



AU AstroNews

The Newsletter of the Astronomical Unit

November 2025

Sponsored by the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History



Setting up for a "Second Saturday" public viewing at the SBMNH. Photo: Tom Totton.

SBAU ELECTION

Our annual election is coming up on December 5. If you are interested in serving as an officer in the club, contact Vice President Ronnie Herron at [<brherron@gmail.com>](mailto:brherron@gmail.com) Positions and their duties are detailed on the SBAU web page.

OUTREACH SUMMARY

Since the last newsletter, certified SBAU/SBMNH volunteers Brandy Ackerman, Andy Allen, Tim Crawford, Tessa Flanagan, Brian Green, Ronnie Herron, Sean Kelly, Ila Jade Komasa & Quasars, David Larson, Pat & Chuck McPartlin, Janet & Martin Meza, Ron Nixon, Michael Robertson, Charles Schueler, Tom Totton, Chuck Watson, Tom Whittemore, Lee Wilkerson, Pat Forgey & Jerry Wilson, Greg Wittmann, and Andre Yew showed the sky to **1095** viewers, helped by David Feinberg, Jen Gee, Mike Jacoby, Ken Kihlstrom, Kyle Luker, and Rachel Street.

OUTREACH EVENTS FOR NOVEMBER

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>](mailto:rcoulter@sbnature2.org). It's quick and painless.

School events are ramping up. Please come out and help if you can - it's a lot of fun showing Saturn to students.

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 2, 2 AM - Daylight Saving Time ends, Fall Back one hour.

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 4, SETUP 7 PM

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

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 5, SETUP 5 PM

Telescopes for Science Night at Santa Barbara Community Academy, 850 Portesuello Avenue. We set up by the field to the S of the main building, with entrance off of Portesuello.

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 6, SETUP 4:30 PM

Telescopes for Science Night at Foothill School, 711 Ribera Drive in Goleta. We set up on the playground blacktop, entering through a gate off Cathedral Oaks Road at the NW corner of the campus. Pizza for volunteers.

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 7, 6 PM

AU monthly meeting in Farrand Hall at SBMNH. SBAU merchandise sales at 6 PM. Quick planetarium show at 6:30, AU business meeting at 7, then at 7:30, our speaker will be Dr. Phil Korngut, Instrument Scientist for NASA's SPHEREx mission

to map the cosmos. **We need to be out of Farrand by 9 PM.** This will be a hybrid meeting, also on Zoom. Watch your email or find the link on the SBAU web page.

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 8, 4 PM

AU monthly planning meeting on Zoom. Watch your email for the link.

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 8, SETUP 6 PM

Monthly Public Star Party at SBMNH, next to Palmer Observatory, 7 to 10 PM.

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 10, SETUP 5 PM

Telescopes for Science Night at Coastline Christian Academy in Goleta at 5950 Cathedral Oaks.

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 13, SETUP 5:15 PM

Telescopes for Astronomy Night at Peabody Charter School, 3018 Calle Noguera. We enter through a gate on the SW side of campus, off Calle Granada.

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 15, SETUP 5 PM

Telescopes for an Astronomy Night at Midland School, 5100 Figueroa Mountain Road in Los Olivos. Dinner for volunteers at 6. Dark skies!

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 18, SETUP 5 PM

Telescopes for an Astronomy Night at Goleta Valley Junior High, 6100 Stow Canyon Road in Goleta. We set up on the west side of campus.

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 20, SETUP 5 PM

Telescopes for Hope School, 3970A La Colina Road. We enter through a gate at the end of their parking lot to set up on the blacktop playground.

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 21, SETUP 5 PM

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

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 22, SETUP 5 PM

Telescopes for Cub Scout Pack 36, in the uppermost parking lot of Santa Barbara Community Church on the west side of 1002 Cieneguitas Road in Santa Barbara.

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 28, SETUP 4 PM

Telescopes for a potluck dinner and Astronomy Night at the Bulito Beach cabana in Hollister Ranch, on the coast past Gaviota State Beach. **We will need to supply a list of names for entry through their security kiosk, so let Chuck know at <macpuzl@west.net> if you plan to attend.** This event is only open to SBAU volunteers who have undergone the SBMNH background check, and their guests.

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Jerry Wilson

We have a number of comets in the sky this fall, including Lemmon, Swan, and the infamous 3I/ATLAS. Having two bright comets visible in the sky around the same time is a rare cosmic treat. During the event, Comet Lemmon (C/2025 A6) will pass about 56 million miles (90 million kilometers) from Earth, while Comet Swan (C/2025 R2) will soar even closer, at roughly 24 million miles (39 million km). Each was expected to peak in brightness between Oct. 20 and Oct. 21.

Comet C/2025 A6 (Lemmon) was discovered in January 2025 and has been steadily brightening as it soars through the inner solar system. Lemmon is visible in a pair of binoculars or small telescopes in the southwestern evening sky after sunset, slowly getting lower each night as it moves southeast.

Comet C/2025 R2 (SWAN) was discovered in September 2025 by the Solar and Heliospheric Observatory's SWAN instrument. It is visible in small telescopes fairly high in the south as it moves eastward from Aquarius into Pisces.

Comet C/2025 N1 (ATLAS) later named 3I/ATLAS was discovered on July 1, 2025. The '3I' designation means it is the third interstellar comet.

As it turns out, it may be observations from Mars, not Earth, that give us our closest look at the comet. 3I/ATLAS came as close as around 18.6 million miles (30 million kilometers) from Mars, on October 3, 2025, while it was around 168 million miles (270 million km) from Earth. That means ESA spacecraft

orbiting Mars are in play. At that time, both Mars Express and the ExoMars Trace Gas Orbiter (TGO) spacecraft were making observations. Attempts to obtain images of the object using the High Resolution Stereo Camera (HRSC) onboard Mars Express, and also with the Color and Stereo Surface Imaging System (CaSSIS) onboard TGO are being made. Stay tuned for results.

3I/ATLAS, as indicated by detailed spectroscopic observation and its hyperbolic or open orbit, is definitely a visitor from outside our solar system. Current thinking is that it formed in the thick disk portion of the Milky Way (we are in the thin disk region) nearer the core. Its chemical makeup is different than usual for home grown comets. For details, please see our discussion of the spectral data at "SBAU Astro hour for October 20 on YouTube".

SBAU MEMBER HOLIDAY PARTY

December 11, 2025

Hilton Garden Inn, Goleta CA

\$45.00 per person

5PM-9PM

White Elephant Gift Exchange

Delicious food and great fun

RSVP by 12/01/2025 to Events@SBAU.org

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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 rate: \$20

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NOVEMBER 2025						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1 DST ENDS AT 2AM
2	3	4 CAMINO REAL MARKETPLACE 7PM	5 FULL MOON SB COMMUNITY ACADEMY 5PM	6 FOOTHILL SCHOOL 4:30PM	7 GENERAL MEETING 6PM	8 PLANNING MEETING 4PM STAR PARTY SETUP 6PM
9	10 COASTLINE CHRISTIAN ACADEMY 5PM	11 LQ MOON	12	13 PEABODY CHARTER 5:15PM	14	15 MIDLAND SCHOOL 5PM
16	17	18 GOLETA VALLEY JH 5PM	19 NEW MOON	20 HOPE SCHOOL 5PM	21 WESTMONT 5PM	22 CUB SCOUTS 5PM
23/30	24	25	26	27 FQ MOON	28 HOLLISTER RANCH 4PM	29