

The Focal Point

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Editor: Keith Burns

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Woodruff Dark Site is a Reality!

By John Lentini

The AAC Board is pleased to announce that we have reached an agreement with the Atlanta Area Council of the Boy Scouts of America that allows Club members to use the Woodruff Scout Reservation near Blairsville. Woodruff will be one of our main dark-sky observing places. You can go there and observe under the darkest skies in Georgia any time you want, as long as you abide by the terms of the agreement. You can camp on the observing field (until the adjacent campsite is developed), and there will be a rustic cabin available after October 1. There are port-a-potties, and there will soon be electricity and a warm-up/storage shed.

The Club will spend up to \$4,000 from the Dark Site Fund to build the storage and warm-up shed, and to pour a 20 by 20 foot concrete slab to make a level observing surface. We will



also be installing three polar-aligned pedestals with power.

Dark sky events have been staged at Woodruff on May 27 and September 30. The next scheduled event is November 25, but Club members are welcome to use the site anytime.

The Club's new 16-inch scope will be housed there in the Winter, and there is also a C-11 available.

Anyone who wants to use the observing field needs to sign a release promising not to sue the Scouts or the Club if they get hurt. You need to tell the Club's Scout Liaison (me) that you're going, so I can alert the Ranger that you're coming up, and you also have to agree to follow the rules of conduct as stated below.

1. No white lights should be used on the observing field, except in emergencies.
2. Vehicles may be parked on the observing field, but no vehicles will be allowed (except for loading and unloading) in the camping area. (Note: until the camping area immediately north of the observing field is completed, this rule will not be operative).
3. No alcoholic beverages or illegal drugs will be allowed on the Woodruff Scout Reservation.
4. Only certified Club members may operate the Club's equipment.
5. All users of the facility must sign a visitors' log.
6. All users of the facility will adhere to the Scout's Outdoor Code, and will leave the site in the same or better condition than it was upon arrival.
7. The Woodruff speed limit of 14 mph will be observed at all times. Drivers agree to exercise extreme caution, due to the presence of many pedestrians.
8. The Woodruff Camp Ranger is responsible for enforcing all rules on Scout Property.

Rule 3 may be the most difficult, but needs to be followed. The Scout Reservation is private property, and their allowing us to use the field is not much different from a Baptist Church allowing us to use their facilities. The rules are similar to State Park rules, but it is OK to have beer in your campsite in a State Park.

Anyone who has ever been to Woodruff on a clear night wants to go back. Trading off the beer is worth it. The observing field is quite remote, so letting the Ranger you know you're

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there is important.

The Ranger's name is Kendall Foster. He was born in the cabin next to the observing field. He's a very nice person, but is very protective of his 800-acre domain. Be nice to him and make sure you call ahead. I can be reached in the daytime at 770-218-2180, ext. 3047, or in the evenings at 770-984-0175. If you try to get me and can't reach me, you can leave a message on the camp's answering machine at 706-745-2700. The reason to go through me is so the Ranger doesn't get 10 or 20 calls on a weekend.

The release form that you need to sign is posted on the Club's Website. You should print it, sign it and mail it to:

John Lentini

833 Countryside Court

Marietta, GA 30067



After I get your form, your name will be put on a list of "approved users," and you will get the combination to the gate. The visitors' log will be located next to the gate. Access to the warm-up shed, where other equipment will be located, will be controlled by another combination lock, available to everyone who has been checked out on the Club's equipment.

The Club's relationship with the Scouts is still evolving. Club members have been working for over a year to bring about this agreement so that we may have access to a truly dark place to observe. The Scouts have been pleased with our willingness to share our expertise with the boys, and they are really not much bother since they tend to fall out by 11 PM.

This is a win-win proposition, assuming that everyone shows respect for the land and the rules that the landowners have, and remains sensitive to the fact that this is a new venture for the Scouts. Both the AAC and the Scouts hope that this relationship will be beneficial and long-lasting.

The next observing event to be held at Woodruff is Saturday November 25.

From the Prez's Desk...

September was a productive month for the AAC. Many great things happened.

The first, and the one that makes me the most pleased personally, was to give Lenny Abbey a plaque to commemorate his 50 (yes, I said 50) years as a member of the AAC. He joined in 1950 at the age of twelve. He has held very position on the AAC Board (six times as President alone); contributed to the education of its members through articles and lectures at meetings; and been the AAC's "window" to a wide network of professional and amateur astronomers and astronomical organizations (such as Fernbank, Bradley, the Planetary Society and the AAVSO).

Both Lenny and Eugenia, who joined the Jr. Astronomers program in 1947, were also given Lifetime Memberships to the AAC.

The Japanese honor special individuals by designating them "National Treasures". It is most certainly true that this couple should be considered the "National Treasures" of the AAC, the city of Atlanta and professional and amateur astronomy. Please, join me in congratulating and thanking them for their lifetime of contributions.

This month we also signed the "Memorandum of Understanding" with the AAC (Atlanta Area Council) of the Boy Scouts and approved spending up to \$4000 to erect a building at the Woodruff Boy Scout Camp in Blue Ridge. The BSAAC has been very happy with our presence at Woodruff and would like to see our relationship grow and solidify in the future. To find out more, please read the article about the MOU in this month's *Focal Point*.

We also held our Zombie Party at CEWMA on the weekend of the 23rd. While Hurricane Helene scared away all but the most dedicated (or crazy), about 20 people showed up by Saturday night and had a great time, with a few hours of really good skies. The views of Jupiter and Saturn in both the club's 24" and Ken Lilja's scope were magnificent! We preceded the chapter meeting with a potluck dinner and that was magnificent, too.

