

# The Focal Point

The Atlanta Astronomy Club  
Established 1947  
June 2002

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Editor: Keith Burns

ASTRONOMY

CAFE

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## Atlanta Astronomy Club Annual Banquet

The Atlanta Astronomy Club is presenting its annual banquet on Friday, June 21<sup>st</sup> at Dave & Busters, right off of I-85 and Steve Reynolds Boulevard in Duluth. Beginning at 7 pm, we will have hors d'oeuvres and a cash bar. Following at 8 pm is the buffet with roast beef and/or chicken, vegetable sides, beverages, and desserts. The price for the dinner is \$22 and payable before the event! The complete information is on our website.

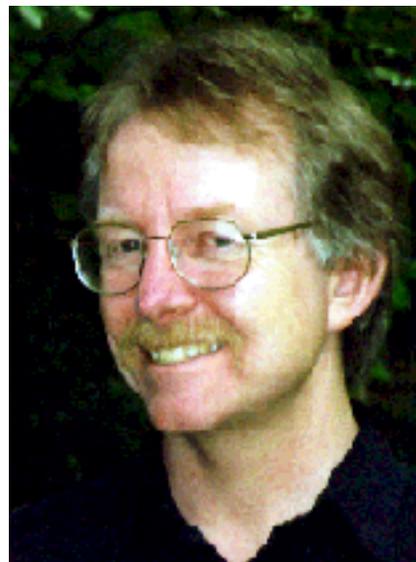
Our special guest speaker is Dr. Sten Odenwald who has a new book coming out the first of June, *Patterns in the Void*, just in time for his presentation! Dr. Odenwald is also the author of *The Astronomy Café* and *The 23<sup>rd</sup> Cycle: Learning to Live With a Stormy Star*. He also hosts an award-winning website called the Astronomy Café where he has answered over 45,000 questions since 1995. ([www.astronomycafe.net](http://www.astronomycafe.net)) He has also written articles for The Washington Post; Sky and Telescope; and Astronomy magazines. Dr. Odenwald's research work involves the discovery and investigation of the Cosmic Infrared Background and the 'first light' from infant galaxies. He is the recipient of the 1999 Goddard Space Flight

Center Excellence in Outreach Award and the Popular Writing Award from the American Astronomy Society, Solar Physics Division. Dr. Odenwald received his PhD in astronomy from Harvard University in 1982.

Following is a synopsis that Dr. Odenwald sent about his upcoming book!

### *Patterns in the Void: Why Nothing is Important*

As we enter the 21st Century, we have succeeded in blotting out the Milky Way from our skies as our backyard security lights and city lights blaze forth. In the desperate race for "Perfect Security," we have lost our sense of The Infinite which only the night sky can give us. Astronomers, meanwhile, have uncovered dark energies and matter lurking in the cosmic Void which are collectively driving our cosmos to a bleak eternal future in which only our own Milky Way will remain as a candle shining in the intergalactic blackness. At the other extreme, physicists have discovered that space and time are not what we normally think they are, and that our bodies are built from



shimmering quantum fields and patterns etched in the fabric of space. In the end, the destiny of our own universe is written within that dark emptiness that you see each night. In this talk, I want to reacquaint you with the primal mystery of darkness and space, and show you why it is that space and darkness, what the Ancients called 'the Void', is much more

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than Nothing. I will draw upon rare and peculiar human experiences to help you see a very different, and emotionally compelling, picture of what space, matter and cosmos are really all about. In return, you may find your sense of wonderment and awe of the night sky, rekindled anew.

This talk is one that EVERYONE will enjoy, so please feel free to invite family and friends. I will have copies of the book available for sale and Dr. Odenwald will personally autograph these for you after his presentation. Mark this date and secure your place!

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## FROM THE PREZ

Here in June we are still being dazzled by the planetary dance. Last night in Rabun County Jupiter and Venus were brilliant beyond words from Dan Gap; like the two bright headlights of an oncoming car on a country road late at night (in the sky) ... coming right at you. I was mesmerized. I was the proverbial deer in their headlights.

