



AU AstroNews

The Newsletter of the Astronomical Unit

August 2015

Sponsored by the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History



SBAU President, Tom Totton, sets up his telescope for the public at a recent Bacara outreach.

OUR AUGUST SPEAKER

Our speaker for the August 7th meeting will be Stephen J. Edberg from the NASA Jet Propulsion Laboratory at Cal Tech. The title of his talk is “Is Pluto a Planet? and other ambiguities.” Steve writes “Pluto’s demotion from planet to ‘dwarf planet’ shocked many people. In this presentation Steve will explore the classifications of many types of objects in our solar system and some found around other stars to try and understand what the classifications mean... or if they even have meaning! *Recent findings of the New Horizons mission to Pluto will also be discussed.*”

OUTREACH SUMMARY

Since the last newsletter, AU volunteers Mike Chibnik, Bill Clausen, Tim Crawford, Mike Farris, Art Harris, Ken Kihlstrom, Zanna Lucy, Pat & Chuck McPartlin, Janet & Martin Meza, Bonnie & Bruce Murdock, Edgar Ocampo, Cez & Tom Totton, Tom Whittemore, Patricia & Jerry Wilson, and Linda & Harold Yarbrough showed cool astronomy stuff to **1050** visitors.

OUTREACH FOR AUGUST

Here are the AU outreach events for July. Events are subject to change, so to get the latest updates, contact Chuck at macpuzl@west.net or 964-8201.

SATURDAY, AUGUST 1, SETUP 8 PM

Telescopes for campers at Cachuma Lake Campground. We set up on the grassy field at Dakota Plains.

THURSDAY, AUGUST 6, SETUP 7 PM

Telescopes for Bacara Resort and Spa. We set up on the bluff lawn overlooking the ocean.

FRIDAY, AUGUST 7, 7 PM

AU monthly meeting in Farrand Hall at SBMNH. Hear about the New Horizons mission to Pluto.

SATURDAY, AUGUST 8, 6 PM

Planning meeting in the classroom next to Javier's office at SBMNH. Come plan your club's activities. All are welcome.

SATURDAY, AUGUST 8, 8 PM

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

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 12, SETUP 8 PM

Telescopes for UCSB students, on the lawn by San Nicolas dorm. Let Chuck know if you plan to come, so he can arrange parking permits.

THURSDAY, AUGUST 13, SETUP 7 PM

Telescopes for Bacara Resort and Spa. We set up on the bluff lawn overlooking the ocean.

FRIDAY, AUGUST 14, SETUP 7 PM

Telescopes for Refugio Beach State Campground, in the day use parking lot, southwest corner.

THURSDAY, AUGUST 20, SETUP 7 PM

Telescopes for Bacara Resort and Spa. We set up on the bluff lawn overlooking the ocean.

FRIDAY, AUGUST 21, SETUP 7:30 PM

Monthly Public Telescope Night at Westmont College, at the observatory, next to the baseball field. ***Lunar X visible from about 7:25 PM to 9:54PM.***

SATURDAY, AUGUST 22, SETUP 8 PM

Telescopes for campers at Cachuma Lake Campground. We set up on the grassy field at Dakota Plains.

TUESDAY, AUGUST 25, SETUP 7 PM

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

THURSDAY, AUGUST 27, SETUP 7 PM

Telescopes for Bacara Resort and Spa. We set up on the bluff lawn overlooking the ocean.

FRIDAY, AUGUST 28, SETUP 7 PM

Telescopes for Refugio Beach State Campground, in the day use parking lot, southwest corner.

SATURDAY, AUGUST 29, SETUP 8 PM

Slide show and scopes for Carpinteria State Beach. We set up on the sidewalk toward the ocean from the entry kiosk.

Sir Arthur C. Clarke as I knew him...

Jim Williams

Editor's note: Jim Williams visited the prestigious astronomer and writer three times: in 1997, 2001, and 2003. The following is Jim's remembrance of his 1997 visit. His other visits will follow in subsequent issues of the AU AstroNews.

Our first meeting was in December 1997, just after his 80th Birthday. It was a fun visit, arranged by my friend Wayne Houser who had befriended Arthur while he was in Sri Lanka working for the "Voice of America". We made a short visit not long after we arrived, riding in the dark in one of the thousands of 3-wheeled cabs that clogged the streets.

