



AU AstroNews

The Newsletter of the Astronomical Unit

February 2024

Sponsored by the Santa

Barbara Museum of Natural History



*Tim Crawford studies the quality of a hand-crafted mirror.
Photo credit: Tom Totton*

Outreach Summary

Some cloudouts, but AU volunteers Henk Aling, Andy Allen, Tim Crawford, Tessa Flanagan, Art Harris, Ron Herron, Sean Kelly, David Larson, Pat & Chuck McPartlin, Bruce Murdock, Edgar Ocampo, Tom Totton, John Winckowski & Sean Fox & Quasars, and Andre Yew showed cool stuff in the sky to 1023 people, helped by David Feinberg, Diane Welcenbach, and Lee Wilkerson.

SBAU volunteers must have undergone the SBMNH background check, and conform with the SBMNH policies for dealing with the public, to participate in outreach activities. To get vetted, contact SBMNH Volunteer Manager Rebecca Coulter <rcoulter@sbnature2.org>. It's quick and painless.

Outreach Events

School events ramp up in February. Help out if you can!

Friday, February 2, 7 PM

Monthly AU meeting in Fleischmann Auditorium at SBMNH. Another hybrid Zoom/in person meeting. Short planetarium show at 7 PM, followed by a talk on the Mount Wilson Observatory by Dr. Tim Thompson at 7:30.

Tuesday, February 6, setup 6 PM

Telescopes and slide show for students at Santa Barbara Junior High, 721 E Cota. We set up behind the Marjorie Luke Theater, with access through a gate by the intersection of E Ortega and N Quarantina.

Thursday, February 8, setup 5 PM

Telescopes for Science Night at Monte Vista School, 730 N Hope Avenue in Santa Barbara.

Saturday, February 10, 5 PM

Monthly AU planning meeting via Zoom. Watch your email for the link.

Saturday, February 10, 7 PM

Monthly public star party at SBMNH, by the Palmer Observatory.

Monday, February 12, 6:30 PM

Join Astronomy Programs Manager John Winckowski for a Science Pub presentation at Dargan's Irish Pub & Restaurant, 18 E Ortega Street for a tour of some of the solar system's most interesting residents: moons!

Tuesday, February 13, setup 7 PM

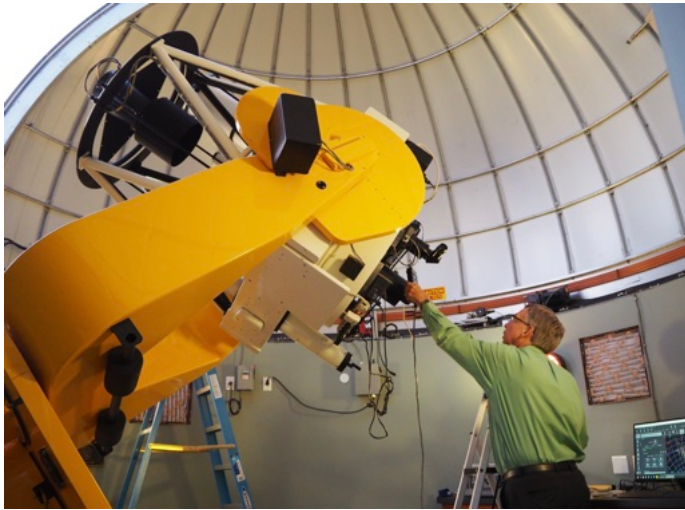
Telescope Tuesday at Camino Real Marketplace, in the plaza by the theater.

Friday, February 16, 7 PM

Monthly public telescope night at Westmont's Keck Observatory, next to the athletic fields.

Thursday, February 22, setup 4:30 PM

Telescopes for Science Night at Ellwood School, 7686 Hollister Avenue in Goleta.



“Not sure whether this chewing gum is going to solve the problem, but it’s worth a try....” Photo credit: Tom Totton

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Jerry Wilson

In the late-night hours of January 21, 2024 – 90 minutes before impact over European skies – NASA [said](#) a small asteroid would hit Earth’s atmosphere. And hit it did. The space rock struck on schedule above an area west of Berlin, Germany. The asteroid was only about 1 meter (3 feet) in diameter. It posed no danger to people on the ground. Yet it’s possible the asteroid might have spread small meteorites over the landscape.

In the hours since then, footage of the fireball in the skies over Germany has been coming in on social media.

Asteroid hunter [Krisztián Sárneczky](#) of Budapest, Hungary, discovered the asteroid only shortly before impact. Sárneczky has become famous for last-minute discoveries such as this one, including the discoveries of an asteroid that fell over [France in 2023](#) and another that hit over the [Arctic Ocean](#)

[in 2022](#). This is only the 8th asteroid detected before impact.

ARTS CORNER

FEBRUARY DELIGHT

The moon is sitting in the Chinese elm,
we are sitting on the deck.

A wisp of clouds has netted the stars
and the wind swirls all around us.

It pauses and we listen to a rare hush
over the city.

Then the wind begins to dance -
a cool gust chills our ankles,
a warm one brushes our face.

We are a captive audience
content eating our cherry vanilla ice cream
poised on the brink of tomorrow.

Suzanne Spillman

The Flame of Peace

I breathe in light,
I let light infuse every cell of my body,
A seed of peace is born,
I plant the seed of peace into
The fertile soil of my consciousness,
A flame of peace is intensely lit,
I send the flame of peace to
Every Israeli’s heart to
Every Palestinian’s heart to
Every Ukrainian’s heart and to
Every Russian’s heart
Praying that peace and harmony
Would refill again the empty reservoir of peace

Humanity!
Oh humanity,

Despite your differences,
 Let you be attuned to peace
 By the flame of peace,
 Let all animals immerse in
 The river of peace,
 Let the fish swim in
 The ocean of peace,
 Let the plants and the trees be
 Nourished by streams of peace,
 Let the entire globe be engulfed in
 The flame of peace.
 Let peace and harmony flow like a river of light,

Oh heart,
 I cry for peace,
 Let the tears cleanse and purify
 The soul of humanity,
 Let it be real,
 Let it be, let it be, let it be.

*Ibrahim Ibn Salma
 11/24/2023*



Looking back at an earlier RTMC.... Photo credit: Tom Totton

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The Astronomical Unit

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FEBRUARY 2024						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1	2 LQ MOON AU MEETING 7PM	3
4	5	6 SB JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL 6PM	7	8 MONTE VISTA SCHOOL 5PM	9 NEW MOON	10 ZOOM PLANNING MEETING 5PM STAR PARTY 7PM
11	12 SCIENCE PUB AT DARGAN'S 6:30PM	13 TELESCOPE TUESDAY 7PM	14	15	16 FQ MOON WESTMONT 6PM	17
18	19	20	21	22 ELLWOOD SCHOOL 4:30PM	23	24 FULL MOON
25	26	27	28	29		