

The Focal Point

The Atlanta Astronomy Club
Established 1947

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July 1998

Editor: Peter Macumber

General Meeting June 19th, 1998

by Willie Bower, Recording Secretary

Philip Sacco presented a new general meeting format in which committee chairpersons will submit updates and/or activities to the corresponding secretary for publication in the Focal Point. Only late breaking news or brief announcements will be made at the general meeting which will make for a more concise "get to the speaker" kind of meeting.

Committee News: Alex Langoussis distributed coupons to the members for one free admission to the Fernbank Planetarium with the purchase of one at regular price. Peter Macumber announced that Focal Point articles be received by the weekend prior to the first of the month to allow for more timely distribution. He also announced plans to distribute the Focal Point electronically to those who receive E-mail. This move will save the save substantially in postage and paper expense.

Orientations have been planned for July 18th and August 29th at Villa Rica. Awards were given to Joanne Cirincione and Keith Burns for completion of the Astronomical Leagues' Lunar List. Of special note, Keith Burns received certificate number 100. Phil Bracken handed out directions to "Sunset Ridge", a proposed dark skies site between Amicalola Falls and Dahlonega. If interested E-mail Phil at philb@mindspring.com. Ken Poshedly announced the 51st ALPO Convention to be held at Fernbank July 9-11th. Also, Ken announced the proposed dates for the 1999 Peach State Star Gaze are April 15-18th. And finally in his installment of Astronomy Today, Philip Sacco demonstrated the benefits of the "Reform Calendar". The calendar devised by Ralph Bridge consists of 360 days (30 days per month) with the extra five days (to complete the solar cycle) as a week long holiday in the middle of the year (Sounds good to me). You can receive one of these calendars by completing Phil Sacco's modified Lunar List that is aptly named for it's conceiver - The Lunatic List.

New Business: Philip Sacco announced that a poll/questionnaire would be distributed with the next Focal Point to access the club members views of the clubs strengths and weaknesses. Phil Bracken mentioned a proposed club project of making a 25 inches portable Dobsonian type telescope that could be used at many club functions. Chrissy Mondell announced the formation of a women's auxiliary for the AAC. If interested she can be contacted at ppsacco@mindspring.com. Ralph Bowman was recognized for he very generous donation of ten 10 inch equatorial mounts to the club to be used for fund raising projects. Eugenia Abbey announced a special guest speaker, Davis Malin of astrophotography fame will be giving a talk at Fernbank August 6th. Lenny Abbey honored with a brief obituary the life and work of William Calder, the founder of the Atlanta Astronomy Club, who recently passed. Lastly, Rich Jakiel presented our guest speaker, Mel Bartels who talked to the members about "Future Trends in Amateur Astronomy".

Survey

by Eugenia Abbey, Survey Committee Chair

The center of this month's issue of the Focal Point consists of a short Member Survey printed on blue paper. This should take less than 5 minutes to complete, fold and staple to be mailed. The last page will form the envelope when folded. It is already pre-addressed and stamped! Completion is easy but SO important to the Club. Share your preferences and opinions with the Club leadership. The Survey will give the officers vital information as they plan for the next few years. The deadline for returned Surveys is **July 25, 1998**. We encourage you to mail them back or bring them to the July club meeting. Results will be announced in August. Why not complete the survey now!

CHEROKEE COUNTY ASTRONOMY MOUNTAIN

PLANNING SESSION

by Phil Bracken, Dark-Site Observatory Committee Chair

The next meeting of the people interested in building an astronomical facility in Cherokee County will be on **Monday July 13, at 7:00 PM**. It will be at the Cherokee Co. Chamber of Commerce building, which is on the right side about half of a mile west from Exit #7, off I-575. Anyone who is interested in finding out what is happening or who may be able to help in its planning and development, is encouraged to come.

LADIES OF THE NIGHT...SKY MEETING

by Chrissy Mondell

Hi Gals,

I will be having a get together at my house on **Monday, July 20th** starting at around 6:30 P.M. All the Ladies of the AAC are welcome to attend.. It will be POT LUCK, anything you bring is fine.. I'd appreciate a RSVP to either myself (404) 296-6332 or ppsacco@mindspring.com, or to Joanne Cirincione before 6:00 at jcirincione@na.ko.com. or to Deb Caruso wintercrcl@aol.com or call (770) 730-9382.

