

# The Focal Point

The Atlanta Astronomy Club  
Established 1947  
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Editor: Keith Burns

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## In This Issue:

- Page 1...**April Banquet, Leif Robinson Speaker. Events calendar.
- Page 2...**Atlanta Astronomy Expo. ATM. Prez's Desk.
- Page 3-4...**How to get the Focal Point online. Elliott chapter news. AAC/ VBAS star party at Mentone. Directions.
- Page 4-5...**GASP! ShriII of the Night.
- Page 5...**March Meeting Minutes. Our New Observatory.
- Page 6-8...**New Observatory. Pictures to. First Try.
- Page 9...**Joining the AAC. When and how to submit articles to the Focal Point. Astronomical League. April Speaker Bio.
- Page 10...**Astronomy club contacts. Join the AAC listserv.

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## April Annual Banquet

The Atlanta Astronomy Club is presenting its Annual Banquet on Friday, April 20, at the Winship Ballroom in Emory University's student center. Our special guest is Leif Robinson, editor emeritus of Sky and Telescope. Hors D'Oeuvres are at 6:30, dinner at 7, and the talk at 8, with a reception to follow. (Don't worry if you get slowed down a bit in traffic. Since we are serving buffet style, it's not critical if you're a little late.)

The menu includes a choice of Italian Sausage Baked Ziti, Vegetarian Lasagna, or Chicken Parmesan, plus beverage, sides, and dessert. Cost is \$17.00 per person. Please send in your money promptly to Peter Macumber. The sooner we get the reservations in, the better we can plan this event. \*All reservations must be received no later than April 17. This is not a "show up and pay at the door" event.\*

The talk will be one that everyone can enjoy, so we encourage you to bring spouses, significant others, friends, etc. **Leif Robinson**, who will present "*Reflections of the Artist's Moon*."

Those of you who subscribe to the Focal Point by email should have received banquet information. Those who get the Focal Point by regular mail should receive the information shortly. Non-members are more than welcome to attend. Contact me

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## Calendar

April 6th-Special Open House at Bradley Observatory. Guest Speaker: Dr. John Morse. Talk about "The NASA Long Range Strategic Plan". Starts 8PM.

April 14th-Open House and Training at Walter Barber Observatory. Start Time: 5:30PM.

April 20th-Annual AAC Banquet. Location: Emory University. Speaker Leif Robinson, editor emeritus of Sky and Telescope. Register in advance. \$\$

April 21st-Deep Sky Observing at Mentone, AL. Joint Star Gaze with the folks of the Von Braun Astronomical Society of Huntsville.

April 21st-Charlie Elliott Chapter Meeting at the Visitor's Center. Topic: TBA. Observing after meeting at the observing field weather permitting .

April 28th-GASP-FDR State Park near Pine Mountain, GA. General Astronomy talk. Bonus: Mythology talk by Philip Sacco. Sidewalk astronomy to follow. Rain or shine.

May 5th-Atlanta Astronomy Expo. Bradley Observatory at Agnes Scott College. Runs from 8AM to 6PM. Speakers: Mel Bartels(Keynote), Chris Butler, Michael Covington, David Hanon, Chris Depree, Rich Jakiel and Philip Sacco. \$\$

May 18th- General Membership Meeting. 8PM at White Hall at Emory University. Dr. Amy Lovell of Agnes Scott College. 8PM. Topic: Studies of comets Hale-Bopp and Hyakutake. Elections!!!!

May 19th-Deep Sky observing at Woodruff Boy Scout Camp Bee/ Beaver Field.

June 15th-General Membership Meeting. Starts at 8PM. Details TBA.

June 16th or June 24th-Deep Sky Observing at PARI or Brasstown Bald Mtn. Final date and location TBA.

at [aleko@mindspring.com](mailto:aleko@mindspring.com) if you need more information.

In May our speaker will be Agnes Scott College's **Dr. Amy Lovell**.

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## First Annual Atlanta Astronomy Expo

May 5, 2001 ~ Bradley Observatory

**8:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.**

The beginning of the new millennium marks the first annual Atlanta Astronomy Expo! The Atlanta Astronomy Club will co-host this event with Agnes Scott College on **May 5, 2001** at the **Bradley Observatory**. **Speakers will include Mel Bartels, Chris Butler, Chris DePree, David Hanon, and our very own Philip Sacco.** There will also be planetarium shows, poster displays, vendors, art works, books, and a swap meet – there is something here for everyone! Our mission statement is to provide a forum for amateurs, professionals, and the Atlanta community for this event. We are confident this will bring astronomy awareness to the public here in Atlanta! Mark your calendars, join in the fun, and come support your club! Watch for flyers and details.

