

The Focal Point

The Atlanta Astronomy Club
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Editor: Keith Burns

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August General Membership Meeting

The August meeting will take place on Friday August 16th. Location is White Hall on the Emory University Campus. There will be refreshments and socializing taking place between 7:30 pm and 8 pm. The meeting starts at 8pm with some announce-



ments followed by our speaker. August meeting is just around the corner . . . and you may be asking, "Who and What Topic?" Well, a big thanks to Philip Sacco, who has agreed to come and share his talk: On the Wings of Desire: The Lovers Triangle. So the ancients also watched soap operas. Where else can you

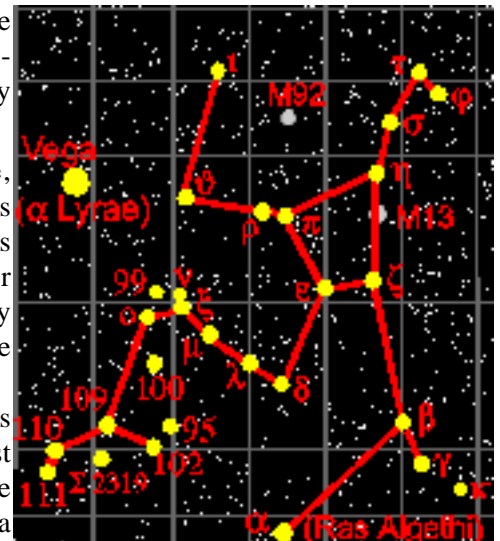


go to see love, betrayal, and fighting without paying for it?

This talk will be an interesting view of an association of constellations in a way the ancients would have viewed them. The position and arrangements of the constellations makes

it easier to remember them as well as the associated myths. As usual, I am sure that we will all enjoy Philip's rendition of constellations and mythology. He may even do a few stunts while taking us through the stories of the ancients. The collapsing chair always brings down the house. Just ask Phil. So, come on down and hear a side of astronomy you don't normally hear about. In this rare occasion, Phil will brave the elements and do one of his favorite after midnight discussions in the early evening.

On another note, Glenn Burns was supposed to be this month's speaker and due to a family conflict, will not be able to speak. However, he has agreed for the first part of 2003. More details on that at a later date.



Upcoming Charles Elliott Chapter Meetings

By Art Zorka (Secretary Charles Elliott Chapter)

There will be a viewing session on August 11th for the Perseid Meteor Shower. The next meeting of the CE Chapter will be

Continued on the next page.

on August 31st. The topic of this meeting is setting up and using an equatorial mounted telescope. There will be a meeting for the General Public on September 28th. Viewing sessions will follow all meetings weather permitting. The September 28th meeting for the General Public will be followed by a viewing session in the parking lot outside the Welcome Center. Of Course, the Observing Field is always open to all members. Be sure to wear your name tags and to sign in.

Newsletter Deadline and Info

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. You can submit articles anytime up and including the deadline date. The **deadline** for the **September issue** is **August 31st**.

Annual Membership Directory

By Harry Falise AAC Treasurer

As some of you may already be aware, we are distributing the annual membership directory. It includes listings by last AND first names. Some have already received it via E-mail (in Adobe PDF format), and others by snail mail.

When we checked the E-mails that we had, about a third were returned. If you believe we have an old e-mail address of yours, please send the correction to me at hfalise@imnisp.com. Also, let me know whether you'd like your copy E-mailed or "Snail" mailed.

Finally, we are also distributing the updated "AAC Handbook" to new members. It includes Bylaws, directions to observing sites, club history, etc. If you would like a copy, let me know. Thanks.

AAC Board of Directors Meeting 21 July, 2002

General. AAC Chairman of the board, Chuck Painter, called the meeting into order at 3:15PM. AAC members attending were Bear Simmons, Ken Poshedley, Sharon Carruthers, Rich Jakiel, Ken Gabrielson, Harry Falise, Jessica Simmons, Gil Shilcutt, John Lentini, Peter Macumber, Chuck Painter, Carol Abernathy, Keith Burns, and Art Russell. **Actions.** The following actions were decided during the meeting. *Observing Chairwoman, Sharon Carruthers.* Survey 20 inch telescope at Villa Rica to estimate repair needs and costs. Reschedule PARI observing event, finalize September observing site. *Treasurer, Harry Falise.* Send Fiscal Report and Balance Sheet to board members. Provide board members with budget analysis