We'd like to make it as easy as possible for the ladies of the club to get together and say hello so please come and feel free to call me if there is anything you'd like to ask about..

So Guys, please give this notice to the significant other, and PLEASE watch the kids. Ladies come on down...please :0)

Hope to see ya's Chrissy :0)

(See directions inside)

From the Oval Office

by Philip Sacco

Well, the summer heat is on, and so are the great activities of the AAC!

Questionnaire

I would like to call your attention to the questionnaire we have sent to all our members in this month's Focal Point. It has been some time since the club polled the membership to find out the level of your experience and knowledge in things in astronomical and what types of activities you would like to find available to you in the club. Please take a minute and fill out the questionnaire and put it in the mailbox. We have included postage on it so please do send it to us as we will use it as guidance for our upcoming year and beyond. Please bear in mind that we are sending out over 300 of these in addition to the newsletter this month, and the postage adds up. Remember- this is YOUR club, and this is your opportunity to take part and shape the future activities made available to you.

Lunar Challenge

As you may have heard sometime in the past year while I was your Observing Vice President, the Astronomical League has many wonderful observing clubs you may join by completing various lists of objects to be observed. As your membership to the Astronomical League is a benefit you have as a member of the AAC, it costs you nothing additional to participate in one of these 'viewing clubs' and receive the notoriety and experience that comes with completing one of these programs. As we now have four certified Lunatics in the AAC (and two more pending if I understand Keith correctly) out of the national total of a mere 100, I thought you may want a little something different to try cutting your 'eye teeth' on to gain some experience with your new hobby. You will find enclosed in this month's Focal Point the July monthly Lunar Challenge. The entire program will course thru the entire year. It does include the Astronomical League's entire Lunar Survey as well as some choice objects and facts for consideration.

As I have met a good number of our new members in this past year, and I know that you are for the most part all brand new to the exploration of the heavens, this Lunar Challenge will get you to Zombie status in no time. You can do it from your back yard too, so there is no need to hunt a dark site somewhere across the state. I hope you will all try it out, and join the growing ranks of Lunatics!

Sponsorship

As any of you that have been out to the club's observatory in the past year know, there is a lot of activity out there, and this year will see even greater improvements. Part of the improvements includes the construction of several convertible bench/picnic tables. Peter Macumber constructed one for our club's use last year, and it is VERY useful and very well made of weatherproofed wood.

I discussed this matter with Peter, and he has agreed to construct the needed benches if we can get them sponsored by the membership, hence my Challenge:

I Challenge any person/s to match my \$100 for the sponsorship of a bench/table (A number of you can get together and go in on one if you want....). For each \$100 sponsorship a convertible bench/table will be constructed for use at the club's observatory and will have installed on it a brass name plate naming you as the sponsoring member!

I will be presenting my \$100 to the club at the July meeting and at that time I will Challenge any of you to match me! I hope you will all be there to join in the spirit of the thing....

New Business

In the last month, we have had some exciting developments on the Dark Site front. If you haven't heard yet, the Forest Service has shown the AAC several sites for our consideration as viewing sites in North Georgia on Forest Service Property. We have selected one in particular and christened it "Sunset Ridge"(once you see the sunset up there you will understand why....). The club has been given the go ahead to begin using the site for observing and when the proper paper work is completed we hope to receive a land grant for the property.

Here's the catch- We can't develop the land for an observatory. Although we haven't given up on finding a dark site upon which to build another observatory, a new idea has come up. For your consideration during the New Business portion of the July meeting, we will have open floor discussion on the possibilities of the AAC purchasing a large aperture portable telescope. This will enable us to bring a large aperture scope to the remote sites we are currently using as well as augment the facility at Villa Rica on special occasions or any other special event we may hold. There has been a committee formed to consider our options, and you can hear their report at the July meeting. Your comments will be essential for the club to make a wise decision for it's membership. Please bear in mind that the club has funds set aside for dark site considerations, and these funds will be used when the club feels it has made it's decision. It is up to YOU to speak up on this matter and help in making wise decision, one that you will be happy with.