The ticket price for those folks who pre-register is \$8 for adults and \$4 for students. Ticket prices at the door are \$10 for adults and \$5 for students.

There will also be an **Astro-Imaging Contest**. There are **three categories**. The **first category** is **Photography**. **Second category** is **CCD or Video imaging**. The **third category** is **Other**. This includes drawings, sketches, paintings, models, or sculptures of planets, moons, galaxies, star clusters (open or globular), or nebula (reflection, planetary, or emission). There will be a prize awarded for each category. Prizes to be announced later. The items will be displayed in the hallway areas of Bradley Observatory the day of the event and judged at that time. See Rich Jakiel for more information on the contest.

See the Atlanta Astronomy Club website for more information at <http://www.atlantaastronomy.org/>.

We can still use volunteers to lend a hand with this event. If you would like to help, please contact either of the co-chairs: **Tom Crowley** at [crowleytj@hotmail.com](mailto:crowleytj@hotmail.com) or **Art Russell** at [artrussell@mindspring.com](mailto:artrussell@mindspring.com).

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## Amateur Telescope Makers Group

Interested in building your own telescope? Want to enhance your current scope with some features or fix problems with it? Do you want to grind your own mirror or learn how it is done? This is the group for you. The ATM group meets every couple of weeks at Skip Cook's house. He has generously offer this location for this purpose. Contact him via phone (404-325-4987) or email ([scz9@cdc.gov](mailto:scz9@cdc.gov)) for more information and directions.

Tracy Wilson runs the group and has much expertise to offer. You can contact him via email ([tracywilson@alltel.net](mailto:tracywilson@alltel.net)). Announcements of meetings will be posted on the AAC listserv. You can also find out about upcoming meetings from Skip. There are other folks that attend these meetings that may have some expertise to offer to help you with construction project you are working on. They are looking for a new place to hold meetings. They need a room that is fairly large and you don't mind it getting dirty. If you know of a place or have one available, please contact either Skip Cook or Tracy Wilson. Thanks.

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## FROM THE PREZ'S DESK.....

Our long awaited dream has come true! The pad & building are up at our new dark sky site at Woodruff; it is wired & the power should be hooked up this week. We all owe John Lentini our most heartfelt gratitude for connecting us with Tom Wilson and the Boy Scouts; and for making this happen so quickly. One way to repay him is to commit to doing a session with the Scouts this summer. It is part of our obligation to the Scouts for letting us use their property and to the AAC mandate "to promote & educate". If you can make it up even one night, please contact John. You don't have to be the best observer in the Club; just know how to run your own scope & point it to a few celestial highlights and you will make hundreds of boys happy. (We are going to see if we can arrange to move the session from Tuesday to Thursday nights, as this will make it easier for many of us to go up.)

Our April General Meeting will be the AAC's Annual Banquet with guest speaker Leif Robinson, Editor Emeritus at Sky & Telescope magazine. Dinner is \$17 per person. An invitation has been mailed or e-mailed to all members. Please respond ASAP to reserve your spot.

The AAC will be hosting its First Annual Atlanta Astronomy Expo on Saturday May 5, 2001 at Agnes Scott College. Featuring exhibits, vendors, speakers and hands-on demonstrations, we hope it will be the start of the biggest annual astronomy event in the South East. If you want the prestige of being in on the ground-floor, talk to Tom Crowley or Bear Simmons to find out how you can help.

Finally, our Elections are coming up in May. All our elected positions are still up for grabs (President, Treasurer, Observing Chair, Speaker Chair & Recording Secretary). Don't let being a newcomer to the AAC stop you from offering to run. We have the best crop of Executive and Board members this Club has seen and lots of help from the "old hands" (experience-wise, not age-wise!). With a membership of 400, we are the largest astronomy Club in the southeast but we are totally run by volunteers. Everyone works, has family commitments and does Club business in their "spare" time. We can only fulfill our

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commitments to our membership and take on new projects by depending on the support of our members. In the immortal words of Chrissy Mondell, "Many hands make light work!". If you want to consider stepping up to the plate and running for a position, contact Art Russell or Bob Smith.

Now a little lunacy: Both Jewish and Islamic religions use the moon as the basis of their religious observances, but the only Christian holiday based on the moon is Easter. It falls on the first Sunday two weeks after the first new moon of Spring.

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## Call for Designs

**By Richard Blackburn**

We need your help! We are planning to create lapel pins as a prize for completing the Peach Fuzzies at this years Peach State Star Gaze. If you have an idea, even if you are not artistic, please contact me at [rblackburn@mindspring.com](mailto:rblackburn@mindspring.com), by phone at 770-815-7387, or see me at a meeting.