comparing capital and operating expenses as well projection of budgetary activities. Investigate investment opportunities and make a recommendation to the Board about club funds currently in savings and checking. *Recording Secretary, Art Russell.* Provide list of capital equipment to Treasurer. Provide paper cutter to support production of membership badges. *PSSG Chairman, Ken Poshedley.* Provide Rich Jakiel with Microsoft Word copy of most recent version of the membership packet. *Board member, Rich Jakiel.* Provide membership packet and proposed revisions (introduction) to membership packet revision committee by 26 July, 2002. Organize and conduct membership packet revision meeting at Villa Rica, 27 July, 2002. *Membership Committee.* Present final recommendation on duties and responsibilities of the Membership Committee to the board. *Peter Macumber.* Conduct meeting to produce name badges for the club. **Agenda-Officer's Reports.** *President, Bear Simmons.* Bear is pleased with the results of the recent Membership Committee meeting and the new, shorter format for the business meeting held as a part of the monthly General Membership Meeting. *Observing Chairwoman, Sharon Carruthers.* The observing session proposed for PARI will be rescheduled. Woodruff Boy Scout Camp: Electrical problems have been noted. Additionally, across the summer, the Scouts have failed to attend a number of the scheduled Tuesday and Thursday observing session hosted by the AAC. The 20 inch telescope at Villa Rica remains out of service. It was decided that Sharon will organize a committee to survey the 20 inch to determine requirements to return the telescope to service and present the results of that survey with recommendations to the Board of Directors. Training on and use of the 20 inch is suspended until repairs are completed. Training will resume on the 24 inch Tectron. The observing chairman is working to coordinate training with Dark-Sky sessions and possibly the Peach State Star Gaze. *Recording Secretary, Art Russell.* Minutes from the last board meeting were presented and accepted. *Corresponding Secretary, Keith Burns.* 133 issues of The Focal Point were printed and mailed for a cost of about \$200. Carol Abernathy has donated a surplus copier to the club to help reduce production costs for the newsletter. Sharon Carruthers is investigating refurbishment costs. *Treasurer, Harry Falise.* A revised profit and loss statement was distributed to those attending, as was a synopsis of the club's fiscal balance sheet which reflects ~\$23,000 in total club funds, of which ~\$11,000 represents operating funds with the remaining ~\$12,000 being in the Dark-Sky fund. Investment opportunities will be investigated and a recommendation made to the board about club funds currently held in checking and savings accounts. The treasurer expressed the need to have an inventory of the club's capital equipment. Art Russell volunteered to provide a earlier list of equipment as a starting point. The treasurer also expressed the need to have an inventory of fund raising

Continued on the next page.

supplies (e.g. coffee cups, t-shirts, etc.) and costs associated with fund raising efforts. *Peach State Star Gaze (PSSG) Chairman, Ken Poshedley.* 60 adults and 3 children are currently registered to attend the 2002 PSSG with about \$4900 being received in registration fees. Wil Tirion is designing commemorative t-shirts and they will be produced locally. Additionally, a method to reduce PSSG related printing costs has been secured. *Charlie Elliot Chapter.* The chapter was not represented, but does appear to be very active and has recently publicized their new website. **Agenda-Old Business.** *Carol Abernathy.* Action. Investigate alternative membership badge outsourcing possibilities and costs, and report at the next board of directors meeting. Result. Recommendation to board that we favorably consider Peter Macumber's offer to produce membership badges for \$2 per badge. Peter Macumber will coordinate production of the new badges at his home on 28 July, 2002. Art Russell volunteered to provide a heavy-duty paper cutter to help in badge production. *Ken Poshedley.* Action. Post policy for generator use at the PSSG on the PSSG listserv. Result. KenPo is working with Tom Crowley to get the policy posted. *Rich Jakiel.* Action. Update the membership packet. Result. Rich will convene a committee to review revisions to the membership packet at 5PM on 27 July at VR. *Membership Committee.* Action. Meet before the next board of directors meeting to clarify its mission and responsibilities. Result. The committee defined a large portion of its duties, but will meet on 4 August to finalize its missions and responsibilities. **Agenda-New Business.** Distribution of the membership directory. Decision was made that the membership directory will be sent by email or by surface mail to those members requiring a paper copy. **Next Board Meeting.** Tentatively scheduled for September 15, 2002, 3PM, at the 5 Seasons Brewpub and Restaurant.