Astronomy Today- A Reformed Calendar

Welllll.....now for something a little different. How would you like a Three Day weekend? How about New Years Eve always on a Saturday night? How about Christmas and New Years in the same week to make vacations easier to get? How would you feel about a 5 day national holiday around the Fourth of July?!

Got our interest, Huh?! Well a gentleman by the name of Ralph Bridge came up with a proposed new calendar for use beginning in the year 2000. It takes care of the erratically numbered days per month, superstitious days, and plenty more. You can find a little article on it in your February "Reflector" from the Astronomical League, page 17. It is based on the reappearance of the new moon each month. Call Ralph at (408) 252-7073 and ask him about it. He'll be happy to send you one. For that matter, complete the Lunar Challenge this year and I'll give you one! Anyway, If you really want the poop on it come to the meeting and ask me about it in July....I'll have one to show you if you missed the meeting in June.

MX

MOON SO SHINY,
MOON SO BRIGHT,
LIGHTING THE PATH
TO COSMIC DELIGHTS.

Frank DePinto

ATM Groove

by Gil Shillcutt

Last Month's meeting saw the conclusion of the "Barn Door Tracker" topic, so this month the ATM Special Interest Group will be taking off in a new direction. And an unexpected direction it is.

For those of you who weren't in attendance last month, a couple of announcements were made. We'll continue to pursue telescope making and projects. Tracy Wilson has graciously agreed to pick up this segment of the special interest group. I'll continue to chair the group, but for traditional ATM activities, Tracy will set the tone going forward.

The second announcement is that we'll be starting a new special interest group, the Astro-Imaging group. Like the ATM portion of the group, we will cover topics of interest to those that are into capturing images of astronomical objects. The idea is to incorporate all aspects of imaging, including CCD, film astrophotography and, yes Rich, drawing. Topics will run the gamut, from techniques such as polar alignment, to materials and computer processing. This is an extremely rich field with many subtleties, and I'm excited about the possibilities. The AAC has a number of talented imagers, including Tim Puckett, David Hannon, Rich Jakiel, and Emery Hildebrand. There are a lot of us who are just starting out on the path to imaging, and with resources like this, that path can be made shorter and more rewarding.

In other announcements, Dr. Chris DePree has allowed us to use the basement area of the Bradley Observatory for the construction of scopes. This is a temporary arrangement, as the administration at Agnes Scott College may have other plans for the space. In the meantime, we (the ATM group) need to go about securing space where tools, tables and telescope parts can be stored, and where people can go to work on their scopes. There will be more information on this later.

Art Russell donated an 80mm binocular objective to the group. This objective is of short focal length and is well-suited for use as an objective for a finder scope. Please contact me if you are interested in picking up this little jewel.

A couple of months ago, Tom Faber donated an unfigured 8" mirror to the group as well. I found myself unable to work on the mirror, and decided to put it up for group consumption. Willie decided that the 10" mirror he's been working on isn't enough to keep him busy, and decided to take it on. I guess he figures (pun intended) that he doesn't want to put up with any of that sissy pre-figuring stuff, and wants to do it right. The completed mirror will be used as the basis for a scope that the ATM group will be raffling off to fund its projects.

Also, some months ago, Eric Shelton brought up the fact that he has a 12" dob that is in need of completion. Apparently, all the parts are there, but it requires assembly. This scope is intended to be used as a club loaner scope. Anyone out there who wants to take this on will be the first "loanee", and can use the scope for a protracted period of time.

The format of the ATM meetings will change somewhat to accommodate the addition of the special interest group. Projects will continue with the telescope making portion in the basement of the observatory. The "show and tell" portion of the meeting will continue to take place as well, but will trade off months between imaging and telescope making. The theory is that this way, topics will continue to be fresh, and we'll also be providing adequate time on a particular topic to make sure that individuals' projects can be completed before moving on to new projects.

This month I'll be presenting the first of the imaging topics. You've got to start somewhere, and this month's topic will be polar alignment. We'll discuss the finer points of polar alignment, and some of the techniques by which you polar align a scope – and no, we're not talking about just sight-

ing along the RA axis. We'll go over polar scopes, computer-aided alignment and drift alignment. Guess which one is the most accurate.

