



# AU AstroNews

## The Newsletter of the Astronomical Unit

January 2016

Sponsored by the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History



Comet Catalina in early December. Photo: Bruce Murdock.

### OUR JANUARY MEETING

Our January General Meeting will take place on Friday, January 8<sup>th</sup> at 7PM. Our speaker this evening will be Sean Kelly from SBCC. ***Please note that our monthly meeting has moved to the second Friday because of the holiday.***

### OUTREACH SUMMARY

Since the last newsletter, AU volunteers Tim Crawford, Zak Dafaallah, Carolyn & Ed Edwards, Art Harris, Jürgen Hilmer, JC Hoch, Chris Larson, Adrian Lopez, Zanna Lucy, Pat & Chuck McPartlin, Janet & Martin Meza, Bruce Murdock, Edgar Ocampo, Javier Rivera, Sonia Rodriguez & Carlos Flores, Michael Sommermann, Tom Totton, the Wadhwa family, Tom Whittemore, and Jerry Wilson showed cool astro stuff to 722 visitors.

***Once again, AU outreach volunteers did an outstanding job in 2015! As of the newsletter deadline we are at 228 events for the year, with attendance of 16,576. Over 30 members earned membership extensions. Remember, just help out at six AU outreach events in a year, and your membership gets extended a year.***

### JANUARY EVENTS

Here's what's scheduled so far for January. Events are subject to change, so for the latest updates, or

directions to events, contact Chuck at 964-8201 or [macpuzl@west.net](mailto:macpuzl@west.net).

### FRIDAY, JANUARY 8, 7 PM

Our first monthly meeting of the year in Farrand Hall at SBMNH. Sean Kelly of SBCC will be our speaker.

### SATURDAY, JANUARY 9, 5 PM

Monthly AU planning meeting in the classroom outside Javier's office. Come help your club plan our activities for the coming year.

### SATURDAY, JANUARY 9, 7 PM

Monthly SBMNH Star Party. Bring a scope, or just come out and mooch some views of the winter sky.

### TUESDAY, JANUARY 12, 7 PM

Telescope Tuesday at the Camino Real Marketplace in Goleta. We set up in the plaza by the theater. ***Note that Telescope Tuesday will be the second Tuesday of each month for 2016.***

### WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 13, SETUP 5 PM

Telescopes for a STEAM night at Santa Ynez Elementary School, at 3525 Pine Street. We set up in their central plaza.

### THURSDAY, JANUARY 14, SETUP 4:30 PM

Telescopes for Science Night at Hope Elementary School, 3970 La Colina Road. We set up in the courtyard by their auditorium.

### FRIDAY, JANUARY 15, SETUP 6 PM

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

### THURSDAY, JANUARY 21, SETUP 4:30 PM

Telescopes for Science Night at Monte Vista School, at 730 North Hope Avenue. We set up on the south side of the campus, near the kindergarten playground. Pizza for volunteers.

### **WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 27, SETUP 5 PM**

Telescopes for Science Night at Adams Elementary School, 2701 Las Positas Road. We set up on the playground field, accessed by a driveway at the south end of the auditorium. Pizza for volunteers.

### **THURSDAY, JANUARY 28, SETUP 5 PM**

Telescopes for Science Night at Brandon School, at 195 Brandon Drive in Goleta. We set up in their central courtyard. Buffet food for volunteers.

### ***Time Travel***

*Tom Totton*

I just had a nice evening visit to the Cranbrook Institute of Science Center near Detroit. It is a bit larger than our Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History, with a nice Tyrannosaurus Rex skeleton and life size mammoth covered in some sort of woolly stuff that felt like Angora. It has a huge collection of minerals and even numerous meteorites. There are also modern collections of various tribal artifacts with 3D narrators and virtual books. Lots of interactive exhibits dot the Science Center for the curious kid inside us (see <http://tinyurl.com/h4a3xs7> ). Best of all, it has a 75-seat planetarium with a high resolution display system (using a Digistar 5 system like ours). The attached observatory was very similar to the updated SBMNH Palmer, with a 20" CDK, etc. ( <http://tinyurl.com/odgrbdt> ). The astronomer there was hoping for clear skies to confirm exoplanets found with the Kepler mission - actually the continuing K2 mission - in the area he had studied at Kitt Peak. Unfortunately, typical for Michigan, the sky barely let the Moon show for a moment and then clouded over. Thank your lucky stars that you live in Southern California for the number of days with a clear sky! On another note, our December Members' Meeting was terrific with presentations by Chuck McPartlin, Art Harris, Bob Richard, and Jerry Wilson. The Holiday Dinner had a few misunderstandings about what would be considered an astronomical related gift (USC Tennis shirt?) to exchange, but the conversations and food were wonderful. <http://tinyurl.com/jcdw4rq>

Until we meet again in January, when I hope to see a full Farrand Hall audience for Sean Kelly, have an even better New Year!