GASP (Georgia Astronomy in State Parks)

By Joanne Cirincione

Tallulah Gorge State Park – 6/15/02

For those of you who came up to Tallulah Gorge State Park I want you to know that you were very fortunate to experience the clear skies. It's a running joke that for the past 4 plus years we have been going up there we never had a clear sky! Well we broke our bad luck streak.

We had a beautiful clear night. We set up on the helicopter field next to the campground and had about 50 some campers come and view with us. As always Sharon's talk and slide presentation was a hit. After that Philip Sacco told his legendary mythology stories.

We had about 11 members show up which was a nice turnout.

I want to thank Peter Macumber, Sharon Carruthers, Keith Burns, Charles Hinley, Bear Simmons, Donna Satterfield, Art & Maria Zorka, Phil Sacco and Robert Webb for their part. It couldn't be done without them! Robert brought a few of the North Georgia Astronomy Club members out. I hope they know they are welcome any time to join us.

We would love to have more members join us on our adventures. We can always use the knowledge, scopes, binoculars and companionship! You don't need to have equipment to help out. If you are new to astronomy this would be great time to learn.

I want to also thank one more special person. Karla Rae, our ranger at Tallulah Gorge, has been our friend, our light and our fan for the past 4+ years. She endured the rains and clouds with us. It is befitting that the last event she would have at Tallulah Gorge State Park would be with the Atlanta Astronomy Club and that it would be a crystal clear night! She has moved to W. Virginia to start a new life. Karla thanks for a great friendship and good luck with everything!



Continued on next page.

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:

Atlanta Astronomy Club
PMB 305
3595 Canton Road A9
Marietta, Georgia 3006

Treasurer's address is:

Harry Falise AAC
4300 Jimmy Carter Blvd, Apt #107
Norcross, Georgia 30093

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. Also send information on upcoming observing events, meetings, and other events to the webmaster.

FDR State Park - 8/31-9/2

FDR State Park is in Pine Mountain, GA. Slide presentation starts at 8:00p followed by observing at the stone amphitheater next to the office. The campground is sold out for the holiday weekend but if you're near enough come join us for the Saturday and Sunday programs and hang out with us. If you are interested enough, keep calling to see if there are any cancellations.

If you have any questions about any of our events please let me know. Joanne at Starrynights@AtlantaAstronomy.org



Satellites to the Rescue!

A ship on the ocean is swamped by a giant wave. A small airplane loses power and crash lands on a mountain field. A snowmobiler in Alaska breaks a tread and is lost far from civilization. How do the brave people who rescue folks in peril find out where they are?

Search and Rescue Satellite-Aided Tracking, called SARSAT for short, uses two types of satellites to help people (and their pets!). Geostationary Operational Environmental Satellites, nicknamed "GOES," fly in place. They never stray from their spots above Earth. Polar Orbiting Environmental Satellites, called "POES," are in constant motion. They orbit Earth several times a day. The main job of these spacecraft is to track environmental conditions around the world. But GOES and POES also hear special distress signals from ships, planes, and individuals. The satellites send the information to a control center in Suitland, Maryland. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, an agency of the U.S. Government, operates the center. They learn who's in danger and where the emergency is. Then they send the Coast Guard or the Air Force to save the day!

Ships, airplanes and people use different kinds of equipment to transmit emergency signals. All these devices broadcast distress messages to GOES and POES. Personal Locator Beacons for individuals are available only in Alaska, but soon may be sold in the rest of the United States. Backpackers and others who travel to remote areas could carry these devices in case they get into trouble.

NASA provided the satellites used for SARSAT and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration operates them. SARSAT has helped to locate and rescue more than 12,800 people worldwide and 4,300 people in the United States. The Air Force and Coast Guard also rescued dogs and other pets that were traveling with their families when disaster struck!

Find out more about SARSAT at <http://www.sarsat.noaa.gov>.



Institute of Technology, under a contract with the National Aeronautics and Space Administration.

Also check out The Space Place Web site at <http://spaceplace.nasa.gov/goes/orbits.htm> to learn how these satellites orbit Earth and how GOES can hang over one spot all the time!

This article was written by Eric Elkins and provided by the Jet Propulsion Laboratory, California

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

Visit 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. The Focal-Point web can be entered by using the Username of AAC and a password of **Crux**. These names are case sensitive! Type AAC and Crux exactly as you see it here.

