wife and I moved to Santa Barbara, began a workshop for the Astronomical Unit. The other night at the Westmont outreach I told my friend, Tim Crawford, who fashioned a really fine 10" mirror a couple years ago in my workshop, that when he looked up at the stars with that mirror he should thank my friend. Tom is sorely missed.

a great
man
is
gone
Tall as the truth
was who: and
wore his (mountains
understand
how) life
like a (now
with
one sweet sun,
in it, now with a million
flaming billion kinds
of nameless
silence) sky;
- e.e.cummings

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AU annual membership rates:

Single = \$15 Family = \$25

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August 2007

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1	2	3	4 Refugio Beach State Park 7:30PM
5 	6	7	8	9	10	11 Planning Meeting 6PM SBMNH Star Party 8PM
12 SB ● Amateur Radio Club Sun Party 8:30AM	13	14	15	16	17 Westmont College 7:30PM	18 Cachuma Lake Campgrounds Dakota Plains 8PM
19	20 	21	22 Refugio Beach State Park 7:30PM	23	24	25
26	27	28 	29	30	31	

The Astronomical Unit

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