

# The Focal Point

The Atlanta Astronomy Club  
Established 1947  
October 1999

Vol XII No. 5

Editor: Peter Macumber

## Astro Images



By Geoff Powers

Salutations Astro Imaging aficionados! Not to sound too much like an astrologer, but the moonths of the calendar are favorable for me to bring this moonthly column up to date with our meetings!

Focal Point deadline Oct 2<sup>nd</sup>. Second meeting, Oct 1<sup>st</sup>! Have to hurry this to print, but I'll cover everything.

Our September startup meeting had a decent turnout, considering it was also Labor Day weekend, the final 3-day weekend of 99's summer. Four different club members called me that Thursday and Friday to express their regrets that Holiday commitments would prevent them from attending. Still, an even dozen participants made it, besides me. I was able to just barely cover all the subject matter in the time frame allotted. There were some familiar faces and some new ones too. Everyone seemed to pick up something. Club member, Frank Marchese, brought some fantastic tripod star images, but I was unaware he had them until after the meeting. I would have certainly worked then into my presentation, had I realized. Frank also volunteered to bring along his Meade LX fork mount to help with the second meeting, but a schedule change at his job prevented him from making it on Oct 1<sup>st</sup>. Thanks Frank, for your interest and participation. I hope this will be an example for everyone interested in capturing celestial images on film. Remember the AAC is your club. Our Astro Imaging special interest group is yours too! I do hope to get many individual members involved in a "hands on" way.

Long time member, Tom Faber, brought along his clock driven barn-door tracker to the second (Oct 1<sup>st</sup>) meeting. He also brought out some images he has taken with this neat little device. Thanks Tom. You have some too cool shots of Hale-Bopp!

Attendance at the second meeting was comparable to the first, and again two club members called to let me know they couldn't make it and to ask specific questions. I was able to cover my

planned subject matter in 90 or so minutes. I'm kinda glad this one is out of the way, because to do the best presentation I could possibly do, I had to transport and setup almost every piece of equipment I have! Thanks, Frank Bowman for helping me carry it all inside the Observatory! I'd be willing to do it again, whenever necessary, but it was a lot of work in a short period of time. (Ask KenPo and Peter, they helped carry it out!)

*(Actually what was more amazing, is how much stuff you can fit into Geoff's car. – Peter)*

The November meeting will ***NOT*** be held at the Bradley Observatory. The first Friday of next moonth is also New Moon weekend. That Friday, Nov 5<sup>th</sup> is the first night of an extended Deep Sky Session at Charlie Elliot. On Saturday, Nov 6<sup>th</sup> at 2:00 p.m. in the Aquatic Center at Charlie Elliot, I will give a "Getting Started in Astrophotography" presentation. The folks at Charlie Elliot are going to advertise this as a public event. However, I will be mostly recapping the camera-on-tripod stuff I did on Sep 3<sup>rd</sup> at Agnes Scott. If you missed this meeting, and would like to catch up, please join us on Nov 6<sup>th</sup> at Charlie Elliot.

Also, on November 6<sup>th</sup> at 4:30 p.m. on the observing field at Marben Farms Road. I will do the regular club Astro Imaging session. This will be our Polar Alignment session. I want to cover basics and theory in the hour or so before darkness, and then do a hands on, real-time stardrift (declination drift) alignment, Don't forget the Time Change before this event! It will be getting dark much earlier.

Directions to Charlie Elliot are available on the web if needed.

Our regular meetings are the first Friday each month, at Bradley Observatory, Agnes Scott College at 8:00 p.m. (Not in November!) Directions to Agnes Scott are in the August Focal Point, or call me personally.

In closing, a short personal note. The October AAC General Meeting is the weekend of the 15<sup>th</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup>, and 17<sup>th</sup>. This also the weekend of my 20 Year (YIKES!) High School reunion. Instead of showing some photos in the lobby before the club meeting, I'll be sentimental reminiscing with my old classmates in Virginia! I may not see many of you after Brasstown Deep Sky, until the November thing at Charlie Elliot. I'll be available by phone after the reunion. Take care, and keep your shutters snapping!

## Ladies of the Night ... Sky

Hi all, Long time since I've written anything for the Focal Point. I would like to get a Ladies of the Night ... Sky meeting together for the month of October. We can meet at my house in Norris Lake. It is a ways down I 20 but easy to get to! How about a Tuesday night this time? We can also have it on a Saturday if everyone is up to it. I am open for suggestions and would like some input on when and where would be best for most of us. I work everyday and the weekends are somewhat open for me. I am going to attend the MASP this year, which is the weekend of the 8th, and we really should try to get together before the next meeting. Anyway, please, either e-mail me at <starlight@mindspring.com> or give me a call at 770-761-4787 and we all can figure out an impromptu meeting if necessary. I am open to anything. (Just about, I should add).

"If wishes were fishes; we'd all be swimming"

Chrissy :o)

PS. I will give directions to whomever needs them as per conversation!

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## From the Prez

**By Ken Poshedly**

Not Available

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## Aurora visible in Georgia

**Keith Burns**

Thought everyone might be interested in this. The observing overall stunk at Brasstown on the 18th, but the seeing an aurora display in the sky made the trip out worth while. We hit the jackpot last night. Saturday September 11 and early morning Sunday September 12, 1999 a group from the Atlanta Astronomy Club went up to a spot in the mountains north of Atlanta to do some deep sky observing. We had to move from the original site do to a miscommunication and not being able to access a field. We had to come up with a backup plan. So we headed for Brasstown Bald Mountain. It is the highest location in Georgia. The mountain is about 100 miles north of Atlanta and only 10 miles south of the Georgia and North Carolina border. Upon arrival, there we discovered that the spot in the sky I thought was thin cirrus being lit by bright star was in fact the aurora display. It was visible in various spots to the north, northeast, east, south, and west. The brightest spot was located to the northeast and last about 30 minutes. All of them were a ray type structure. The colors included red, pink, green, and I think I saw yellow. With the exception of the ray located to the northeast, all the rest were bright thin rays with a few minute duration to them. We had partly to mostly cloudy skies. The activity peaked about 12 midnight. It started about 10:30PM and ended about 1 am.