General Meeting – July 20, 2002

55 members and guests attended the July General Membership Meeting of the AAC held at Emory University's White Hall. **"Bear" Simmons, President**, opened the meeting and welcomed 11 new members as well as 2 guests to the evening's meeting. The business meeting was very short and lasted only about 30 minutes. The short business meeting reflects his desire to streamline the business portion of general membership meetings in order to allow more a more leisurely presentation by featured speakers, and facilitate an earlier end to an evening's meeting. Streamlining the business discussions, Bear reviewed the upcoming events calendar (listed at the back of the Focal Point and on the AAC website at: <http://> *Continued on the next page.*

www.atlantaastronomy.org/docs/calendar.htm). **Art Zorka, Charlie Elliot Chapter Recording Secretary** then reviewed current and scheduled events for the chapter and extended an invitation to all AAC members to participate in any Charlie Elliot chapter event. **Ken Poshedley, Peach State Star Gaze Chairman**, reviewed preparations for the upcoming Peach State Star Gaze scheduled for 3-6 October (see the website for details at: <http://personal.atl.bellsouth.net/atl/p/o/poshedly/pssg/index.html>). The evening's featured speaker was **Brad S. Meyer, Professor of Astrophysics** at Clemson University (see <http://photon.phys.clemson.edu/wwwpages/meyer.html>). Dr. Meyer spoke about the details of nuclear astrophysics, nucleosynthesis, the wonders of the r-process, and how to make gold (take your friendly your neighborhood star, add enough mass and then wait long enough). Following Dr. Meyer's presentation, the meeting adjourned with members reassembling at Melton's App & Tap to sample libations and discuss things astronomical.

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 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 or phone at 770-427-1475.

The pins for the Caldwell club have finally been sent to me by Sue Rose of the AL. So if you were suppose to get one, it will be coming soon.



The Crescent Nebula thru an H-alpha filter. HaRGB exposure of 120:18:12:14.

<http://www.bobholzer.com/images/crescentps2.jpg> Those were made with a TEC 6, that's a 6" mak-cass with fabulous optics. Picture by Bob Holzer.

Rabbit on the Moon

How many have ever seen the full Moon? (Pause) Well one night Rabbit saw a full moon and thought how great it would be to ride the moon across the sky. (Use hands to show the moon crossing the sky). He thought, if I ran up a big hill and jumped up. I could catch the moon and ride it across the sky.

So— one night he tried and of course he couldn't reach it. So he decided he would ask the Hawk if he could fly him up to the moon, so he could ride it across the sky. When he asked Hawk. The hawk said he couldn't fly that high. But he should ask the Eagle because he could really fly high. So Rabbit went and asked the Eagle if he could fly him up to the moon, so he could ride it across the sky. The Eagle said that he could really fly high. But NOT THAT HIGH.

Well poor Rabbit he was so sad and he went and asked all the little birds if they could fly him up to the moon so he could ride it across the sky. Well the little birds all laughed, how could they reach the moon? Rabbit started to cry, he really wanted to ride the moon across the sky. The Crane bird was listening, and said. That he had really BIG wings. Maybe he could fly Rabbit up to the moon. Do you really think so said Rabbit? Well! we could give it a try. Grab hold of my legs and we'll try. So the Crane bird started to flap, and flapped again and again. (I flap my arms and talk softly then flap faster and get louder) He started to come off the ground so he flapped faster and faster. Before you know it he reached the moon. Rabbit was sooo happy. He thanked the Crane bird and said he was giving Crane a present of red feathers. He touched the Crane on the top of his head and the feathers on the top of his head turned all red. If you look at a Crane bird today you will see that he still has red feathers on the top of his head. But while he was flying up to the moon with Rabbit holding his legs Rabbit got heavier and heavier, and stretched and stretched Cranes legs, so that the Crane Bird has the longest legs of all the birds.

The best part of this story is: that if you look up at the full Moon, You will see the Shadow of the Rabbit on the Moon.



Coyote Dances

From the Cheyenne

Do you remember Coyote? He was always was doing something. Well, Coyote loves to dance, One night he went out into the dessert. He started to dance around, chasing his tail, jumping, and spinning around. He just loved to dance. He looked up at the sky and saw the stars flashing, twinkling and dancing across the sky. He thought how great it would be to dance with them. So he called up to them. Good evening, Ladies. My, you sure are pretty tonight, Anybody care to dance. Well, the stars all laugh. A little blue star said. Did you hear that foolish Coyote? He wants to come up here and dance with us. Red star said “ Why

