



AU AstroNews

The Newsletter of the Astronomical Unit

March 2001

Sponsored by the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History

Galileo

Thanks to JPL's Paul Fieseler for telling us about the highlights of Galileo's mission to Jupiter, and the serendipitous discovery that Velorum is an eclipsing variable.

March's Speaker

At our March meeting, Chris Butler will present "**Our Little Corner of the Galaxy.**" Have you ever wondered what it would be like to voyage among the stars? Wonder no longer; internationally published science artist Chris Butler has created a visually stunning tour through distant but actual star systems to give you a sense of what we might find out there, and also give you a new perspective on Earth and its place in the universe. Using the latest computer technology, Chris even permits you to watch as the constellations swim into strange patterns as you put an extra 100 light years towards your frequent flier miles. Special tour itineraries will focus on stars you can see tonight, so you'll have sparkling mementos of your stellar vacation.

Congratulations Chris!

Long time AU member **Chris Baer** has been selected as one of only 13 semifinalists in California for the prestigious Science Talent Search, sponsored by Intel. The STS is often considered the "**Junior Nobel Prize.**" Each semifinalist will receive \$1,000 in recognition of their scientific achievements. In addition, each of the schools that placed a semifinalist in the competition will receive \$1,000 per semifinalist to be used in support of the school's science and math education programs.

Students were judged based on their individual research reports on their research ability, scientific originality and creative thinking. The research projects cover all disciplines of science, including chemistry, physics, mathematics, engineering, social science and biology. All STS entries were reviewed and judged by top scientists from a variety of disciplines.

Chris received the award for his research project "Extraction of Novel Proteins from Mussel Byssal Threads with Special Regard to Catechol Oxidase." (No doubt with an eye toward their use in telescope optical coatings ;)

In addition to the scholarship award, all semifinalists and their teachers are honored with certificates of merit. These students are recommended to select colleges and universities for admission and financial assistance.

Volunteers

We've had more great volunteer turnouts in February. Thanks to Chris Baer (and cohorts), Warren Bitters, Joe Brown, Joe Doyle, Arthur Harris, Kathryn MacCurry, Pat McPartlin, Edgar Ocampo, Helen Osenga, Wayne Rothermich, and Jim Williams for volunteering at the public and outreach events since the last newsletter. We had some rain, but we reached 725 customers.

Help!! March is a busy month, and we have some **big** outreaches coming up that could use some extra scopes: **Hollister School** outreach on March 1, **Mountain View School** Science Night on March 14, **Adams School** (if it's rained out on Feb. 28) on

March 15, and the **Hollister School** Science Fair on March 22. Contact Edgar at 964-0914 or eocampo26@earthlink.net to volunteer!

AU Events Coming Up

Thursday, March 1, 6:30 PM – Outreach Observation for Hollister School.

Friday, March 2, 7:30 PM – Monthly AU meeting in Farrand Hall at SBMNH. Our Little Corner of the Galaxy.

Sunday, March 4, 7:30 PM – Outreach Observation for Camp Ramah Elderhostel in Ojai. Contact Edgar to help out.

Saturday, March 10, 8:30 PM – SBMNH Monthly Public Star Party.

Sunday, March 11, 7:30 PM – Outreach Observation for Camp Ramah Elderhostel in Ojai.

Wednesday, March 14, 5:00 PM – Mountain View School Science Night.

Thursday, March 15, 7:00 PM – Possible rain date for Adams School.

Friday, March 16, 7:30 PM – Monthly Westmont Public Observation.

Saturday, March 17, 6:30 PM – Outreach Observation for Carpinteria Gifted Students at Padaro Grill on Santa Claus Lane.

Sunday, March 18, 7:00 PM – Corporate Outreach Observation for IDP. Contact Edgar or Chuck to get information.

Thursday, March 22, 6:30 PM (?) – Hollister School Science Fair.

Saturday, March 24/25, dusk to dawn – Dark Sky and **Messier Marathon** at the Gun Club. Come out and make a run at the 107 of 110 total from last year! We'll have Messier Marathon observing aids available at the monthly meeting.

