

# The Focal Point

The Atlanta Astronomy Club  
Established 1947  
April 2003

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Editor: Keith Burns

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## Annual Banquet 2003/ April Meeting

The Atlanta Astronomy Club will be holding its annual banquet on Saturday April 12, 2003 at The Basket Bakery & Caf  6655 James River Drive, Stone Mountain, GA. Cocktails at 7:00 p.m. Dinner at 7:30 p.m. Our guest speaker will be the Chris Butler.

The dinner will include: Bread & Butter, Salad. A choice from four entrees: 1) Prime Rib, herb encrusted with au jus, parsley potatoes and vegetable medley. 2) Schnitzel Forestier, scalloped veal with mushrooms and red wine, served with spaetzle and red cabbage. 3) Pasta, Chicken provincial, tomato and mushroom cream sauce serve tossed in ziti pasta. 4) Fresh Fish, grilled with lemon dill butter, served with wild rice and fresh saut ed vegetables.  
Dessert, Coffee, Tea, Soft Drinks, and Cash Bar.

The costs of the dinner (including tax and tip) will be \$33.00 per person. Chris Butler will be donating one of his original astronomy paintings, which will be given away as a door prize to one attendee. You MUST reserve and pay for meal by April 7th . (You DO NOT have to pre-select your entr e choice in advance.)

The Atlanta Astronomy Club's 2003 Annual Banquet

Yes, I will be attending the annual Banquet! Number of dinner reservations \_\_\_\_\_ x \$33 = \_\_\_\_\_ Total

Enclosed is a check made out to the Atlanta Astronomy Club. Mail to; Peter Macumber, 1057 Trestle Dr., Austell GA 30106.

I would like to announce that Chris has just been given the distinction of having a minor planet named after him. Details

are as follows: name (13543) Butler. Discovery 1992 AO2 1992 01 02 Kitt Peak 48157 Spacewatch. To put it in Chris' words, "they must have liked my scribbles."

Chris is arriving in Atlanta on Thursday, April 10th. We are going to have an informal get together for him at the Five Seasons Restaurant that evening at 7:00 p.m. Five Seasons is located on Roswell Road (right off I-285 at the Prado). This will be an opportunity to meet Chris and spend a little one-on-one time with him, if you would like to attend. We have reserved space there, and if you would like to come, please feel free to come!

Regards, Carol Abernathy Program Chair & Vice President

## Nominations for May Elections

By Keith Burns (Nominating Committee Chairman)

The nominating committee for the upcoming elections has been formed. The committee consists of Keith Burns, John Lentini, and Tom Crowley.

Positions open for the elections in May include President, Vice President (Speaker Chair), Vice President (Observing Chair), Recording Secretary, Corresponding Secretary (Newsletter Editor), and Treasurer. There will also be 3 board positions.

If you are interested in or want to run for one of these positions, contact one of us. If you are curious about one of these positions and need more information, please contact me or Tom or John. Is there someone else you would like to nominate for one of these positions? Again please contact us.

I can be reached through email or phone at [Keith\\_B@Bellsouth.net](mailto:Keith_B@Bellsouth.net) and phone # 770-427-1475 evenings. John Lentini via email at [johnlentini@yahoo.com](mailto:johnlentini@yahoo.com) phone 770-984-0175. Tom Crowley via email at [crowleytj@hotmail.com](mailto:crowleytj@hotmail.com)

The only qualification for running for a position is that you be a good member in standing. Make sure those membership dues have been paid in other words.

As of April 3rd, we are stilling looking for people to run for Recording Secretary, Corresponding Secretary (Newsletter Editor), and Treasurer. Also two board positions remain open for Candidates. We have no one running for any of the above mentioned positions.

## Atlanta Area Astronomy Listserv

If you have email access with a computer, then you can subscribe to the Atlanta Area Astronomy Listserv. This is a 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 Astronomy 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.

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## Amatuer 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](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 ([tracy@c2optical.com](mailto:tracy@c2optical.com)). Announcements of meetings will be posted on the AAC listserv. You can also find out about upcoming meetings from Skip.

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## Astronomical League News

First, the Executive Committee sends thanks to all of you for your memberships in the League. The League continues to grow, and Jackie Beucher, our Executive Secretary, recently announced that we now have 278 member societies. This enhances and strengthens amateur astronomy at the national level.

We are nearing the deadline for submitting award nominations for the Horkheimer Youth Service Award, the Mabel Sterns Newsletter Award, and our Webmaster Award. For additional information, please visit the League webpages at [www.astroleague.org](http://www.astroleague.org) or contact our awards coordinator, Mr. Carroll Iorg. All nominations are due by March 31, so don't delay. There are many dedicated society volunteers who would be thrilled to receive appreciation for their work.

Many of you are planning activities for the National Dark Sky Week. Thanks to the many astronomical society newsletters I

receive, we have seen much news about member society planning. The League, the IDA, and the American Astronomical Society are fully supporting NDSW, as is Sky and Telescope magazine. Additional press releases on NDSW will be issued before the event. For additional information about NDSW, please visit the League's website, and click on announcements.

ALCON 2003 in Nashville, Tennessee is fast approaching. For additional information, again, please see the League's web site [Matt Ganis, our webmaster, is doing outstanding work keeping the League website updated with timely news]. July 8-12 will be here very soon, and we hope to see you at ALCON.

We are making great progress with the ISS Amateur Telescope project. In addition, our first ever, national office is now open in Kansas City. Stand by for additional news announcements on these projects.

