



AU AstroNews

The Newsletter of the Astronomical Unit

March 2019

Sponsored by the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History



Tim Crawford welcomes honored guest, Srikanth, to a recent mirror-making workshop. Photo credit: Bruce Murdock.

MARCH GENERAL MEETING

Our March speaker will be Assistant Professor, Dr. Timothy Brandt, from the UCSB Physics Department. Dr. Brandt's main research goal is to discover and characterize massive planets around nearby stars by direct imaging, and to push the ability to image ever fainter planets. He is currently writing the software for the CHARIS integral-field spectrograph for the Subaru Telescope and preparing for a high-contrast survey. His other active research projects include work on stellar evolution, stellar ages, and star clusters.

OUTREACH SUMMARY

AU volunteers Tim Crawford, Joe Doyle, Tessa Flanagan & Duff Kennedy, Ruben Gutierrez, Art Harris, Baron Ron Herron, Sean Kelly, Ken Kihlstrom, Chris Larson, Jacob Luiken, Pat & Chuck McPartlin, Janet & Martin Meza, Bonnie & Bruce Murdock, Peggy O'Rork, Javier Rivera, Elliot Roh, David Salvia, Tom Totton, Matthew Walton, Tom Whittemore, Jerry Wilson, and Andre Yew showed the sky to **1118** viewers last month.

MARCH OUTREACH

Here's the schedule so far for March. Remember, the events are subject to change and cancellation, so for the latest updates, contact Chuck at 964-8201 or macpuzl@west.net.

The Telescope Workshop meets most Tuesday evenings at 7:30 PM at the Broder Building at SBMNH. Contact Tim Crawford at tcrawf3@cox.net for information. Listen to the AU on the radio at KZSB 1290 AM at 9 AM on the second and fourth Monday of each month.

FRIDAY, MARCH 1, 7 PM

Monthly AU meeting in Farrand Hall at SBMNH.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 6, SETUP 4:30 PM

Telescopes for Science Night at Monroe School, 431 Flora Vista Drive, on the Mesa. Pizza for volunteers.

THURSDAY, MARCH 7, SETUP 4:30 PM

Telescopes for Science Night at El Camino School, 5020 San Simeon Drive in Goleta. Pizza for volunteers.

THURSDAY, MARCH 7, SETUP 5:30 PM

Telescopes for Science Night at Santa Barbara Charter School, on the east end of the campus of Goleta Valley Junior High, 6100 Stow Canyon Road in Goleta.

SATURDAY, MARCH 9, 5 PM

AU planning meeting in the classroom outside Javier's office at SBMNH. All members are welcome to help plan your club's activities.

SATURDAY, MARCH 9, 7 PM

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

SUNDAY, MARCH 10 - DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME STARTS!

TUESDAY, MARCH 12, 7 PM

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

THURSDAY, MARCH 14, SETUP 5 PM

Telescopes for Science Night at Hollister School, 4950 Anita Lane, in Noleta. We enter through a gate on the east side of the playground off Ashton Street.

FRIDAY, MARCH 15, 7 PM

Monthly Public Telescope Night at Westmont College observatory, next to the baseball field.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 20 2:58 PM PDT - VERNAL EQUINOX - IT'S SPRING!

SATURDAY, MARCH 30, SETUP 6 PM

Telescopes for Bacara Resort and Spa. We set up on the bluff by the Angel Oak Restaurant.

From the President

Jerry Wilson

There are a lot space technology development and demonstrations going on currently. The Chinese have landed a rover on the backside of the Moon and germinated several varieties of vegetables inside a pressurized compartment. Tomatoes, I think. Meanwhile the Japanese have landed the Hayabusa2 probe on an asteroid and captured samples of the surface for return to earth. The Israelis have launched an entirely privately funded lunar lander using one of Elon Musk's rockets.

Speaking of Elon, he's beginning testing of components of his Big Falcon Rocket and capsule design to carry a hundred passengers at a time to Mars. NASA is building their own deep space exploration capsule, the Orion capsule, and the large booster needed to lift it. Orion will look like a larger version of the Apollo capsule and will hold five passengers. Right now it looks like SpaceX may have the lead, but time will tell.

This is hardly a complete list, but shows that these are exciting times with much more to come. China is planning its own space station and semi permanently manned lunar base, and both SpaceX and NASA are planning Mars bases. Of course, there has already been a Tesla roadster drive-by of Mars.



Club member, Ken Pfeiffer, captured this spooky and imaginative photo of the moonrise before last month's lunar eclipse.



"Good golly. How did the food folks know that I loved pickled beets?" Photo credit: Tom Totton.

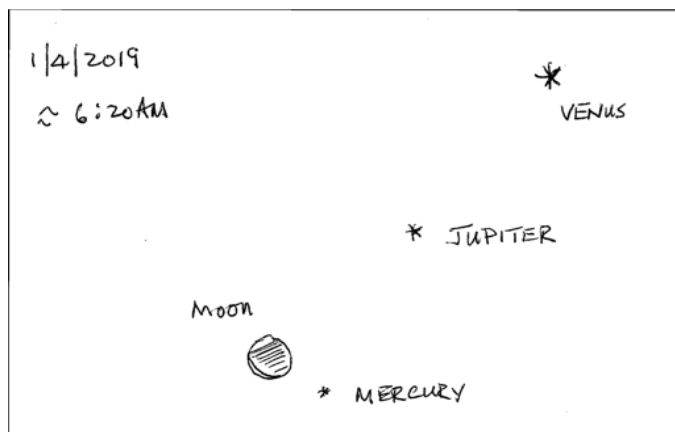


"I swear. This is exactly what the alien did when I took away his green outreach laser pointer!"

Naked-eye Astronomy

Tom Whitemore

There is something to be said for naked-eye astronomy. Early on January 4th I witnessed a spectacular alignment in the southeastern sky: a crescent Moon, Venus, Mercury, and Jupiter hovering above the horizon. The fact that I did not have a telescope set up to view the event allowed me to see the entire arrangement and get a better perspective on how the planets and the Moon wobble about the ecliptic throughout the year. Remember to enjoy the night sky with your eyes!



Author's sketch of the January 4th alignment.



"I sure hope the group likes this kale and quinoa salad...."
Photo credit: Tom Totton.

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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 = \$20 Family = \$25

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The Astronomical Unit

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March 2019

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1 GENERAL MEETING 7PM	2
3	4	5	6 MONROE SCHOOL 4:30PM	7 EL CAMINO 4:30PM SB CHARTER 5:30PM	8	9 PLANNING MEETING 5PM STAR PARTY 7PM SBMNH
10 DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME BEGINS	11 TECH TALK KZSB (AM 1290) 9-10 AM	12 CAMINO REAL MARKETPLACE 7PM	13	14 HOLLISTER SCHOOL 5PM	15 WESTMONT COLLEGE 7PM	16
17	18	19	20 VERNAL EQUINOX!	21	22	23
24	25 TECH TALK KZSB (AM 1290) 9-10 AM	26	27	28	29	30 RITZ-CARLTON BACARA SETUP 6 PM
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