I want to encourage everyone to come out to our annual Villa Rica Picnic on Saturday October 21, starting at 2:00 p.m. We will supply hamburgers, dogs, bratwurst, sodas, condiments and a "Birthday Cake" for VR. We ask that you come with a potluck dish (no too much potato salad, please - try for cookies, chips and dips, and other salads).

Here's for a good Fall with better skies than we have had all summer!

Sharon

The word "Canada" in a stylized font with a small Canadian flag above the letter 'a'.

Board Meeting #3 Minutes

Sunday, September 10, 2000. Start time 2:15 pm. Location of meeting Fernbank Science Center.

In attendance: COB - Bear Simmons, Board Members: Jim Moore, John Lentini, Bob Smith; Club Officers: Sharon Carruthers - President, Alex Langoussis - Program Chairman, Rich Jakiel - Observing Chairman, Peter Macumber - Treasurer, Keith Burns - Corresponding Secretary (Focal Point Editor), Joanne Cirincione - Recording Secretary; Club Members/Standing Committees: Art Russell, Gil Shilcutt, Ralph Bowman, Ken Poshedly, Carlos Flores

President-Sharon Carruthers opened the meeting by thanking

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all the Agnes Scott College volunteers for helping out at Friday night's (9/8) Night Under the Stars program. It was a success and look forward to working with Chris Dupree in the future. Treasurer- Peter Macumber *AAC T-shirts, 2 T-shirt styles, same AAC logo, various sizes. \$10 for S, M & L, \$12 X-Large, 2X and 4X. Looking into Polo Shirts. Recommendations: look into other suppliers for tall sizes and sweatshirts. * Ordered solar film for the making of solar filters. ATM group will make filters in a session to sell. * 363 Memberships, 393 total individual members. 127 members receive e-mail version

of Focal Point. * No major outstanding bills, little financial activity. Complete budgetary report will be presented at the next Board Meeting. Observing Chairman-Rich Jakiel * Zombie Star Party - CEWC, September 22-24. \$5.00/day, volunteers get in for free. 2 dif-



ferent fields, 1 for public one for serious observers (no camping on this field). Building to be used will either be the Activities or Discovery Building. Members are asked to start sending in payments now. Day of event will cost \$10. * Woodruff Boy Scout Reservation, September 30. * Villa Rica - New power pole location. Need to look at permit. Computer equipment on hold until power pole is re-set. 10in mirror sent out for re-coating. Maintenance is being done on 20in. * (Ralph Bowman) Deck almost done. Needs railing. Recommendations were taken on what kind of ramp to be used. Corresponding Secretary-Keith Burns * Some changes were made to the Focal Point and there are more to come. September 29 is the deadline for the October issue. Program Chairman-Alex Langoussis * September's speaker, Lenny Abbey; October's



meeting will be one week earlier than scheduled. It will be on October 13-Full Moon; Looking at December's meeting to be a Holiday Program. Maybe have the Ladies of the Night...Sky help with coordinating a "pot luck" dinner before a planetarium show. Maybe

have it at Agnes Scott College.

Standing Committees Report - FoGSPA (Friends of Georgia State Parks Astronomy)-Joanne Cirincione - Have been having success with the State Parks. August 5th at Amicalola Falls State Park-we set a record for attendance at their amphitheater; September 2-4 - FDR State Park was a tremendous success. Philip Sacco helped us out with the audience with his story telling. Unicoi State Park contacted us to do an As-

tronomy night on November 11 (Full Moon). State Parks are limiting for full club participation so if anyone wanted to volunteer or just join us they would need to make their own reservations. Working with Bear and Karen Simmons on getting contacts with Native American mythology story tellers and also working with Philip Sacco on his "unique" style of story telling. Recommendations: Contact other Georgia clubs for joint sidewalk astronomy sessions. Also, starting a FoGSPA e-mailing list. CEWC- (Rich Jakiel) Philip Sacco attempted a section officers meeting but it was postponed. Zombie Party funds going to site/promotion for CEWC. Website- *There is a survey on the website. It will close after 2 weeks. *Lots of hits. Some months exceed 10,000. *Art Russell offered to put his Star Hop articles on the Website. *Recommendations: Some information should be moved to other pages. *Fix screen to fit all computer monitor sizes. *Combine sites -Nightsky.org and AAC. Woodruff Boy Scout Reservation-John Lentini * Scouts want to move on the building of the observatory. *Discussed points from the "Draft" Memorandum of Understanding; ¶Facilities ¶Instructional Program ¶Access to Facilities ¶Rules of Conduct ¶Ownership ¶Security and Insurance ¶Amendment ¶Termination *Allocation of Funds: 20x20 concrete pad, 10ft walkway, 20x20 shed (may have roll off roof) Board approved the MOU and funds allocated for the building of observatory. 10 votes. OTHER TOPICS: *Discussion on the storage of the 24in. Possible storage at Woodruff during Spring/Summer; CEWC during Fall/Winter. *Need volunteers for several events AAC has going on. Try to get old/new members to volunteer. Will need the manpower with many future events. Great way to see what's going on, meet new people and just to be involved. *Bear Simmons closes meeting with discussion for the next Board Meeting: *Raising of Dues-justify it financially, possible different levels of membership. *Next Board Meeting will either be on Sunday, October 8 or Sunday October 22 at Jim Moore's church. (after services) 2:00pm. Meeting adjourned at 4:40pm.

