

# The Focal Point

The Atlanta Astronomy Club  
Established 1947  
January 2004

Vol XVI No. 8

Editor: Nameless Editor

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## January General Membership Meeting

The January meeting will take place on Friday January 9th. The meeting will take place at White Hall on the Emory University Campus. Starts at 8 PM sharp. Refreshments and socializing before hand out in the hallway from 7:30PM to 7:55PM.

**TALK TITLE:** Science and Recreation: The Amateurization of Astronomy in Britain and the United States

**ABSTRACT:** Amateur astronomers have always felt the need for a journal in which to publish their results, a venue for meetings in which to discuss those results, and a means for coordinating improvements in techniques for carrying out their work, while also providing for the socialization of newcomers to the field. In two case studies, this talk will explore the paths along which such organizations have developed. In Britain, as professional astronomers appropriated the Royal Astronomical Society for their own purposes, several failures of amateur organizations preceded the successful formation of the British Astronomical Association (BAA). Within a few decades after its foundation, the BAA's specialized observing sections and credible journal, admired by professional and amateur astronomers alike, served as a model for at least three failed attempts to form a similar organization in the United States. What emerged in the United States instead were five separate specialized observing associations, most of which legitimately claim international status, and the nationwide Astronomical League devoted to recreational astronomy. This talk will consider the different paths taken in the amateurization of astronomy in the Britain and the United States, and how those paths were influ-

enced by the professionalization of astronomy in both countries.

**SPEAKER:** Thomas R. Williams, Houston, Texas

**BACKGROUND ON SPEAKER:** A native of California who attended high school and college in Tempe, Arizona, Tom Williams worked as a chemist and manager for the Shell Companies for 36.5 years before retiring in 1992. Fascinated with astronomy since his early telescopic glimpses of Saturn and the Ring Nebula in Lyra at the Griffith Observatory in Los Angeles, Tom's early attempts to make a telescope in high school and college were followed by about ten years as an arm chair astronomer. Then in 1967, he joined the Fairfield County Astronomical Society in Stamford, Connecticut where he became very active as an observer of comets and variable stars. He has served on the council of the American Association of Variable Star Observers in various capacities for over twenty years including three terms as its president. Since his retirement from active employment, Tom has completed a PhD in History at Rice University and is now practicing history by editing for the Biographical Encyclopedia of Astronomers to be published by Kluwer Academic Press in late 2004. He is also the AAVSO Historian, and plans to write a history of that organization in time for its centennial in 2011. Tom presently serves as the chairman of the American Astronomical Society's Historical Astronomy Division. Further background is available at <http://www.ruf.rice.edu/~trw/> which, unfortunately, has not been updated for a few years.

### Directions to Emory University

**From I-20 East or West:** Take exit 60-B, the Moreland Avenue North exit. Turn right on Moreland and follow it approximately 3 miles. Moreland will change to Briarcliff Road once it crosses Ponce de Leon Avenue. Continue straight on Briarcliff approximately 2 miles to North Decatur Road. Turn right and follow North Decatur one mile to the Dowman Drive intersection. It's a five way intersection. Emory University will be on your left.

**From I-75 North or South:** Take exit 248-C, the Freedom Parkway exit. Cross Boulevard; continue on Freedom Parkway; veer right at split. Road will pass by Carter Center. Continue on through next traffic light. Road deadends at next traf-

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fic light. Turn left onto Moreland Avenue. Road changes names after crossing over Ponce de Leon Avenue to Briarcliff Road.. Go approximately 2 miles on Briarcliff Road to North Decatur Road. Turn right and follow North Decatur Road one mile to the Dowman Drive intersection. Emory University will be on your left.

**From I-285 East:** Take I-285 to Stone Mountain Freeway (exit 39). Take the Atlanta/ Decatur exit. Take the Stone Mtn Freeway to the end(1 Mile). Turn left onto Lawrenceville Hwy. Road will change names to Scott Blvd. Take Scott Blvd to North Decatur Road. Note that it is a five way intersection. Turn right onto North Decatur Road. Take road for 1 1/2 to 2 miles to Dowman Road. Note that Dowman Road is a five way intersection. Turn right onto Dowman Road.

