



# AU AstroNews

The Newsletter of the Astronomical Unit



May 2009

Sponsored by the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History



*100 Hours of Astronomy comes to Carpinteria! Photo credit: Javier Rivera.*

## Outreach Summary

We survived the 100 Hours of Astronomy, which generated at least 2600 of our customers (not all the totals are in yet!), with over 1200 of them at the Carpinteria event. It was a ton of fun.

Since the last newsletter, AU volunteers Andy Allen, Warren Bitters, John Boyd, Chad Caprio, Brian Clark, Bill Clausen, Jason & Tim Crawford, Joe Doyle, Carolyn & Ed Edwards, Mike Farris, Ruben Gutierrez, Laurence Harms, Art Harris, Tom King, Chris Larson, John Martinez, Chuck McPartlin, Max Neufeldt, Edgar Ocampo, Helen Osenga, Javier Rivera, the Quasars, Nancy Rohrer, David Salvia, Ryan Shapiro, Samantha Thompson, Jonathan Weber, Tom Whittemore, Jerry Wilson, Tim Wittenburg, and SBCC students James, Sam, Shane showed neat stuff in the sky to **2974** customers. Also, since February, Javier has held events for **171** more!

## May Events

Here are the AU events scheduled so far for May. **Astronomy Day** is our big event of the year, so come out and help if you can. To get the latest

information on schedules, or directions, just contact Chuck at 964-8201 or [macpuzl@west.net](mailto:macpuzl@west.net).

### Friday, May 1, 7 PM

Monthly meeting in Farrand Hall at SBMNH. Start with a quick planetarium show by Javier, then hear a talk by former AU member and now NASA scientist Dr. Rus Belikov, "Searching for Other Earths".

### Saturday, May 2, setup 9 AM

It's **Astronomy Day**, all day. We'll set up with solar scopes and various astronomical displays during the day, have a scope clinic by Palmer Observatory 7 to 8:30 PM, and then a Star Party from 8:30 to 10.

### Tuesday, May 5, setup 7 PM

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

### Saturday, May 9, 8 PM

Monthly Public Star Party outside Palmer Observatory at SBMNH.

### Wednesday, May 13, setup 7 PM

Telescopes for guests at the Biltmore Hotel. Contact Chuck for information.

### Friday, May 15, 8 PM

Telescopes for the monthly Public Telescope Night at Westmont College, at Carroll Observatory, next to the Van Kampen dormitory.

### Saturday, May 16, setup 7:30 PM

Telescopes for Los Padres National Forest Family Camp, at the Paradise Campground along Paradise Road.

### Sunday, May 17, 2 PM

Space music concert at SBMNH. Contact Javier for details.

### **Monday, May 18, setup 8 PM**

Telescopes for a group from Carpinteria Family School, camping out at Cachuma Lake, in a Barona group site.

### **Friday, May 22 - Monday, May 25**

Annual RTMC Astronomy Expo at Big Bear Lake. Hang out with 2000 or so of your favorite amateur astronomers at 7000 feet. It probably won't snow this year!



*More 100 Hours of Astronomy! Photo credit: Javier Rivera.*

### **Wednesday, May 27, setup 7:30 PM**

Telescopes for the children attending the Ocean Futures events at El Capitan Canyon Campground, in the Lower Loop area.

### **Friday, May 29, setup 8 PM**

Telescopes for campers at Refugio Beach State Park. We set up in the day-use parking lot, at the west end.

### **Saturday, May 30, setup 8 PM**

Telescopes for Los Padres National Forest Family Camp, at the Paradise Campground along Paradise Road.

### **From Our President's Pen...**

Well, with regard to 100 Hours Of Astronomy this president can certainly say, "MISSION ACCOMPLISHED." AU was able to set up an outreach event from 10:00 AM to 10:00 PM, on all four days of this world-wide event that covered the three communities of Goleta, Santa Barbara, and Carpinteria. The Grand Finale was the Carpinteria Star Party that had an incredible 1,233 people attend-Fantastic! But wait, AU isn't done yet.

**International Astronomy Day** is on **May 2nd** and will be taking place at the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History from 10:00 AM to 10:00 PM. All AU members and telescopes involved in the 100

Hours of Astronomy event, and much more, will be present that day. It will be AU at its very best. In celebration of International Year of Astronomy 2009, AU will be conducting a **free raffle** of two of the largest and most sophisticated telescopes ever given to lucky members of the community, as well as other great prizes. Remember, you just have to be there to win. This is our Club's way of encouraging community members to embrace the wonders of astronomy, and also have a fun and an educational day at the museum. See you there!