The meeting will be held, as usual, on the second **Friday** of the month, the **10th of July**, at Agnes Scott's Bradley Observatory. For directions, you can contact me via e-mail at gil.shillcutt@choicepointinc.com or phone at 404-467-1437. Directions are also posted on the AAC web site at: <http://stlsfb.gtri.gatech.edu/astrotxt/atlastro.html>. See you all there!

Please note that beginning in September, the ATM meeting will be moved to the first Friday of the month so that we won't conflict with Dr. DePree's Bradley Observatory Astronomy Lecture series, which is moving to the second Friday of the month.

Pioneering Women

by Deb Caruso

We all recognize the name Herschel. The "Herschel list" contains objects that William Herschel discovered. What many of us don't know is the role his sister played in the making of that list.

Caroline Herschel (1750 - 1848) had a seemingly difficult childhood. Instead of being educated like her brother, she was her mother's housemaid. When she was ten years old she was stricken by Typhus. She fully recovered, however, she would only grow to be 4'3". Facing a life of an old maid, she remained at home with her parents in Germany.

When she was 22 she moved to England to live with her brother, William. William wanted to get her away from their parents (and he needed a maid). He was a musician and made very good money. In his spare time he made telescopes and had a passion for deep-sky observing (comet hunting).

King George III gave William a grant and he quit his job as a musician/director. He made and sold telescopes full-time. Over time Caroline became involved in her brother's business. She spent hours grinding and polishing mirrors to help him out.

At the age of 32 Caroline became William's apprentice. She carried on the business while William was out of town now and then. Because her ability was recognized during these times, King George III gave her a small grant of her own. This is very significant considering where women stood in society during this time in History.

She had many accomplishments. Among them: she detected nebulae and catalogued them, she discovered eight comets, and after William's death she catalogued every discovery her and William had made (the Herschel List). She was an honorary member of the Royal Astronomical Society and of the Irish Royal Academy. She was recognized in her lifetime for her accomplishments. She died at the ripe old age of 98.

Caroline Herschel is one of the many women who made significant contributions to Astronomy. Her work left its mark in the world of Science. She was a pioneer to the field and rightly so.

-Information taken from www.netsrq.com/~dbois/index.html, a paper written by Melissa Nysewander (Class of 1998, Agnes Scott College). Thanks to Jonathan Scott (a very dear friend), researcher and proofreader, for his help!

August Meeting

The special presentation by Dr. Malin will replace the the regular general of the Astronomy Club in August. August 21st will be a business meeting only.

Bradley Notes July 1998

by Chris De Pree

Greetings from Decatur! Summer is a very nice time at Agnes Scott College. The days are a bit more quiet, and there is ample time to reflect and plan for the next year. First, let me say that I hope you will all be able to join us for Ed Albin's talk at the end of this month. Look elsewhere in this issue for dates and times. Ed is an expert on Mars and will give a fascinating presentation. I wanted this month to give you a sneak preview of the lecture schedule that I am preparing for the Open House Lecture Series for 1998-1999, and invite your feedback.

I'm planning on calling the series "Sizing Up the Universe", and the premise is this:

Our understanding of the universe has developed in fits and starts with the astronomical tools that we have had at our disposal. This year, lectures at the Bradley Observatory will trace chronologically the development of the tools of astronomy from our eyes and sextants to telescopes covering every portion of the spectrum. We will also explore the impact of these past, present and future tools on our appreciation of our place in the cosmos.

The following is a list (in order) of the lecture titles that I am envisioning, listed with the month of the talk.

September - Pictures in the Sky: Naked Eye Astronomy Then and Now

October - Of Druids and Priests: Ancient Astronomy and its Tools (Guest Speaker TBA)

November - Sextants and Clocks: Astronomical Tools Before the Telescope

December - A Whole New World: The First Optical Telescopes

February - Say Cheese: Photography and Astronomy

March - Turn on the Radio: Tuning in the Radio Spectrum (I am hoping that Anneila Sargent[CalTech] or Miller Goss [NRAO] will give this talk.)

April - Up, up in the Sky: Satellites and Astronomy

May - At Heaven's Gate: New Technologies for the New Millennium

I hope that you are all enjoying these summer months. Drop me a line at cdepree@ire.agnesscott.edu if you have any comments or questions. And I hope to see you at the Observatory some time soon.