## Focal Point

Saturday, October 30 is the deadline for the November Focal Point. This is a little ealier than normal, due to the New Moon the following weekend.

It is important to make article deadlines for the Focal Point, because of the time involved in getting the Focal Point composed and printed. The average Focal Point, from start to finish can take up to 20 hours of my time! If it is not mailed on a Monday morning, it would most likely not get sent out for another week.

Please send your articles to me before the deadline!

Peter

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## Training, Vila Rica

These are our training sessions on AAC club equipment. Information required for checkout on the club's Walter F. Barber, Jr. Observatory, including the 20", the 10" Cave, the 8" Maksutov, and the various loaner scopes.

## ATM Workshops, ASC Bradley Observatory

Meet us at Agnes Scott College's Bradley Observatory for the ATM Workshop. The ATM group is building a 16" f7 dobsonian, and is continuing work on the mirror. Various other scopes are also in progress. Come find out how to build your own scope, or bring your own materials for expert instruction with Tracy Wilson.

## Dark Sky, Dusk, Brasstown Bald

Remember this one? This was one of the club's most popular outings last year. The AAC's monthly Dark Sky event will be held at Brasstown Bald's visitor parking area. The site offers skies so dark, several members packed it in for the night when the Milky Way rose, because it looked like a bank of clouds had moved in!! We'll try to keep interlopers with headlights to a minimum this time. This is a members-only event.

## POHO, Villa Rica

**Public Open House and Orientation.** This is sure to be a big event. We'll need help with refreshments, parking, and scopes. Come and show what you've learned with the public. Volunteer's meeting will begin at 6:00. The event will be well publicized throughout the Atlanta area, so we expect that there will be a large public attendance.

## Quarterly Work Party at Vila Rica. 9:00am

The call is out for all members to attend!!

### Club Officers

Ken Poshedly	President	770-979-9842 <i>ken.poshedly@mindspring.com</i>
Eugenia Abbey	VP Program Chairman	404-634-1222 <i>eabbey@bellsouth.net</i>
Gil Shillcutt	VP Observing Chairman	404-467-1437 <i>Gil.Shillcutt@choicepointinc.com</i>
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Tom Buchanan	Light Pollution	770-521-2136
Lynn Crowley	Beginner's Contact & Socials	404-233-6886
Julie Moore	Hospitality and Refreshments	770-242-6735
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Chrissy Mondell	Ladies of the Night ... Sky	404-296-6332 <i>chrissy@NightSky.Org</i>
Geoff Powers	Astrto Imaging	770-454-6107

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## NightSky.Org

The Focal Point is available in color online in PDF format. The free Adobe(R) Reader allows you to view, navigate, and print PDF files across all major computing platforms.

Visit **NightSky.Org/aac** on the web. In a private sub-web, the past year of Focal Points can be found. Check it out. If it works for you, send me an e-mail and I will stop sending you a copy snail-mail. It will also save the club a dollar. The Focal-Point web can be entered by using the Username of **AAC** and a password of **mizar**. These names are case sensitive! Type AAC in capitals, type mizar in lower case.

Peter

## October 1 Astro-Imaging

8:00pm, ASC Bradley Observatory

## October 9 Dark Sky

Brasstown Bald

## October 9 ATM Workshop

9:00am, ASC Bradley Observatory

## October 15 General Meeting

Fernbank Science Center

## October 16 POHO

6:00pm, VR

## October 23 Quarterly Work Party at VR

9:00am

## October 23 Club Picnic at VR

22nd Anniversary

## November 5 Astro-Imaging

8:00pm, ASC Bradley Observatory

## November 5-7 Dark Sky

Zombie Party @ CEWMA

## November 13 ATM Workshop

9:00am, ASC Bradley Observatory

## November 13 Astro Techniques

5:00pm, VR

## November 15 Mercury Transits Sun

## November 20 Training, 5:00pm, VR

## November 27 ATM Workshop

~~9:00am, ASC Bradley Observatory~~

Remember to send renewals to the club and payable to the club.

Remember S&T is now \$30

Astronomy is \$29

Club membership is \$25 or \$10 for student.

## Atlanta Astronomy Club

### The October Meeting

Friday, October 15<sup>th</sup>

Our October meeting will be held on October 15, at 8:00 p.m. at **Fernbank Science Center's planetarium**. Club members, and their guests, will be admitted to the program without charge. Just stop at the ticket desk and tell them you are with the AAC. Since the program will begin promptly at 8:00, it is best to plan to be there a little early.

The title of the program is: Millennium Countdown. Here is how Fernbank describes it:

With the relentless march of time, humans have become proficient at marking the passage of decades, centuries and eventually millennia. Our program reveals the inner workings of calendars as well as an astronomer's insight into the meaning of time. Join us as we look back to first millennium predictions and forward to the skies on the new millennium.

Find out more about Fernbank on the web at: <http://fsc.fernbank.edu>

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>

Subscribe to the Atlanta Area Astronomers Mailing List!

Send a message to [AAList-subscribe@listbot.com](mailto:AAList-subscribe@listbot.com)

For further information send an e-mail to [Lenny Abbey LAbbey@Mindspring.com](mailto:LennyAbbey@Mindspring.com)



Newletter of The Atlanta Astronomy Club, Inc.

FROM:

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

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FIRST CLASS