General Meeting September 15, 2000

Number in attendance: 58 - **Sharon Carruthers, President** - opened the meeting. She talked about the successful events at FDR State Park and Agnes Scott College. **Rich Jakiel, Observing Chairman** - Went over the details of the CEWC Zombie Party held 9/22-24. 9/30-Woodruff Boy Scout Reserve. Villa Rica looking good. Ralph Bowman is almost done with the deck. There will be a work party sometime in early October. **Keith Burns, Corresponding Secretary** - Announced September 29 deadline for the October Issue of the Focal Point; **Astronomical League (AL) Rep.**- No awards were given out but there are awards to be given. Members were not present at this meeting. **Tom Buchanan, Light**

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Pollution – On-going project, Einstein Project, which is an observatory in NE Cherokee County. Cherokee County needs to meet with water & sewage representatives before moving on. **Joanne Cirincione, FoGSPA** – Amicalola Falls State Park was a success; broke attendance record at the outdoor amphitheater. FDR State Park was a success. Next FoGSPA event will be November 11 at Unicoi State Park in Helen, Ga. If you are interested in joining us you can call Unicoi at 1-800-573-9659 to make reservations. Ask to be put by the AAC campers. E-mail Joanne at starrynights@AtlantaAstronomy.org for more information. **Sharon Carruthers** – Announced that John Lentini has worked out a Draft Memorandum of Understanding with Woodruff Boy Scout Reserve. This is a first for the Boy Scouts nationally to have a joint agreement with any organization outside the Scouts. Recommendations were made to send an article to various publications on this. Sharon also encouraged all to become a “Scouter”. You will be able to work with the Scouts on their merit badges and also have special privileges at Woodruff where non-Scouter are limited. **Mark Banks, Sidewalk Astronomy** – Announced some events for September. October 2nd - Day Math & Astronomy Lecture at Phoenix Middle School, Lawrenceville *Volunteers needed; October 4th - Sidewalk Astronomy Pickensville Middle School,



Gwinnett Co. 7pm *Volunteers needed; October 12 - Atlanta Botanical Gardens “Moonlight Walk” 7-9pm Open to the public *Volunteers needed; October 26th - Stargaze & Science night Burkely Lake Elementary, Duluth 7pm *Volunteers needed; (Tentative) Polo, BBQ & Stargaze at the Polo field in Cherokee Co. Please contact him if you are interested in helping or having a sidewalk as-

tronomy event. bank4@mindspring.com or (404) 257-2766. **Alex Langoussis, Program Chairman** - introduced our speaker, AAC’s own Lenny Abbey. His talk “Telescopes I Wish I Had Known, The Sequel” was very informative and entertaining. After Lenny’s talk Alex announced our October 13th speaker, Dr. William Sheehan, who will be visiting us from Minneapolis. Before letting Lenny return to his seat, Sharon and Alex presented him with a plaque honoring him on 50 years with the Atlanta Astronomy Club! Also Lenny and his wife Eugenia (43 years with the club) were awarded lifetime memberships. This is much deserved! Congratulations! Other announcement: Bradley will have their first open house after re-opening on October 6th! In closing, Sharon raffled off door prizes. Meeting was adjourned.

Atlanta Astronomy Website

By Matthew “Yoda” Macumber

Buzzz..Buzzz...Buzz, Hello partial eaten fish! Hello, have you heard about the website called AtlantaAstronomy.org?Yes, It contains all of the latest information about observing events, membership and special surveys. I learned when the next gen-



eral membership meeting is and how to join the listserv. I read some really neat featured articles, how to access the electronic Focal Point, and took part in an interesting survey. Wow, the website

AtlantaAstronomy.org has everything. I am going to go there right now. Yes, I will also go there now to look at the satellite images. Ahhh...The cloud cover...Ahhhhh.

Friends of Georgia State Parks Astronomy

Joanne Cirincione



Labor Day weekend was a great success at FDR State Park in Pine Mountain, GA! We had an awesome volunteer turnout – 15 came out and camped! Both Saturday and Sunday’s sidewalk astronomy was a blast. Philip Sacco started off both evenings with his “unique” mythology stories. This mesmerized the audience. Sharon Carruthers followed with her presentation, “Women in Astronomy” on Saturday night, filling in for Dr. Schmude who could not make it. Rich Jakiel did his presentation, “Hubble Vision” on Sunday night. The audience was large and

the skies were DARK & CLEAR! I wanted to thank the members who came out and made this weekend a great success. I wanted to thank Ashley Applegate of FDR State Park and Beverly Jordan of Friends of Georgia State Parks who helped make this event a success.

An Investigative Expose: The Uranus/Neptune Cover-up

by Bill Warren



Continued on the next page.

Several years ago, I tried in vain for more than three months to find Uranus and Neptune. At magnitude 5.8 or thereabouts, Uranus should have been a pushover for any telescope even marginally superior to a \$19.98 K-Mart Blue Light Special refractor. It wasn't, though. I'd looked everywhere it was supposed to be, and it just wasn't there. Neptune, three mags. fainter, was 15 times more invisible to me than Uranus.

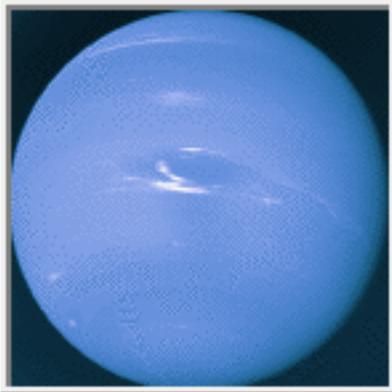
Before giving up, I decided to ask a few people who I

thought should know about things like where to find Uranus, so I talked to **Gil Shillcutt** and **Rich Jakiel**. They hemmed and hawed when I asked them where to find Uranus, and finally they suggested that I check the monthly charts in *Sky & Tel* and *Astronomy*. Well,



I did that, but the charts showed this wavy line across the sky with several Moons in various stages on it. Uranus, Neptune and other planets were dangling from the line like fish on a stringer. I compared the charts with the night sky — and lo and behold, *there wasn't any wavy line up there!* (And no Uranus or Neptune, either.) And then it dawned on me, a disturbing notion with sinister implications: **No wonder I can't find Uranus and Neptune** (I thought): **They don't exist!** Note Uranus in the picture to the right.