Bradley Open House

Dr. Edward Albin, of the Fernbank Science Center, will give a special summer Open House on the topic of "Exploring Mars at the Millennium" at **7:30 PM, July 24 at the Bradley Observatory**. He will give a 45 minute presentation showing some of the most spectacular images from the recent Mars Pathfinder and Mars Global Surveyor missions. Dr. Albin specializes in planetary geology, and the study of Mars. His presentation will be followed by questions and a reception.

You are all especially invited to this special summer session!

Christopher G. De Pree (404) 638-6266 Office

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141 East College Avenue

Agnes Scott College

Decatur, GA 30030

Fernbank Science Center and the Atlanta Astronomy Club Co-Host Visit by David Malin

Mark your calendars for a special event on **Thursday, August 6**, when Fernbank Science Center and the Atlanta Astronomy Club co-host a presentation by Dr. David Malin, the world's foremost authority on astrophotography. You may have seen some of Dr. Malin's work in *Sky and Telescope* and *Astronomy* magazines.

Now you will have a chance to meet him in person and hear him lecture on "A Universe of Colors," in the Fernbank Jim Cherry Memorial Planetarium. Dr. Malin will show us some of his superb photographs and discuss his special methods of making a series of unique three-color astronomical photographs using techniques developed over twenty years of experience.

Dr. Malin has worked as a photographic scientist and astronomer at the Anglo-Australian Observatory in New South Wales Australia. He is also Adjunct Professor of Scientific Photography at Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology. He has been at the Epping (Sydney) laboratory since 1975 and uses the front-line instruments of the AAO, the 154" Anglo-Australian Telescope and the 48" UK Schmidt Telescope at Siding Spring in his work.

Dr. Malin has devised many novel ways to extract information from photographs including a technique called unsharp masking where a deliberately blurred positive film copy is superimposed over the original negative to cancel most of the coarse detail in the original and leave the fine detail hidden in the original negative.

All members of the Atlanta Astronomy are invited and encouraged to attend this special presentation in the Fernbank planetarium on August 6 at 8:00 p.m. A private reception for Club members and their guests will be held after the presentation.

Observing Chairman

Keith Burns, Lunar certificate #100

We recently received ten steel piers from Ralph Bowman as a gift to the club. Several of the piers are going to be installed at Villa Rica and other future club sites. Starting this month, we will auction one pier each month for several months. A silent auction will be held at the monthly general meeting. The idea is to start the bidding at \$150.00 and go up from there. Anyone wanting to bid on the pier just write the amount you want to bid down on a sheet of paper along with your name, address, and phone number. The person with the highest bid takes the pier home with them. The money will go for Villa Rica improvements. The piers are made of plate steel and have an adjustable wedge built into them. You can set the angle to match the latitude of your location. You will never have to polar align your scope again or mess with a stupid tripod.

The next deep sky event is to be held at Cornelius-Moore Field located halfway between Rockmart and Cedartown. The start time for the event is dusk. Directions and information on the site are below.

If you are looking for information on any AL observing program, contact me at (H)770-427-1475 or via email at Keith_Burns@Mailexcite.com.

Anyone having completed an observing program can submit your observations to me 1) in person 2) by email 3) or regular mail to Keith Burns 3740 Burnt Hickory Rd Marietta, Georgia 30064. The best part about this job is to see someone complete an observing program.

I've got to believe that there are more than four lunatics in this club. I know that the moon can be annoying when you are trying to nail that faint fuzzy deep sky object. You have to admit though that it holds some interesting

features and history. Try the lunar program. Join the lunar crowd. We need more lunatics.

Rockmart Directions

From Atlanta

Take I-20 west to exit 12 (Thorton Rd). Turn right at end of off ramp. This is GA 6 which becomes US 278. Proceed on US 278 to the Rockmart city limits. Note that you will pass through the counties of Cobb and Paulding.

From Marietta

Take GA 120 west to US 278. Turn right onto US 278. Proceed on 278 to Rockmart city limits.