This month we are holding our annual banquet on the 21st. Usually this is held in April, but had to be moved this year to June and will be held at Dave and Busters. This takes the place of our monthly meeting. (See details in the Focal Point.) I have been assured by many people that the food is excellent, and we know that the speaker is also. Sten Odenwald has his PhD in Astronomy. His job is to educate people about Astronomy and he has taken his mission to the Web, establishing the highly successful "Ask An Astronomer" site among others. He also has a new book out. I am convinced he will be a great speaker for us, and I urge everyone to come out

This invitation is especially extended to the newer members. I know that new members quite often feel overwhelmed and isolated in the first few months of their membership, because I was also so overwhelmed just shy of five years ago. Orientations at VR, Public Outreach Events at both VR and Charlie Elliot, GASP Events, the recent Atlanta Astronomy Expo, the Peach State Star Gaze (PSSG), and this month's Banquet are perfect for socializing and getting to know each other. Most of these events were actually designed with this in mind; so please come on out.

In addition, at future monthly meetings Art Russell and Carol Abernathy have agreed to be the club's Welcoming Committee for new and prospective members. I can't think of two nicer or more qualified people to do this. In addition, everyone should feel free to contact me with any concerns at the following numbers and e-mail address.

Bear Simmons; Phone: (home): 404-299-7511, (cell): 404-210-8373 E-mail: bearsimmons@earthlink.net.

Hope to see you all on the 21st.

Bear

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## Dark Sky June 8 Brasstown Bald

Our June 8 Dark Sky will be at Brasstown Bald. Please note, that this is a day-use Federal park; they are giving us special permission to stay through the night. So please respect their rules against setting up the "appearance of camping".

NO fires. NO tents (you can sleep in your vehicle). PAY the parking fee which is \$2.00. If possible, vacate the park before 10 a.m. Sunday, before the park opens, so we don't attract the attention of those who come into the park on Sunday morning.

Woodruff is also still available for those who want to set up camp; or leave Brasstown and get some shut-eye before driving home (Brasstown is about ½ hour from Woodruff). The week of June 2 – 8 is for leader training.

Sharon Carruthers

Observing Chair

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## Joint Star Party July 6th

On Saturday July 6th the AAC and the VBAS will hold a joint observing session near Mentone, Alabama. Club member Roger Dowait has offered a site for us to use that night. The site is located along the Georgia-Alabama border west of Summerville, Georgia. No speakers featured but just good old fashion observing. You can either sleep in your vehicle or setup a tent. For more information, contact Keith Burns at Keith\_B@Bellsouth.net or phone evenings 770-427-1475.

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## Georgia Astronomy in State Parks-GASP

### Monte Sano State Park - Huntsville, Ala

We had a nice turnout with our club members in Huntsville, considering the distance. I want to thank the Macumbers, Keith Burns, Tom Faber, Kat Sarbell and Charles Hinley for braving the 3 1/2 to 4 hour drive. We had a nice turnout with the campers and the view of the full moon at the overlook was just awesome. We were treated to the ISS passing over us which was greeted with excitement from both the children and parents.

Sharon, Keith and I were treated to a tour of the Von Braun's observatory and planetarium. Some great stuff there. They have a pretty impressive library going on there also. We also took a tour of the Space & Rocket Center and saw the IMAX film on the ISS. We were invited to go back next year and we are all looking forward to it.

### Tallulah Gorge State Park - June 15, 2002

Please join us at TGSP on Saturday, June 15. The presentation

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starts at 9:00p followed by observing at the helicopter field next to the campground. We encourage experienced and new members to come out, relax, camp and have some fun. To join the GASP listserve go to our website at AtlantaAstronomy.org, 1) AAC On-line – 2) Mailing Lists - 3) GASP link. All updates and information will be posted here.

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. Membership fee's are **\$30** for a family or single person membership. College Students membership fee is **\$15**. These fees are for a one year membership.

Magazine subscriptions to Sky & Tel or Astronomy can be purchased through the club for a reduced rate. The fees are **\$30** for Sky & Tel and **\$29** for Astronomy. Renewal forms will be sent to you by the magazines. Send the renewal form along with you check to the Atlanta Astronomy Club treasurer.

**Club address is:**                      **Treasurer's address is:**

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PMB 305  
3595 Canton Road A9  
Marietta, Georgia 3006

Peter Macumber AAC  
1057 Trestle Drive  
Austell, Georgia 30106

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>

Send suggestions, comments, or ideas about the website to [webmaster@AtlantaAstronomy.org](mailto:webmaster@AtlantaAstronomy.org). Also send information on upcoming observing events, meetings, and other events to the webmaster.