We will be making the pins in 1/2" size, so limit the complexity of your ideas & drawings.

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## Elliott Corner- News of the Chapter

**by Philip Sacco**

The March meeting has come and went- Amazing isn't it?? The March meeting of the Charlie Elliott Chapter saw about 20 guest present. Provisional officers were selected: Ken Moss-Provisional Director, Ken Lilja- Provisional Observing supervisor, and Alesia Rast- Chapter Liaison. Chapter elections will be held in May, and everyone is encouraged to attend. A phone tree is in progress to reach all the new members from the east side of town. If you are interested in helping, please contact Alesia Rast at- 770-922-6371.

Chapter meetings are held on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday of the month at the Visitor Center of the Elliott Management Area, 7:30.

Next meetings:

April 21<sup>st</sup>- Astronomy introduction for the beginner. Lesson plan from the Universe Sampler. Observing following meeting at observing field. Constellation of the Month- LEO.

May 19<sup>th</sup>- Join us for a covered dish diner at 5pm at the Visitor Center. General election for the Chapter. Slide show and discussion on observing Mars. Constellations of the month- Ursa Major, Coma Bernices, Corvus, Virgo, Asterion Et Chara.

June 16<sup>th</sup>- Watch for a time change for the chapter meeting due to Daylight Savings. Constellations of the month- Bootes, Libra, Serpens, Corona Borealis, Ursa Minor.

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## Getting The Focal Point Online

Did you know that there are two versions of the focal point

available? One is the standard 8 page b&w photo copied that is mailed to members. The other version is available on the web. It is 10 to 15 pages long. Web version is in color with pictures and an extra article (or two).

The Focal Point is available online in PDF format. The free Adobe(R) Reader allows you to view, navigate, and print PDF files across all major computing platforms. Download the free reader at [www.adobe.com](http://www.adobe.com)

Visit [NightSky.Org/aac](http://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 Peter Macumber an e-mail and Keith Burns will stop sending you a snail-mail copy. The Focal-Point web can be entered by using the Username of **AAC** and a password of **Orion**. These names are case sensitive! Type **AAC** in all capitals, type **Orion** exactly as you see it here.

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## AAC/VBAS Stargaze Mentone, Alabama

**When:** Saturday April 21<sup>st</sup>. The event starts at sunset but you are welcome to come in the afternoon and setup early. **What:** It is the Semi-annual Atlanta Astronomy Club/ Von Braun Astronomical Society stargaze. This is the official April deep sky event for the Atlanta Astronomy Club. **Alternatives:** Of course, I anticipate many folks going to CEWMA or Woodruff instead. That's fine. This event is geared towards those folks who want a change of venue under some pretty dark skies.

**Who:** This is a chance for us to get together with members of the Von Braun Astronomical Society of Huntsville. Roger Dowiat who is a club member has offered this site for us to use for this event. **Where:** This location sits atop of Lookout Mountain just over the of Alabama border. It's only about 90 miles northwest of Atlanta. It's located a few miles east of the town of Mentone. If you still aren't sure where this is, it is located southwest of Chattanooga and northwest of Rome, Ga.

**Amenities:** Well there's no running water or toilets. You are welcome to camp. There is some ac power access. Dark skies are plentiful. The only light dome is the town of Ft Payne which is southwest of here. Height is another bonus as this place sits at 2000 feet above sea level. Besides, dark skies there are other things to see in the area. Desoto Falls is about 5 miles south of the very small town of Mentone. Mentone sits on the western edge of Lookout Mountain. Desoto state park is about 10 miles south of Mentone. Also located to the south is Little River Canyon WMA which offers several beautiful falls, canyon side views, scenic drives, and hiking trails. Questions: Contact Keith Burns at 770-427-1475 evenings or email at [Keith\\_B@bellsouth.net](mailto:Keith_B@bellsouth.net). I will be out of town April 3-10.

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## Directions to Mentone Site From Atlanta

1) Take I-75 north from Atlanta. 2) Take I-75 to Adairsville

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exit 306. This is GA 140. Exit interstate here. 3) At end of ramp turn left onto GA 140. 4) Take GA 140 west to US 27. 5) Turn right onto US 27. Head north on US 27 to Summerville. 6) Upon entering the town of Summerville, look for GA 48 on left hand side of road. Turn left onto GA 48. 7) Take 48 west. You will pass through the towns of Menlo and Cloudland. After Cloudland, the road crosses the AL/GA border into Alabama. 8) GA 48 becomes AL 117. Travel west on 117 for several miles. 9) Look for a church called Mentone Church of God. The church is on the right side of the road. Past the church, look for DeKalb county road 644. The road is on the left side of the road. It is a gravel road. 10) Turn left onto 644 and travel for ½ a mile. Look for two driveways on the left hand side of the road. The driveways are close together. There should be several large rocks next to the driveways. Turn left into the second driveway and go past the new house on the left. 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. Drive past the other end of the pond. The main setup area is between the old farm house and pond.