It was all part of an enormous subversive plot, I decided, to keep **Sir William Herschel**, the man who "discovered" Uranus in 1781, from being discredited. **Charles Messier** made *his* share of mistakes (e.g., listing M101 twice, con-



fusing the double star Winnecke 4 for a tailless comet, and using liquid Drano to clean his eyepieces); well, Uranus was Herschel's mistake. But they didn't want you to know that, I reasoned.

Admitting after all these years that we have only five planets (I'd already

decided that Mercury and Pluto didn't exist, either) would completely undermine and discredit NASA's efforts to expand its planetary exploration program. Would *you* advocate the federal government using your tax dollars to support multibillion dollar scientific expeditions to planets

that don't exist?

Note Neptune in the picture to the left. Gil and Rich had told me that they'd *seen* Uranus and Neptune — but who was to say that they weren't part of a continuing conspiracy to fool us into believing that Uranus and Neptune actually exist?

For that matter (I went on), who was to say that one (or both) of those gentlemen wasn't on that grassy knoll in Dallas on Nov. 22, 1963? Was it merely coincidental that neither the Dallas police, the Texas Rangers, the Warren Commission, the FBI, the CIA, nor any other investigative agency even bothered to ask Rich or Gil where they were when JFK was assassinated? Rich had often used the innocent-sounding suffix *-ly* in describing me (e.g., "seriously disturbed"); but what if that suffix was actually a cleverly disguised reference to *Lee Harvey Oswald*? But enough about that.

I didn't care if the experts said that Uranus and Neptune were blue, green, blue-green or plaid; the fact was, *they didn't exist!* As I told Rich, "If you believe in the Tooth Fairy, you at least get a quarter under your pillow; with Uranus and Neptune, all you get is *heartache!*"

All of which leads me to introduce you to my new observing program, the "If You Don't See It, It Ain't There (And Doesn't Exist) Club." After all, with such superb observing skills as yours and mine, don't you suppose we'd see those faint fuzzy wuzzies in the night sky if they were really there?



In my new observing club (which is vastly superior to the AL's Messier Club and the rest), you simply aim your 'scope where you think an object ought to be, and you only get credit for it if it's not there.

You earn your certificate and pin by failing to find any 150 objects in the night sky, with double credit for missing the Moon and quadruple credit for failing to find the sky (e.g., by forgetting to take off your lens cap).

There is no entry fee for my new observing program, but I *do* have shipping & handling expenses to consider. Just make out your check for \$250.00, payable to me. Don't

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mail it to me, though; just palm the check to me while we're shaking hands (the way politicians do it), and I'll get you a pin, certificate, and a night's free lodging in the Lincoln bedroom at the White House. Bring your own telescope.



Howl-ween Fun

by Philip Sacco, Lunatic #82

This list was compiled two years ago, and mysteriously manages to elude me or... 'disappear' two months before the Howl-ween season. Now that it is posted maybe you will have a chance to track some of these monsters down as they will be rising soon...

Well it's that time of year again....Witches, Ghosts and Goblins and 'Things that go Bump in the Dark'.....

Yip....Hard to believe it's almost Halloween again. This is a time of year when we prepare ourselves for the unusual, the scary things to present themselves. But more curious than that, is the fact that many of us will go out of our way to go do something a little unusual or even spooky in the 'Spirit of the Season'.

If you are one of those individuals who like to hunt out the unusual and scary....than this 'Halloween Trick-or-Treat List' will be right up your alley! So fix yourself a cup of hot witches brew, put on something warm and take a trip on the Dark Side with a friend for an evening of a Howl-ween good time.....!

The Howl-ween Hunt- or 13 Un-Lucky Objects

Let's do a little observing warm up before we get to the "13 Un-Lucky Objects" and do a little naked eye hunting to get in the mood of the evening.

If we're going to have ghosts and goblins and such creatures of the night....everything has a beginning and 'the end' is no different, so to start off this seasonal pleasure...something needs to be laid to rest. First stop will be somewhere high overhead by mid evening. Commonly known as the constellation 'Delphinus', located just NE of the Eagle(Aquila) this little constellation was at one time called '**Job's Coffin**'. I figure the name comes from the odd ol' timey coffin shape of this small group of stars. The second constellation to hunt down is just south of Pegasus....find the Sea Monster **Cetus**. The third easy monster to hunt down is the constellation **Draco- The Dragon**.

A little hunting through some old atlas' will be required to locate the following lost constellations, but to the intrepid hunter

of the obscure, these will bring you some satisfaction once you have learned them and found them....after all this is a Hunt.....

The False Cross- I'll give you a hint....Iota and epsilon Carinae and Kappa and Delta Velorum...good luck these are 'deep in the ground' so to say....hehehehehe.....or is that ..."Ah-Haa-Haaaa!"

The Horse and Rider- Zeta and 80 Ursae Majoris....

The Sickle- Just Try to find this one at this time of year.....This ones a real Trick....

