



AU AstroNews

The Newsletter of the Astronomical Unit

March 2010

Sponsored by the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History

MARCH MEETING SPEAKER

This month's speaker is Dr. Andy Howell who will talk about dark energy. Dr. Howell received his undergraduate degree from the University of Florida and his Ph.D. from the University of Texas at Austin. Andy was a postdoc with Saul Perlmutter and the Supernova Cosmology Project at Lawrence Berkeley National Lab. In 2003 he became a postdoc at the University of Toronto with the Supernova Legacy Survey. In the fall of 2008 he moved to Santa Barbara, and became a staff scientist at the Las Cumbres Observatory Global Telescope Network and an adjunct faculty member at UC Santa Barbara. His research focuses on supernovae and cosmology, particularly thermonuclear supernovae and dark energy.

OUTREACH SUMMARY

Since the last newsletter, despite 3 clouded-out events, AU volunteers Andy Allen, Chad Caprio, Bill Clausen, Tim Crawford, Mike Farris, Ruben Gutierrez, Art Harris, Jürgen Hilmer, Pat & Chuck McPartlin, Max Neufeldt, Dennis Nord, Edgar Ocampo, Mark Parker, Javier Rivera & Samantha Thompson & Quasars, Nancy Rohrer, Tom Totton, John West, Tom Whittemore, and Tim Wittenburg showed the sky to 762 customers at 12 Night Sky Network events.

MARCH OUTREACH EVENTS

Here are the AU events scheduled for March. To get the latest information on schedules, or directions, contact Chuck at 964-8201 or macpuzl@west.net

THURSDAY, MARCH 4, SETUP 5 PM

Telescopes for Science Night at Hollister Elementary School, 4950 Anita Lane in Goleta. We'll set up on their playground, entering through a gate on the eastern side.

FRIDAY, MARCH 5, 7 PM

Monthly AU meeting in Farrand Hall at SBMNH. Start with a quick planetarium show, then our speaker will be Dr. Andy Howell, and the topic will

be dark energy, the property of empty space that seems to be causing it to expand.

FRIDAY, MARCH 12, SETUP 6 PM

Telescopes for Dunn School, 2555 Highway 154 (off Roblar) near Los Olivos in the dark skies of the Santa Ynez Valley.

SATURDAY, MARCH 13, 5 PM

AU planning meeting in the classroom outside Javier's office at SBMNH. All members are welcome to help plan your club's activities for 2010, and consume pizza before the star party.

SATURDAY, MARCH 13, 7 PM

Monthly Public Star Party at SBMNH, next to Palmer Observatory. Mars and Saturn are the stars of the party.

SUNDAY, MARCH 14, 2 AM

Don't forget to switch to Daylight Saving Time!

TUESDAY, MARCH 16, 7 PM

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

FRIDAY, MARCH 19, 7:30 PM

Monthly Public Telescope Night at Westmont College, at their new observatory next to the baseball field. Look through the big scope!

SATURDAY, MARCH 20, ALL EVENING

Vernal Equinox - It's Spring! Plus it's time for the annual Messier Marathon at the Gun Club. Stay up all night and see all 110 catalog entries, if you're lucky.

SUNDAY, MARCH 21, 2 PM

Memorial for AU member Helen Osenga at the Nature Center at Cachuma Lake. See the article at the end of this newsletter.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 24, SETUP 5 PM

Telescopes for Science Night at Monroe School, on the Mesa at 431 Flora Vista Drive.

SATURDAY, MARCH 27, 8 PM

Telescopes for a group of Boy Scouts at a ranch in Ballard Canyon. Contact Chuck for details if you can come.

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S PEN....

Ruben Gutierrez



Michael sports an SBAU cap! Photo: R. Gutierrez

FREE AU CAP WITH NEW MEMBERSHIP

It's my pleasure to announce the AU's first ever membership drive! Our club is so involved in such a variety of projects that the folks at the last planning meeting decided to reach out and entice new members to join in on the fun. So, starting this month, and through International Astronomy Day (4/24/10), all new members will receive an official SBAU cap! Yes, these caps, that normally sell for an unbelievable \$10.00 to members, will be free to any first time member. All you have to do is pay the annual dues of \$15 (or \$25 for a family) and you'll get your cap. You'll also enjoy all the privileges of membership, which includes a free planetarium show prior to each General meeting, getting to listen to the AU's very interesting monthly speaker and presentation, entrance to the monthly Star Party at the SBMNH, the Star-B-Q, Campout at Cachuma Lake, the AstroNews emailed to you, and the list goes on and on. If you've been thinking of joining, or know of someone who has just been itching to become a member of the Astronomical Unit, now's the time. Just contact Secretary/Treasurer Pat McPartlin, and she'll fix you right up!