## Boy Scout Volunteers

We have about half of the commitments we need for Summer Camp Astronomy. Here are the days we have nobody signed up for yet: **Woodruff** : June 13, 25, 27 July 9, 18, 23, 25. **Bert Adams**: June 6 July 7, 8, 10, 11, 13, 17, 18.

The following days have only one astronomer per night signed up so far: **Woodruff**: June 18 July 2. **Bert Adams** June 11, 13, 18, 20, 25 July 14, 15.

Call a friend and make arrangements to come out and practice your constellation-finding, public-speaking, and relating-to-young-people skills. Your participation is good for the Scouts, for the Club and for you-and it's fun. Please contact me at 770-984-0175 evenings or email at [johnlentini@yahoo.com](mailto:johnlentini@yahoo.com), to **sign up. Thanks.**

## Woodruff Summer Guidelines

The Woodruff Camping season starts June 3 and runs to the first week of August. The Club cannot schedule any events up there during this time, but individual members may use the site. Contact John Lentini is you plan to be there and make sure he has your release form. He will arrange with the Rangers to open the main gate to the field (which has a key, not combination, lock). The sign-in sheet is in the mailbox located on the bulletin board across from the cabin. The key to the warm-up

shed is inside the electrical panel. Contact John Lentini to get the combination - you will need it to get into the shed & to turn on the power to the piers. There is a sink with running water on the field.

The campers leave Sat & arrive Sun, so Sat night is a busy time for the staff as they clean up & get ready for the next group. Kendall, the Camp manager, is very concerned with the safety & security of the AAC. Do your best to cultivate his respect. We want to keep relations between the AAC and the AAC (Atlanta Area Council) on the best possible footing so, PLEASE, respect the rules of the Camp when you are up there- the speed limit on Camp property is 15 mph - non-Scouters are permitted access to Bee Field but not the rest of the Camp- no drinking (alcohol is NOT permitted on Scout property!), smoking or swearing in front of the little campers.

## PSSG Profits and LCD Vote

This year the AAC Board split our expenses into two streams: annual expenses, paid for by dues (printing the FP and the speaker budget use up more than 60% of our dues); and capital expenses, that had no funding source. The Board approved, in principal and submitted to the General membership at the April Meeting, two Proposals: 1) That we spend up to 100% of the profits from PSSG'01 (\$7,000) to pay for the "extras" & unfinished items; including up to \$5,000 for an LCD projector and laptop in order to meet our speaker, outreach & educational goals. (passed 42 to 0 against/abstain). 2) That up to 50% of future PSSG profits would released to fund non-operating expenses (passed 42 to 3 against/0 abstain).

### The AAC Needs YOU to make programs for the LCD!!

A member of the AAC, who now lives in Florida, ordered & shipped to us a Toshiba LCD 1250 lumen projector for cost. The laptop we wanted was no longer available, so we are waiting to find one on sale (less than \$1,000).

We spent a lot of money on this item so we want to see it used as much as possible to meet our goals of public outreach & education. This is where we need YOU, our members, to help with ideas for programs and, especially, to help create them.

You don't need PowerPoint – if you create a "script" and a series of program files to illustrate it, you can either e-mail the files or save them to a disc and send them to Peter Macumber or John Lentini who can load them into PowerPoint. (This is what Julius Benton, from ALPO, did for his talk in March).

Some ideas from programs: 1) A short program about the AAC; PSSG; etc. 2) Our new member Orientation. 3) Introduction to astronomy for various age groups – GASP; elementary & jr high/high school talks; etc. 4) Introduction to binocular astronomy with "where to find" charts. 5) How a telescope works. 6)

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Dark sky information. 7) A planetarium program and/or the sky this month. 8) Specialty programs – women in astronomy; star birth and death; the Messier marathon guide; the ISS; the Hubble; etc. 9) Your ideas.

We have created an AV Committee (chaired by Peter Macumber & John Lentini) which is responsible for the maintenance of the LCD/LT and who will make it & the programs available to the members. Ideally, anyone who has some experience with this equipment can join the Committee and will be available to go to the public event to run the LCD (just as AV depts. do at schools and businesses). If you are interested in either making a program or joining the AV Committee, contact John, Peter or Sharon Carruthers.

