
THE FOCAL POINT

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The Newsletter of the Atlanta Astronomy Club

February 1991

CLUB CALENDAR

Next Meeting: Friday, February 8, 1991 at 7:30 P.M. at Fernbank Science Center. **NOTE:** The meeting time and place are *not* misprinted here!!

Program: This month's program is sponsored by Fernbank Science Center and features Soviet Cosmonaut, Georgy Grechko. Dr. Grechko will present a slide program entitled "The Present and Future of the Soviet Space Program."

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The Focal Point is published monthly during the academic year by the Atlanta Astronomy Club, Inc. The AAC is a non-profit organization dedicated to the advancement of amateur astronomy. Meetings are held on the third Friday of each month (the second Friday in December) at the Bradley Observatory on the Agnes Scott College campus. Dues are \$35 annually and include a subscription to *Sky & Telescope* magazine and use of the observatory in Villa Rica.

Submissions: Article submissions are welcome and encouraged. Please deliver to the editor for consideration. Electronic submissions are accepted at beow@mike@gatech.edu. The submission deadline for the next issue is *March 1*.

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SPECIAL UPDATE!!

No, the Atlanta Astronomy Club hasn't declared war on Iraq. But an item almost as important has caused a special emergency issue of the newsletter to be prepared on very short notice. You may have read the masthead describing the next program. It is rare to get to hear a astronaut at all, much less a Soviet one. So when Fernbank invited the AAC to hear a cosmonaut, we couldn't turn them down. Even if it meant having the meeting a week early. There will be NO meeting on the third Friday of February. This meeting on the second Friday will replace it.

Here is an excerpt from the press release describing Dr. Grechko.

One of the Soviet Union's leading spacecraft designers, Dr. Georgy Grechko is a veteran of three spaceflights and has spent a total of over 134 days in space [*Wow! - Ed.*]. He is well known for his sense of humor, having reported UFOs in space during the flight of Salyut 6, and he holds the distinction of being the first grandfather in space.

The program is in the Fernbank Planetarium at 7:30 P.M., however I would suggest that you arrive about 15 minutes before that to get a choice seat. After the program, the Astronomy Club members are invited to watch the planetarium show "Birth of the Cosmos". Our usual business meeting and refreshments will be held in a Fernbank classroom. If the weather is clear, the observatory will be open for public viewing. Programs don't get too much better than this, so don't miss it!

UPCOMING ANNOUNCEMENTS

The next newsletter will contain our updated membership list, several articles by our members, and a new column which I hope will become a regular feature. *Recent Observations* is the name, observations by members is the game. Members like to know what is going out there in the observing world. That is, when it isn't cloudy 3 weeks out of the month. Please take time to jot down some notes on a post card or letter and send them to me. It is surprising to see how much observing really goes on in our club.

NEW COMET DISCOVERED

This is an improved ephemeris for Comet Arai (1991b). Data is taken from IAU Circular 5170. Positions are for 0 hours UT on the dates given and are for equinox 2000.0. Right ascension and declination are given in hours-minutes-decimal-minutes and degrees-minutes form.

Improved orbital elements for equinox 1950:

T = 1990 Dec 11.070 ET q = 1.43596 AU
Peri. = 337.762 Node = 114.841 Incl. = 71.119

DATE	R.A.	DEC	DIS EA	DIS SU	MAG
2/01	7:25.3	57:50	0.75	1.61	11.5
2/02	7:21.1	58:42	0.77	1.62	11.5
2/03	7:17.0	59:30	0.78	1.62	11.6
2/04	7:13.0	60:16	0.80	1.63	11.7
2/05	7:09.0	60:58	0.82	1.64	11.7
2/06	7:05.1	61:38	0.84	1.64	11.8
2/07	7:01.3	62:15	0.85	1.65	11.9
2/08	6:57.5	62:49	0.87	1.66	11.9
2/09	6:53.9	63:21	0.89	1.66	12.0
2/10	6:50.4	63:51	0.91	1.67	12.0
2/11	6:46.9	64:19	0.93	1.68	12.1
2/12	6:43.6	64:45	0.95	1.68	12.2
2/13	6:40.5	65:10	0.97	1.69	12.2
2/14	6:37.4	65:32	0.99	1.70	12.3
2/15	6:34.5	65:53	1.01	1.71	12.4
2/16	6:31.7	66:13	1.03	1.71	12.4
2/17	6:29.1	66:32	1.05	1.72	12.5

EDITOR'S REGRETS

My sincere apologies to those who were misled by my error in the last newsletter. The date was only 1 year and 3 days off.



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