

The Focal Point

The Atlanta Astronomy Club
Established 1947
September 2006

Vol. 19 No. 4

Editor: Kat Sarbell

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September General Meeting

By Keith "Kosmic Kow" Burns, AAC Program Chair

The next general meeting of the Atlanta Astronomy Club will be on September 15th at 8 P.M. at Emory University at the Goodrich Whitehall building. The meeting will take place in room 207. This is the first room on the left after entering into the building through the double doors. We will have refreshments just outside of the room before the meeting. A small donation in the "kitty" box is requested but not required. Directions on how to get to the meeting are on page 7.

We will have our business meeting first. This includes any announcements and other things of astronomical interest. Anyone who wishes to make announcements, please notify Peter Macumber at president@atlantaastronomy.org and also email me at Keith_B@Bellsouth.net. That way Peter knows who is speaking ahead of time and he can schedule the time needed. I also need to know so I can put your information on a Powerpoint presentation slide that will run before and during the business meeting. Please have the announcements to me by no later than September 11th. Note that I will not be at the September meeting. Alex Langoussis will be filling in for me as speaker chair. Our featured speaker of the night, April Whitt, gives her talk with questions and answers to follow. We will adjourn the meeting and head off to a local eating establishment for supper, dessert, and/or just a drink.

Her talk is titled, "Solar System Extremes." Her presentation this evening is about two spacecraft on the way to the extremes of the solar system. The MESSENGER probe is headed to Mercury, and New Horizons is on its way to Pluto (planet or not). Each of

Continued on next page



The Peach State Star Gaze 2006

by Peter Macumber, AAC President

It seems like just a few weeks ago the last PSSG ended. A week later plans were set in motion for this years PSSG. After what seems like a short ten months, the planning and organizing are building. Now it is only one month away.

This year, on October 16th, the PSSG'06 will begin - a week of observing, attending workshops, and talks in the mountains of North Georgia (actually Tennessee.)



During the Peach State last year, visitors got to watch the changing of the fall leaves in the mountains. PSSG photos by Tom Faber.

We have arranged for NASA's "AeroSpace Environmental Traveling Exhibit" for Friday and Saturday. More details are available on the website at www.atlantaastronomy.org/pssg.

Jonh Serrie will be back on Friday night to entertain under the stars with his program, "The Stargazers Journey".

Our own Larry Owens and Chris Hetlage as well as Jim Fly and Vic Menard will be giving talks as well as workshops.

Our keynote speaker, Bob Berman, will provide us with two entertaining talks, one Friday and one Saturday. Bob Berman is the director of Overlook Observatory near Woodstock, New York, and adjunct professor of astronomy at Marymount Manhattan College. He is the astronomy editor of *The Old Farmer's Almanac* and a monthly columnist for *Discover* and *Astronomy* magazines, and he has appeared on the Today Show and Late Night with David Letterman. His books include *Secrets of the Night Sky*, *Cosmic Adventure* and *Strange Universe*. He lives near Woodstock, New York.

Brochures are available from the website as well as being able to register online. By registering online, you have the option of paying with PayPal.

This years event has a registration fee of \$50.00 for an Individual and \$75.00 for a Family. Registrations must be postmarked no later than September 25, 2006 or else walk-in rates apply. *Continued on next page*

these missions to extreme environments comes with its own set of challenges that include extremes in temperature, radiation, and travel times. April has participated in workshops with scientists from both missions. April will bring each projects information and excitement of the project teams.

Speaker bio: April Whitt serves as an astronomer at Fernbank Science Center, where she writes and produces planetarium programs for students and the general public. She began working in planetariums in college, and continued on a Morehead scholarship at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Following several years with Gerry O'Neill at the Space Studies Institute in New Jersey, the family moved to Chicago, where she worked with the Adler Planetarium for ten years before arriving in Atlanta. She achieved National Board certification in teaching last November.

April continues to write and produce planetarium programs, work with students and teachers, record monthly sky information pieces, offer visitor tours in the observatory, and is a member of several planetarium groups: the Great Lakes Planetarium Association, Middle Atlantic Planetarium Society, South Eastern Planetarium Association and the International Planetarium Society.

Upcoming speakers and programs

October 20th: meeting cancelled due to the Peach State Star Gaze. This event will include several wonderful speakers who will talk on various topics of astronomical interest. Be sure to make your reservations and attend.