Cerberus- The three headed dog guardian of hell....**I'll give a Halloween treat to anyone who can tell me where to avoid this beast.....**wellll, I did say you may have to get out an old atlas...didn't I? (this is a very uncommon constellation.....after all...How many Three Headed Flesh Eating dogs have YOU seen?! find this one and you will have a real Treat to share with others...

This last constellation I have included not so much for it's content- **Tubus Herschellii Minor-** but rather for the fact that it was created by a Jesuit astronomer named....**Father Maximilian Hell....!**

Now, if you began this trek about 9PM, you should now be approaching the 'Witching Hour' so let's get to the good stuff.....after one last easy naked eye object. Turn your attention to the constellation Perseus and hunt down "**The Demon Star**" commonly known as Algol. This star is one of the shortest term variable stars, and can be seen to brighten and dim in the course of just a few days....!

OK....OK....it's dark out now and the sky is full of creatures of the night...you just need to spy them out now....It's time for the "13 objects for a Howl-ween Good Time"! A telescope will be required for these little monsters, after all.....they would rather you didn't see them and they can only be found under cover of night!

1. Markkarians Chain- M84/86/88...You'll have to hunt early to find this chain in a woman's hair! Wellll....it was a LOT of hair so maybe a chain was necessary!?

2. The Dragon Nebula- NGC 5623, M 8...reputed to live in a tea pot!

3. The Ghost of Jupiter- NGC 3242...under the tail of Hydra....Good LUCK!

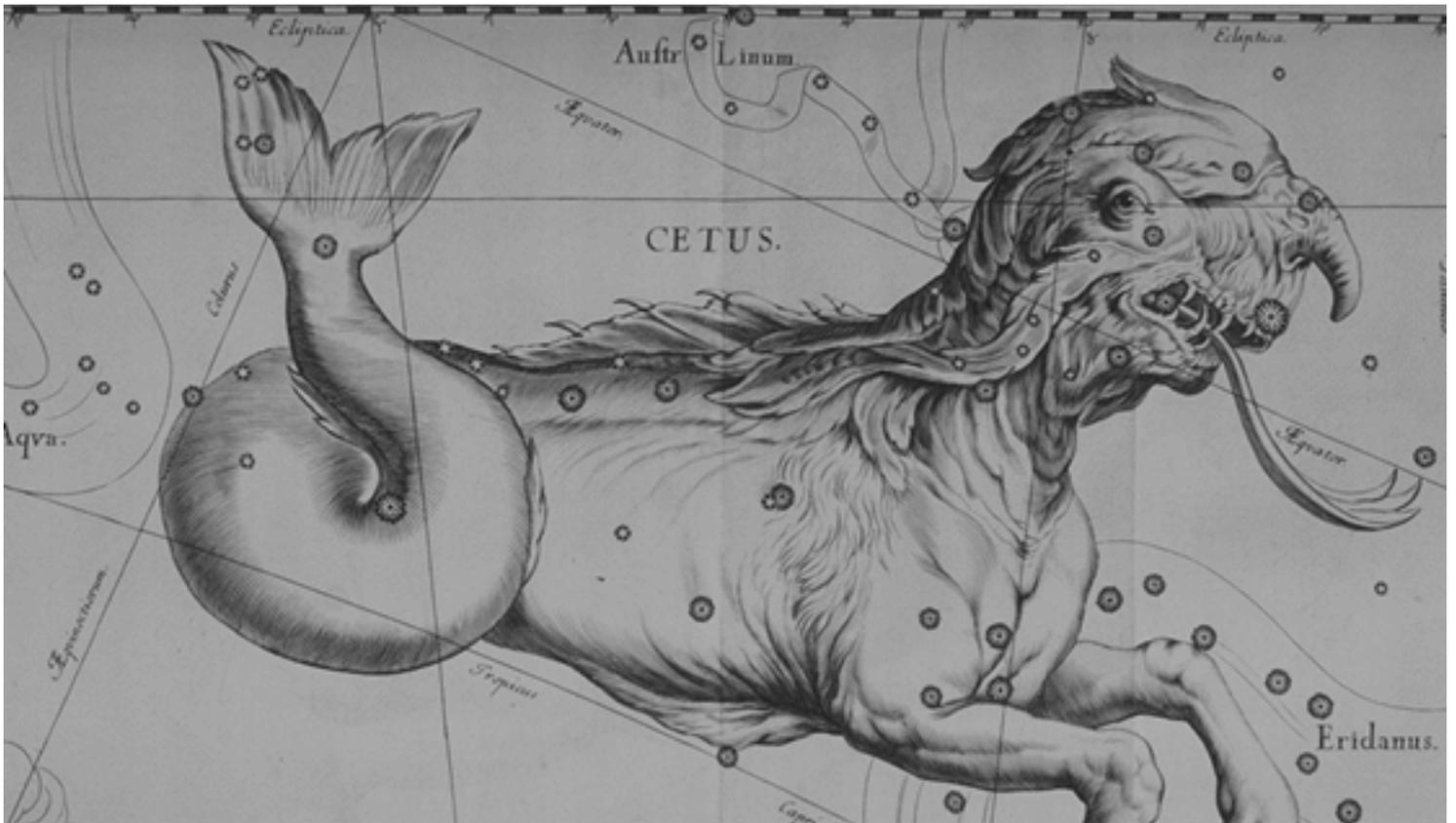
4. The Cat's Eye- NGC 6543...can be found under the first curl of the dragon....



5. The Owl Nebula- NGC 3587, M 97...you'll have to crawl under the belly of the Big Bear to find this guy...

6. The Owl Cluster- NGC 457...This one is a treasure of a Queen.....

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7. **The Veil-** NGC 6960...Just slipped off Job's Coffin!