Jim and Sir Arthur, Again

AU member Jim Williams is returning to Sri Lanka to hobnob with Sir Arthur C. Clarke. Jim has been selected to make a presentation at an international planetarium conference, "Teaching the Universe in the 21st Century," being held there on March 19 – 24.

ASTROIMAGE 2001

The Orange County Astronomers and its SIG (Special Interest Group), Electronics Oriented Astronomers, with California State University Physics Department and Sky & Telescope magazine jointly sponsor AstroImage 2001, a one day seminar on astronomical imaging. It will be held at the Ruby Center at California State University, Fullerton, California, on Saturday, March 10th. Doors open at 0830 and the program will begin at 0900. The program covering both electronic and silver-based astronomical imaging, techniques, equipment, and applications will last until about 1700.

A trade show is also held during the seminar, with about a dozen manufacturers and outlets represented, showing the latest in camera, telescope, and software products. An important part of the event is an image show, presented both electronically using computers with large screen displays, as well as a print show for film images. All are invited to participate. Admission to the event is \$25 for the day, which includes complimentary refreshments at 2 breaks. You may pre-register for AstroImage 2001 by sending checks made payable to Orange County Astronomers to: Charlie Oostdyk Orange County Astronomers PO Box 1762 Costa Mesa, CA 92628. More information on speakers/topics can be found at: <http://www.chapman.edu/oca/ai2k/ai2k.htm>

Reach for the Stars

Monday, April 9, 7:30 p.m., at SBMNH in Fleischmann Auditorium. Nationally acclaimed astronomer David Levy shares his 40-year-long passion for the night sky. One of history's most successful comet hunters, with 21 discoveries to his

credit, Levy will share the excitement of scientific inquiry, as well as his infatuation with the awesome delights of the universe. He will talk about the discovery of Comet Shoemaker-Levy 9, which later collided with Jupiter in one of the most spectacular celestial displays in modern history.

A radio talk show host, author of 21 books, and an Emmy award winner, Levy conveys his enthusiasm for the universe in this multi-media presentation of quests and exploration. After the presentation, enjoy a close up look at the night sky through large amateur telescopes operated by members of the Astronomical Unit. The evening includes a book sale and signing. This program is co-sponsored by Raytheon. Advance tickets are available in the Museum Admissions Office beginning March 20. Museum Members, AU Members, and Students with ID \$8; Non-Members \$10.

Telescope Volunteers Needed

Volunteers willing to bring a scope and run it for an hour or so after David Levy's lecture will receive free admission to Reach for the Stars! Special seating will be arranged so that volunteers may leave quietly to set up near the whale skeleton and be ready to receive visitors before the presentation ends. Fleischmann seats over 300 people, and we are hoping for a sell-out crowd! To volunteer, please contact Edgar, Chuck, or Steve.

New Telescope Store

There is a new telescope, binocular, and accessory store in Thousand Oaks, CA. The name is "The Scope Merchant." The location is 654 E. Thousand Oaks Blvd. The phone number is (805) 381-1885. The brands carried include Orion, Meade, TeleVue, Celestron, Lomo, Antares, and others.

A Little SB on Eros

The NEAR Shoemaker spacecraft that touched down on Eros last month included the Hemispherical Resonator Gyro system made by Litton Guidance and Controls (nee DELCO) in Goleta.

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

Current annual membership rates are:

Single \$15 Family \$25

Our address is:

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On the Web: **www.sbau.org**

March 2001

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4 Elderhostel Outreach Ojai	5	6	7	8	9	10 Star Party SBMNH
11 Elderhostel Outreach Ojai	12	13	14 Mtn. View School Science Night	15 Rain Date Adams School	16 Westmont Public Obs	17 Carpinteria Gifted Students
18 IDP Corporate Outreach	19	20 Equinox It's Spring!	21	22 Hollister School Science Fair	23	24 Dark Sky Messier Marathon
25	26 Venus visible	27 before sunset	28 and sunrise!	29	30	31

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