From Rockmart

After crossing into the Rockmart city limits you will pass through two traffic lights. At this point the road shrinks down from 4 lanes to 2 lanes. Proceed on US 278 for another 4 to 5 miles. After traveling for 4 miles start looking for a furniture store called Meir's on the right. Also there should be an airport road sign. Turn right onto the first road on the right just after passing the furniture store. Then immediately take a left turn at the fork in the road. You should be on Airport road now. Here again there should be an airport sign. Proceed down airport road for about 9/10 of a mile and through the gate onto airport property. Drive between the hangers and straight ahead out onto the runway. Turn right and proceed (east) down the runway to the end of the runway. We setup in the grassy areas to the sides of the end of the runway. We either setup on the right side(in most cases) or left side (sometimes).

Warnings

- 1) When on the runway watchout for airplanes. They have the right a way.
- 2) Careful of the runway lights on both sides and both ends of the runway.
- 3) Never setup on the runway it's self. Setup only in the grassy areas to the side. While the airport goes dead at dark, you never know when someone might have to make an emergency landing.

Facts you should know.

- 1) This place has good horizons in all directions.
- 2) Rarely does the location fog over.
- 3) Planning on doing photography? Wait until 10:30 pm. The runway lights can be remotely activated by any pilot flying overhead. After 10:30 air traffic disappears and so goes the chance of the runway lights going on.
- 4) The light dome of Rockmart to the east gets smaller after midnight. The parking lot lights of the grocery store are shut off after 11 PM.
- 5) This observing site has the darkest skies of any site this close to Atlanta.
- 6) There's no electric power, warm-up shed, or bathroom on site. The only bathroom is many an assortment of trees.

LADIES OF THE NIGHT...SKY MEETING

Directions to the Mondell Residence:

Take I 285 to the East side of Atlanta

Take Covington Highway exit and go East

Go approx. 1/2 mile east on Covington Hwy to first traffic light (at South Indian Creek.)

Go North(left) on South Indian Creek.

Go approx. 2 miles to Redan Road, and Go Right (east) on Redan Road.

Go 1.1 miles to the first entrance to Crystal Lakes subdivision. There is a grey picket fence, and banners flying out front.

Turn right into Crystal Lakes subdivision on To-Lani Farm Rd.

Take the first right onto Cherokee Heights.

Come up the hill to third house on left after culdesac...#1097 Cherokee Heights.

Number and name (Sacco) are on the mail box.

Focal Point

One of the largest single budget items in the AAC is the printing and mailing of the Focal Point. Help save the club money and order your Focal Point by e-mail.

The Focal Point can now be e-mailed to individual club members. You would receive the Focal Point in a PDF, Portable Document Format. An Adobe Acrobat reader, readily available on the web, can be used to view and/or print the PDF file.

The PDF version of the Focal Point contains the same information as the printed version, only more. It has color and crisper graphics.

To request your Focal Point to be delivered via e-mail, send me a message <macumber@BellSouth.net> and put Focal Point in the subject. You will start receiving the Focal Point via e-mail. If you want to try the PDF version, let me know, and I will send you this issue in PDF.

SUPERNOVA 1998cr IN PGC 57979

It's a supernova discovery from the Puckett Observatory!

Excerpt from IAU Circular 6956

T. Puckett and A. Langoussis, Mountain Town, GA, report the discovery of an apparent supernova (mag 17.6) on an unfiltered CCD frame taken with the Puckett Observatory 0.30-m automated supernova patrol telescope on June 28.09 UT. SN 1998cr is located at R.A. = 16h23m17s.25, Decl. = +37°12'47".5 (equinox 2000.0), which is 0".5 west and 7".5 south of the nucleus of PGC 57979. The object was also present on CCD frames taken on June 29.10 at mag 17.5. The object was not present on previous CCD frames taken on June 24.2 (limiting mag 18.75). The object does not appear on the Palomar Sky Survey scans. M. Richmond, Rochester Institute of Technology, reports that SN 1998cr was present on a 300-s R-band KAIT image taken on June 29.275 UT.

Tim will be posting the images on his web site at <http://www.cometwatch.com/pgc57979.jpg>

SUPERNOVA 1998cs IN UGC 10432

Yes, it's another supernova discovery from Puckett Observatory!

Excerpt from the IAU Circular 6957...