For those feeling adventuresome, Take US 278 west from Atlanta to the town of Rockmart. At the second traffic light in Rockmart turn right onto GA 101. Take 101 north to Rome. It is about 23 miles distance. Just after you enter into the Rome city limits, the road climbs up a steep hill. This is followed by a drop down the other side. At the bottom of the hill, the 101 crosses over US 27. Continue north on 101 for another ½ mile. At this point, 101 turns left but you want to keep going straight. Then the road merges into US 27. Take US 27 north. Just after you pass Floyd Medical Center, US 27 turns right. Follow US 27 out of town. About 10 miles up the road you will cross over GA 140. Continue north on US 27 to Summerville. Then directions above from numbers 6 through 10.

There is a power pole near the house. You can run a cord from there if you need power for your scope. It's a temporary power.

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## Georgia Astronomy in State Parks (GASP)

**Joanne Cirincione, GASP**

### **Tallulah Gorge State Park – 3/17/01**

I want to thank all of you who came out to Tallulah Gorge on 3/17. We had a great club turnout! Though the skies were not clear we were able to see some stars through the thin clouds. Sharon had to do her presentation twice since the crowd came in two shifts. There were about 35-40 campers at her presentation. They followed us down to the helicopter field where we had one scope set up. (The sky wasn't worth setting up more than one.) We ended the night by having a "huge" fire around the main campfire ring. Thanks to Matthew Macumber for the bonfire!

I wanted to thank Karla Rae from Tallulah Gorge for keeping the faith in us. We don't have much luck when it comes to the weather. I also want to thank: Sharon, Peter, Matthew and David Macumber, Keith Burns, Tom Faber, Kat Sarbell, Bear Simmons, Ken Adams, Tom and Lynn Crowley, Harold and Claudia Champ, Dallas Rogers and I believe we had some folks on the field who didn't stay long.

Some of us braved the Gorge on Sunday. Though we didn't go down the 600 stairs this time we did hike the rim. What a beautiful hike! That one scene you could never get tired of looking at!

### **FDR State Park 4/28/01**

Mark your calendars for Saturday, April 28 for our 2<sup>nd</sup> trip to FDR State Park. If it is anything like last year then you will be in for an awesome sky. We will start out around sunset with Sharon Carruthers doing the presentation on General Astronomy. As a bonus, Philip Sacco will be doing his famous mythology talk. His talk, along with observing, will follow the presentation. This will all take place at the overlook at the office. If you need any help with your scopes, Peter Macumber and Keith Burns, our resident "scopemen", will be there to help you. Bring a chair or blanket with you and settle in for a long, fun night!

You will be responsible for your own camping arrangements. For reservations call (770) 389-7275 or (1-800) 864-7275. If you plan on joining us please drop me an e-mail at [starrynights@AtlantaAstronomy.org](mailto:starrynights@AtlantaAstronomy.org) so we can look for you.

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## In The Chill (Shrill) Of The Night!!

**By Dallas Rodgers**

My adventure began when I awoke early Sunday morning to my own nature call around 2 or 3 am. I'm sure this seemingly normal situation resulted in disturbing the entire campground. To my chagrin, in my normal and then ..... I bolted awake as the **alarm system** went off - honk - honk - honk - with lights flashing too!!!! I forgot to disengage the alarm system before messing with the door! Like a bolt of lightning, I was jolted awake, but with all synapses snapped, I stumbled for my keys, finally having to resort to a flashlight before I could find them. I quickly turned the alarm off, but my heart was thumping in my throat by this time.

The only thing missing from my embarrassing clash with the quietness of nature was a mag -100 spotlight on the guilty vehicle! I thought perhaps of sneaking out under cover of darkness, but alas I remembered the gate being locked and was sure if I jumped out to unlock it something would happen and I would be locked out of my vehicle. I pondered my dilemma of creating such a serious environmental impact - first light pollution everywhere, and now noise pollution to boot from my own

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state of the art alarm system!

