



# AU AstroNews

## The Newsletter of the Astronomical Unit

June 2001

Sponsored by the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History

### **June is Picnic Time**

The annual AU Picnic will start at 6 PM at SBMNH, across the creek from Farrand Hall. This will be our last general get-together until the September meeting. It's a potluck, so if you haven't signed up to bring something yet, call Gretchen. See Tony and Joan off on their eclipse safari!

### **May Meeting**

If you missed Jim's great Sri Lanka adventure, you can still catch it on the web at <http://www.utech.net/~10288/jimspage.html>. You'll see the elephant orphanage, but not Jim's world famous constellation tie ;)

### **Volunteers**

In the last month, we had so many club members come out for events that a roster of their names would overflow the newsletter. Thanks, everybody, for such a great response, especially for the Astronomy Day festivities under the marine layer! We had our scopes blessed with burning sage, although Craig's battery subsequently died. There were some clouded out events, but we still reached **421** customers, not counting the Astronomy Day attendance, estimated at a little over 200.

Remember that outreach schedules are subject to change, so check the web page, the bulletin board, or contact Edgar or Chuck to find out the latest. Try to let one of us know ahead of time if you are planning to volunteer at an event!

### **AU Observations for June**

Saturday, June 2, setup 8:00 PM – Campground outreach at Cachuma Lake. Meet at Dakota Plains.

Saturday, June 9, setup 1:30 PM – Solar observation for Cub Scouts at Rancho Oso from 2:30 – 4:30 PM.

Saturday, June 9, 8:30 PM – SBMNH Public Star Party.

Friday, June 15, 8:30 PM – Westmont Public Observation.

Saturday, June 23, setup 8:00 PM – Campground outreach at Refugio Beach State Park. We've always had great planetary viewing here, and Mars is beckoning!

Saturday, June 23, dusk – Dark Sky at Figueroa Mountain and/or West Camino Cielo. Remember to check where people are going.

Saturday, June 30, setup 8:00 PM – Campground outreach at Cachuma Lake. Meet at Dakota Plains.

### **AU Observations for July**

Thursday, July 12, setup 7:30 PM – Slide show and telescopes for Senior High School (like Elderhostel) at Francisco Torres.

Thursday, July 12, setup 8:00 PM – Outreach observation for Aquacamp kids at El Capitan State Beach. We need at least one scope for this event, too.

Saturday, July 14, 8:30 PM – SBMNH Public Star Party.

Wednesday, July 18, setup 8:00 PM – Outreach observation for Coastwalk at Refugio State Beach.

Friday, July 20, 8:30 PM – Westmont Public Observation.

Saturday, July 21, setup 8:00 PM – Campground outreach at Refugio Beach State Park.

Saturday, July 21, dusk – Dark Sky at Figueroa Mountain and/or West Camino Cielo. Remember to check where people are going.

Monday, July 23, setup 11:30 AM – Elings Park solar / lunar observation at noon for 150 Cub Scouts.

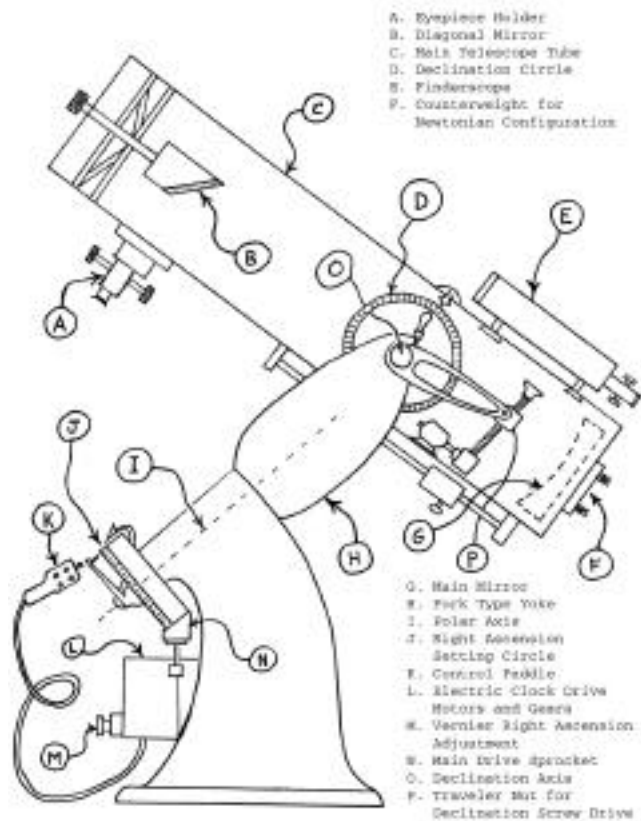
Wednesday, July 25, setup 8:00 PM – Outreach observation for Aquacamp kids at El Capitan State Beach.