November there will be a meeting but exact date, speaker, and topic is still in the planning stage at this time. I should have more info in October.

December there will be a Christmas dinner. This is a popular event, so the speaker chairman will not disappoint the masses. At this time the location is not yet confirmed. I do have a speaker or with some luck, *speakers*. It's going to be an interesting program that will complement the dinner. We are planning on holding it on a Saturday night to allow more folks to attend. Keep those fingers crossed.



The Peach State Star Gaze 2006

(continued from the front page) The Field (pictured above), for Camping or Scope setup is \$12.00 per person per night. You also have the option of a bunkhouse for \$20.00 per person per night. The Bunkhouse includes use of the field. All attendees must pay either the Field or Bunkhouse fee.

Meals can be pre-ordered and are provided by WhiteWater Express. Brunch is \$7.00 and Dinner \$8.00.

A PSSG classic Tee Shirt will be available to order, in both a men's and women's style.

Come out to the 2006 Peach State Star Gaze, October 16 through October 22. Support your club in its major fundraising event of the year.

June Board of Directors Mtg Minutes

by Richard Jakiel, AAC Recording Secretary

Attendance: 9 BOD members, 4 AAC members

BOD meeting on June 11, 2006 started at 5 PM at the Bradford Map Store, President Peter Macumber presiding.

First Order of Business: AAC BOD Chair election

Tom Crowley re-elected as the BOD Chairman by a 7-0 vote.

OLD Business – AAC/DAV Opportunity

Tom Crowley using a PowerPoint presentation discussed the DAV/AAC initiative in considerable detail. Among the points covered:

- The AAC land purchase and what it entails
- AAC/DAV business relationship, including build-out and the PSSG
- The cost to both the AAC and to the membership, including member procurement of "Field Memberships"

AAC/DAV motions

Motion 1.) The BOD will take the AAC/DAV initiative to the membership (a quorum required) for approval at the July General membership meeting.

Discussion and amendment – a 15 to 20 minute presentation will be given at the June membership meeting.

Vote: 9 – 0, motion passed

Motion 2.) At the July membership meeting, the BOD will state to the membership that it has approved of this initiative and that it will make this recommendation to the AAC membership.

Vote: 8 – 1; Ken Poshedly was recorded voting against this particular statement.

August General Meeting Minutes

By Richard Jakiel, AAC Recording Secretary

The meeting on August 18th started shortly after 8 P.M., with Peter Macumber presiding. The official attendance count was + 45 members and guests. The business portion of the meeting was shorter than normal, but one important issue was brought up. The DAV initiative that was passed by club vote (46 – 0) in last month's meeting was in its final stages of ratification. On August 25th, the deal with DAV should be officially closed.

A Presentation Double Header

In a rare "double header", there were two excellent presentations given during the meeting. The first was by well-known observer and writer Tom Polakis, who happened to be in town visiting the Atlanta area with his wife, Jen. His talk focused on his numerous astronomy related travels throughout the western US, Alaska and even Namibia in southern Africa. His images of star parties, observatories, scenic western vistas and even icy Alaskan scenery were breathtaking and entertaining.

Following Tom's talk was Dennis Hands' presentation on the Mars Desert Research Station (MDRS) in the high desert of Utah. Entitled "Hard Work, No Pay, Eternal Glory" – it focused on his two-week experience in a "Mars simulation" station run by the Mars Society. He discussed some of his experiences living and working inside an 8-meter diameter station, including full-dress forays into the very exotic looking countryside. We learned what it might be like living on Mars, including how many fun ways one can bang one's knee on the rocks. The local scenery was eerily like Mars – very exotic and stark, with only the barest glimmers of life to remind one that this was still Earth.

The meeting ended at 09:45 PM, and a number of members soon headed to the "after meeting" at Athens Pizza.

Charlie Elliott August Minutes

by Clevis Jones, CEC Recording Secretary

ATTENDANCE: Seventeen guests and members attended the August 19, 2006 CE chapter meeting.

BUSINESS: Larry Owens covered donations. Larry enumerated the current inventory of equipment donated to the chapter. Jon Wood suggested to Larry an "Equipment Rotation Plan" whereby folks in the CE chapter could take "Baby Sitting possession" of the various telescopes that have been donated on the strict condition that they make every effort to make the telescopes available to chapter members who would like to use them.