T. Puckett, Mountain Town, GA, reports his discovery of an apparent supernova (mag 17.5) on an unfiltered CCD frame taken with the Puckett Observatory 0.30-m automated supernova patrol telescope on June 29.25 UT. The candidate is located at R.A. = 16h30m39s.22, Decl. = +41o12'54".4 (equinox 2000.0), which is 0".2 east and 16".0 north of the nucleus of UGC 10432. SN 1998cs was also present on CCD frames taken on June 30.14 at mag 17.0. The object was not present on previous CCD frames taken on June 2.17 (limiting mag 18.75). The object does not appear on the Palomar Sky Survey scans.

Some background... Saturday night, June 27-28, Alex and Tim were shooting the galaxies in batches of 50-100. They would inspect the images from the previous batch while the next batch was running. Upon discovering the supernova in PGC 57979, they interrupted the imaging of that next batch in order to take further images of the discovery.

So, Sunday and Monday night, Tim went back to image those galaxies in the batch that didn't get shot Saturday night. In that group was UGC 10432, with a very prominent supernova!

Another interesting note... Each frame is targeted on a specific galaxy, but often there are other galaxies on the same image. BOTH discoveries were in "non-target" galaxies.

So, after being the co-discovering of 2, Tim gets the third all to himself.

Congratulations, Tim!

Congratulations, Alex!

A Lunar Observing Project

by Philip Sacco Lunatic #82

Hello All,

I hope you find this a worthwhile project...

With the growing number of Lunar and Planetary observers evident within our club (we have four, count them, four Lunatics now (!!)) out of the national 100) I have put together a year long program for your viewing pleasure. The Project is devoted to the Moon, and has been drawn from the Astronomical Leagues Lunar List and information from NASA.

The project is intended to be a year long one in scope (pun intended), thus you will find your monthly challenge printed here in the Focal Point.

Anyone completing the entire project and supplying your Observing Chairman with your notes will be awarded the AL Lunar Certificate and Pin (the entire AL Lunar survey is included) as well as a copy of the Reformed Calendar based on the New Moon Cycle (Those attending the June meeting were given a briefing on the Reformed Calendar). I am currently working on a special certificate for those completing this program as well, as this project is quite in depth, I assure you, and anyone completing it will be worthy of special note.

(For more information, you will have to wait 'til next month's Focal Point. If you can't wait that long, send Phil an e-mail and beg him for the list. Copies will also be printed and available from Keith)

ATLANTA ASTRONOMY CLUB

[Search For Dark-Sky Observatory Site](#)

The Atlanta Astronomy Club, Inc. (AAC) is seeking the assistance of anyone able to help find a new location in Georgia that can be used as an astronomical viewing site. The club wants to build several small buildings that can be used for an observatory and warm up shed. Please notify the search committee listed below, if you are aware of any potential dark-sky viewing locations.

The AAC was formed in 1947, to help promote the joys of viewing and understanding our Universe. The club sponsors regular viewing sessions that are open to its members as well as the general public. Many people of all ages and educational backgrounds have been able to marvel over the splendors of the sky due to the efforts of the AAC.

The Walter Barber Observatory near Villa Rica, was built by the AAC on land donated by the Barber family in memory of their son. This has provided an ideal location about 30 miles west of Atlanta for people to view the stars with their own telescopes or the club's equipment. The club now maintains 20", 10", and 8" telescopes as well as other observing aids at this site. The growth of the metropolitan area with its many lights has created an increasing problem with the sky glow at this location. An additional observing site is needed so the club can build another observatory and warm up shed facility. This new site could be used by people in the area, and the AAC would be very pleased to host observing session for local schools, churches, scout troops or other organizations.

A good viewing site needs to be in a dark-sky location away from lights shining directly on it. Visibility to about 20 degrees above the horizon in most directions is desirable. The ability to bring 20 or more automobiles to a somewhat flat location where telescopes can be set up for the night is also needed. Availability of electrical hookup is not necessarily required, but would be a much added benefit. A one to two hour driving time from Atlanta's I-285 would also be desirable.

The Atlanta Astronomy Club, Inc. is a registered nonprofit educational organization. As defined by its bylaws, the purposes of the club shall be educational, literary, scientific, and especially to promote the public knowledge of, and interest in astronomy. Any donations to the club of equipment, materials, money or land will be tax deductible.