STAR PARTY FRENZY

Every year the AU is very involved in the community by putting on star parties, well, just about anywhere. Last year the AU put on star parties up at Figueroa Mountain, Cachuma Lake, Westmont College, Downtown during First Thursday, the Camino Real Marketplace, Paseo Nuevo, Bacara Resort, the Biltmore Hotel, Carpinteria State Beach, the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History, many schools, and, well, you get the picture. No wonder the AU was ranked in the top three in the nation for number of outreach events during the International Year of Astronomy 2009. And, guess what, the AU will be conducting a similar schedule this year. Some of the highlights will include International Astronomy Day in April (where we'll give out a Deluxe 8 Inch Dob telescope and Celestron Sky Scout in our now famous free raffle), a Girl Scout Jamboree in May (where 2000 are expected to attend), and at Carpinteria in October (during the blockbuster Avocado festival), to name a few of over 50 star parties that are lined up. The AU has become so well known that we've even been invited by the National Park Service to conduct a Star Party at Yosemite National Park. Wow! Keep checking your AstroNews for all of the scheduled Star Parties in the month, and if you can help out please contact Outreach Coordinator Chuck McPartlin.

SBAU DIRECTORY FOR JUST A BUCK

Have you ever wanted to contact a member of the AU, or just wanted to look through the list of names and contact information of our ever growing membership and didn't know how? Well, put your mind at ease. Our ever busy and very dependable Secretary/Treasurer Pat McPartlin is putting together the official AU Directory. This Directory will be just full of information on the membership and will only cost you one George Washington (a club fund raiser). I'll let you know when it becomes available.

PLAZA DELI CAFE ON ASTRONOMY DAY

The AU has contracted the Plaza Deli Cafe to provide lunch for all of the hard-working members and volunteers on International Astronomy Day. How does your choice of turkey & cheese, deli veggie, salami & cheese, tuna, or roast beef & cheese along with chips, cookies and a cold soft drink sound to you? Just sign up to help out on this

busy and exciting day and it's all yours! In order to help, please contact Pat McPartlin.

THE AU IS FULL OF STARS

Our club membership is full of stars that make an impact on all of us in one way or another. One glimmering star who has sadly left us and is now a permanent shining star in our hearts is Helen Osenga. Helen passed away a few months ago. She was a wonderful person who will surely be missed. I hope to see you at her memorial at Cachuma Lake on Sunday, March 21st (please see the special article below for more details). Yes, the AU is full of stars, and I especially would like to thank a couple of new ones that joined us last month: The Family Membership of Joe and Janet Martorana. Welcome aboard! I would also like to thank the following AU stars who recently renewed their memberships: Individual - Bob Brown, Joe Klein, David Larson, David Morrow, Dennis Nord, James Robertson, Paul Winn – Family - Marciano and Sabine Chan, Jeff and Charlene Garfinkle, Ken and Kathy Pfeiffer, as well as Paul and Sandy Russell. May each evening bring you a clear sky and beautiful picture of the Universe. And, thank you for your support.

MEMORIAL FOR HELEN OSENGA

The Cachuma Lake Nature Center has invited anyone from the AU to RSVP and attend an informal, non-religious gathering on Sunday, March 21, 2010, at 2 PM, to honor the memory of Helen. The occasion will be held in the beautiful garden of the Nature Center at Cachuma Lake. Pat McPartlin will have copies of the invitation at the March AU meeting. If you wish to attend, please obtain a copy of the invitation and RSVP by March 15, to Annie Ruano (arruano@verizon.net or 805-569-1707). Remember to hold on to the invitation, because if you show it at the Cachuma Lake entry kiosk, you won't have to pay the park entry fee. Light refreshments will be served. Also, you will have the opportunity to share memories of Helen, if you wish.

AU Information Box

President: Ruben Gutierrez 450-7451
rubenalvag@aol.com
Vice President: Mike Farris 637-3300
mike@mikewfarris.com
Secretary/Treasurer:
Pat McPartlin 964-8201
parsnip7@yahoo.com
Outreach: Chuck McPartlin 964-8201
macpuzl@west.net
Webmaster: Paul Winn 886-2319
paul@sbau.org
Newsletter: Tom Whittemore 687-2025
kometes@aol.com
Equipment: Art Harris 968-4017
nbis@cox.net

AU Astronomy Information Pager

(Leave a short message) 564-9002

SBMNH Astronomy Program Coordinator

Javier Rivera 682-4711x173
jrivera@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: <http://www.sbau.org>

March 2010

| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|--|--|---|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 Hollister Elementary 5PM | 5 AU General Meeting 7 PM | 6 |
| 7  | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 Dunn School 6 PM | 13 Planning Meeting 5 PM SBMNH Star Party 7 PM |
| 14 Spring Forward! | 15  | 16 Camino Real Marketplace 7PM | 17 | 18 | 19 Westmont College 7:30PM | 20 Messier Marathon at the Gun Club |
| 21 Helen Osenga Memorial 2PM | 22 | 23  | 24 Monroe School 5 PM | 25 | 26 | 27 Ballard Canyon 8PM |
| 28 | 29  | 30 | 31 | | | |

The Astronomical Unit

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