2006 remaining schedule – September 16 (3rd Qtr), October 14 (3rd Qtr), November 11 (3rd Qtr), December 9 (Wn Gib).

OBSERVING REPORT: Steve Bieger presented his usual excellent and informative coverage of "What's Up Tonight".

CURRENT EVENTS REPORT & FEATURE PRESENTATION Part 1: Clevis Jones covered the chapter's membership in the Night Sky Network (NSN) with an Internet based explanation and a short movie.

FEATURE PRESENTATION Part 2: Larry Owens gave a presentation and discussion on the two year history of the Byers mount project.

OBSERVING SESSION: About a dozen folks delighted in observing with the 16-inch Newtonian on the [Owens]-Byers Mount!

Charlie Elliot Future Meetings

by Clevis Jones, CEC Recording Secretary

September 16, 2006 at 5:00 p.m. "What's Up Tonight" by Steve Beiger, "Current Events" by Clevis Jones, and the Feature Presentation: POT LUCK – 'nuff said!

October 14, 2006 at 5:00 p.m. Tentatively scheduled is one of Jim Honeycutt's really cool lab sessions at Oxford College of Emory University in Oxford, GA.

For updates and directions, please check the CEastronomy website for the most current meeting information! <http://www.CEastronomy.org>

Bradley Observatory Open House Series 2006-2007

"Astronomy Through Time" - Humans have looked up at the heavens for as long as they have had eyes to see and minds to wonder. The Open House Lecture Series this year concentrates on astronomy through the centuries, the history of astronomy. Explore the impact of changing technology on astronomical understanding, hear inspiring human stories of discovery and exploration and delve into the myths and architecture of ancient cultures.

All talks are free and open to the public. Lectures begin at 8 p.m.; doors open at 7:30 p.m. Bradley Observatory and Delafield Planetarium. Here is the schedule for Fall 2006. The programs for Winter/Spring 2007 will be announced later.

September 8 - Michael Lynn, Associate professor of history and interim chair, Agnes Scott

October 13 - Robert Silliman, Professor emeritus of history, Emory University

November 10 - Miller Goss, National Radio Astronomy Observatory

December 8 - Christopher De Pree, Associate professor of astronomy and chair, Agnes Scott

DSO Report from Brasstown Bald

by Daniel Herron, Observing Chair

We had a good time at Brasstown Bald on August 19th. The weather was looking iffy but about 12 people took the chance and showed up. The weather on the Bald was a cool 73, and was partly cloudy. Clouds would move in and then move out throughout the afternoon. Early on we watched a couple thunderstorms move south of us in the distance.

Then it started to get dark. This is where the fun began. Within the next four hours we saw an Iridium flare, got rained on, took pictures of lighting in the distance, observed many objects, watched Dr. Schmude help Elisa with her scope, saw a few "shooting stars", broke my Blackberry beyond repair, and just had a good time!

Around 8:30 we were lucky and were able to see a -5 mag Iridium flare right on the edge of an opening in the clouds. Right as it was getting dark I felt a couple of drops of rain and quickly put my short tube 80 back in the car. As soon as I did the bottom dropped out. It rained hard for about 10 to 15 minutes and then stopped.

After the rain a few people decided to head home, but 5 of us stayed. Alan Coffelt, Dave from the N. GA Astronomy club, Dr. Richard Schmude, Elisa Roberts, and I stayed and hoped for the skies to clear. After about 30 to 45 minutes the skies opened up and we brought out the big scopes and started observing. Throughout the night we saw M27, Alberio, M57, Neptune, Uranus, The Veil Nebula, The North America Nebula, the Swan Nebula, M8, M20, the Milky Way, and the Coat Hanger asterism.

All in all it was a fun night observing. We had a little of it all up on the Bald. Thanks for all those who came out!

GPTV Visits Brasstown Bald Mountain

by Keith Burns, Program Chair

It was a nice cool afternoon on August 26 for another dark-sky observing party, with GPTV as our special guests. The camera teams from Georgia Public Television were there to put together a story on astrophotography. Visitors were many for the early hours. Even though no astro imagers were there, GPTV still interviewed me for their program. GPTV also interviewed and video taped several others at the observing site. A thin crescent moon was visible for the camera.

Although the fog made advances, the skies cleared for observing that night. Soon it was "dobs versus refractors" out in the parking lot. There were no lights on the mountain. The summer Milky Way was bright and beautiful. We also saw meteors flashing by.

