

7-12 like no one else.

Anacapa's Near Space Balloon Launch is a Success

Students capture photos and environmental data from 90,000 feet above Earth's surface



AAHAB-1 reached an altitude greater than 90,000 feet overlooking the Central Coast, San Luis Obispo Bay and the Pismo Dunes.

- See more photos in the [Facebook album](#).
- [Letter of congratulations](#) to ANSEC crew from teacher Levi Maaia
- [Download a pdf of the students' PowerPoint flight summary with environmental data.](#)

Media Coverage

- S.B. News-Press: [Students explore atmosphere with balloon-equipped camera](#)
- S.B. Independent: [Anacapa School Skirts the Stratosphere](#)
- KCLU Public Radio: [Lance Orozco's radio feature story](#)
- S.B. EdHat: [Anacapa School's Launch a Success](#)
- Noozhawk: [Anacapa School Project Soars to Stratospheric Heights — Then Lands Safely](#)

MAY 23, 2011 — SANTA BARBARA, CALIF.

The Anacapa School's Near Space Exploration Club (ANSEC) successfully recovered its high-altitude balloon after a weekend flight, which returned stunning photos and environmental data from the Earth's upper atmosphere.

On Saturday, May 21, 2011, at 9:43 a.m., ANSEC members Julio Bernal, Aubrey Cazabat, Christian Eckert and Connor Proctor along with faculty advisor Levi Maaia launched the club's first near space balloon probe, AAHAB-1, from a site east of Paso Robles in the small community of Shandon, Calif. The group's mission was to gather photos and environmental data as the balloon passed through the stratosphere.

After the probe's two-hour and 10-minute flight over the California Central Coast, the team recovered the payload in rural Kings County, Calif., 20 miles northeast of the launch site.

Anacapa School empowers students to excel at critical thinking, creativity, integrity and compassion through academic and experiential learning in a close-knit, diverse community.



The ANSEC team calculated the balloon's lift in order to ensure the craft would climb quickly.

on the camera window, which can be seen in a few of the higher level shots," said senior Connor Proctor. "Other than that, all of our critical systems worked flawlessly."

Data from the flight, including photos, a map of the flight path and environmental data, can be found at the school's Web site www.anacapaschool.org.

Anacapa School is an independent, co-educational, WASC-accredited, college preparatory day school for junior high and high school students in grades 7-12. Founded in 1981 by Headmaster Gordon Sichi, Anacapa enjoys the best student-teacher ratio of any school, public or private, in Santa Barbara at its historic campus located in the heart of the Santa Barbara civic center.

"We worked so hard on this project," said senior Aubrey Cazabat. "It was such an amazing feeling to see the capsule back on the ground and to know that we had done it!"

From the top of the balloon's 91,122-foot ascent above 99 percent of the Earth's atmosphere, the camera had a view as far as 400 miles in all directions under a black, near space sky. The capsule's GPS radio tracking signal was heard by amateur radio stations as far away as San Diego and Mendocino Counties.

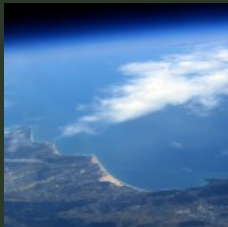
After beginning this project in the late fall, the Anacapa students quickly learned that they had a steep learning curve ahead as they tackled challenges from wind and flight path prediction to engineering a sturdy but lightweight capsule that could survive brutally cold conditions and hurricane-force winds. Despite these hurdles, the club achieved all of its goals and retrieved extensive environmental data, including temperature, humidity, barometric pressure and radiation exposure levels, along with stunning photos of Earth's curved surface.

"We picked up some ice



Map data courtesy CUSF, aprs.fi and © 2011 Google

Click below for high-quality 300 dpi image files for printing:



This entry was posted on May 23, 2011.



Anacapa School
814 Santa Barbara Street
Santa Barbara, CA 93101