8. **The Blinking Nebula-** NGC 6826...careful or this one will drop on your head when your not looking....or rather when you can't see it! Tricky little fella'....now ya' see him...now ya' don't! Flies with swans....

9. **The Ghost Ring-** IC 5148...hehehehe Happy Hunting!!

dig REAL DEEP to find this one.....and up comes a GHOST.....BOO!

10. **Miracks Ghost-** NGC 404....this guy is related to a Chained up Princess.....Monster Meat if you will....he'll be hovering over head soon.....

11. **The Spider-** NGC 5829...no tellin' where you will find

this little guy.....try looking under your chair....!

12. **Medusa-** This one is an unable- Abel 21.....Are you sure you want to look for this one?!

(13.) **The Witch Head Nebula-** IC 2118 this one will be up early in the morning near the right foot of Orion.

Well there you are!



Annual Villa Rica Picnic

The VR Picnic is on Saturday Oct 21, starting at 2:00 p.m. Why, you may ask hold it in October? Because we were gifted the property by the Barbour family, who live to the north of the site, in October 1973. They gave us this property in memorial to their son, Walter, Jr., a member of the AAC and an active amateur astronomer, who died in his late teens, for our use as long as we retain the name of Atlanta Astronomy Club and use the property for public education. So we invite you all to come out, RAIN or SHINE (we have held the picnic in a day-long downpour!) to remember Walter and celebrate the start of our best viewing season. We will supply sodas, hotdogs, hams, bratwurst, condiments and a "Birthday Cake"; we ask for pot-luck donations on salads, cookies (the guys love those big bake shop kind), chips & pretzels, fruits & veggies, etc. Don't bring large amounts - double the normal family batch. As it will be a third quarter Moon, some people may stay for the evening to get some "scoping" in. Sharon.

Work Party at Villa Rica

Saturday October 14th we will be having a work party at our Villa Rica observatory. The basic goals this time are to layout where the power will go on the property. Finish the deck for the KenPo Shed. Install the mirror for the 10 inch if it arrives by then. Do some minor repairs on the 10 inch scope and mount. Cut the grass and trim the weeds on the property. For more details, contact either Rich Jakiel or Ralph Bowman. Their phone numbers are listed on page seven of this focal point. The work commences at 10 A.M.

Directions & Info for Chiefland Star Party

Take I-75 south through Georgia and into Florida. You will exit the interstate at exit 76 in Gainesville, Fla which SR 26 and then go west. This goes about 25 miles to the town of Trenton. In Trenton take SR 47 south to Chiefland. This is another 11 miles or so. When you get in Chiefland, head south on US 19-98. Go south of town (chiefland) about 5 miles on US-19/98. On the right side of the road is SR347. Go west on SR347 about 2 miles and you will reach SR330. Take a left on SR 330 and go exactly 1 mile. Drive slow or you will miss the turnoff. There will be a row of mailboxes on the left. Just before the mailboxes, there is a dirt road which has a small sign which may not be visible. It is labeled LCR 434/NW 50th st. Take a right here. Go one city block west on the dirt road and the first road on the right will be NW 52nd CT. Take a right and go north to the end of the road. On the left is a pole barn and small building. This is the site.

Chiefland star party is \$5 a night. and we do not really provide much in the way of speakers or such. However, Saturday is a picnic in which everyone participates. Chiefland has a Best

Western and several other motels. There are some springs nearby for swimming and skin diving. In town is a Wal Mart super store which carries a fair amount of film and does one hour developing as does There is a Winn Dixie across the street. Plenty of places to eat. Bar-B-Q Bill's is a popular astroscoper hang out but there is chinese and cedar key (about 40 mi away) has some seafood places. If you are camping out, we have 115VAC available but do not expect to plug a portable AC unit in. It usually depends on the size of the crowd, how the breakers handle the power consumption (that is limiting factor - we do not mind paying extra on electric). Portable heaters for scopes and blow dryers usually are not a problem. Stereos are ok and sometimes we have to be careful about how loud the music is played (Neighbors are all astronomers but about 1/4 - 1/2 mile away their are just plain folk who sleep at night).

Contact either Rich Jakiel or Tom Crowley for more information. Their phone and email addresses are listed on page seven. The Star Party runs from Friday October 27th through Sunday Ocotober 29th.

Directions to Mentone Observing Site

Take I-75 north from Atlanta. Take I-75 to Adairsville exit 306. This is GA 140. Exit interstate here. At end of ramp turn left onto GA 140. Take GA 140 west to US 27. Turn right onto US 27 and head north to Summerville. In Summerville look for GA 48 on left hand side of road. Turn left onto GA 48. Take 48 west. You will pass through the towns of Menlo and Cloudland. After Cloudland, the road crosses the AL/GA border into AL. GA 48 becomes AL 117. Travel west on 117 for several miles. Look for a church called Mentone Church of God. Past the church look for DeKalb county road 644. The road is located on the left side. Turn left onto 644 and travel for 1/2 a mile. Look for two driveways on the left hand side of the road that are close together. There should be several large rocks next to the driveways. Turn left into the second driveway and not the first one. Then go past the new house. Take the gravel drive around the right side of the new house. There is a field with pond and old farm behind the new house. The main setup area is between the old farm house and the pond.

Tennessee Star Party October 20-22

The Barnard-Seyfert Astronomical Society in Nashville Tennessee, is hosting an astronomical event in October. We have secured a large field with cabins at Fall Creek Falls State Park. This place has fantastic scenery and wonderful dark sky. Our camp can accommodate about 200 people and at least that many telescopes. We will have great speakers and fellowship. For more information please visit this link. <http://www.bsasnashville.com/directory.html> We hope to hear from you!