We kept observing late even through the wind and dew. I was there past 4AM - and made no Waffle House run!

Solar System Shrunk

NASA/JPL Release, posted August 24, 2006

If you woke up Thursday morning and sensed something was different about the world around you, you're absolutely right. Pluto is no longer a planet.

The International Astronomical Union (IAU), wrapping up its meeting in Prague, Czech Republic, has resolved one of the most hotly-debated topics in the cosmos by approving a specific definition that gives our solar system eight planets, instead of the nine most of us grew up memorizing.

NASA has already visited all eight planets that retain their official title: Mercury, Venus, Earth, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus and Neptune. In addition, the agency has its New Horizons spacecraft en route to Pluto, which the astronomical union has designated as the prototype for a new class of celestial objects, to be called "dwarf planets." *Continued*



"NASA will, of course, use the new guidelines established by the IAU," said Dr. Paul Hertz, Chief Scientist for the Science Mission Directorate at NASA Headquarters. "We will continue pursuing exploration of the most scientifically interesting objects in the solar system, regardless of how they are categorized."

Ceres, which orbits in a belt between Mars and Jupiter and is the largest known asteroid, is one of those interesting objects. In 2007, NASA will launch the Dawn spacecraft on a mission to study Ceres, which the astronomers have placed in the dwarf planet category, alongside Pluto. The dwarf planet family also includes 2003 UB313, nicknamed "Xena." When Dr. Mike Brown of Caltech and his colleagues announced last summer that they'd discovered the object, which is bigger and farther away than Pluto, many astronomers decided it was time to figure out once and for all, "What exactly is a planet, anyway?"

Here's how it all shakes out. The IAU has decided that, to be called a planet, an object must have three traits. It must orbit the sun, be massive enough that its own gravity pulls it into a nearly round shape, and be dominant enough to clear away objects in its neighborhood.

To be admitted to the dwarf planet category, an object must have only two of those traits -- it must orbit the sun and have a nearly round shape. And no, moons don't count as dwarf planets. In addition to Pluto, Ceres and 2003 UB313, the astronomical union has a dozen potential "dwarf planets" on its watchlist.

What's to become of the other objects in our solar system neighborhood, the ones that are not planets, not dwarf planets and not moons? The organization has decided that most asteroids, comets and other small objects will be called "small solar-system bodies."

Despite the establishment of these three distinct categories, there are bound to be gray areas. As technologies improve and more objects are found, the IAU will set up a process to decide which of the three categories are most appropriate for specific objects.

Even before the discovery of Xena, not all was calm in the planetary world. There was debate after Clyde Tombaugh discovered Pluto in 1930. With its small size, distant location and odd orbit, some questioned whether Pluto was really a planet or just an icy remnant of the planet-forming process.

That issue has been resolved by the IAU. Among those most keenly following the debate -- Mike Brown, who has been awaiting word on Pluto and the object he found, Xena.

"I'm of course disappointed that Xena will not be the tenth planet, but I definitely support the IAU in this difficult and courageous decision," said Brown. "It is scientifically the right thing to do, and is a great step forward in astronomy."

Although the revamping of our solar system might seem unsettling, it's really nothing new. In fact, when Ceres was discovered in 1801, it was called a planet, as were several similar objects found later. But when the count kept on growing, astronomers decided "enough is enough," and they demoted Ceres and its siblings, placing them in a new category, called asteroids.



Image Credit: NASA/JPL

Voyager 1 Passes Milestone

NASA/JPL News Release August 20, 2006

Voyager 1, already the most distant human-made object in the cosmos, reached 100 astronomical units from the sun on Tuesday, August 15 at 5:13 p.m. Eastern time (2:13 p.m. Pacific time). That means the spacecraft, which launched nearly three decades ago, is 100 times more distant from the sun than Earth is.

In more common terms, Voyager 1 is about 15 billion kilometers (9.3 billion miles) from the sun. Dr. Ed Stone, Voyager project scientist and the former director of NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena, Calif., says the Voyager team always predicted that the spacecraft would have enough power to last this long.

"But what you can't predict is that the spacecraft isn't going to wear out or break. Voyager 1 and 2 run 24 hours a day, seven days a week, but they were built to last," Stone said. The spacecraft have really been put to the test during their nearly 30 years of space travel, flying by the outer planets, and enduring such challenges as the harsh radiation environment around Jupiter.