### Get the Focal Point Online

The Focal Point is available online in PDF format. The PDF version is also in color. 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 [www.AtlantaAstronomy.org](http://www.AtlantaAstronomy.org) on the web. The link to Focal Points is located at the top of the front page of the website. If it works for you and you want to get the FP via email, send Peter Macumber an e-mail at [pmacumber@nightsky.org](mailto:pmacumber@nightsky.org). The Focal-Point web can be entered by using the Username of AAC and a password of **Aries**. These names are case sensitive! Type AAC and **Aries** exactly as you see it here.

### \*\*\*Charlie Elliott Chapter Section\*\*\*

#### AAC/CEWMA Chapter Organizational Meeting

Sunday May 19/20/02 5:00 p.m. Attendance: 16 (9 AAC).

Sharon Carruthers, Past President of the AAC opened the meeting with a Statement Of Purpose. "This meeting has been called," she said, "meeting to vote on creation of a chapter of the AAC at the Charlie Elliott Wildlife Management Area site; to find 3 members to act as interim officers for the first 6 months; and to schedule the first meeting of the Chapter."

She reminded us of the understood relationship between the AAC and the CE Chapter. The Chapter Board would function independently of the AAC; i.e. setting its own schedule of meetings & public events with CE to suit the unique needs of the members of the Chapter. The AAC would provide any assistance needed to run meetings (i.e. find speakers from the AAC on a topic). Any events, such as Open Houses, would be a joint venture supported by both organizations.

She went on to say, "It is my impression that there were three

issues that have made it difficult to get the Chapter going: 1) the monthly meeting that included a public Open House was interfering with the development of a "core" membership who would be willing to run the Chapter. 2) the monthly Open Houses were keeping the more seasoned observers away, as they were not interested in the programs that appealed to the general public. 3) the meetings were scheduled at a time (too close to sunset) that discouraged them from attending as they would have to leave their equipment unguarded on the field, or set up after the meeting in the dark".

In response to issue #1, *Alesia Rast*, with the Department of Natural Resources, Charlie Elliott Wildlife Center and Charter Member of the Charlie Elliott Chapter said that CE would consider the chapter's "obligation" to them (in repayment for the use of the observing field) would be met by *quarterly* Open Houses/Public Programs. Of course, she could ask members of the Chapter to help with these special events/sidewalk talks, as opposed to advertising the monthly meetings as public events.

*Art Zorka* suggested that at public events volunteers could set up scopes in the parking lot at the Visitors Center instead of sending the public out to the field with the "serious" observers. *Chuck Kibling* announced that he was presenting his Meade 16" Dob, on loan, to the chapter. It would be stored at the visitors center for use by chapter members who have been trained in its use and for Astronomy training purposes.

It was asked how AAC will help the Chapter? It was understood that Chapter members would also be members of the AAC, would receive the Focal Point and membership in the AL. The Chapter would receive support for our activities; i.e. speakers at meetings/workshops; manpower for public events

*Fred Taylor* said that he would like a monthly meeting, aimed at beginners. *Mark House* suggested monthly meetings for beginners; bi-monthly for advanced. *Art Zorka* proposed a monthly Open House with Chapter/business meeting every third month. The discussion changed to the budget for Chapter. *Maria Zorka* suggested \$5 to AAC/ \$20 to Chapter. *Sharon Carruthers* stated that this would not cover all the costs of the benefits paid for by the AAC (i.e. newsletter costs \$10 annually; insurance; etc); but that the AAC Board would have to consider a budget just as it does for other AAC committees.

We discussed looking into having the Chapter represented on the AAC Board. *Ken Moss* stated that the Chapter should be represented on the AAC Board and wondered if this would this require the creation of another Board position or the reassignment of an existing position?

A Motion Presented by *Sharon Carruthers*; seconded by *Mark House* – "That we accept the Atlanta Astronomy Club, Inc/ Charlie Elliott Chapter bylaws as approved by the Atlanta Astronomy Club Board; form a Chapter of the Atlanta Astronomy Club, Inc to be located at the Charlie Elliott Wildlife Center and

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submit this vote to the Board of Atlanta Astronomy Club, Inc for ratification". Passed 9 for / 0 against / 0 abstentions.