Joint Star Party Mentone, Alabama

By Keith Burns

The Atlanta Astronomy Club and the Von Braun Astronomical Society are holding a joint star party on Saturday October 28, 2000. The observing location has changed. The town of Mentone is the new location. It's located west of Summerville, Georgia and only a few miles inside of the Alabama state line. Thanks to AAC member Roger Dowiat for allowing us use of the site.

The observing field is a grassy hilltop with good horizons and dark skies. It's located on top of Lookout Mountain. It is 1900 feet above sea level. Unlike the previous site, this location is only a short distance off the main road. If you have any questions or want more information, please phone me (at 770-427-1475) or email me (at Keith_B@bellsouth.net).

The Chiefland Star party is scheduled for the same weekend. If you don't want to(or can't) drive to Florida, this is the star party for you. The distance is exactly 88 miles from my house in West Cobb. There is no charge for the event either. There will be no speakers but plenty of an observing. You can either tent camp or sleep in your vehicle. Come on out and hang out with the folks of the Von Braun Astronomy Club for the night.

Timothy Ferris Announcement

Mark this date on your calendar. Wednesday, November 1, 2000 at 7 PM. Timothy Ferris, author of *The Whole Shebang*, *Coming of Age in the Milky Way* and the creator of the PBS series, *Life in the Universe*, will speak at Agnes Scott College.

Amatuer Telescope Makers

Since the loss of their home at Bradley observatory, the ATMers meet sporatically but often. Watch the AACLIST to find out more from Tracy or Skip. They have been meeting at Skip Cook's House. Skip is listed in the committee section of the Focal Point on page 10. You can also email Tracy at tracywilson@alltel.net. Soon they will be back at Bradley since the renovations of the building are almost completed.

Friends of Georgia State Parks Astronomy

Saturday, November 11 we will be at Unicoi State Park in Helen, Georgia for a sidewalk astronomy andcampout! Unicoi has invited us to be a part of their Astronomy weekend. It will be a full moon weekend so come prepared for the "bright" skies! We will start off with a talk and slide presentation at 7:00p followed by a sidewalk astronomy session for the park! Directions will be posted as the time gets near. We would like to get an idea of how many people plan to come or if you have any questions please e-mail Joanne at the her new email address of

starrynights@AtlantaAstronomy.org.

For Reservations call 1-800-573-9659 (If you want to camp with the rest of us ask to be put with the AAC. Though the sites are first come first serve the park suggests doing this.) Campsite costs: \$14.00 - Campsites with water only; \$19.00 - Campsites with water and power; \$22.00 - RV/Trailer sites (full-hood-up). Check the Events Link on our website and join the FoGSPA e-mail listserve for updated information on current and future FoGSPA events. Go to the Mailing List link on the home page at AtlantaAstronomy.org. HOPE TO SEE YOU THERE!

Calendar

October 13th - General Meeting at Emory University 8PM
Speaker Dr. William Sheehan.

October 14th-Work Party at Walter Barber Observatory
Starts at 10AM.

October 21st - Annual Picnic at Villa Rica.

October 28th-CEWMA Chapter Meeting.

October 28th - Mentone, Ala. - Alternative Deep-sky event.

October 27th-29th - Chiefland, Fla. Special Deep-sky event.

November 1st- Gaines Auditorium at ASC.

Speaker Timothy Ferris 7PM.

November 4th-Walter Barber Observatory Open House.

November 10th-Open House" Sculpting the Sky" 7:30PM
Bradley Observatory at ASC. Speaker Amy Lovell.

November 17th-General Meeting at Emory University 8PM
Speaker TBA

November 25th-Deep Sky Session Woodruft BSC.

December 8th-Open House" Stonehenge to Keck" 7:30PM
Bradley Observatory ASC. Speaker Dr Chris DePree.

December 15th- General Meeting. Location TBA.
Planetarium program and a surprise.

AAC Club Officers

President: Sharon Carruthers

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VP Program Chairman: Alex Langoussis

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VP Observing Chairman: Rich Jakiel

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Treasurer: Peter Macumber

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Light Pollution: Tom Buchanan

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Hospitality & Refreshments: Julie Moore

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Ladies of the Night...Sky: Chrissy Mondell

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Friends of Georgia State Parks Astronomy: Joanne Cirincione

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Amatuer Telescope Making: Skip Cook

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CEWMA Coordinator: Philip Sacco

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Club Historian: Lenny Abbey

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Club Librarian: Jim Moore

770-242-6735 hollin@dwcs.com

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NightSky.Org

Did you know that there are two versions of the focal point available? One is the standard 8 page black and white one that is mailed to members. The other version is the web version. It is 10 to 15 pages long. It's also in color and includes pictures and an extra article or two.

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 **vega**. These names are case sensitive! Type AAC in capitals, type vega in lower case.

Focal Point Deadline

I'm looking for articles, pictures, and drawings on anything astronomy related. Perhaps you have taken a trip somewhere and did something astronomy related while there. Tell the rest of us about it. You can email it to me or send it to me. My home address is Keith Burns 3740 Burnt Hickory Road Marietta, Georgia 30064. Email address is Keith_B@bellsouth.net.

The **deadline** for the **November issue** is **October 30th**.

Magazine and Membership Renewal

You are sent a membership renewal two months before your membership expires. Your magazine renewals are sent to you by the publisher. Magazine renewals must be paid by the club. Remember to send renewals to the club with a check payable to the club. S&T is \$30. Astronomy is \$29. Club membership is \$25 or \$10 for a student.

