



# AU AstroNews

## The Newsletter of the Astronomical Unit

December 2005

Sponsored by the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History

### AU Elections

It's that time of year again, when the AU looks for a few good members to stand up and help keep our club a great place to come and share astronomy. It's not a lot of work, and the officers from previous years are still around and willing to help, so don't be reluctant to come forward. It's really a rewarding experience, and it greatly deepens your appreciation for all the interesting and enthusiastic people who make up the Astronomical Unit.

As outgoing president, I would like to extend my sincere thanks to all the officers, volunteers, and members who have made this year so much fun, and contributed so much to the club's delightful atmosphere. (Chuck says)

### Outreach Summary

AU outreach volunteers have been pretty busy since the last newsletter, showing the sky to **1164** customers! AU volunteers making it happen were Bridget & Andy Allen, Warren Bitters, Bill Clausen, Jason & Tim Crawford, Joe Doyle, Art Harris, Jürgen Hilmer, June Kelley, Pat & Chuck McPartlin, Max Neufeldt, Ron Nixon, Edgar Ocampo, Helen Osenga, Craig Prater, John West, and Tim Wittenburg.

### AU Events for December

We have lots of outreach scheduled for December, and we'd love to have you join us. Events are subject to change, so be sure to contact Chuck at [macpuzl@west.net](mailto:macpuzl@west.net) or 964-8201 if you have any questions or need directions.

### Friday, December 2, 7:30 PM

AU monthly meeting in Farrand Hall. Elections of AU officers for 2006, followed by Members Night, short presentations by AU members.

### Monday, December 5, setup 7 PM

Slide show and telescopes for Santa Barbara Junior High School.

### Thursday, December 8, 6 PM

Annual AU Holiday Party at the Beachside Bar & Grill at Goleta Beach. Good food and good fun.

### Friday, December 9, setup 6:30 PM

Telescopes for Marymount Academy, just up the hill from the Museum.

### Saturday, December 10, 5:30 PM

AU planning meeting in the classroom next to Krissie's office at SBMNH. Planning for future AU events, including Astronomy Day 2006.

### Saturday, December 10, 7 PM

Monthly Public Star Party at SBMNH.

### Monday, December 12, setup 6:30 PM

Telescopes for Roosevelt School, just down the hill from the Mission.

### Wednesday, December 14, 7 PM

Telescopes for Santa Ynez Valley Christian Academy.

### Thursday, December 15, 11:30 AM

Volunteer Recognition Luncheon in Fleischmann Auditorium at SBMNH. RSVP to Elaine Kaufmann at 682-4711 x107 if you can make it.

### **Thursday, December 15, 6 PM**

Telescopes for Peabody Charter School. We'll need extra volunteers for this event, as it's also the "Winter Sing" for the entire school.

### **Friday, December 16, 7 PM**

Monthly Westmont Public Telescope Night. Since the big new scope and dome aren't finished yet, we'll need volunteers with scopes.

### **Thursday, December 29, 7 PM**

Slide show and telescopes for Ojai Elderhostel.



### **A Child's Eyes**

When I was young, I remember going to my grandparent's home for visits. The scent of the pines outside transitioned into deep rich smells of potpourris wafting throughout the house as we entered. The grownups visited and I would walk past the old Grandfather's clock in the entryway to the den. It was hot from its small space and walled with books, musky from age. In there were items that must have come from all over the world - mysteries that stimulated my young mind. But I remember a small ship in a bottle I used to stare at. I would look inside to see the tiny name on the ship's bowsprit- "Andromeda." Of all the objects in the small den to choose from, it was this small ship in a bottle that would continually pull at me.

As a lad I became fascinated with astronomy. I used to climb up on my parent's roof with a blanket and lie down with a pair of binoculars to stare up at the stars. I don't think I knew which ones they were but there sure were a lot of them. My Grandmother

gave me several books on the subject to hone my skills. I would memorize the planets and the number of moons they had. We didn't realize the number of moons each planet had back then and I guess we're still counting. One day my Grandmother came to our house and told me she wanted me to meet a friend of theirs who was an avid astronomer. He was very astute on the subject and well received locally. I was told he owned a very nice telescope. Along with this though came a very stern warning not to touch his equipment or we would go immediately from the premises, never to return. I never had seen her act so seriously before and it scared me. As a result I shied away and never went over to this man's house. I sometimes wonder now what might have come of it.