Any assistance you can give the AAC in this worthwhile effort to build a new observatory will be most appreciated.

Thank you,
Phil Bracken

Chairman of the Dark-Site Observatory Committee

4719 Crest Knoll Drive

Mableton, GA 30126

Home: 770-941-6517

Fax: 770-948-8882

E-mail: philb@mindspring.com

Treasurer

If you want to convert your S&T and/or Ast. subscriptions to club subscriptions, all you need to do is send me a renewal form and a check for the correct amount. Club subscription rates must be order by the Club Treasurer.

Sky&Tel is currently \$27, Astronomy is \$24. Only one year can be ordered at a time through the club.

Club Officers

Phil Sacco	President	404-296-6332
	<i>ppsacco@mindspring.com</i>	
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Standing Committees

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Gil Shillcutt	Amateur Telescope Makers	404-467-1437
	<i>Gil.Shillcutt@choicepointinc.com</i>	

AAC CALENDAR of EVENTS

July 09-11	ALPO Conference	Fernbank
July 10, Friday	ATM	Bradley Obs
July 13, Monday	Cherokee County	
July 15, Wednesday	Mail Survey	
July 17, Friday	General Meeting	Emory White Hall
July 18, Saturday	Orientation	Villa Rica
July 20, Monday	Ladies Nite	Chrissy's
July 21-25	ALCON	French Lick, Indiana
July 24, Friday	Dr. Albin	Bradley Obs Open House
July 25, Saturday	Deep Sky	Rockmart
July 26, Sunday	Focal Point Deadline	
August 06, Thursday	Dr. Malin	Fernbank
August 14, Friday	ATM	Bradley Obs.
August 21, Friday	Business Mtg	Emory White Hall
August 22, Saturday	Deep Sky	Brasstown Mtn
August 29, Saturday	Orientation	Villa Rica

Focal Point

by Peter Macumber

July 26 is the deadline for the August Focal Point. Please send your committee reports and articles to me by then.

This month was good in a sense that I have more material than room. (In case you didn't know, with the extra inserts, we can only print 4 pages, and still use a 32 cent stamp.)

Today we have 320 members.

Atlanta Astronomy Club

July

General Meeting

The next general meeting of the Atlanta Astronomy Club will held at Emory University White Hall on **July 17 at 8 P.M.** Refreshments will be available between **7:30 and 8 P.M.** Once again this month, there will a door prize. Each person in attendance will get a free ticket for the drawing. Additional tickets will be available for \$1. You must be present to win!

In July, our own Lenny Abbey will speak on:

Telescopes I Wish I Had Known.

Learn how a committee set astrophysics back by fifty years! See how modern astrophotography was invented by a wealthy British amateur.

Since he became interested in astronomy at the age of 12, Lenny has been an observer, coordinator for two sections of the ALPO, and has participated in projects for NASA, the Smithsonian Astrophysical Observatory and Harvard College Observatory. He was elected fellow of the Royal Astronomical Society in 1970. Lenny's long-time interest in the history of telescopes and observing in astronomy's "modern" period has led him to uncover many interesting facets of the lives and works of yesterday's amateurs and professionals. And guess what? They had the very same problems that we have!

Come to our July meeting and meet two very intriguing telescopes. Telescopes you will not forget.

The Atlanta Astronomy Club Inc., the South's largest and oldest astronomical society, meets at 8:00 p.m. on the third Friday of each month at Emory University's White Hall or occasionally at other locations (check the hot line for details). Membership is open to all. Annual dues are \$25 (\$10 for students). Discounted subscriptions to Astronomy, and Sky & Telescope magazines are available.

Hot Line: Timely information on the night sky and astronomy in the Atlanta area is available on a twenty-four hour basis on the

Atlanta Astronomy Club hot line: **770-621-2661.**

Internet Home Page: **<http://stlspb.gtri.gatech.edu/astrotxt/atlastro.html>**



The Focal Point

Newsletter of The Atlanta Astronomy Club, Inc.

FROM:

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[We're here to help! Here's how to reach us:](#)

Atlanta Astronomy Club

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FIRST CLASS

