



AU AstroNews

The Newsletter of the Astronomical Unit

September 2005

Sponsored by the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History

September Meeting

On September 2, our monthly meetings will resume from summer break with a presentation by the faculty of the Physics Department of Westmont College about their new telescope and the refurbishment of the observatory there. "After more than 50 years, Westmont will retire its 16-inch Newtonian telescope from Carroll Observatory and install a 24-inch F/8 Cassegrain with Ritchey-Chrétien optics. The new instrument features more than twice the light-gathering power of the old one and nearly twice the resolving power." Read more on their website at physics.westmont.edu/



AU members set up for the July 30th Star-B-Cue.

Outreach Report

Since the last newsletter, AU outreach volunteers Andy Allen, Warren Bitters, Tim Crawford, Art Harris, June Kelley, Pat & Chuck McPartlin, Edgar Ocampo, Helen Osenga, Tom Whittemore, and Tim Wittenburg showed the night sky to 443 customers. We'll need all the volunteers we can get for the September 23 event, so come help if you can!

AU Events for September

Friday, September 2, 7:30 PM

Monthly meetings resume in Farrand Hall at the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History. Come hear about the new Westmont telescope.

Saturday, September 3, setup 7 PM

Slide show and telescopes for campers at Cachuma Lake.

Saturday, September 3, all night

Dark sky observing. Contact Joe Doyle or Paul Winn for details.

Sunday/Monday, September 4/5, setup 7

PM

Telescopes for the Bacara Resort. Contact Chuck if you're interested.

Friday, September 9, setup 7 PM

Telescopes for campers at Refugio Beach State Park.

Saturday, September 10, 5:30 PM

AU planning meeting in the classroom adjacent to Krissie's office at SBMNH. Anyone is welcome to attend and help plan activities like the campout and holiday party!

Saturday, September 10, setup 7 PM

Monthly Public Star Party at SBMNH. Lots of fun sharing the views.

Friday, September 16, setup 6:30 PM

Public telescope night at Westmont. The observatory is under construction for the installation of the new telescope, so we'll need volunteers with scopes!

Saturday, September 17, setup 6:30 PM

Slide show and telescopes for campers at Cachuma Lake.

Friday, September 23, setup 6 PM

Telescopes for around 1500 Girl Scouts camping at the Live Oak group site upstream from Cachuma Lake. The entrance is via the Rancho San Marcos Golf Course. Given the size of this group, we desperately need volunteers with telescopes!

Saturday, September 24, setup 6:30 PM

Slide show and telescopes for the Santa Barbara Botanic Garden. This was lots of fun last time!

Thursday - Sunday, September 29 - October 1

The annual Calstar gathering at Lake San Antonio. See their website at www.sjaa.net/calstar2005.html for details. Look closely at the group photo, and you'll spot some AU members.

Stars in the Canyon Country

by Tom Whittemore

This summer I returned to the red rock country of southern Utah for the first time since 1995. Since this was primarily a camping trip, I did not bring a telescope but I did bring along my trusty 9x63 binoculars for the dark, dry desert skies at Arches National Park near the town of Moab. What follows are my memories of the first night.

The night promised to be spectacular as I sat at my picnic table and watched the sky darken. A young moon lay very close to Venus, and Jupiter shone very bright in the deepening blue sky. I was wondering if there was going to be an occultation of Venus by the moon later on in the evening, but they both set before any such possibility. The brighter stars came out one by one. I swept my head from west to east: Spica, Arcturus, Antares, Vega, and Altair. Soon, the rest of Scorpius came into view with the stinger stars in the scorpion's tail pointing directly to Ptolemy's Cluster, an easy naked-eye object. One by one more objects in Sagittarius popped into view: M22, the Swan, and the Lagoon. I moved the binoculars further up into the sky and pulled in amazing details in the Scutum Star Cloud. A jump to the center of Cygnus revealed thousands of stars, and further to the northeast the Andromeda

Galaxy stretched across the entire field of view of my binoculars. I waited for Triangulum to come up to see if M33 would be a naked-eye object, and although it wasn't, this large faint galaxy stood out in my 9x63s against the dark Utah skies. Mars came up shortly afterward and I was starting to fade, so I called it a night. But before I fell asleep, lying in my tent, I remembered what a treat a truly dark sky is, and I hoped that tomorrow night would be just as spectacular.



Lepus visits my campsite at Arches National Park.

The Stars of Summer...



Chuck helps Joe with his alignment.



Tim Crawford prepares for the evening.



Dobs rule!



Revisiting the July 30th Star-B-Cue.

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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**

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September 2005

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1	2 Monthly Meeting 7:30PM	3 ● Cachuma Lake 7:00 PM
4 Bacara Resort 7:00 PM	5 Bacara Resort 7:00 PM	6	7	8	9 Refugio Beach 7 PM	10 AU Planning Meeting 5:30 PM SBMNH Star Party 7:00PM
11 ☾	12	13	14	15	16 Westmont 6:30 PM	17 Cachuma Lake 6:30 PM
18 ○	19	20	21	22	23 Live Oak Group Site 6:00 PM Help!	24 Botanic Garden 6:30 PM Setup
25 ●	26	27	28	29 Calstar Lake San Antonio	30 Calstar Lake San Antonio	Calstar Lake San Antonio

The Astronomical Unit

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