



AU AstroNews

The Newsletter of the Astronomical Unit

March 2011

Sponsored by the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History

OUR MARCH MEETING

AU member, Dr. Jerry Wilson, will speak about his experience in astrophotography and image-processing. Jerry has been imaging the heavens since he was a youngster, and has participated in numerous national-caliber workshops over the years, including those given by the well-known University of Arizona imager, Adam Block.

OUTREACH REPORT

Since the last newsletter, and despite all the clouds, AU volunteers Andy Allen, Warren Bitters, Karleen & Dennis Cowan, Tim Crawford, Joe Doyle, Mike Farris, Ruben Gutierrez, Art Harris, Jürgen Hilmer, Jeremy Kerby, Chris Larson, Pat & Chuck McPartlin, Max Neufeldt, Edgar Ocampo, Bob Richard, Javier Rivera & Quasars, Nancy Rohrer, Colin Taylor, Tom Whittemore, Jim Williams, and Tim Wittenburg showed the sky to 541 customers. Thanks for all the extra support while Pat & Chuck were out of action!

If you volunteered for an AU event in 2010, you're invited to the annual Volunteer Luncheon in Fleischmann Auditorium at the SBMNH at noon on Saturday, March 26. RSVP by March 11 to Rebecca Fagan Coulter at 682-4711 x107 or rcoulter@sbnature2.org



Chuck and Pat at the Biltmore. Photo: R. Gutierrez.

MARCH OUTREACH EVENTS

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

THURSDAY, MARCH 3, SETUP 4:30 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 4, SETUP 5:30 PM

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

TUESDAY, MARCH 8, 7 PM

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

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 9, SETUP 5 PM

Telescopes for Science Night at Mountain View School, 5465 Queen Ann Lane in Goleta.

THURSDAY, MARCH 10, SETUP 6 PM

Telescopes for an astronomy night at the Goleta Public Library, 500 North Fairview Avenue in Goleta. We set up in the back lot, at the eastern side.

FRIDAY, MARCH 11, 7 PM

Monthly AU meeting in Farrand Hall at SBMNH. Start with a quick planetarium show, then our speaker will be AU member, Dr. Jerry Wilson.

SATURDAY, MARCH 12, 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 2011, and consume pizza before the star party.

SATURDAY, MARCH 12, 7 PM

Monthly Public Star Party at SBMNH, next to Palmer Observatory.

SUNDAY, MARCH 13, 2 AM

Don't forget to switch to Daylight Saving Time!

MONDAY, MARCH 14, SETUP 6 PM

Telescopes for an astronomy night at Monte Vista School, 730 North Hope Avenue in Santa Barbara. We set up in their playground, on the north side.

FRIDAY, MARCH 18, 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 19

Biggest full moon of the year (it's near perigee).

SUNDAY, MARCH 20, 4:21 PM

Vernal Equinox - It's Spring!

TUESDAY, MARCH 22, SETUP 5:30 PM

Telescopes for an astronomy night at Midland School, in the dark skies of the Santa Ynez Valley at 5100 Figueroa Mountain Road.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 23, SUNSET

Best evening elongation of Mercury for the year.

SATURDAY, MARCH 26, NOON

Volunteer appreciation luncheon at SBMNH, in Fleischmann Auditorium.

SATURDAY, MARCH 26, 6 PM

Tour of the Sedgwick Reserve and the large LCOGT telescope there, followed by a star party. The Sedgwick Reserve is at the end of Brinkerhoff Avenue in the dark skies just below Figueroa Mountain.

From The President's Pen

Ruben Gutierrez

Attention...

I hope you enjoyed February's general meeting as much as I did. The speaker was not only one of the most interesting ones I've listened to, but the Valentines goodies were, well, out of this world. The March General meeting promises to be just as great - but with a twist. ***Please note on your calendar that the March General Meeting will not take place on the first Friday, but the second one - that's March 11th.*** The planning meeting and monthly star party will take place on the usual second Saturday.

Looking ahead...