The spacecraft are traveling at a distance where the sun is but a bright point of light and solar energy is not an option for electrical power. The Voyagers owe their longevity to their nuclear power sources, called radioisotope thermoelectric generators, provided by the Department of Energy.

Voyager 1 is now at the outer edge of our solar system, in an area called the heliosheath, the zone where the sun's influence wanes. This region is the outer layer of the 'bubble' surrounding the sun, and no one knows how big this bubble actually is. Voyager 1 is literally venturing into the great unknown and is approaching interstellar space. Traveling at a speed of about one million miles per day, Voyager 1 could cross into interstellar space within the next 10 years. *Continued on next page*

"Interstellar space is filled with material ejected by explosions of nearby stars," Stone said. "Voyager 1 will be the first human-made object to cross into it."

Voyager Project Manager Ed Massey of JPL says the survival of the two spacecraft is a credit to the robust design of the spacecraft, and to the flight team, which is now down to only 10 people. "But it's these 10 people who are keeping these spacecraft alive. They're very dedicated. This is sort of a testament to them, that we could get all this done."

Between them, the two Voyagers have explored Jupiter, Uranus, Saturn and Neptune, along with dozens of their moons. In addition, they have been studying the solar wind, the stream of charged particles spewing from the sun at nearly a million miles per hour.

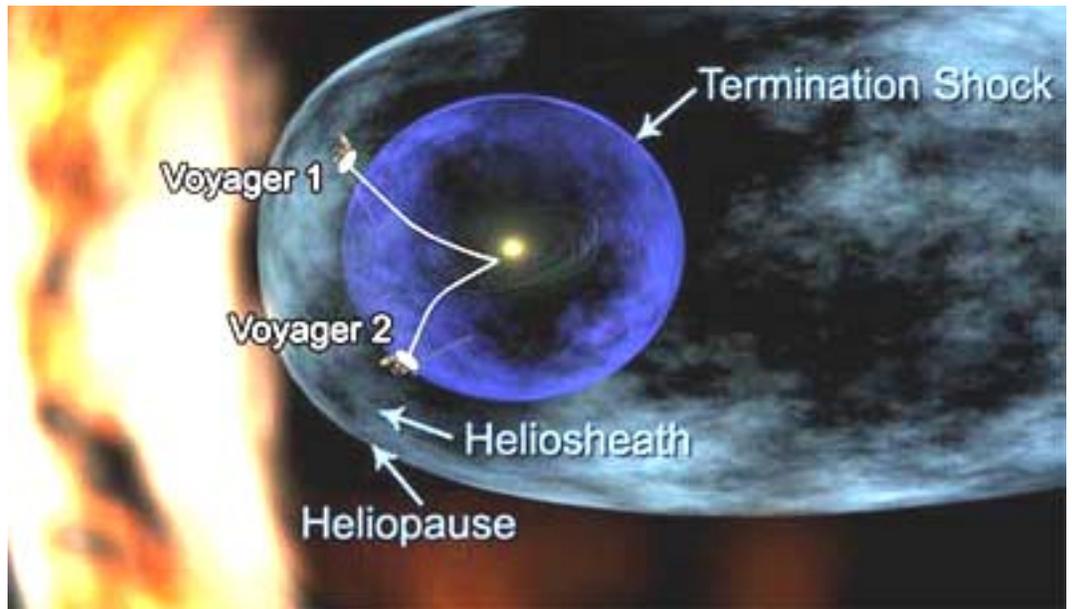


Image Credit: NASA/JPL

Wispy Dust and Gas Paint Portrait of Starbirth

Hubble Photo Release August 23, 2006

This active region of star formation in the Large Magellanic Cloud (LMC), as photographed by NASA's Hubble Space Telescope, unveils wispy clouds of hydrogen and oxygen that swirl and mix with dust on a canvas of astronomical size. The LMC is a satellite galaxy of the Milky Way.



This particular region within the LMC, referred to as N180B, contains some of the brightest known star clusters. The hottest blue stars can be brighter than a million of our Suns. Their intense energy output generates not only harsh ultraviolet radiation but also incredibly strong stellar "winds" of high-speed, charged particles that blow into space. The ultraviolet radiation ionizes the interstellar gas and makes it glow, while the winds can disperse the interstellar gas across tens or hundreds of light-years. Both actions are evident in N180B.