Arthur owned a mansion that had once been the home of the Anglican Bishop of Sri Lanka. The mansion was shared with the Ekanayake family, Hector and Valerie and their 3 daughters, with whom Arthur jointly ran a diving rental business. He lived in an upstairs apartment where the Bishop once stayed. The Ekanayake's took care of all the day to day needs, so he could focus on his work. Visitors disembarked from their ride, entered a small lobby with a huge moonscape mural, climbed up a stair that was the base of a large porte-cochere, passed through a large office area full of desks and cabinets that bridged the driveway, through a small ante-room filled with Arthur's awards ("The Ego Chamber"), and into... The Office. The office had

a large living room area with leather sofas and chairs, a TV (Arthur had the first TV in Sri Lanka), and beyond that, in front of a large bookcase and behind a desk with an enormous computer monitor, was the man himself, [CBE](#), [FRAS](#), Hugo and Nebula award winner, inventor of communications satellites in a Geostationary orbit (1945), Chancellor of Moratuwa University, Vidya Jyothi, Dr. Arthur C. Clarke. The first evening visit was brief, but very cordial; Arthur (whom I addressed as Dr. Clarke) was very friendly and not intimidating at all. After 5 minutes you relaxed completely. Oh, and outside on the patio was a 14" Celestron telescope.

You never showed up empty handed at Arthur's – it's terribly bad form to do so. Wayne had recommended a gift of a bottle of Harvey's Bristol Crème or Sandeman's Sherry; the latter is what I brought. At Christmas dinner Arthur said, "Let's open that stuff that Jim brought," after remarking that he was getting so much booze that "We may soon have to do some serious drinking!" (though that never happened!).

Christmas dinner a few days later was amazing. One of the girls had asked me earlier if I had any dietary limitations. I answered that I did (can't eat small seeds and such). Dinner was an incredible traditional English dinner. Lots of chatter just like we had always been there. Lots of Sherry and lots of stories, and chat about the scuba diving business that the Ekanayake's shared with Arthur. Dessert was a lovely yogurt, topped with fresh green grapes, each one neatly cut in half with the seeds carefully removed. Wow.

Later, we went upstairs and looked on his computer screen at the amazing detailed photos of the cracks on the icy surface of Europa - some so straight you could lay a giant ruler on them. Arthur remarked that they looked like they were designed by a "mad freeway engineer." After a while I presented him with a birthday card from the AU, signed by many of the members, and we had leftover birthday cake. It was an amazing visit, the first of three.

"Time Travel"

Tom Totton, SBAU 2015 President

On July 10th, the Santa Barbara Astronomical Unit had the 2004 Nobel Prize for Physics winner,

Professor David Gross, of UCSB and the Kavli Institute of Theoretical Physics, making a superhuman effort in educating our club. Seems the Future of Fundamental Physics involves finding a way to reach electron Volt energy of 10^{28} eV for unification of the Strong, Weak, Electromagnetic, and Gravitational forces. However, the Large Hadron Collider might only be able to reach 10^{13} eV. Dr. Gross went on to speculate whether humans have the will and wisdom (i.e., knowledge over ignorance) to go further in the quest to find the quantum dimensions of space-time, dark matter, gravitons, etc. to find unification in physics. See some low quality photos of his talk here:

<http://tinyurl.com/pgnob3r>

The talk was a bit long and our following snacking time and cleanup caused some of us to violate the SBMNH zoning rules by not removing all cars by 1030pm. Because of this we will need to pre-arrange a talk time limit no later than 9:30PM with future speakers to help us clear out on time.

Good news just hit me today from OPT (Oceanside Photo & Telescope). It seems I have won a new OPT 6" RC telescope, iOptron ZEQ25 mount, and Celestron Skyris 618 color CCD camera from their SC Astronomy Expo July 25th online contest. Or is this a bummer, as now I have to pay income taxes on the \$1697 value, right? At least it was not a gift horse that I am looking in the mouth!

See you all later in August as I will be missing the Pluto meeting and the planning meeting.

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August 2015

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1 CACHUMA LAKE 8PM
2	3	4	5	6 BACARA RESORT 7PM	7 SBAU GENERAL MEETING 7PM	8 SBMNH PLANNING MEETING 6PM STAR PARTY 8-10PM
9	10	11	12 UCSB 8PM	13 BACARA RESORT 7PM	14 REFUGIO STATE BEACH 7PM	15
16	17	18	19	20 BACARA RESORT 7PM	21 WESTMONT COLLEGE 7:30PM	22 CACHUMA LAKE 8PM
23	24	25 CAMINO REAL MARKETPLACE 7PM	26	27 BACARA RESORT 7PM	28 REFUGIO STATE BEACH 7PM	29 CARPINTERIA STATE BEACH 8PM
30	31					

The Astronomical Unit

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