October General Membership Meeting

Note that the date has changed just for this one month. This month's meeting will be Friday October 13, 2000. The featured speaker this month is Dr William Sheehan. The title of his talk is Neptune's Discovery: Crown Jewel of Celestial Mechanics, or Heist of the Century?

William Sheehan is a practicing psychiatrist with a life-long interest in astronomy. The year he graduated from medical school he published his first book, *Planets & perceptions, a book of the year of the Astronomical Society of the Pacific in 1988. He has written several other books, most notably *The Immortal Fire Within*, a highly acclaimed biography of astronomer Edward Emerson Barnard, based on original research in the archives of Vanderbilt University, Lick Observatory, and Yerkes Observatory, and *In Search of Planet Vulcan* (with Richard Baum), which a reviewer in *The Journal for the History of Astronomy* praised as containing the "the best popular history of celestial mechanics I have seen." He is a contributing editor to *Sky & Telescope*, assistant coordinator of the Solar System studies section of the Association of Lunar and Planetary Observers, and a member of the History of Astronomy Division of the American Astronomical Association, and a consultant to Committee 41 (history) of the International Astronomical Union. In addition to his historical work, he is a keen observer, especially of the Moon and planets. He spent the year 1999-2000 in New Zealand and while there was an honorary research associate of the Carter Observatory in Wellington.

Astronomical League News

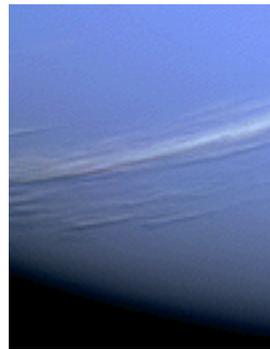
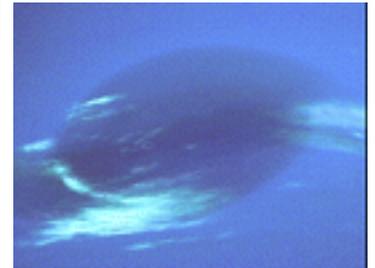
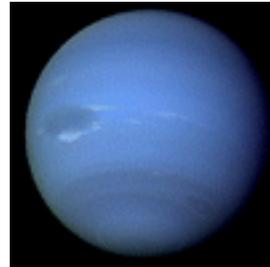
By Keith Burns

Do you want to have one of those cool Astronomical League pins to wear like some of your fellow club members do. All you



have to do is complete the requirements of one of the AL observing programs. There are 21 different observing programs available for you to do. Anything from observing the sun to logging the Messier ob-

jects. You can also observe the moon. Some of the programs require the use of binoculars instead of a telescope. So if you don't have a telescope, you can still do one of the programs with a standard pair of 7X35 binoculars. If you want information on the programs available, contact me by calling (home 770-427-1475) or email me (at Keith_B@bellsouth.net). You can also ask any club member wearing one of the observing award pins. They can give you some info on the particular observing program they have completed. Remember that as a member of the AAC you also have a membership in the Astronomical League.



Zombie Party Lost & Found

Sharon Carruthers

Several people left their dishes behind. They were washed and put under the counter in the Aquatic Center's kitchen. You can pick them up at the next Chapter Meeting. I have the Tilley hat and camping pot that were left behind in my possession - please e-mail me or give me a call so I can arrange getting them back to you.



The Focal Point

Newsletter of The Atlanta Astronomy Club, Inc.

FROM:

Keith Burns Email: Keith_b@bellsouth.net

3740 Burnt Hickory Road

Marietta, Georgia 30064

We're here to help! Here's how how to reach us:

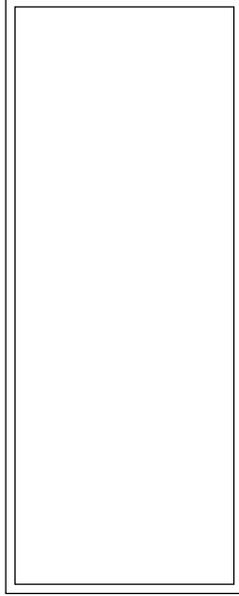
Atlanta Astronomy Club

PMB 305

3595 Canton Road A9

Marietta, GA 30066

FIRST CLASS



Legal Stuff

Here's a little info on most of the pictures used . Credit should be given to the proper folks just to make this legal. If you are curious, go visit some of these sites. Some pretty interesting stuff to see.

Page 4 pictures. 1) Discovery Communications Inc. Website address is www.discovery.com. 2) Friends of Georgia State Parks. Website address is www.dnr.state.ga.us/dnr/parks.

Page 5 pictures. 1) Bill Arnett web master. Images from NASA. Website is www.seds.org/nineplanets/nineplanets/nineplanets.html 2) Spock photo from Paramount Pictures.

Page 6, 7, & 11 pictures. 1) Halloween stuff from Jerry Wilson. Website address is <http://wilstar.com/holidays/hallowm.htm> 2) Atlas pictures from University of Milano. Website <http://mahler.brera.mi.astro.it/HEAVENS/ATLAS/atlanti.html> 3) Neptune photos from Caltech Institute of Technology. Website is <http://pds.jpl.nasa.gov/planets/> 4) Snoopy from Charles Schulz United Syn.

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://www.AtlantaAstronomy.Org>

Subscribe to the Atlanta Area Astronomers Mailing List!

List posting address: AAC@topica.com

To subscribe to the new list, send a message to: AAC-subscribe@topica.com

To drop out of the list, send a message to: AAC-unsubscribe@topica.com

For list information, go to: <http://www.topica.com/lists/AAC>

To tell me what a wonderful job I am doing, send messages to: LAbbey@mindspring.com