This was not the kind of statement I intended to leave at my first encounter with GASP, even though gasp was exactly what I did. There was only one other vehicle on the field, occupied by Peter's sleeping son, and I thought perhaps a bribe might work to keep my escapade a little secret, but with much of the campground abuzz with flashlights that looked like fireflies from my vantage point, I decided that my own silence, darkness, and increased bladder control were my best options to blend back into the background. I apologize to all who were there and suffered! And speaking of suffering, I continued to suffer until around 7am when all of my control mechanisms were exhausted. I quickly DEACTIVATED the alarm, unlocked the door, bolted to the privy, and slowly edged my Explorer out and headed home. I will forever gasp as I reflect on my first experience with GASP! My apologies to all who shared in this with me.

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## General Meeting March 16 Minutes

Number in attendance: 109 – 10 non-members – 4 New Members - **Sharon Carruthers, President** – Sharon opened the meeting by thanking Julie Moore for the great refreshments. She asked for reports from the Officers and Committee Heads. **Rich Jakiel, Observing Chairman** – Announced a work party for Villa Rica, during the week, to dig a trench and other maintenance. Only time the equipment could be rented. Woodruff Dark Sky – 3/24; working on an orientation/training for April. **Keith Burns, Corresponding Secretary** – Announced April 2 deadline for April's Focal Point. **ALCOR Rep** - Keith presented Paul DiBono with the Urban List Certificate and Pin, he also presented Phil Sacco with the Planetary Certificate and Pin. **Alex Langoussis, Program Chairman** – Announced April's "meeting" will be our Annual Banquet. This is a pre-paid event only. No walk-ins. Encouraged all to stay for a small reception after the dinner to mingle with our guest speaker Leif J. Robinson, former Editor of Sky and Telescope Magazine. May's speaker will be Dr. Amy Lovell of Agnes Scott College.

**Mark Banks, Sidewalk Astronomy** – Three events are waiting to be scheduled. They were cancelled due to weather. 3/20-Tucker Rec. Center. Let Mark know if you have an interest in helping him or have an event you want help with. [Bank4@mindspring.com](mailto:Bank4@mindspring.com). **Joanne Cirincione, GASP** – Starting off this year with a great schedule. March, Tallulah Gorge State Park; April, FDR State Park; July, Tallulah Gorge; September, Labor Day, Amicalola Falls State Park; November, Unicoi and Tallulah Gorge State Parks. We have some open dates we are hoping to fill. **John Lentini, Woodruff** – In the process of clearing/building a campground. Need used furniture. Need volunteers for the annual summer Boy Scout season. Volunteers are needed Tuesday's during the summer. This is our agreement with Woodruff for having the land and facili-

ties to use. Contact John Lentini. Information on last page of Focal Point. **Phil Sacco, CEWC Coordinator** – Provisional elections in March followed by observing session. Messier Marathon. Ken Poshedly – **PSSG Coordinator** – Help is needed in preparing the mailings. Contact Kenpo at [ken.poshedly@mindspring.com](mailto:ken.poshedly@mindspring.com).

**Tom Crowley, Nominating Committee** – Please consider running for an Officer position or Board Member positions. All members are welcome. Contact Tom Crowley, [crowleytj@hotmail.com](mailto:crowleytj@hotmail.com), Bob Smith, [bsmith@msn.com](mailto:bsmith@msn.com), or Art Russell, [artrussell@mindspring.com](mailto:artrussell@mindspring.com). **Astronomy Expo** – May 5, 2001. First Annual. Need volunteers for all areas to help with the event. Contact Bear Simmons if interested in helping. [Bearsimmons@earthlink.net](mailto:Bearsimmons@earthlink.net). For general information contact, Tom Crowley or Art Russell. [Crowleytj@hotmail.com](mailto:Crowleytj@hotmail.com) or [artrussell@mindspring.com](mailto:artrussell@mindspring.com).

**Alex Langoussis, Program Chairman** – Introduced our guest speaker for the evening, Dr. Todd Henry of Georgia State University's Astronomy Department. He is also the deputy project scientist and coordinator of research for NASA's Nstars Project.

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## Our New Observatory

### A Commentary by Alex Langoussis

It appears that our long hoped-for dark site observatory is finally becoming a reality! One of the reasons I joined this club in 1979 was our new dark site at Villa Rica. I eventually became inactive for quite a few years, until becoming observing chairman in 1993. By then, it was very apparent that Villa Rica was nearing the end of its useful life for use as a dark site. It was time for the club to search further.

So Dave Riddle, the previous observing chairman, and I headed for the hills. We set out one night to see just how far we would have to go to get dark skies. We stopped at Jasper. Not bad overhead, but we kept going. Just past Ellijay was better. We were of the belief we would need to go at least that far. We finally ended up east of Blue Ridge. We parked the car, and admired the view. All we had was an Astroscan, but the view that night of the Whirlpool was pretty impressive.