Coyote you wouldn't last at all. We dance all night long. Coyote answered back. Oh pretty ladies I'm a fine dancer, I would never get tired. We could waltz around all night. Ladies Please. A star from the south felt sorry for him and called down, that he could come up and dance with her. But he had to remember that he could not stop because they dance all night long. He called back He wouldn't stop. I'll dance all night with you Pretty Star. Well, the star reached down as far as she could and Coyote was reached up as far as he could. The moment they touched Coyote was whirled up into the sky and they began to dance and dance. The dance for a long time and Coyote started to loss his breath. So he ask if they could just stop long enough for him to catch his breath. She said Oh No. We dance all night. Coyote said O.K. And they continued to dance. But Coyote was getting so out of breath, he was just hanging



on to the star. After a while he couldn't ever do that. He let go and he fell all the way back down to earth. Some people say that where he fell, there is a big hole in the ground. Other people say the hole was so big it is filled up with water and became a great big lake. Others say he burned up and left a bright streak across the sky. The next night, another Coyote wanted to dance with the stars. They called down Don't you remember what happened to your brother coyote? But I'm a better dancer then him. Night after Night those

foolish Coyote tried to dance across the sky with the stars and they fall. Leaving streaks of light across the sky. If you go out at night and look up you just might be able to see one of those foolish Coyotes fall back to earth.

NEW COMET HOENIG (C/2002 O4)

A comet discovered last week by Sebastian Hoenig from near Heidelberg, Germany, should become a fairly easy target for small telescopes during the next three months. Currently magnitude 10 and crossing the Andromeda-Cassiopeia border, the nearly tailless object is expected to brighten to magnitude 9 by mid-August as it enters the north circumpolar sky. Thereafter it remains accessible to Northern Hemisphere observers before dawn, eventually working its way south across the galaxy-rich sections of Coma Berenices and Virgo in late October.

With this find, Sebastian Hoenig apparently becomes the first amateur astronomer to discover a comet from German soil since June 1946, when Anton Weber in Berlin was a codiscoverer of Comet Pajdusakova-Rotbart-Weber (C/1946 K1). Hoenig is no stranger to comets, however; he is also credited with locating 20 comets in SOHO spacecraft images of the Sun's vicinity.

Taken From Sky and Tel news.

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. Contact him via phone (404-325-4987) or email (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 (tracy@c2optical.com). Announcements of meetings will be posted on the AAC listserv. You can also find out about upcoming meetings from Skip.

The ATMer's are looking for a place to hold meetings and work on projects. If you know of a location or have one to offer, please contact either Skip, Tracy, or Sharon Carruthers.

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. To add a subscription, send a message to: AstroAtlanta-subscribe@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 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.

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 else-

where, please contact the author of the article or photographer who has taken the picture. With rare exceptions, most people will grant you permission.

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The Focal Point

Newsletter of The Atlanta Astronomy Club, Inc.

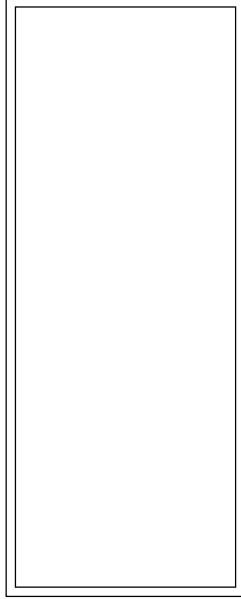
FROM:

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

August 10th- Dark Sky Observing at Woodruff located near Blue Ridge, Georgia.

August 10th- Perseid Open House, CEWMA Chapter @ Marben Farms Field ?? Public to be sent to Marben Farms Field and not club site.

August 11th & 12th- Perseid Meteor Shower viewing at CEWMA club observing field.

August 16th- General Meeting...White Hall on the Emory University Campus. Refreshments 7:30PM. Meeting starts at 8PM.

August 31st- GASP talk and sidewalk astronomy at FDR state park.

August 31st- CEWMA Chapter Meeting. The topic will be Setting Up And Using Equatorial Mounts. Deep sky observing after the meeting.

September 7th- Dark Sky Observing at Woodruff.

September 14th- Orientation and Open House at Walter F Barber Jr. Observatory.

September 20th- General Meeting at White Hall on the Emory University Campus. Meeting at 8PM.

September 28th- CEWMA Chapter Open House. Meeting at Visitors Center and Observing in parking lot following meeting.

October 3rd-6th- PSSG 2002. Guests David Levy and Wil Tirion. Fee for event. Must register in advance.

Visit the new Charlie Elliott Chapter Website for more information on upcoming meetings and happenings. <http://touchmoon.com/ce/index.shtml>