I'll be passing around sign up sheets for the 2011 International Astronomy Day! Yes, this is the AU's premier outreach event of the year, for which we will need "All hands on deck." The SBMNH has done a wonderful job in restoring the giant blue whale skeleton at the front entrance plaza, which gives the AU a dramatic backdrop to our booths, displays, and telescopes - and our now world-renowned FREE raffle of a deluxe 8" Dobsonian telescope and other great prizes. We have always enjoyed a great turnout, but the day can only be successful with your help. So, please sign up and help - you'll be happy you did. As always, the AU will supply a tasty lunch from the La Cumbre Plaza Deli, along with marvelous desserts made by Timma Buck. Come and enjoy the day, and bring a friend.

Further thanks...

On International Astronomy Day, May 7th, 2011, the AU plans to display the new UC2 wheelchair-accessible viewing system. Wow, what an accomplishment that will be! We expect to see delivery of the completed viewing system by mid-April and, very appropriately, "First light" will be on International Astronomy Day. This has been the dream of AU member and designer, Jim Williams, for many years. I can't thank Jim enough for the countless hours he's devoted to this project, and his continued expertise on the subject of handicapped accessibility. I also wish to thank Trinity Episcopal Church of Santa Barbara, and its congregation, for accepting the AU's grant request and providing \$1,265.00 to purchase the Nexstar 8 Schmidt-Cassegrain Goto telescope for the UC2 Viewing

System. This was a truly wonderful gift that will help provide viewing accessibility to those individuals in wheelchairs who have not had the opportunity to look through a telescope designed specifically to meet their needs. Thank you Trinity Church and the Justice and Outreach Parish Council for your concern for people with special needs, as well as AU member, Brother Laurence Harms, for helping in the grant application and board interview process! The AU is still seeking funding for the actual construction of the UC2 mount, and needed accessories and signage to make the UC2 complete, as well as to promote the You Can See Too Outreach Project. Should you have any ideas, please feel free to contact me at rubenalvag@aol.com.

Hats off...

Did you know the SBMNH has received a donation of a 14.5' observatory dome? The assembled dome is tucked away near the Palmer Observatory and, with the leadership of AU member John Martinez of the Las Cumbres Observatory Global Telescope Network, plans are afloat for the museum to have a fully-functioning observatory, equipped with a 20" reflector donated by LCOGT. One of the AU's main goals is to provide individuals - all individuals - with the opportunity to look through a telescope, enjoy spectacular views of the universe, and learn about the wonder of astronomy. Many members of this Club have made it possible for many thousands of people to do just that. It certainly is a pleasure to thank those members for the dedicated work they do - month after month, and year after year - a truly remarkable gift to the community.

Welcome...

I wish to thank Bob Brown, Joe Brown, Laurence Harms, Mike Jogoleff, Bob Kvass, Bob Richard, John West, Sabine & Marciano Chan, Kathy & Ken Pfeiffer, and Laguna Blanca School for renewing their memberships this month, and give a warm welcome to new members: Jon Marinello, Carolyn Turner and Matt Wooddall, and the Jones and Rice families. The AU's membership, along with the incredible sponsorship from the SBMNH, is what makes this club welcome wherever we go. ***Thank you, everybody!***

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AU annual membership rates:

Single = \$15 Family = \$25

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On the Web: <http://www.sbau.org>

March 2011

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1	2	3 HOLLISTER ELEMENTARY 4:30PM	4 DUNN SCHOOL 5:30PM	5
6	7	8 CAMINO REAL MARKETPLACE 7PM	9 MOUNTAIN VIEW SCHOOL 5PM	10 GOLETA PUBLIC LIBRARY 6PM	11 MONTHLY AU MEETING 7PM	12 PLANNING MEETING 5PM SBMNH STAR PARTY 7PM
13 DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME!	14 MONTE VISTA SCHOOL 6PM	15	16	17	18 WESTMONT COLLEGE 7:30PM	19
20 VERNAL EQUINOX	21	22 MIDLAND SCHOOL 5:30PM	23 MERCURY AT SUNSET!	24	25	26 SBMNH LUNCHEON - NOON LCOGT 6PM
27	28	29	30	31		

The Astronomical Unit

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