*Rainbow and Gibbous Moon above Northridge Canyon.  
Photo: T. Whittemore.*

### ***Correction***

An image of the Lunar "X" posted in the October issue of the AstroNew was taken by Mike Farris. The editorial staff regrets any confusion that the original credit for the photo may have caused.

### ***Fleeting Mercury***

*Nancy Rohrer  
1-17-06*

Known to the Romans of old  
as messenger of the Gods  
for he dashed about so bold  
hiding from view except  
a few evenings and dawns.

Nearest planet to the Sun  
has a year of 88 days  
as he travels different ways  
He is just a little one  
being one third the size of Earth.

Galileo found Mercury in 1610  
Surveyor flew around in 1968  
Mariner 10 landed in 1975  
a land of many impact craters  
We'll learn more,  
Messenger returns in 2011.

## **Venus**

Nancy Rohrer

3-10-06

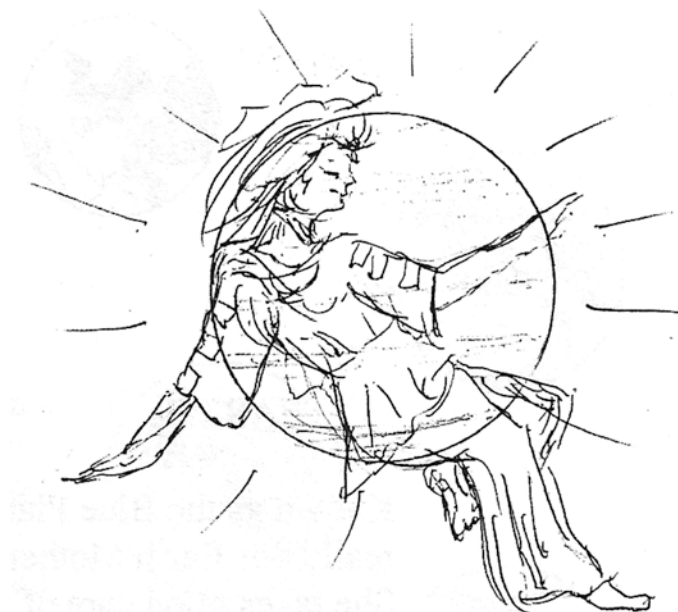
The Moon and many Stars  
In the Heavens above  
Sends gleeful glows to me.  
One star shines brighter  
than all the rest.

Only it is not a Star  
It is Earth's Sister Planet  
Named for Goddess of Love  
And Beauty, Planet Venus  
Always with us beaming bright.

It is second Planet from the Sun  
Merely a short .72AU away  
Almost as big as Earth  
With a similar makeup  
Yet, very different

870 degrees discourages visitors  
Brave Mariner 2 visited in 1962  
There have been many visits since  
Huge volcanoes were found and  
Thick covering of poisonous gas.

All is convincing to stay at home  
With our rolling oceans  
Forest of fluttering leaves swaying  
In the fresh soft breeze  
On beautiful, comfortable Earth.



### **AU Information Box**

**President:** Tom Totton  
[president@sbau.org](mailto:president@sbau.org)

**Vice President:** Jerry Wilson 968-4056  
[jerryawilsonphd@gmail.com](mailto:jerryawilsonphd@gmail.com)

**Secretary:** Adrian Conrad & Adrian Lopez

**Treasurer:** Colin Taylor 967-8140  
[dancingmagpie@cox.net](mailto:dancingmagpie@cox.net)

**Equipment:** Art Harris 968-4017  
[n6is@cox.net](mailto:n6is@cox.net)

**Outreach:** Chuck McPartlin 964-8201  
[outreach@sbau.org](mailto:outreach@sbau.org)

**Newsletter:** Tom Whittemore 687-2025  
[kometes@aol.com](mailto:kometes@aol.com)

**Refreshments:** Janet & Martin Meza 450-8383  
[AguilarPerryMeza@gmail.com](mailto:AguilarPerryMeza@gmail.com)

**Webmaster:** Paul Winn 886-2319  
[webmaster@sbau.org](mailto:webmaster@sbau.org)

### **SBMNH Astronomy Programs Manager**

Javier Rivera 682-4711x173  
[jrivera@sbnature2.org](mailto:jrivera@sbnature2.org)

**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 = \$20 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:** <http://www.sbau.org>

# January 2016

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1 HAPPY NEW YEAR!	2
3	4	5	6	7	8 SBAU GENERAL MEETING 7PM	9 PLANNING MEETING 5PM STAR PARTY 7PM SBMNH
10	11	12 CAMINO REAL MARKETPLACE 7PM	13 SANTA YNEZ ELEMENTARY 5PM	14 HOPE ELEMENTARY 4:30PM	15 WESTMONT COLLEGE 6PM	16
17	18	19	20	21 MONTE VISTA SCHOOL 4:30PM	22	23
24	25	26	27 ADAMS ELEMENTARY 5PM	28 BRANDON SCHOOL 5PM	29	30
31						

## The Astronomical Unit

c/o Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History  
2559 Puesta Del Sol Road  
Santa Barbara, CA 93105-2998