As announced in the special mailing to those interested in Chapter membership, an election was held to choose interim officers, for a period of six months. Those elected were: **Chapter Director** – Mark House **Observing Chair** – Phil Sacco and Fred Taylor **Recording Secretary** – Art Zorka

Alesia Rast announced that future plans for the CEWMA site include the proposed construction of an adult lodge and dining facility. First business meeting of the new Chapter was scheduled for June 8 at 7:00 p.m. (to be confirmed). Meeting was adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

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## Elliott Chapter Business Meeting

There is a business meeting scheduled for June 8th at 7PM. Location is the Visitor's Center located at Elliott. Come and find out what's being planned for the coming months and more.

### Contributing to the Newsletter

Please send 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 hard copies of pictures. Articles can either be sent to Keith Burns 3740 Burnt Hickory Road Marietta, Georgia 30064 or email at [Keith\\_B@bellsouth.net](mailto:Keith_B@bellsouth.net). You can submit articles anytime up and including the deadline date. The **deadline** for the **July issue** is **June 30th**.



## Science Fiction Becomes Science Fact

For more than 40 years, science fiction writers have imagined ways for spacecraft to fly more quickly around the solar system. One idea they came up with was an "ion" engine, powered by a gas called xenon. This allows a spaceship to fly almost 10 times faster than a regular spaceship using the same amount of fuel.

Spaceships powered by this fictional technology have appeared in several science fiction movies. Ion propulsion was mentioned in a "Star Trek" episode in 1968. And in the "Star Wars" movies, the TIE (Twin Ion Engine) fighters that raced around the galaxy used ion propulsion.

But now, the fantasy of science fiction has become a reality. In 1998, NASA launched its Deep Space 1 mission with an ion engine onboard to test. The engine performed exactly as mission operators thought it would. By the time the spacecraft retired in December, 2001, the ion propulsion system had accumulated 677 days of operation and had expended well over 90% of the xenon it carried at launch. The ion engine powered

the spacecraft past Comet Borrelly and allowed Deep Space 1 to return the best-ever images from a comet.

This means that we can now reach destinations in our solar system that we only dreamed about before. Planning is now underway for NASA's new Dawn mission which will use ion propulsion to travel to two asteroids. Other missions are also considering using this now-proven technology. What was once science fiction has now truly become a reality.



## A GIFTed weather satellite

Weather forecasts help you decide what clothes to wear, or what activities to plan. Meteorologists you watch on TV aren't always correct. But they're usually accurate enough so you can choose between a light shirt and heavy coat. Some people need more precise information about the weather. Knowing a hurricane is forming could help a ship's captain avoid the worst of the storm. Knowledge about weather patterns could help farmers plan when they plant and harvest their crops. Scientists could save lives with early predictions of tornadoes and severe weather.

NASA's Earth Observing 3 (EO3) is the latest mission in its New Millennium Program. The goal of New Millennium is to test new technology that will make space flight cheaper and more efficient. Scientists will use what they learn from the program to develop longer, more complicated missions. You may have read about Deep Space 1 and Earth Observing 1 (EO1) in earlier Space Place columns.

EO3's main instrument is GIFTS, which stands for Geosynchronous Imaging Fourier Transform Spectrometer. GIFTS will improve observations and predictions of the earth's weather. From 22,370 miles (36,000 kilometers) above Earth's surface, GIFTS will collect data about wind, humidity and air temperature. Scientists will also do measurements from the ground and the air, to see if GIFTS is accurate. The instrument will provide lots of information to scientists. With more than 32,600 sensors to collect data, GIFTS will scan 300 square miles every 10

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seconds.

EO3 will also test new data compression technology. Just like downloading web sites when you're online, sending and receiving data from a spacecraft takes time. GIFTS will have to send its information more than 22,000 miles back to earth. With EO3, NASA will find new ways to put as much information into as few bits of data as possible. Making the data smaller will make GIFTS observations get to Earth faster. To learn more about data compression, visit The Space Place web site at [spaceplace.nasa.gov/eo3\\_compression.htm](http://spaceplace.nasa.gov/eo3_compression.htm).

Even though TV news meteorologists aren't always correct, they're usually accurate enough so you can choose between a light shirt and heavy coat. More precise information about the weather can save lives and money. Knowing a hurricane is forming could help a ship's captain avoid the worst of the storm. Knowledge about weather patterns could help farmers plan when they plant and harvest their crops. Scientists could save lives with early predictions of tornadoes and severe weather.

