



AU AstroNews

The Newsletter of the Astronomical Unit



December 2009

Sponsored by the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History



Chuck McPartlin and Mike Brown share a "galactic" moment at the SBMNH. Photo: R.Gutierrez.

Outreach Summary

Since the last newsletter, AU outreachers Andy Allen, Chad Caprio, Bill Clausen, Tim Crawford, Joe Doyle, Carolyn & Ed Edwards, Mike Farris, Ruben Gutierrez, Art Harris, Jürgen Hilmer, Marv Johnson, Justin & Tom King, Chris Larson, Dale Lowdermilk, Zanna Lucy, Pat & Chuck McPartlin, Max Neufeldt, Edgar Ocampo, Javier Rivera & Samantha Thompson & their Quasars, Nancy Rohrer, David Salvia, SBCC students Rory Barton-Grimley, James Forsythe, Shane McKinney, and Kelsey Northend, Tom Totton, Tom Whittemore, and Tim Wittenburg showed the night sky to 1384 customers.

Outreach for December

Here are the AU events scheduled so far for December. Remember, events are subject to change, so to get the latest information on schedules, or directions, just contact Chuck at 964-8201 or macpuzl@west.net.

Tuesday, December 1, setup 6:30 PM

Telescope Tuesday at the Camino Real Marketplace in Goleta. We set up in the plaza between Borders and the movie theater.

Wednesday, December 2, setup 6:30 PM

Telescopes and slide show for Santa Barbara Junior High School. We set up behind Marjorie Luke Theater on the campus, and get in via the gate on the East Ortega and North Quarantina intersection.

Friday, December 4, 7 PM

Monthly AU meeting in Farrand Hall at SBMNH. Short planetarium show at 7, followed by the meeting at 7:30. Our speaker is Dr. Tom Farr from NASA/JPL, speaking about the Cassini and Mars missions.

Saturday, December 5

Public open house for the new observatory at the Sedgwick Nature Reserve, up by Los Olivos at the end of Brinkerhoff Avenue.

Wednesday, December 9, setup 6 PM

Telescopes and slide show for Franklin Elementary School. We set up on the playground accessible from the gate at the intersection of East Yanonali and North Voluntario.

Thursday, December 10, 6 PM

Annual AU Holiday Party at the Beachside Bar & Grill at Goleta Beach.

Friday, December 11, setup 6 PM

Telescopes and slide show for docents at the Sedgwick Nature Reserve, out at the end of Brinkerhoff Avenue in dark skies.

Saturday, December 12, 5 PM

AU Planning Meeting in the classroom outside Javier's office at SBMNH. Come help plan your club's activities for 2010!

Saturday, December 12, 7 PM

Monthly Public Star Party at SBMNH. Bring a scope and have fun showing goodies in the sky outside Palmer Observatory, or just show up and enjoy looking at them. Maybe we'll catch part of the Geminid meteor shower, but the peak is the night of the 13th and morning of the 14th.

Wednesday, December 16, setup 6 PM

Telescopes for gifted students and their families at Washington School, on the Mesa near Lazy Acres. We get our scopes in through a small gate off Shoreline this year, so contact Chuck for access details.

Friday, December 18, 7 PM

Monthly Public Telescope Night at Westmont College, at their new observatory, next to the baseball field.

Monday, Dec 21, 2009, 09:47 AM PST

Winter Solstice - Official start of Winter.

Friday, December 25, setup 6 PM

Telescopes for guests at Bacara Resort & Spa. We set up on the lawn adjacent to the Miro Restaurant. Contact Chuck for access details.

The Colossal Machines

Jürgen Hilmer

The sky is the same, but our eyes are
Supercharged with Giant Machines!
Now, Man can create the latest theories
And have New Cosmic Dreams.

Look-back Time is now near the extremes!
Does Man's Mind expand like the Cosmos,
Using the Giant Machines?
Can Man now find the Ultimate Theories,
And also experience the Final Cosmic Dreams?