I lost this contact with astronomy for years. Oh, I had a class in college or maybe a few conversations with friends over timely topics like the Hubble Space telescope or a huge naked eye comet in the sky to the Northwest and even the future of the space industry. Somewhere, my dormant interest started to bubble again. I wanted to go to a star party- and so I did.

In the dark, where we are all equal, you can't hide the enthusiasm people have for the cosmos. At the star parties I saw young and old alike amazed by streams of light as old as time itself. I have yet to meet someone who sees the rings of Saturn for the first time and is bored by it. The waning interest in astronomy started to wax.

It turns out that the man I didn't go visit when I was young was Captain Crutchfield Adair. He was one of the founders of the Santa Barbara Astronomy Club- a predecessor to the club to which I now belong - The Astronomical Unit. In an indirect way, I sort of did get to meet Captain Adair after all-just later in my life. It's as if that young lad I once knew is now standing inside me. I know these eyes of mine are old now, but behind them- behind them I believe there is still a child in wonderment- still pondering what once was, what is and what might be. It must be the same for all of us- it just must be. At star parties I imagine I see that child in all of us. The people are having fun- observing, sharing, laughing, or caught in rapture of what is the razor's edge between fiction and reality.

You know, I now have that ship in a bottle - the Andromeda. From time to time I find myself gazing down into it. I can imagine myself back at my Grandparent's home on a cold night, looking up at the lights flickering on the ceiling from the firelight in the old brick fireplace. Sometimes I can almost hear the pines outside rustling in the wind or smell the crackling of the fire. I find myself sometimes staring out the window past the stars to a place that is somehow linked to all of us- I'm not sure how or why but it gives me a feeling of peace and serenity- a quiet acceptance of it all. I can now go out and look up- but now I will see the Andromeda Galaxy. I can almost hear her churning away in the night sky two and a half million light years away. To all the dreams that may come to a child's eyes- sometimes it's worth the wait- well worth the wait.

May all your dreams find you- may all your wishes come true.

Tim Crawford  
Christmas, 2005

### **For Sale**

For Sale: Orion Skyquest XT6 Dobsonian in good condition. Ample light grasp, portable, stable mount, quick setup and takedown, easy to operate. \$200 purchase price includes: 1500 mm (6") primary mirror, 45" long enameled steel optical tube, cabinet quality Dobsonian wooden base, 8x50 right angle/correct image finderscope, 10mm and 25mm Plössl eyepieces, center-marked mirror for precise collimation. Would consider trade for ETX 90 RA or similar scope. If interested contact: Don French at: (805) 569-5839 or dsfrench@cox.net.

Celestron N80 short tube OTA. With tripod mount and Red Dot finder only. Excellent RFT or spotting scope for you birders. \$100.00. Tony, 685-5387 or [galvan@dosgatos.com](mailto:galvan@dosgatos.com). Tony will bring this scope to the December meeting.

Meade ETX 60AT, brand new in box. W/25mm eyepiece. Makes an excellent Christmas present or a second field scope. \$135.00. Tony will also bring this scope to the December meeting.

### **AU Information Box**

<b>President:</b>	Chuck McPartlin 964-8201 <a href="mailto:macpuzl@west.net">macpuzl@west.net</a>
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### **AU Astronomy Information Pager**

(Leave a short message) 564-9002

### **SBMNH Astronomy Program Coordinator**

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### **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 20<sup>th</sup> 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>

## December 2005

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1 ●	2 AU Monthly Meeting 7:30 PM	3
4	5 Santa Barbara Junior High 7:00 PM	6	7	8 ●	9 Marymount Academy 6:30 PM	10 AU Planning Meeting 5:30 PM SBMNH Star Party 7 PM
11	12 Roosevelt School 6:30 PM	13	14 Santa Ynez Valley Christian Academy 7:00 PM	15 ○	16 Westmont College 7:00 PM	17
18	19	20	21 Solstice, 10:35 AM PST	22	23 ●	24
25	26	27	28	29 Ojai Elderhostel 7:00 PM	30	31

### The Astronomical Unit

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