Saturday, July 28, setup 8:00 PM – Campground outreach at Cachuma Lake. Meet at Dakota Plains.

### The Westmont Scope

The cool new **AU Members Handbook** that Jim Billig produced last month includes a map and directions for finding your way to the Carroll Observatory at Westmont College. If you haven't been there yet, here's some background information on their telescope.

The big 16 1/2 inch reflector that we use every month for the Westmont public observations is an interesting beast. Although it's old and dusty now, 45 years ago it was quite an instrument, and its large aperture and good mirror figure are still impressive. The telescope and its massive equatorial fork mount were designed, manufactured, and donated to Westmont College by Mr. George A. Carroll of Tujunga. It is convertible between a Newtonian configuration of 83 inch focal length, and a classical Cassegrainian configuration of 320 inch focal length, simply by changing the secondary mirror.



Today, the scope is equipped with digital setting circles that make it easier to hunt down the faint fuzzies in its reach. Since we always use the Newtonian setup, you sometimes have to climb pretty far up a ladder to get to the eyepiece, but it's usually worth the trip.

Carroll Observatory was dedicated June 1, 1957. The big scope was equipped for spectroscopic and micrometric work, and its introduction originally made national news. In the late 1980s, members of the Santa Barbara Astronomy Club (now merged with the AU) were featured in *Astronomy* magazine (February, 1989) for their observations of the rotation of Mars with a CCD camera on the scope, which were among the first CCD images of Mars taken by amateurs.

Mr. Carroll was well known for some other telescopes. On the RTMC website there is a picture of him with his solar coronagraph at the 1969 event. He also played a major role in the foundation of Stony Ridge Observatory in 1957 in the San Gabriel Mountains near Mount Wilson, where there is a 30 inch telescope which is also of convertible Newtonian/Cassegrainian configuration, and bears a striking resemblance to the Westmont scope. At the time it was dedicated, it was the largest amateur telescope in the world, and it was later used in lunar surveys of potential landing sites for the Apollo missions.



Come out and join us some third Friday of the month, and try out this venerable telescope. Cruise the web to find out more about George Carroll and Stony Ridge Observatory at:

<http://www.rtmc-inc.org>

<http://stony-ridge.org>

<http://physics.westmont.edu/observatory/>

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AU AstroNews is the monthly publication of the **Astronomical Unit (AU)**, mailed to the general membership. Contact Chuck before the 20<sup>th</sup> day of the preceding month to contribute to the newsletter.

Current annual membership rates are:

Single	\$15	Family	\$25
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Our address is:

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On the Web: [www.sbau.org](http://www.sbau.org)

# June 2001

					1 AU Picnic	2 Cachuma Obs
3	4	5	6	7	8	9 Cub Scout Solar Obs, SBMNH Star Party
10	11	12	13 Mars at Opposition	14	15 Westmont Obs	16
17 Father's Day Get Dad a telescope!	18	19	20	21 Summer Solstice, Total Solar Eclipse	22	23 Refugio Obs, Dark Sky
24	25	26 Charles Messier's 271st Birthday	27	28	29	30 Cachuma Obs

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