



AU AstroNews

The Newsletter of the Astronomical Unit

March 2013

Sponsored by the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History

OUR MARCH MEETING

Our speaker this evening will be Dr. Steven E. Hodges whose talk is titled, "The 2012 Single Handed Transpac: Flight of Frolic." Steve's biography reads: Steve grew up mainly near Washington DC, and when not in school, delivering papers, or cutting grass, he learned electronics and sailed dinghies on the Chesapeake and Michigan lakes. Wanderlust sent him hitch hiking to Fairbanks, AK, and then, via a very indirect route, Steve somehow ended up in Santa Barbara in 1977 where he found work at Santa Barbara Research Center (SBRC), a subsidiary of Hughes Aircraft Co. After nine years of infrared engineering and development, SBRC awarded Steve a graduate fellowship, which allowed him to earn a Ph.D. in Laser Physics from the University of Oregon at Eugene in 1993. SBRC lured him back as an Engineering Manager and then Director of Engineering and Product Support for the fire sensing and suppression product line, a position he held for more than 15 yrs. During that period of dynamic development and corporate turn over sales grew twenty fold, much of it based on products developed and launched by teams Steve led. After 28 years of service, with six patents and many publications and presentations, Dr. Hodges took advantage of an opportunity to telecommute as a physicist for the Army's Tank Automotive Research and Development Engineering Center (TARDEC), a situation he has enjoyed for almost five years. In his spare time, Steve sails and kayaks, especially in the Santa Barbara channel with occasional forays in Baja, British Columbia, and Lake Superior. Steve has been active in local sailboat races for more than 10 years, crewing on several boats, and has also been able to fit in a few delivery sails, including two between CA and HI, and one through the Panama Canal. Last summer, Steve sailed his Islander 36 Frolic in the Single Handed Transpac, a race from San Francisco to Hanalei Bay, Kauai; besides being second in class, Steve was awarded the Navigation award.

OUTREACH SUMMARY

Since the last newsletter, AU volunteers Andy Allen, Angela Bates, Bill Clausen, Tim Crawford, Zak Dafaallah, Joe Doyle, John Edkins & Susan Jackson, Mike Farris, Rod Fritz, Ruben Gutierrez, Art Harris, Jürgen Hilmer, Chris Larson, Pat & Chuck McPartlin, Janet & Martin Meza, Kim Miller, Max Neufeldt, Edgar Ocampo, Ray Ogella, Rosemary & Al Rice, Bob Richard, Nancy Rohrer, Ron Smith, Colin Taylor, Tom Totton, Javier Rivera & Julio Orozco & the Quasars, Tom Whittemore & Melissa Romo & Dave Snyder, Patricia & Jerry Wilson, and Paul Winn showed the sky to 1419 viewers.

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. Remember, events are subject to cancellations and changes, like this month's meeting!

THURSDAY, MARCH 7, SETUP 5PM

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, from Ashton Street.

THURSDAY, MARCH 7, SETUP 5PM

Telescopes for Science Night at the Montessori Center School, 401 Fairview in Goleta. They're in the back, western part of the parcel.

FRIDAY, MARCH 8, 7PM

Monthly AU meeting in Farrand Hall at SBMNH. *** NOT FIRST FRIDAY *** Hear about celestial navigation by Dr. Steven Hodges.

SATURDAY, MARCH 9, 5PM

AU planning meeting in the classroom outside Javier's office at SBMNH. All members are welcome to help plan your club's activities for 2013.

SATURDAY, MARCH 9, 7PM

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

SUNDAY, MARCH 10, 2AM

Don't forget to switch to Daylight Saving Time! Start looking for Comet Pan-STARRS, low in the west at sunset.

THURSDAY, MARCH 14, SETUP 6PM

Telescopes for an astronomy night at Midland School, at 5100 Figueroa Mountain Road, past Los Olivos in the Santa Ynez Valley. Dark skies!

FRIDAY, MARCH 15, 7:30PM

Monthly Public Telescope Night at Westmont College, at the observatory. Look through the big scope!

SATURDAY, MARCH 16, ALL NIGHT

Messier Marathon at the Shotgun Range of the Gun Club, at the end of West Camino Cielo.

