



AU AstroNews

The Newsletter of the Astronomical Unit

July 2024

Sponsored by the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History



In an early mirror-making workshop at the Broder Building, Tim Crawford is shown working on a 10" mirror.

OUTREACH SUMMARY

May gray and June gloom wiped out numerous outreaches, but since the last newsletter, certified AU volunteers Brandy Ackerman, Tim Crawford, Tessa Flanagan, David Larson, Pat & Chuck McPartlin, Bruce Murdock, Edgar Ocampo, Tom Whittemore, Jerry Wilson, and Andre Yew showed cool stuff in the sky to **542** people, helped by Jen Ito, Ken Kihlstrom, and Ila Komasa.

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 FOR JULY

Thursday, July 4, setup 8 PM

Star Party at the Ritz-Carlton Bacara, on the blufftop lawn by the Angel Oak restaurant. **If you haven't been to a Bacara event before, contact Chuck for instructions.**

FRIDAY, JULY 5

This month we have a potluck instead of the monthly meeting.

SATURDAY, JULY 6, SETUP 8 PM

Slide show and telescopes for campers at Cachuma Lake. We set up in the field at Dakota Plains.

TUESDAY, JULY 9, SETUP 7 PM

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

THURSDAY, JULY 11, SETUP 8 PM

Telescopes for campers at Carpinteria State Beach. We set up on the sidewalk towards the beach from the entry kiosk.

FRIDAY, JULY 12, SETUP 8 PM

Telescopes for campers at El Capitan State Beach, in the day use parking lot.

SATURDAY, JULY 13, 4:30 PM

AU monthly planning meeting on Zoom. Watch your email for the link. Send any items you want on the agenda to Andy.

SATURDAY, JULY 13, SETUP 7:30 PM

Monthly Public Star Party at SBMNH, next to Palmer Observatory, 8:30 to 10 PM.

FRIDAY, JULY 19, SETUP 8 PM

Monthly Public Telescope Night at Westmont, at their Keck Observatory, next to the athletic fields.

SATURDAY, JULY 20, SETUP 8 PM

Slide show and telescopes for campers at Cachuma Lake. We set up in the field at Dakota Plains.

SUNDAY, JULY 21, SETUP 8 PM

Telescopes for Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church, 909 N La Cumbre Rd. Setup in the south end of their parking lot.

FRIDAY, JULY 26, SETUP 8 PM

Telescopes for campers at El Capitan State Beach, in the day use parking lot.

SATURDAY, JULY 27, SETUP 8 PM

Slide show and telescopes for campers at Cachuma Lake. We set up in the field at Dakota Plains.

AN UPDATE ON THE MIRROR-MAKING WORKSHOP....

Tim Crawford

Greetings from the workshop! Our mirror class, originally created by our own Tom Whittemore, is now in its twentieth year! It seems like just yesterday we were at the Broder Building gathering for our first encounter with grinding a working mirror to be integrated into a hand-crafted Newtonian-type telescope. For many of us these are Dobsonian scopes utilizing John Dobson's famous, simple and elegantly-designed scopes. Our goal is to keep you abreast of the most current techniques which Amateur Telescope Makers (ATMs) can offer. Instead, though, I wanted you to know a little more of what happened to Tom's Workshop.

After COVID, we lost the venue at the Museum where we met each Tuesday night from 7:30-9 pm where we had an average of about 6-8 people each week. We helped many members of the local community to fix or use their scopes as well. Now, Jerry Wilson and Tom Totton host a Zoom meeting on Tuesday nights. Present and past members meet here to do more than just learn mirror making techniques. We have members from all over: Paso Robles, Rio Vista, Phoenix. Mike Chibnik is now hosting his own monthly meetings (Windy Skies Observers) that are much like our general meetings with a flair for the workshop. Below is a photo of the name plate of my 10" scope which was built at some of the first workshops.



The new workshop now hosts a variety of new interests: ZWO cameras and Seestar robotic scopes. Other interests include diagnosing problems with tracking mounts, telescope designs, or image processing are addressed now. Henk Aling is making a tracking platform. Chuck Watson has 3D-printed his own tube for a 6" mirror he has crafted! It has blossomed into a valuable resource for ATMs or Astronomy aficionados in all phases of the field. Another example of this benefit is new processing softwares (like Blur X Terminator) coming out now that are making the image processing taking leaps forward. Some of the members' images are just plain gorgeous! You may see some of them in the near future on our bookmarks, including Jerry Wilson's current one.

At outreaches people often ask me, "How long did it take to build your scope?" I tell them that I once bought a kit from Douglas Telescopes in downtown Santa Barbara for \$20! It included an 8" Pyrex blank, a plate glass tool, grits and polishing compounds, and I bought a book, "Making Your Own Telescope" by Allyn J. Thompson. I set up my work table in a garage (55 gal. drum) and opened the first page of Thompson's book. I had no idea how to proceed!

Thirty something years later after joining the AU, at one of the general meetings, Tom Whittemore (who had recently moved to Santa Barbara) stood up and asked if anyone was interested in making a telescope mirror. That same mirror I bought some 50+ years ago is now housed in this Dob shown below. Tom helped me finish it last summer, 2023!



Thank you Tom for bringing this workshop to us along with the lessons you originally taught of “how to craft a reflecting telescope mirror.” You had no idea how far the workshop would come or how it would blossom!

ARTS CORNER

*Teach me your mood, O patient stars!
Who climb each night the ancient sky,
Leaving on space no shade, no scars,
No trace of age, no fear to die.*

*Ralph Waldo Emerson,
“Fragments on Nature and Life, Nature”*

SBAU MERCHANDISE SALE

SBAU branded long and short sleeved shirts, hats, sweatshirts, blankets, coffee mugs, and tote bags will be on sale at the September meeting. See the AU website for photos, details, and pricing. Get them now before they’re gone! Cash or checks only.

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JULY 2024						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2	3	4 RITZ-CARLTON BACARA 8PM	5 NEW MOON SBAU POTLUCK 5PM	6 CACHUMA LAKE 8PM
7	8	9 CAMINO REAL MARKETPLACE 7PM	10	11 CARPINTERIA STATE BEACH 8PM	12 EL CAPITAN STATE BEACH 8PM	13 FQ MOON ZOOM PLANNING MEETING 4:30PM STAR PARTY 7:30PM
14	15	16	17	18	19 WESTMONT PUBLIC STAR PARTY 8PM	20 CACHUMA LAKE 8PM
21 FULL MOON TRINITY LUTHERAN 8PM	22	23	24	25	26 EL CAPITAN STATE BEACH 8PM	27 CACHUMA LAKE 8PM
28 LQ Moon	29	30	31			