NASA's Earth Observing 3 (EO3) is the latest mission in its New Millennium Program. The goal of New Millennium is to test new technology that will make space flight cheaper and more efficient. Scientists will use what they learn from the program to develop longer, more complicated missions. Most major space operations use old equipment and technology, because it's reliable. NASA is hoping the New Millennium Program will open up doors for further exploration. Experimental technology on EO3 will include imaging spectrometry, active cooling and fast data processing.

EO3's main instrument is the Geosynchronous Imaging Fourier Transform Spectrometer GIFTS. GIFTS will improve observations and predictions of Earth's weather. From 22,370 miles (36,000 kilometers) above Earth's surface, GIFTS will collect data about wind, water vapor and air temperature. It will also measure trace gases in the troposphere and stratosphere. Scientists will take measurements from the ground and the air, in order to assess the instrument's accuracy. With more than 32,600 sensors to collect data, GIFTS will scan 300 square miles every 10 seconds.

Earth Observing 3 is expected to launch in 2005. Over the course of its flight, between six and 18 months, it will divide its time between monitoring hurricane activity along the East Coast, and observing the mid-western U.S. during tornado season.

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## ATLANTA ASTRONOMY EXPO II

Those of us who were present at this last Astronomy Expo kind of felt like we were living out the postman's creed! The rains poured on Atlanta – Bear's "waterproof" boots didn't dry until Monday after our Saturday event as he manned the outside, put up signs, etc. Others of us who were inside and working and/or attending the event didn't worry about "bad



Pictured above Chris Butler. Picture below Carolyn Shoemaker. hair days" because we got a bit soaked, too. Unfortunately, the weather deterred many from attending the function.

But folks, those of us who did spent a couple of days that we won't forget! Carolyn Shoemaker was absolutely awesome and did some great presentations on adventures while comet-hunting. She is such a wonderful person and everyone enjoyed her both at the dinner the evening before and also at the Expo itself. Jerry Armstrong brought pictures that he autographed of the Shoemaker-Levy comet and Carolyn signed these for us. (Imagine after David Levy comes to the PSSG and autographs them also – what a keepsake!)



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The joint dinner for the Professional Astronomers of GA and the Astronomy Club was fantastic! The food was fantastic and thanks to Tom managing to get wine and beer “donated” for the event, the evening flowed, so to speak. Carolyn was a hit and we are all so pleased to have had her as our Guest Speaker!

Art Russell did the honors of doing his presentation and introducing others. And, Chris Butler was great last year, but he was fantastic this one. He will definitely be a permanent fixture at any upcoming (?) Expo events! There were door prizes for grabs and many of us came away with some great selections. And appropriately enough, Lynn Crowley was the winner of the grand prize – one of Chris Butler’s artistic pictures! The governor’s office personally had their representative come to the event and present the Atlanta Astronomy Day decree to Sharon Carruthers, who received it for the club.

On a personal note, I had the opportunity to visit extensively with Carolyn Shoemaker during her visit here. I will be writing an article on my adventures and personal talks with her. It was my pleasure to accompany her from beginning to end of her trip and one of the highlights was our trip after the Expo on Saturday to Stone Mountain Park (which I thought appropriate since she works with the U.S. Geological Society in Flagstaff, AZ).

And, most of all, I have to thank Tom Crowley for his vision for the Expo for both this year and last; as well as the opportunity and latitude given to bring in the speakers! When this was first begun last year, we came up with the Mission Statement “Present a forum for amateurs, professionals, and the Atlanta community” and Tom Crowley certainly has endeavored to do just that!

### Atlanta Area Astronomers Listserv

While the Focal Point is a good source for information among other things, it cannot be undated after it is printed. If you have email access with a computer, then you can subscribe to the Atlanta Astronomers Listserv. This is a great source for up to the minute info on observing events. You can also post questions about astronomy. You can talk to fellow astronomers about the hobby or other things related to it.