TUESDAY, MARCH 19, 7PM

Telescope Tuesday at the Camino Real Marketplace in Goleta. We set up in the plaza by the theater.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 20

03:02 AM Vernal Equinox - It's Spring!

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 20, SETUP 5PM

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

FRIDAY, MARCH 29, SETUP 5PM

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

SATURDAY, MARCH 30, SETUP 7PM

Telescopes for Bacara Resort and Spa. We set up on their Miró Lawn. Contact Chuck for access if you haven't come before.

SATURDAY, MARCH 30, 8:30PM

Earth Hour - turn off all unnecessary lights!

From the President's Pen...

Hi AU Members,

I hope you had a fantastic February and I look forward to an even greater March. Well, as usual, Chuck is off to a great start with the star parties for 2013 keeping the AU out in the public eye and sharing the sky with lots of excited sky seeking customers. Chuck, you are amazing and thank you for that :-)

One thing that I can tell you for sure, there is nothing more exciting than seeing the reaction of someone seeing the depths of the sky for the very first time. The enthusiasm in his or her face is something to behold and never forget. It is extremely rewarding to experience this, knowing that you just shared one of the most amazing things the universe has to offer and especially when you tell them how far the stars are and the amazing facts that they offer. It's like seeing a kid in a candy store for the very first time and we all know what that was like, so get out there and share and make the gorgi master proud.

Let me mention that we have the International Astronomy Day coming up, an all day event at the Camino Real Marketplace on Saturday April 20th from 10:00AM till 4:00PM and then again the star party from 7:00PM until 10:00PM. So, if you would like to be a part of this wonderful event, please give me a call so that you can help some unsuspecting star-seeking customers experience the wonders of the universe.

Also, we need all the help we can get for the 1000 Girl Scouts event at the Live Oak Campground on April 27th starting at 6:00PM. Contact Chuck if you would like to be a part of this very fun and rewarding experience.

Until then, I look forward to seeing you at the monthly meeting this Friday, March 8th, and yes I really want to see you, so make sure you make it or I will have Edgar get revenge on you with his powerful energy that he can blast from his hands.

Mike Farris



A CHRISTMAS STORY

Dr. Bob Richard

On Christmas Day afternoon, 2012, Jupiter appeared in the sky very close to the nearly full Moon. We were at my brother's place in Solvang for Christmas dinner, and it was quite cloudy. My brother asked me if I thought I would be able to photograph this event as I had hoped. Looking at the clouds, I simply replied, "We shall see." When we got home, clouds continued to drift across the Moon and Jupiter often completely obscuring them. But in my heart I knew somehow it would be clear, so I continued to set up the telescope to photograph the event using the wide-field F/2 configuration on my scope. Then, as I became ready to take the images, the Moon and Jupiter emerged brilliantly clear in a cloud-free sky. I was rather amazed. So I took my photos over a period of about 45 min. As I completed my work and began covering up the scope, the clouds moved in pretty much obliterating

the Moon and Jupiter as they began drawing apart. About an hour and a half later it was raining! So I won't forget this particular Christmas evening for a long time! To me it was a great and unexpected gift to photograph this special event on Christmas Day, and I wanted to share this gift with all of you.

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AU annual membership rates:

Single = \$15 Family = \$25

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March 2013

| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|--|---------|--|--|---|-------------------------------------|--|
| | | | | | 1 | 2 |
| 3 | 4 ☾ | 5 | 6 | 7 HOLLISTER ELEMENTARY MONTESSORI SCHOOL 5PM | 8 AU MONTHLY MEETING 7PM | 9 PLANNING MEETING 5PM STAR PARTY 7PM SBMNH |
| 10 DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME BEGINS! | 11 ● | 12 | 13 | 14 MIDLAND SCHOOL 6PM | 15 WESTMONT COLLEGE 7:30PM | 16 MESSIER MARATHON |
| 17 | 18 | 19 CAMINO REAL MARKETPLACE 7PM ☾ | 20 MONROE SCHOOL 5PM SPRING BEGINS! | 21 | 22 | 23 |
| 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 ○ | 28 | 29 DUNN SCHOOL 5PM | 30 BACARA RESORT 7PM |
| 31 | | | | | | |

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