Beginning with this edition of AstroNews, we'll be acknowledging new and renewing members for the past 30 days. We wish to welcome aboard new member Colin Thompson and thank Timothy Rodgers and Phyllis Mlynek for renewing their support and participation in this most intriguing and community involved club! The members of AU are what makes this club such a pleasure to be a part of, and continued support is what has made it such a success!

Ruben Gutierrez, SBAU President

### **Did You Know?**

On May 2nd Venus will be at its greatest brilliancy. Look for Venus in the morning sky. On 5/5/61 Alan Shepard was the first American to walk in space, and on 5/14/73 Sky Lab launched. The Universe is thought to be 13 billion years old, and the largest nearby galaxy, Andromeda, is but a mere 2.36 million light years away. Our nearest star, Proxima Centauri, is just a stone's throw away at 4.2 light years.



*And even MORE 100 Hours of Astronomy! Photo credit: Javier Rivera.*

## Dark Sky Observing

AU members frequently get together for observing where the sky is dark. You would be most welcome to join us! Owning or bringing a telescope is not required.

While many deep sky objects are visible from Santa Barbara's suburban skies, there is a much better view where there is not so much light pollution. We take our telescopes to sites on Camino Cielo, Figueroa Mountain, Lake San Antonio, and even Mt Pinos to escape the city lights. The Winchester Canyon Gun Club on West Camino Cielo is our most frequent destination.

We don't have a regular schedule. Instead we select moonless evenings and watch the weather forecasts to come up with a plan. The plan may not be finalized until almost the last minute if the weather seems unpredictable. Even so, we try to get to dark skies at least once every month.

We communicate via e-mail discussions and announcements. If you would like to be on the Dark Sky Observing e-mail list please let me know by sending me a note at [jdoyle@mrl.ucsb.edu](mailto:jdoyle@mrl.ucsb.edu).

Clear Skies! – Joe Doyle



### **AU Information Box**

<b>President:</b>	Ruben Gutierrez	450-7451
	<a href="mailto:rubenalvag@aol.com">rubenalvag@aol.com</a>	
<b>Vice President:</b>	Mike Farris	637-3300
	<a href="mailto:mike@mikewfarris.com">mike@mikewfarris.com</a>	
<b>Secretary:</b>	Tim Wittenburg	969-6945
	<a href="mailto:black10@aol.com">black10@aol.com</a>	
<b>Treasurer:</b>	Pat McPartlin	964-8201
	<a href="mailto:parsnip7@yahoo.com">parsnip7@yahoo.com</a>	
<b>Outreach:</b>	Chuck McPartlin	964-8201
	<a href="mailto:macpuzl@west.net">macpuzl@west.net</a>	
<b>Webmaster:</b>	Paul Winn	886-2319
	<a href="mailto:paul@sbau.org">paul@sbau.org</a>	
<b>Newsletter:</b>	Tom Whittemore	687-2025
	<a href="mailto:kometes@aol.com">kometes@aol.com</a>	
<b>Equipment:</b>	Art Harris	968-4017
	<a href="mailto:nbis@cox.net">nbis@cox.net</a>	

### **AU Astronomy Information Pager**

**(Leave a short message) 564-9002**

### **SBMNH Astronomy Program Coordinator**

Javier Rivera 682-4711x173

[jrivera@sbnature2.org](mailto: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>

## May 2009

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1 Monthly Meeting 7PM	2 Astronomy Day!
3	4	5 Camino Real Market Place 7PM	6	7	8	9 SBMNH Star Party 8PM
10	11	12	13 Biltmore Star Party 7PM	14	15 Westmont College 8PM	16 Paradise Campground 7:30PM
17 Space Music 2 PM	18 Carpinteria Family Night Cachuma Lake 8PM	19	20	21	22 RTMC	23 RTMC
24 RTMC	25	26	27 El Capitan Canyon 7:30PM	28	29 Refugio State Beach 8PM	30 Paradise Campground 8PM
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**The Astronomical Unit**  
 c/o Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History  
 2559 Puesta Del Sol Road  
 Santa Barbara, CA 93105-2998