Subscribe to the Atlanta Area Astronomers Mailing List: The name of the new list is: AstroAtlanta. The address for messages is: [AstroAtlanta@yahoogroups.com](mailto:AstroAtlanta@yahoogroups.com). To add a subscription, send a message to: [AstroAtlanta-subscribe@yahoogroups.com](mailto:AstroAtlanta-subscribe@yahoogroups.com). To cancel your membership, send a message to [AstroAtlanta-unsubscribe@yahoogroups.com](mailto:AstroAtlanta-unsubscribe@yahoogroups.com). Messages for the list-owner (me) go to: [AstroAtlanta-owner@yahoogroups.com](mailto:AstroAtlanta-owner@yahoogroups.com) or to [LAbbey@mindspring.com](mailto:LAbbey@mindspring.com). The “home page” for the list, from which you can change your account defaults is: <http://www.yahoogroups.com/group/AstroAtlanta>. This list is owned by Lenny Abbey.

For those individuals holding an office in the club, please **contact me (Keith)** via **email** if your phone number or email address has **changed** or is **missing** from the contact section to the right. Thanks.

Note that material you see in the Focal Point has been sent to me is for use in our newsletter only. If anyone wants to use the material elsewhere, please contact the author of the article or photographer who has taken the picture. With rare exceptions, most people will grant you permission.

## The Astronomical League

As a member of the AAC, you are automatically a member of the Astronomical League. AL for short. I am the ALCOR for the club. My job is to relay information from the AL to our membership. The AL consists of a national organization. Members in the AL include individuals and other astronomy clubs. Check out the website for the AL at [www.astroleague.org](http://www.astroleague.org) to see what they offer. You also get the AL newsletter called The Reflector four times a year. If you have any questions about the AL, please contact me at either [Keith\\_B@Bellsouth.net](mailto:Keith_B@Bellsouth.net) or phone at 770-427-1475.

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& Fred Taylor

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**Board:** Chuck Painter 7-664-0837  
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**Board:** Gil Shillcutt 4-873-1566  
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**Board Chair:** If your info posted here is wrong, please send Keith a private email with the correct info. Thanks.

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**Light Trespass:** Tom Buchanan 7-521-2136  
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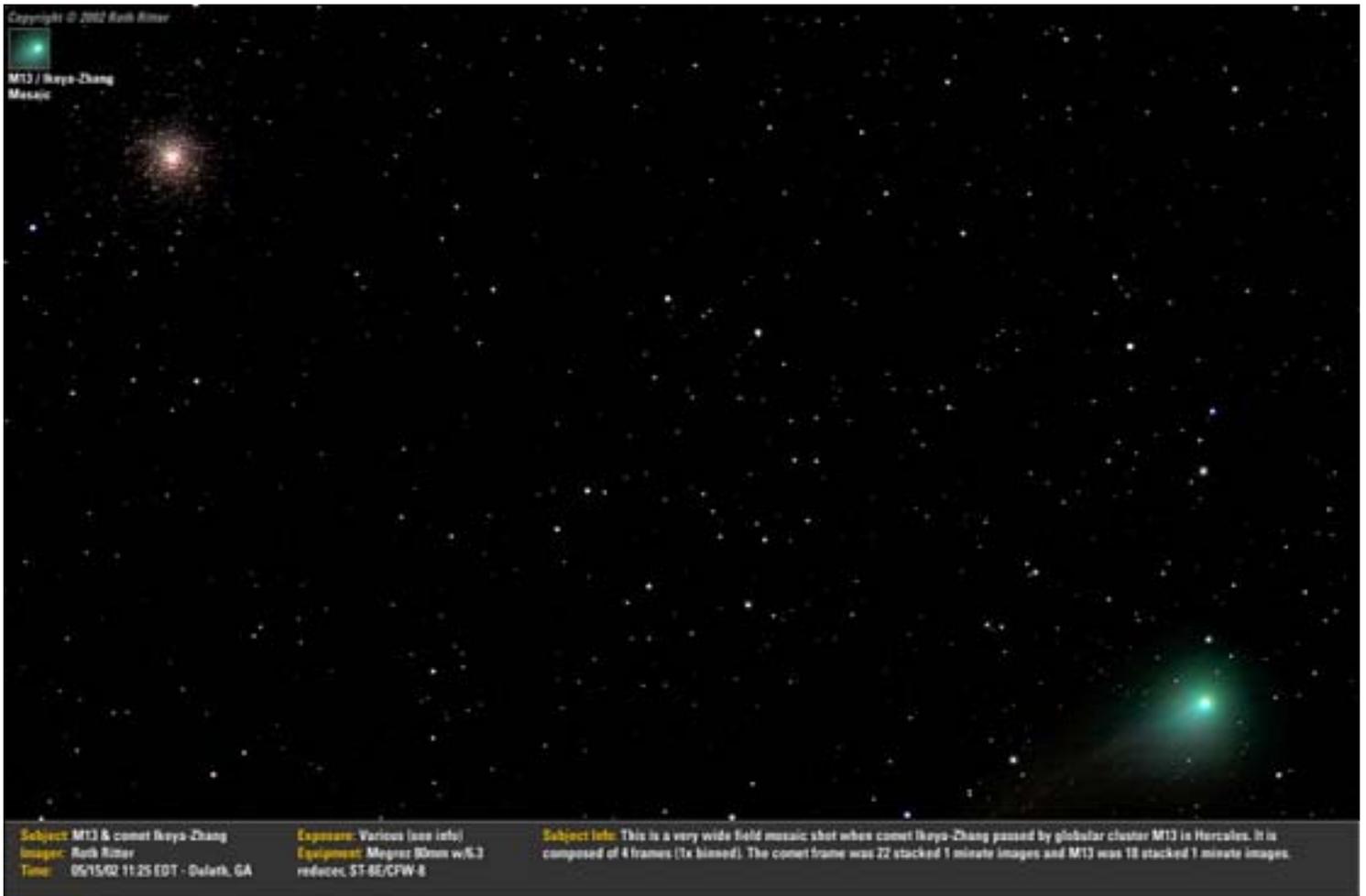
**Obser. & Telescope Training:** Stef Whetstone 7-460-7678  
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**Peach State Star Gaze/ Board:** Ken Poshedly 7-979-9842  
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**Sidewalk Astronomy:** Mark Banks 4-257-2766  
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**Villa Rica Observ. Coordinator/ Board:** Rich Jakiel 7-577-2330  
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**Woodruff Observ. Coordinator:** John Lentini 7-984-0175  
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Picture above is Comet Ikeya-Zhang C1 2002 and M13. Picture taken and supplied by Roth Ritter. Picture to the right is Carolyn Shoemaker, Chris Butler, and Jerry Armstrong. Photo taken by Frank Marchese. Picture below is Venus and the Crescent Moon. Picture taken with a pair of 8X56 binoculars and a Kodak 210 digital camera. This picture was taken at a nearby park where nighttime baseball games were going on. Even with bright lights nearby, the photographer(I) managed to eliminate them from the picture. Anyone can take astro photos with just a simple cheap setup.