Little did we know it would be another eight years before the club had a dark site observatory. Over the years, after numerous trips to the mountains by many different people, we hit many dead ends, as well as a few sites that looked promising. Even though, in the end, they didn't pan out, we still learned a lot. Jim Wyrosdick hosted many observing sessions at R Ranch and at his home on Milky Way (and still does), but with the number of club members we have, it would have been a hardship on Jim. The Turkey Farm near Blue Ridge gave us some wonderful skies. But we learned that accessibility is important,

*Continued on page nine.*

## New Observatory

By Keith Burns

The new observatory located up at Woodruff is almost 100% completed. As of this writing, the building has been built and wired. Electricity is now on site. There are three piers permanently mounted for SCT telescope owners to use. Each one has its own outlet to use. Soon water will be available on the edge of the field. The road leading into the field has been widened and gravel placed. This means the road is solid now and no more sliding in the mud. Near the cabin



is a gate that will have a lock on it in the future. There is also a kiosk that will contain info and a sign in sheet. These sheets are not available yet. The Kiosk construction is not finished yet. Details about how to access the site will be available in next month's issue. Contact John Lentini for more information.

Picture top of page is the observing field and new building. We are facing west. Note that the observatory is oriented north-south. Picture in middle is a closeup of the new building, observing pad, and three piers. Picture at bottom of page is the gate and kiosk. Not pictured is the cabin located to the left side of the road. The gate is a 1/4 mile from the observing field.





Pictured to the left is area that will be made into a camp area for our use and the use of the boyscouts. This spot is located to the northwest of the observatory building. The campground will be setup the same way as the other camp areas in Woodruff.



Pictured to the right is an inside view of the new building. Note that the building is about a foot below the setup pad so the building will not be in the way of viewing.



Pictured to the left is John Lentini, Peter Macumber, and Sharon Macumber/Carruthers. John is the main driving force behind getting this project built and locating the land.



Pictured above is the cabin that is located next to the gate. So where's the rocking chairs? Behind it is this small pond. This is what I call mountain living. It's especially beautiful at night when the light from the stars reflect on the glassy surface of the water.

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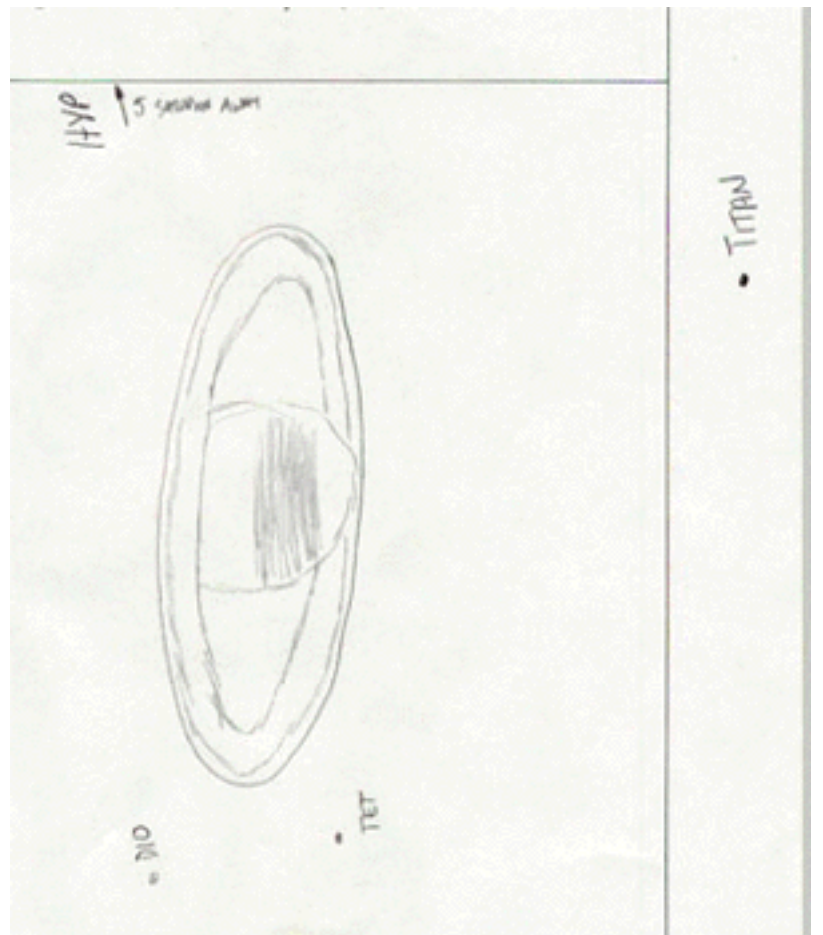
## 1st Try

