



AU AstroNews

The Newsletter of the Astronomical Unit

October 2006

Sponsored by the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History

AU Outreach Summary

September had relatively few events, but we had a great volunteer turnout, and lots of happy customers. *Maybe that's why we're still #1 in the nation for Night Sky Network Outreach events!* Volunteers helping out were Andy Allen, Robert Bernstein, Warren Bitters, Marciano Chan, Bill Clausen, Krissie Cook & her Quasars, Jason & Tim Crawford, Ruben Gutierrez, Laurence Harms, Art Harris, Joy, Jürgen Hilmer, Cathy & Larry Martinez, Pat & Chuck McPartlin, Ron Nixon, Edgar Ocampo, Helen Osenga, Craig & Kenyon Prater, Javier Rivera, Nancy Rohrer, Paul Winn, and Tim Wittenburg. We showed the sky to **801** people.

October AU Events

Here's what's scheduled so far for October. School events are picking up. Remember, outreach events are subject to change as additions and cancellations occur. To get the latest information, or directions to an event, just contact Chuck at 964-8201 or macpuzl@west.net.

Note that there is no Westmont College event this month on the third Friday, because of the AU Campout.

Thursday, October 5, 5:30 - 8 PM

La Patera School Science Night. Pat & Chuck can't make this one, so come with a scope if you can!

Friday, October 6, 7:30 PM

AU monthly meetings in Farrand Hall at SBMNH. Nancy Vandermey from JPL will talk about the Cassini mission to Saturn.

Monday, October 9, Moonrise to Midnight

The Moon will pass over the Pleiades as seen from Santa Barbara. Watch as the bright jewels of this cluster hide behind and pop out from the nearly full Moon.

Wednesday, October 11, setup 6:30 PM

Telescopes for Refugio Beach State Park. Really nice seeing for right on the beach.

Saturday, October 14, 5 PM

AU Planning Meeting in the classroom outside Krissie's office. Anyone is welcome to come discuss future AU activities and consume pizza!

Saturday, October 14, 7 PM

Monthly Star Party at SBMNH. Always a lot of fun.

Friday, October 20 - Sunday, October 22

Annual AU Campout at the Mohawk Shores group site at Cachuma Lake Campground. Observing Friday and Saturday nights, plus a Saturday evening potluck dinner. Don't forget to reserve early for the Nature Cruises. The peak of the *Orionid meteor shower* is around 11 PM on Saturday night, too.

Wednesday, October 25, setup 6:30 PM

Slide show and telescopes for Cleveland Elementary School.

Thursday, October 26, 6 to 8 PM

Telescopes and NSN activities for Kellogg Elementary School's Science Night. They have pizza.

Saturday, October 28, setup 6 PM

Telescopes for Refugio State Beach.

Sunday, October 29, 2 AM

Daylight Saving Time ends. Fall back one hour.

Tuesday, October 31, all night

Show the skies to trick-or-treaters wherever you are.



Jupiter moves lower in the southwest as the month of October continues. By the end of the month it sets only 50 minutes after the Sun and is becoming more difficult to see. **Mercury** is lower and dimmer than Jupiter to see at mid-northern latitudes. Observers here will see Mercury no more than 8° high even at sunset on October 17th, when this little world reaches its greatest eastern elongation. Although Mercury is closest to Jupiter on the 25th, it will be very difficult to spot in the Sun's glow. **Saturn** does not rise until about 3 AM at the start of October. However, by the end of the month, thanks to Daylight Savings Time, Saturn comes up just after midnight, and will be high in the southeast by morning twilight. Watch for Saturn's approach to Regulus during the month of October. **Mars** is in conjunction with the Sun on the 23rd of October. At the same time, **Venus** is at superior conjunction (on the opposite side of the Sun) on the 23rd. Thus, both planets are lost in the solar glare during the month of October. **The Moon** is full on the 6th of October. Since this full moon is the closest to the September equinox, it becomes by definition this year's **Harvest Moon**. For several nights including and after October 20th, the Moon is either small or not visible, permitting fine viewing of the peak of the **Orionid meteor shower!**

For Sale

Coronado Personal Solar Telescope (PST) H Alpha with matched MALTA Mount, one eyepiece, and hand crafted sunshade. \$500 pristine condition. Purchased at RTMC this year (before Meade gutted Coronado), but rarely used. The MALTA is a sweet AltAz mount that fits on any tripod or can be used tabletop. This package would sell for \$628, plus \$50 for a commercial sunshade, plus tax and shipping at OPT. Product info at http://www.coronadofilters.com/products_pst.html

Call me at 683-6187 or e-mail me at jdoyle@mrl.ucsb.edu, if interested.

Astronomical Arts Corner

A Piece of Glass

C.A. Olson

Westwood, N.J.

He labored late into the night,
At early morn' his task resumed,
To fashion thus a disk of glass
Into a subtle curve, not deep,
But measured only by the shades
of light

From a simple pinhole made of
foil,

Revealing to his practiced eye
Imperfections infinitesimal:
Until at last his skill produced
A curve so true the mind of man
Could not discern the wavering of
a breath.

"Just a piece of glass," 'twas said,
But in that simple disk

The heavenly host
Of suns and stars, yea, universes,
Revealed their glory in the sky
For man to ponder – and adore.

Fireflies

by Annie Farnsworth

Until an ambitious neighbor bushhogged,
this field was but scrub
of elder and beech. Now the dog and I
walk alongside, on the dirt road,
watching constellations, galaxies
alighting on grass spires and knapweed.
Are these the self-same stars,
the phantoms I've heard about
whose already-snuffed lumens
have only reached us now? O, you stars,
you tiny perforations
in the tarpaper night, worn-down
beads of an abacus clicked
over and over on nights
when sleep was slow to come...

how heavy it must have been –
the accumulation
of all those wishes.

PLUTO, BYE BYE!

(to the tune of "Bye Bye, Blackbird")

by Diane Wyman

Pack up all your cons and pros
off the list, there it goes
bye bye, Pluto
Since they've voted it's too late
not nine planets, only eight
bye bye, Pluto
You were never qualified, let's face it
shouldn't have included you, 'twas baseless
Just ignore its friends and foes
off the list, there it goes
Pluto, oh my--two thousand si-ix--
PLUTO, BYE BYE!



Packing up at CalStar 2006 on Sunday morning. Photo courtesy of T.W.



After an evening of serous observing, one astronomer looks for some breakfast at CalStar 2006. Photo courtesy of T.W.

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AU annual membership rates:

Single = \$15 **Family = \$25**

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

October 2006

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2	3	4	5 La Patera School 5:30 PM	6 AU Monthly Meeting 7:30PM	7 ○
8	9 Moon occults Pleiades	10	11 Refugio State Beach 6:30 PM	12	13	14 ● Planning Meeting 5PM SBMNH Star Party 7PM
15	16	17	18	19	20 AU Campout: Cachuma Lake	21 AU Campout: Cachuma Lake
22 AU ● Campout: Cachuma Lake	23	24	25 Cleveland Elementary: 6 – 8 PM	26 Kellogg Elementary: 6 – 8 PM	27	28 Refugio State Beach: 6PM
29 ● DST ends: fall back!	30	31				

The Astronomical Unit

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