Also visible etched against the glowing hydrogen and oxygen gases are 100 light-year-long dust streamers that run the length of the nebula, intersecting the core of the cluster near the center of the image. Perpendicular to the direction of the dark streamers, bright orange rims of compact dust clouds appear near the bottom right of and top left corners of the image. These dark concentrations are on the order of a few light-years in size. Also visible among the dust clouds are so-called "elephant trunk" stalks of dust. If the pressure from the nearby stellar winds is great enough to compress this material and cause it to gravitationally contract, star formation might be triggered in these small dust clouds. These dust clouds are evidence that this is still a young star-formation region.

This image was taken with Hubble's Wide Field Planetary Camera 2 in 1998 using filters that isolate light emitted by hydrogen and oxygen gas. To create a color composite, the data from the hydrogen filter were colorized red, the oxygen filter were colorized blue, and a combination of the two filters averaged together was colorized green. The amalgamation yields pink and orange hydrogen clouds set amid a field of soft blue oxygen gas. Dense dust clouds block starlight and glowing gas from our view point.

Credit: NASA, ESA, and the Hubble Heritage Team (STScI/AURA)

Galaxy Hunter: Giant Black Holes Stifle Star Birth

JPL News Release August 23, 2006

Supermassive black holes in some giant galaxies create such a hostile environment, they shut down the formation of new stars, according to NASA Galaxy Evolution Explorer findings published in the August 24 issue of *Nature*.

The orbiting observatory surveyed more than 800 nearby elliptical galaxies of various sizes. An intriguing pattern emerged: the more massive, or bigger, the galaxy, the less likely it was to have young stars. Because bigger galaxies are known to have bigger black holes, astronomers believe the black holes are responsible for the lack of youthful stars.

"Supermassive black holes in these giant galaxies create unfriendly places for stars to form," said Dr. Sukyoung K. Yi of Yonsei University in Seoul, Korea, who led the research team. "If you want to find lots of young stars, look to the smaller galaxies."

Previously, scientists had predicted that black holes might have dire consequences for star birth, but they didn't have the tools necessary to test the theory.

The Galaxy Evolution Explorer, launched in 2003, is well-suited for this research. It is extremely sensitive to the ultraviolet radiation emitted by even low numbers of young stars.

Black holes are monstrous heaps of dense matter at the centers of galaxies. Over time, a black hole and its host galaxy will grow in size, but not always at the same rate.

Yi and his collaborators found evidence that the black holes in elliptical galaxies bulk up to a critical mass before putting a stop to star formation. In other words, once a black hole reaches a certain size relative to its host galaxy, its harsh effects become too great for new stars to form. According to this "feedback" theory, the growth of a black hole slows the development of not only stars but of its entire galaxy.

How does a black hole do this? There are two possibilities. First, jets being blasted out of black holes could blow potential star-making fuel, or gas, out of the galaxy center, where stars tend to arise.

The second theory relates to the fact that black holes drag surrounding gas onto them, which heats the gas. The gas becomes so hot that it can no longer clump together and collapse into stars.

Other authors of this research include: Drs. Kevin Schawinski, Sadegh Khochfar and Sugata Kaviraj of the University of Oxford, England; Dr. Young-Wook Lee of Yonsei University in Seoul, Korea; Drs. Alessandro Boselli, Jose Donas and Bruno Milliard of the Laboratory of Astrophysics of Marseille, France; Tim Conrow, Drs. Tom Barlow, Karl Forster, Peter G. Friedman, D. Chris Martin, Patrick Morrissey, Mark Seibert, Todd Small and Ted K. Wyder of the California Institute of Technology in Pasadena; Dr. Susan Neff of NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center, Greenbelt, Maryland; Dr. David Schiminovich of Columbia University, N.Y.; Drs. Tim Heckman, Alex Szalay and Luciana Bianchi of Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, Md.; Dr. Barry Madore of the Observatories of the Carnegie Institute of Washington in Pasadena; and Dr. R. Michael Rich of the University of California, Los Angeles.



