
The FOCAL POINT

Newsletter of the Atlanta Astronomy Club, Inc.
Volume V, Number XI July 1993

THIS MONTH'S PROGRAM

This month's meeting will be held at 8:00 p.m., Friday, July 16th, in the air-conditioned comfort of Agnes Scott College's Bradley Observatory! Yes, that's right, according to the Steve Gilbreath, Program Chairman, Bradley now has air! Pretty cool, eh?

The Program will be a Team Trivia Contest in which all members can participate. So dust off your astronomy books and almanacs and get ready! And remember, no wagering!

AT THE EYEPIECE Bud Rosser

Twilight...to the rest of the world it is a time of winding down, a time symbolic of an ending. In that sense, July is the approaching twilight of our Club's annual cycle. New officers take over in September. If I may reflect (twilight is a traditional time to reflect upon one's daily activities,) I am moved by the quality of the leadership I have worked with in the past two years.

Your Club officers have performed well, and their spirit and dedication have brought us to the highest level of activity and participation I have witnessed in the past ten years. We are more accessible to the public and they to us. We have larger and larger groups at the observatory. We have a computer bulletin board. We have larger average attendance. We have a professional looking newsletter. We have a wide range of programs, we seem to appeal to a wider range of amateur astronomers, and we seem to have more fun!

As I lay aside the mantle of office, I look forward to having more fun and spending even more time with my telescope and my friends here at the AAC. I want to take more time with new members and public observing needs. I want to become more involved with membership growth and liaison with other clubs in the southeast.

To Steve, Bill, Hal, Eugenia and Dave...please accept my public thanks for your efforts that have brought us to this point. To the slate of new officers, please accept my challenge to look at this approaching twilight as astronomers do...as the time before the REAL fun begins!

PERSEID METEOR STORM!? William Snell

Experts believe there is a strong possibility that the Perseid meteor shower may briefly become a storm next month. The parent comet, Swift-Tuttle, recently passed through the inner solar system and could be accompanied by large amounts of dust and rock. In 1992 some observers in Japan reported hourly counts of 300 plus, instead of the usual 50-60. If the shower meets or exceeds these rates this year it will probably do so for only a few hours or less. Thus geographical location is important; according to the August issue of *Sky and Telescope*, Asia and Europe seem favored for a storm sometime on the night of August 11-12 (Wednesday night, Thursday morning.)

However, the predictions are uncertain. In Atlanta astronomical twilight ends at 10:00 p.m. on August 11 and the moon rises about 1:37 a.m. on the 12th. This observing window could be our best opportunity to witness a meteor storm, but be ready to observe on every clear night that week. The Perseid meteor shower is strong for several days before and after peak.

This year should also be a better than average opportunity to photograph a meteor too! Please check the AAC Computer BBS or the telephone hotline for late breaking developments.

NEW LOCK ON THE OBSERVATORY

The combination padlock on the door to the observatory has been replaced. Please call the Observing Chairman for the new combination.

The combinations for both the gate and the cabinet remain unchanged.

TRIVIA

The answer to June's Trivia question: In 1971 a meteorite crashed into a house in Wethersfield, Connecticut. In 1982 another house a few miles away in the same town was also struck by a meteorite!

This month's trivia: What part of the sky appears in the Leonid meteor photograph at the top of page 97 of the August 1993 issue of *Sky and Telescope*?

The *Focal Point* is published monthly by the Atlanta Astronomy Club, Inc., 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 of Agnes Scott College in Decatur, Georgia.

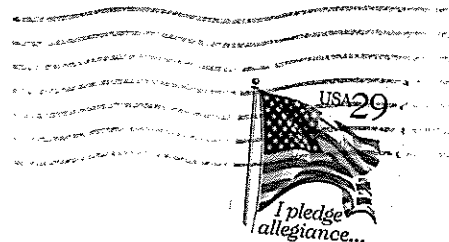
For up-to-date information on Club programs and activities please call the AAC's telephone hot-line at (404) 621-2661 or log in to the Club's Computer BBS at (404) 455-3089.

Membership: \$20 annually for families and \$10 for students. Membership includes a subscription to the Astronomical League's *Reflector* newsletter and use of the Club's observatory in Villa Rica, Georgia. Optional subscriptions to *Sky & Telescope* and *Astronomy Magazine* are available for \$20 and \$16 per year, respectively.

Article submissions are strongly encouraged; please deliver to the editor for consideration. The submission deadline for the August 1993 issue of the *Focal Point* is August 4th. Permission is granted to duplicate and redistribute in a non-profit manner, in part or whole, provided credit is given to the authors, the Club and this publication. Please call the editor at (404) 294-6055 for more information.

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First Class

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