**From I-85 South or North:** Take exit 91, the Clairmont Road exit. Turn (east/south) on Clairmont and follow it approximately 3 miles to North Decatur Road. Turn right and follow North Decatur approximately one mile to Dowman Road. Turn right onto Dowman Road.

**Directions to White Hall from North Decatur Road:** This month the meeting will take place on the Emory University Campus in the at White Hall. Street access is via North Decatur Road. Take North Decatur to Dowman Drive (5 way intersection). Turn onto Dowman Drive. Note that Dowman Drive changes names to Dickey Drive but still same road. Parking is available along Dowman Drive and a parking lot is located behind the Admissions Building. Access is via first left after turning onto Dowman Drive from North Decatur Road. White Hall is located across the street from the new Math and Sciences Building. Ironically the color of White Hall is white.

## Charlie Elliott Chapter

For those who don't know, we have a chapter of the Atlanta Astronomy Club called the Charlie Elliott Chapter. They meet monthly at the visitor's center on the Charlie Elliott Wildlife Management Area property. Located east of Covington, Georgia about 12 miles south of I-20. So for those of you on the east side of town, check them out. Visit their website at <http://www.AtlantaAstronomy.Org/CEWMA>. Additional information on the Chapter including pictures, can be seen at the website. Check the Charlie Elliott Chapter website for info on date and time of **January meeting**. Information will also be posted on the AAC listserv.

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## 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. Email and phone numbers on page 3 of this publication.

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## GASP Final Event for 2003

Below is a thank you note sent to us by Unicoi State Park. The next GASP event is not til March of 2004.

Dear Joanne, Sharon, and all of the Astronomy Club,

We want to thank you for volunteering to host our Astronomy Night at Unicoi State Park & Lodge again this year. We appreciate your time, enthusiasm, and expertise! We think this year's event was a great success. There were about 130 people in attendance for the slide show and the sidewalk astronomy program. Therefore, we count 260 people for the event. Please pass along our thanks to all of the volunteers for being so patient and willing to share their knowledge.

Thank you for being so wiling to provide our guests, as well as our staff with all of the informative handouts. This year the Moon Pies were also a nice added "give away"! We also hope that you enjoyed the accommodations and Unicoi for the weekend.

We look forward to working with you next year on November 20th, so save the date! Thanks again so much for your help and let me know if I can ever do anything for you!

*Continued on the 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 **\$33** 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

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.

Sincerely,  
Ellen McConnell,  
Recreation Director

printed. So if you want more up to date information, go to our club's website. The website contains pictures, directions, membership applications, events updates (when available) and other information. <http://www.atlantaastronomy.org>

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## Atlanta Astronomy Club Listserv

If you have email access with a computer, then you can subscribe to the Atlanta Astronomy Club 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.

Subscribe to the Atlanta Astronomy Club Mailing List: The name of the 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.yahooroups.com/group/AstroAtlanta>. This list is owned by Lenny Abbey.

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## Atlanta Astronomical Imagers Listserv

To join the AAI group simply subscribe to the AAI listserv described below. Once subscribed, you will be connected to a wealth of knowledge and content.

As stated above, the AAI will also maintain a Yahoo Groups listserv. The name of this Yahoo Group is Atlanta\_Astro\_Imaging. To learn more about the Atlanta\_Astro\_Imaging group, please visit <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/AtlantaAstroImaging> . To join the AAI listserv simply send an email to; [AtlantaAstroImaging@yahoogroups.com](mailto: AtlantaAstroImaging@yahoogroups.com) . If you wish to unsubscribe simply send an email to [AtlantaAstroImaging-unsubscribe@yahoogroups.com](mailto: AtlantaAstroImaging-unsubscribe@yahoogroups.com) . All are welcome to join, even if you just want to see the wonderful images produced by this group. The moderators are Chris Hetlage, [mailto:chrishet@attbi.com](mailto: chrishet@attbi.com) and Donovan Conrad [mailto:donovan@donconrad.com](mailto: donovan@donconrad.com) .