by **Richard Blackburn**

Well, I finally decided to try my hand at drawing what I see at the telescope. I figured I would try planets first, as they are brighter. I went out to the Barber Observatory on 18 March, 2001 to use the 10" Cave. First up was Venus. I just got it before it sank into the trees. It was a very thin crescent. Then, I waited for it to get dark enough to try drawing Saturn. While drawing Saturn, I saw 6 moons. I used SkyMap 7.0 to identify the moons after I got home. I labeled them in the drawing. I am definitely not an artist, but I think these pictures are close to what I saw.

<http://rblackburn.home.mindspring.com/sat.jpg>

<http://rblackburn.home.mindspring.com/venus.jpg>





as well as security, so we did not build there. We learned that private property would be our best bet, but where?

We now know that the answer was the Woodruff Scout Camp. As a coincidence, it is located just a few miles from where Dave and I observed the Whirlpool that night eight years ago on our first scouting trip.

But Woodruff did not “just happen”. John Lentini closes his emails with the phrase “Nothing worthwhile happens unless someone makes it happen.” Of course, in this case, the person who made it happen was ... John! This club owes him a great debt of gratitude for finally “making it happen”. His persistence and “whatever it takes” attitude have given this club a facility that we were unable to obtain during the previous eight years.

So, now we finally have a dark site observatory, one that is accessible, secure, and DARK. It's a place where we can view and enjoy the deep sky the way it should be viewed. No longer do we need to settle for just “detecting” deep sky targets. Now, we can appreciate their full glory. We no longer need to look through a dirty window. Rather, we now have a clear window to the universe. I urge you all to take advantage of this new facility.

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## Website Report

The website has proven itself in attracting new members and keeping members informed of club events. This can only happen if we are given the information to post on the website. If you have any suggestions, comments or ideas please send them along to the [webmaster@AtlantaAstronomy.org](mailto:webmaster@AtlantaAstronomy.org).

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## Astronomical League

As a member of the AAC, you also are a member of the Astronomical League automatically. This entitles you to many benefits. The most popular benefit is the 21 observing programs the AL has made available to us. The list of programs includes Lunar, Messier, Herschel 400, Planetary, Urban, Meteor, Sunspot, Universe, and Several Binocular programs. This is just a small sample of the lists available for you to take on as an observing project. You don't have to be a seasoned veteran of astronomy to do one of these programs. Just be eager to try and willing to learn. Contact Keith Burns at ([keith\\_b@bellsouth.net](mailto:keith_b@bellsouth.net)) for more info. He is you AL representative. You can also find out more at the AL website at ([www.astroleague.com](http://www.astroleague.com)). Once you get to the home page of the AL website look in the section labeled observing clubs. You can go down the list from there and find out which program is right for you.

The following people have or will receive an award for completing one of the above programs. Chrissy Mondell the Honorary Telescopic Messier to be awarded in the near future.

She is number 1824. Philip Sacco for finally turning in the long missing Universe Sampler program. He is number 23. Since he has completed 9 programs now, we need to start calling him “The General”. Finally, Stef Whetstone for completing the Telescopic Messier program. He is number 1823.

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## April Speaker's Bio in his own words

Leif J. Robinson joined Sky & Telescope in 1962. To celebrate the start of the new millennium, he retired as the magazine's Editor in Chief after 20 years at the helm. He is the founding editor of SkyWatch, Sky's annual, and remains Editor of its Observer's Guides series.

Leif is an elected member of all major professional astronomical organizations and an honorary member of the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada. He has served on the American Astronomical Society's Publications Board and presently serves on its Working Group for Amateur-Professional Cooperation. He has received the Astronomical Society of the Pacific's Dorthea Klumpke-Roberts Award for astronomy popularization.

Leif has traveled to all continents, often in search of total solar eclipses or other astronomical events, but always in search of birds and other wildlife.

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## Focal Point Article Submissions

I'm looking for articles, pictures, and drawings on anything astronomy related. All formats are acceptable. Pictures can be sent as either JPEGs, GIFs, or other formats. I can also scan in hard copy pictures. Articles can either be sent via postal mail or email. Address it to 3740 Burnt Hickory Road Marietta, Georgia 30064. Email address is [Keith\\_B@bellsouth.net](mailto:Keith_B@bellsouth.net). You can submit articles anytime up and including the deadline date. The **deadline** for the **May issue** is **April 30, 2001**.

