



AU AstroNews

The Newsletter of the Astronomical Unit

February 2005

Sponsored by the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History

AU Holiday Party



Chuck and Pat McPartlin with Paul Winn and Ken Pfeiffer

On the evening of December 15, about 30 AU members and friends infused with holiday spirit (at least by the end of the evening) once again gathered at the Beachside Bar & Grill at Goleta Beach. The food was marvelous, and the company was even better. As a crescent Moon set over the UCSB campus on the horizon, there was a pause in the revelry to hand out the service awards for 2004, to announce the frequent outreach membership extensions, and to select and unwrap or steal from the excellent selection of gifts. If you missed the party, resolve to join us in 2005.

Our Speaker for February

Our speaker for the February meeting will be astrophysics graduate student at UCSB, David Whyson. David will give a short talk about a project he organized in 2002 called the "Amateur Deep Field." If you have ever had questions about how a "professional" uses imaging techniques, this is your chance!

January Meeting

Due to some last-minute changes, the January meeting turned into a literal potpourri. Our president captivated us with a DVD of the Spitzer Telescope mission, and Bill Buzin passed around a number of astronomical gadgets from his bottomless collection of memorabilia. Also, Jeremy Schmit displayed his recently finished 10" telescope, which mesmerized the audience.



Jeremy Schmit poses with his 10" scope

Outreach Totals for 2004

For 2004, the AU held 87 outreach events, hosted by at least 37 AU members, to bring astronomy to the public. We had 5,645 happy customers and 2 disgruntled ones (just kidding). In 2001, we had 30 members active in outreach. In 2002, that number climbed to 35 (at 74 events), and in 2003, helped by the close approach of Mars, we had 44 outreaches, 94 events, and 10,770 customers! For 2005, we have another close approach of Mars, so let's see how close we can come to the record totals of 2003.

Outreach for January

In spite of the heavy rains over the holidays, Pat and Chuck McPartlin, Edgar Ocampo and Art Harris can boast about showing the sky to 45 customers. Thanks again for all your work!

AU Events for February

Here's the calendar of AU events scheduled so far for February. After the devastating rains of late December and early January, we're hoping to hit lots of schools this month. We can always use telescopes and constellation tour guides at these events. Remember that events are subject to change, and new events do pop up, so please contact Chuck at 964-8201 or macpuzl@west.net for the latest information.

Friday, Feb 4 7:30 PM

AU meeting in Farrand Hall.

Saturday, Feb 5

Dark Sky - contact Paul Winn or Joe Doyle for details.

Thursday, Feb 10, setup 5:30 PM

Telescopes for Harding School, setup this year on the other side of the campus (toward the ocean), where it's darker.

Saturday, Feb 12, 5-6 PM

AU Planning Meeting in classroom by Krissie's office at SBMNH.

Saturday, Feb 12, 7 PM

SBMNH Monthly Star Party.

Thursday, Feb 17, setup 5:30 PM

Rain backup date for Harding School.

Friday, Feb 18, 7 PM

Westmont public telescope night.

Thursday, Feb 24, setup 5:30 PM

Telescopes for Brandon School Science Night.

Moon Shots by Tony Galvan (Birdman to the Stars)

The "Owl and Moon" shot published in the January, 2005 issues of [Night Sky](#), and [Sky & Telescope](#) magazines is available in the following sizes:

5 X 7 - matted for an 8 X 10 frame, \$15.00

8 X 10 - matted for a 10 X 12 frame, \$25.00

The photo "Moonrise Over the Coliseum" is also available for purchase. You can view many of Tony's photos at <http://www.dosgatos.com/products.htm> or you may contact Tony at gatos@dosgatos.com for information about any other specific astronomical photos.

For Sale

90mm Meade refractor; 1000mm focal length; alt/az mount. Comes with 12.4mm eyepiece and right angle prism. Interested? Contact Dave Shipman at 687-4882.



AU President, Chuck McPartlin, cautions club members about the safety of using green laser pointers at outreach events during the January meeting.

Ask Captain Cosmos!

Did you ever wonder why the latest sunrise comes on January 4th and the earliest sunset is on the 7th of December instead of both occurring on the Winter Solstice? Are you curious why the full moon in September seems to last for days? Now you can ask Captain Cosmos questions about astronomical topics and he will try his best to set your ship straight! Please send all inquiries to kometes@aol.com.

Parting Thoughts

The Star-splitter

He burned his house down for the fire insurance
And bought the telescope with what it came to.
He had been heard to say by several:
“The best thing that we’re put here for’s to see;
The strongest thing that’s given us to see with’s
A telescope...”

He got a good glass for six hundred dollars.
His new job gave him leisure for star-gazing.
Often he bid me come and have a look
Up the brass barrel, velvet black inside,
At a star quaking in the other end.
I recollect a night of broken clouds
And underfoot snow melted down to ice,
And melting further in the wind to mud.
Bradford and I had out the telescope.
We spread our two legs as we spread its three,
Pointed our thoughts the way we pointed it,
And standing at our leisure till the day broke,
Said some of the best things we ever said.

That telescope was christened the Star-splitter...

- Robert Frost

AU Information Box

President:	Chuck McPartlin 964-8201 macpuzl@west.net
Vice President:	Tim Wittenburg 969-6945 black10@aol.com
Secretary:	Ken & Kathy Pfeiffer 687-2327 Keagle10@cox.net
Treasurer:	Bob Brown 683-2138 BobBrownSB@cox.net
Outreach:	Chuck McPartlin 964-8201 macpuzl@west.net
Webmaster:	Paul Winn 685-5646 strg8zn@cox.net
Refreshments:	Tim Crawford 962-3619 tcrawf3@cox.net
Newsletter:	Tom Whittemore 687-2025 kometes@aol.com

AU Astronomy Information Pager

(Leave a short message) 564-9002

SBMNH Astronomy Program Coordinator

Krissie Cook 682-4711x173
kcook@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: www.sbau.org

February 2005

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1	2 	3	4 AU Monthly Meeting	5 Dark Sky
6	7	8 	9	10 Harding School	11	12 AU Planning Meeting/SBMNH Star Party
13	14	15	16 	17 Rain Backup: Harding School	18 Westmont Public Observing	19
20	21	22	23	24  Brandon School	25	26
27	28					

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