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## Atlanta Astronomy Club Website

While this newsletter is the official information source for the Atlanta Astronomy Club, it is only up to date the day it is

## AAC Contacts

**President:** Jim Moore 7-242-6735  
[Hollin@Bellsouth.net](mailto: Hollin@Bellsouth.net)

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[mikeboni@atlantaastronomy.org](mailto: mikeboni@atlantaastronomy.org)

**Board/ Boy Scout Liaison:** John Lentini 7-984-0175  
[johnlentini@yahoo.com](mailto: johnlentini@yahoo.com)

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**Georgia Astronomy in State Parks:** Joanne Cirincione 4-824-4751  
[starrynights@AtlantaAstronomy.org](mailto: starrynights@AtlantaAstronomy.org)

**Light Trespass:** Tom Buchanan 7-521-2136  
[buchanant@bellsouth.net](mailto: buchanant@bellsouth.net)

**Obser. & Telescope Training:** Stef Whetstone 7-460-7678  
[swhetstone@mindspring.com](mailto: swhetstone@mindspring.com)

**Sidewalk Astronomy / Board:** Mark Banks 4-257-2766  
[Jmarkbanks@earthlink.net](mailto: Jmarkbanks@earthlink.net)

**Villa Rica Observ. Coordinator:** Vacant at this time

**Woodruff Observ. Coordinator:** John Lentini 7-984-0175  
[johnlentini@yahoo.com](mailto: johnlentini@yahoo.com)

**Webmaster Atlanta Astronomy:** Peter Macumber 7-941-4640  
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**Webmaster Charlie Elliott:** Lyle Fischer  
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## *The Focal Point*

Newsletter of The Atlanta Astronomy Club, Inc.

FROM:

Nameless Editor

3740 Burnt Hickory Road

Marietta, Georgia 30064

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

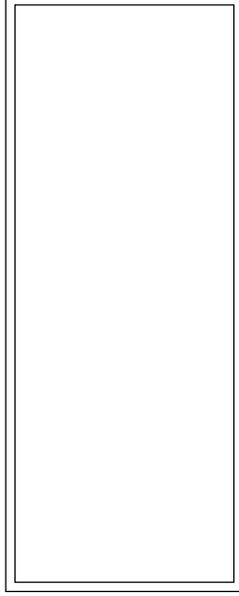
Atlanta Astronomy Club

PMB 305

3595 Canton Road A9

Marietta, GA 30066

FIRST CLASS



### Calendar

**January 9th: General Membership Meeting.** To be held at Emory University White Hall. Starts at 8PM.

**January 10th: Winter Scouters Campout.** Camping and sidewalk astronomy with the scout leaders. Dinner provided to those who help out. Location is frosty Woodruff. Contact John Lentini for more information.

**January 17th: Dark Sky Observing.** Location is Woodruff BSC. Starts at Dark.

**January 31st: How To Use Your Telescope.** Location to be at the Walter Barber Jr. Observatory near Villa Rica, Georgia.

**February 1st: Focal Point Article Deadline.**

**February 20th: General Membership Meeting.** To be held at Emory University White Hall. Starts at 8PM. Speaker and topic to be announced.

**February 21st: Dark Sky observing session** to be held at Woodruff Boy Scout Camp.

**March 1st: Focal Point Article Deadline.**

**March 6th: Open House/ Orientation** at Villa Rica. Note Full Moon but that's okay.

**March 19th: General Membership Meeting.** Emory University. Starts at 8PM. Speaker and topic TBA.

**March 20th: Dark Sky Observing.** Location TBA.

**March 27th: GASP** sidewalk astronomy and camping. Location TBA.

### 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 Nameless Editor at the following address. Send it to Keith Burns 3740 Burnt Hickory Road Marietta, Georgia 30064 or send it via email to **Keith\_B@bellsouth.net**. You can submit articles anytime up and including the deadline date. **The deadline for February is 11:59 PM February 1st. Submissions will no longer be accepted after the deadline.** Note that the editor will start working on the newsletter on **February 1st**. It takes me a week to do the newsletter.