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## Joining the AAC

You can join the AAC by filling out a membership form and mailing it along with you dues to the address printed on it. These forms are available from our Treasurer (Peter Macumber). He carries copies of these forms to most club functions. You can also download the form from the club website at ([www.atlantaastronomy.org](http://www.atlantaastronomy.org)). Once you find the form. Download it and print it. Fill out and mail the form in. Fee structure is \$25 for family and single members. Student fee is \$10. Student fee applies only to students currently enrolled. While the club does have PO Box address, it is best to mail the form to Peter's house. He gets the stuff much faster that way. If you want to get either Sky & Tel Magazine(\$30)or Astronomy Magazine(\$29), include that with you dues made payable to Atlanta Astronomy Club.

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## *The Focal Point*

Newsletter of The Atlanta Astronomy Club, Inc.

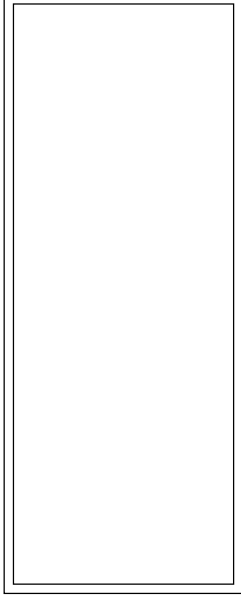
FROM:

Keith Burns Email: Keith\_b@bellsouth.net

3740 Burnt Hickory Road

Marietta, Georgia 30064

FIRST CLASS



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

Atlanta Astronomy Club

PMB 305

3595 Canton Road A9

Marietta, GA 30066

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. Membership is open to all. Atlanta Astronomy Club Hot Line: Timely information on the night sky and astronomy in the Atlanta area. Call **770-621-2661**. Internet Home Page: <http://www.AtlantaAstronomy.Org>

**Subscribe to the Atlanta Area Astronomers Mailing List:** The name of the new list is: AstroAtlanta. The address for messages is: AstroAtlanta@yahoogroups.com . To add a subscription, send a message to: AstroAtlanta-unsubscribe@yahoogroups.com . To cancel your membership, send a message to AstroAtlanta-unsubscribe@yahoogroups.com . Messages for the list-owner (me) go to: AstroAtlanta-owner@yahoogroups.com or to (L.Abbey@mindspring.com). The "home page" for the list, from which you can change your account defaults is: <http://www.yahoooogroups.com/group/AstroAtlanta>. This list is owned by **Lenny Abbey** who is the **Club Historian**. You can reach him via phone at 404-634-1222.

## AAC Contacts

**President:** Sharon Carruthers 770-941-4640  
SCarruthers@NightSky.Org

**VP Program Chairman:** Alex Langoussis 770-591-5776  
aleko@mindspring.com

**VP Observing Chairman:** Rich Jakiel 404-352-0916  
DeepSky@mindspring.com

**Treasurer:** Peter Macumber 770-941-4640  
PMacumber@nightsky.org

**Recording Secretary / Georgia Astronomy in State Parks:** Joanne Cirincione 770-898-4271  
starrynights@AtlantaAstronomy.org

**Corresponding Secretary/ ALCOR:** Keith Burns 770-427-1475  
Keith\_B@Bellsouth.net

**Board Chairman:** Bear Simmons 404-299-7511  
bearsimmons@earthlink.net

**Board:** Tom Crowley 404-233-6886 crowleytj@hotmail.com

**Board:** Tom Faber 770-923-6832 tfaber@america.net

**Board/ Boy Scouts Liaison:** John Lentini 770-984-0175  
johnlentini@yahoo.com

**Board/ Librarian:** Jim Moore 770-242-6735  
hollin@dwcs.com

**Board:** Bob Smith 770-886-8191 bsmith@msn.com

**Sidewalk Astronomy:** Mark Banks 404-257-2766  
bank4@mindspring.com

**Amateur Telescope Making:** Skip Cook 404-325-4987  
scz9@cdc.gov

**Light Trespass:** Tom Buchanan 770-521-2136

**Website:** Matthew Macumber 770-941-4640  
webmaster@atlantaastronomy.org

**Equipment Training:** Stef Whetstone 770-460-7678  
swhetstone@mindspring.com

**Villa Rica Coordinator:** Ralph Bowman 770-926-1424  
rdbowman@ga.prestige.net

**CEWMA Coordinator:** Philip Sacco 404-296-6332  
ppsacco@mindspring.com

**Refreshments:** Julie Moore 770-242-6735 julie@dwcs.com