As an all volunteer organization, we appreciate all you are doing for astronomy. If you'd like to volunteer at the national level, please let me know. Currently, we are looking for a League press officer. Wishing you all clear skies, bright stars, and good observing, Bob Gent President, Astronomical League [www.astroleague.org](http://www.astroleague.org) An educational federation of 270+ astronomical societies.

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## LIGHT POLLUTION REPORT

by Tom Buchanan

Of the many light pollution issues, the following two are described along with possible actions.

**Upward directed billboard lights:** Billboards have been sprouting along I-575 in Cherokee County. On July 10, 2001, the county passed an ordinance that prohibits lamps mounted on the bottom of billboards. The ordinance does not apply inside city limits. If you see any new billboard in unincorporated Cherokee County with bottom mounted lamps, please inform Vicki Taylor at 770-479-0412 or Vicki Dye at 770-479-0411 and give the location. They are Zoning Administrator and Assistant, respectively, for Cherokee County. Their duties include investigating sign code violations.

Also, I would like to know about any billboard in violation.

**Street lights in subdivisions:** Street lights are required in new subdivisions in Fulton County, Gwinnett County, Cobb County, and some other counties and cities. However, in existing residential areas, some counties require that new street lights be approved by 75% or 100% of the affected parties (those whose property lies within 250 feet of a proposed street light.)

A friend of mine in Cobb County has kept the street lights off his street for decades; he simply won't sign a petition for adding street lights.

*Continued on the next page.*

## Musical Satellites

By Tony Phillips

If light were sound, then chemicals would play chords. Water: C major. Cyanide: A minor. Chlorophyll: G diminished 7th. (Please note that the choice of chords here is only for the sake of illustration, and not meant to reflect the actual spectra of these chemicals.)

It's a loose metaphor, but an apt one. Musical chords are combinations of frequencies of sound (notes), while chemicals leave unique combinations of dips in the frequency spectrum of reflected light, like keys pressed on a piano. Spectrographs, machines that recognize chemicals from their "chords of light," are among the most powerful tools of modern chemistry.

Most earth-watching satellites, like the highly successful Landsat series, carry spectrographs onboard. These sensors measure the spectra of light reflected from forests, crops, cities, and lakes, yielding valuable information about our natural environment. Current satellites do this in a fairly limited way; their sensors can "hear" only a few meager notes amid the symphony of information emanating from the planet below.

EO-1 could change that. Short for "Earth Observing 1," EO-1 is an experimental NASA satellite in orbit since 2000. It's testing out a more advanced "spectrometer in the sky"-the Hyperion hyperspectral imager. How good is it? If Landsat were "chopsticks," EO-1 would be Gershwin's "Rhapsody in Blue."

The Hyperion sensor looks at 220 frequencies in the spectrum of visible and infrared light (0.4 to 2.5 microns) reflecting off Earth's surface. Landsat, in contrast, measures only 10. Bryant Cramer, who manages the EO-1 project at the Goddard Space Flight Center, puts these numbers in perspective. "If we flew Landsat over the northeastern United States, it could readily identify a hardwood forest. But using hyperspectral techniques, you probably can . . . tell the oak trees from the maple trees."

Future earth-watching satellites may use Hyperion-like instruments to vastly improve the environmental data they provide. EO-1 is paving the way for these future missions by taking on the risk of flight-testing the sensor for the first time. For farmers, foresters, and many others, this new remote sensing technology will surely be music to the ears.

Read about EO1 at <http://eo1.gsfc.nasa.gov> . Budding young astronomers can learn more at [http://spaceplace.nasa.gov/eo1\\_1.htm](http://spaceplace.nasa.gov/eo1_1.htm) ..

*This article was provided by the Jet Propulsion Laboratory, California Institute of Technology, under a contract with the National Aeronautics and Space Administration.*

### AAC Contacts

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## *The Focal Point*

Newsletter of The Atlanta Astronomy Club, Inc.

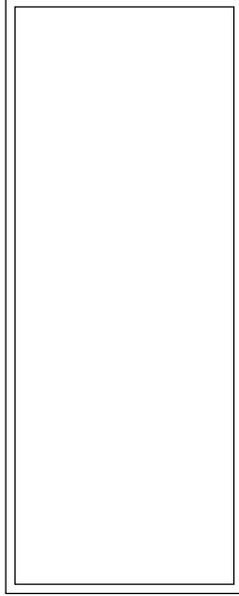
**FROM:**

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**



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:**  
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.

### Calendar

**April 5th- Deep Sky Observing** at Woodruff BSC near Blue Ridge, Ga.

**April 12th- Annual Banquet** of the AAC. Speaker will be Chris Butler.

**April 26th- Charlie Elliott Chapter** of the AAC meeting. Starts at 7PM. Speaker Philip Sacco. Topic of talk on Planet X aka Niribu.

**April 29th- Board Meeting.** Starts at 3PM. Location Carol Abernathy's office. Contact Carol(Program Chair) or Chuck Painter(Chairman of the Board) for details and/or directions to the meeting spot.

**May 3rd- Deep Sky Observing** at Woodruff BSC near Blue Ridge, Ga.

**May 16th- General Membership Meeting.** Location: White Hall at Emory University. Topic: Elections for year 2003-2004.

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

### 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](mailto:Keith_B@bellsouth.net). You can submit articles any-time up and including the deadline date. The **deadline** for the **May issue** is **May 1st**.