Enthusiasts build GalileoScopes at the "Guacamoon and Jupiter, too" outreach in Carpinteria. Photo: R. Gutierrez.

From The President's Pen....

Ruben Gutierrez

The vision of International Year of Astronomy 2009 (IYA2009) was to "help people rediscover their place in the Universe through the sky, and thereby engage in a personal sense of wonder and discovery." From this it is hoped individuals will "realize the impact of astronomy and other fundamental science on our daily lives, and understand how scientific knowledge can contribute to a more equitable and peaceful society." These words have been, and will continue to be, a strong sense of encouragement to amateur astronomers everywhere. Indeed, upon review of this most fascinating year, the Astronomical Unit certainly played its role in sharing the wonder and excitement of looking at the heavens above through a telescope - many for the first time - to literally thousands during the more than 100 Star Parties that were conducted this year in Goleta, Santa Barbara, Carpinteria, and the Santa Ynez Valley. The AU was able to accomplish the goals of IYA2009 and participate in the Global Cornerstone Projects such as the "24 Hours of Astronomy" and distribution of the "Galileoscope" to hundreds of children. The Club also reached out to the historic Los Angeles Astronomical Society, and in an effort of inter-club collaboration, attended one of their Star Parties at the Griffith Observatory. 2009 will certainly be a year to remember, which also involved a most interesting presentation by world famous Astronomer Dr. Mike Brown at the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History. The many hard-working members of the Astronomical Unit and the sponsorship by the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History and its staff made all this possible.

As President I was able to see first hand just how dedicated and hard-working members of the AU really are. However, one member very much stood out among the rest of us: our Outreach Coordinator, Chuck McPartlin. Chuck can truly be described as the heart and soul of our club, as well as our "In House Astronomer." He not only organized every outreach; he also attended almost every one! During the many IYA2009 Star Parties, Chuck could be counted on to set up equipment, use it properly, and answer many questions in Astronomy. His tireless dedication to the science of Astronomy as well as the promotion of the goals of IYA2009 and the AU, have been truly impressive. I would like to declare him the AU-IYA2009 Member of The Year. Chuck's photo on the front page of this edition of the AstroNews with Dr. Mike Brown tells it all; two passionate and highly skilled astronomers finally meet. Thank you very much, Chuck!

2010 is upon us and the AU has already started plans for the coming new year. We have Mount Wilson in our sights for the annual field trip, star parties that will mirror those of IYA2009, and the best International Day of Astronomy ever! Yes, the AU will continue in its tradition of a community-oriented Astronomy Day with interesting displays, hands on projects, Galileoscope distribution, a swap meet and telescope clinic, and a raffle. The grand prize will be a deluxe Dobsonian reflecting telescope. The second prize will be a Celestron Skyscout with a 9000-object database. It's the AU's way of thanking the community for its support and interest in the Astronomical Unit and the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History.

A club is nothing without its members, and I'd like to express a hearty "Welcome!" to new members James Forsythe, Shane McKinney and Caitlin Gemetti, and James Knouse and Aubrey Cano; plus a "Thanks!" to renewing members Laurence Harms, William Gourley, Kenneth Pierskalla, and Gail and Barbara Massey.

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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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December 2009

| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|--------|-------------------------------------|---|---|--|--------------------------------|--|
| | | 1 Camino Real Marketplace 6:30PM | 2 SB Junior High 6:30PM  | 3 | 4 AU General Meeting 7PM | 5 Sedgwick Reserve Open House |
| 6 | 7 | 8  | 9 Franklin Elementary 6PM | 10 AU Holiday Party 6PM | 11 Sedgwick Reserve 6PM | 12 Planning Meeting 5PM SBMNH Star Party 7PM |
| 13 | 14 | 15 | 16  Washington School 6PM | 17 | 18 Westmont College 7PM | 19 |
| 20 | 21 Winter Solstice 9:47AM PST | 22 | 23 | 24  | 25 Bacara Resort 6PM | 26 |
| 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | 31  | | |

The Astronomical Unit

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