If you have some astro photos you have taken, send them to me so we can publish them in the newsletter. Let other club members see your work.





## *The Focal Point*

Newsletter of The Atlanta Astronomy Club, Inc.

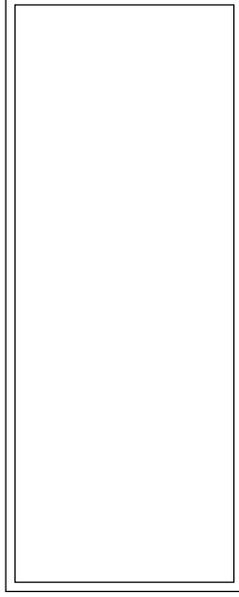
**FROM:**

Keith Burns  
3740 Burnt Hickory Road  
Marietta, Georgia 30064

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

Atlanta Astronomy Club  
PMB 305  
3595 Canton Road A9  
Marietta, GA 30066

**FIRST CLASS**



### **Calendar**

**June 8th- Charlie Elliott Meeting.** Starts at 7PM. Location is the Visitor's Center.

**June 15th- Open House** at Walter Barber Jr Observatory. **CANCELLED**

**June 15th-GASP** at Tallulah Gorge. Talk, sidewalk astronomy, and camping.

**June 21st- AAC Banquet.** Location is Dave and Busters, Gwinnett. Speaker is Dr Sten Oldenwald. Starts at 7PM. Preregister only. Cost \$22 for dinner.

**July 6th- Joint Star Party** with the AAC and VBAS. Location is Mentone, Alabama. Starts at dusk til dawn.

**July 19th- General Membership Meeting.** Location White Hall on the Emory University Campus. Starts at 8PM. Speaker TBA.

**July 20th- Elliott Chapter Meeting.** Time 7PM. Note that this is the tentative date for their meetings. More details to be coming in the July issue of the FP, AAC Listserv, and on the new Elliott Website.