Image Caption: This artist's concept depicts a supermassive black hole at the center of a galaxy. The blue color here represents radiation pouring out from material very close to the black hole. The grayish structure surrounding the black hole, called a torus, is made up of gas and dust. Credit: NASA/JPL-Caltech

The California Institute of Technology in Pasadena, Calif., leads the Galaxy Evolution Explorer mission and is responsible for science operations and data analysis. NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory, also in Pasadena, manages the mission and built the science instrument. The mission was developed under NASA's Explorers Program managed by the Goddard Space Flight Center, Greenbelt, Md. Researchers from South Korea and France collaborated on this mission.

Editor's Note

Most of the images in the Focal Point are in color, but you won't see that if you are getting the mailed version. You can download the full color version from the AAC web site each month. By reviewing the Focal Point over the Internet instead of having it mailed, you can save the club about \$12 a year in printing and mailing costs. It may not sound like much, but the more people that use the Internet to receive the Focal Point, the more money the club will have to support its other activities. Just send an email to Kat Sarbell (FocalPoint@AtlantaAstronomy.Org) requesting that your name be removed from the Focal Point mailing list.

Georgia Astronomy in State Parks (GASP) Events

There is one remaining GASP event for 2006:

November 11th - Florence Marina State Park

For more information about this event, contact Joanne Cirincione at Starrynights@AtlantaAstronomy.org



The GASP volunteers at FDR State Park on Labor Day weekend 2004 - From left to right: Joanne Cirincione, Keith Burns, Harold and Claudia Champ with Ginger, Peter Macumber, Sharon Carruthers, Tom Faber, Kat Sarbell, and Holly and John Ritger.

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 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>

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 or times. Membership is open to all. Membership fees 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 & Telescope* or *Astronomy* can be purchased through the club for a reduced rate. The fees are **\$33** for Sky & Telescope and **\$34** for Astronomy. Renewal forms will be sent to you by the magazines. Send the renewal form along with your check to the Atlanta Astronomy Club treasurer.

The Club address: Atlanta Astronomy Club, Inc., P.O. Box 76155, Atlanta, GA 30358-1155.

Atlanta Astronomy Club Hot Line: Timely information on the night sky and astronomy in the Atlanta area. Call **770-621-2661**.

AAC Web 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.

AAC Officers and Contacts

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AL Observing Programs Assistance: Keith Burns 770-427-1475
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PSSG Chairman: Peter Macumber pmacumber@nightssky.org

Co-Chair: Joanne Cirincione starrynights@AtlantaAstronomy.org

Sidewalk Astronomy: position open

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Webmaster Atlanta Astronomy: Peter Macumber 770-941-4640
pmacumber@nightssky.org

Directions to White Hall at Emory

Meeting Location Information:

Turn onto Dowman Drive from North Decatur Road at the five way intersection (across from Everybody's Pizza). White Hall is located on the right across from the new Science & Math building. Parking is available along Dowman Drive on both sides of the road. There is also a gated parking lot on the left behind the Admissions Building. After 6PM there is no fee to park there. For more detailed directions on how to get to Emory University, visit www.atlantaastronomy.org.

Calendar by Tom Faber (All times EDT unless noted)

- September 4th, Monday: Uranus at Opposition.
September 6th, Wednesday: Venus near Regulus.
September 7th, Thursday: Full Moon (Fruit or Harvest Moon).
September 8th, Friday: Bradley Observatory Open House, 8PM, Agnes Scott College, Lecture Topic: History of Astronomy.
September 14th, Thursday: Moon Last Quarter.
September 15th, Friday: **AAC Meeting at White Hall, 8PM, Emory University.**
September 16th, Saturday: **VR Work Day & New Member Orientation - Contact Daniel Herron for details. CEC Meeting - see p. 2 for details.**
September 22nd, Friday: New Moon.
September 23rd, Saturday: **DSO at Deerlick Astronomy Village - Contact Daniel Herron for details. Equinox at 12:03AM.**
September 30th, Saturday: Moon First Quarter. **Telescope & Instrument Workshop, 11AM, Bradford Map, Globe & Telescopes, contact Sharon Carruthers for details.**
October 6th, Friday: Full Moon (Hunter's Moon).
October 9th, Monday: Moon Occults M45.
October 13th, Friday: Bradley Observatory Open House, 8PM, Agnes Scott College, Lecture Topic TBA. Moon Last Quarter.
October 14th, Saturday: **CEC Meeting.**
October 16th, Saturday: Mercury Greatest Eastern Elongation.

October 16th-22nd: Peach State Star Gaze at Whitewater.

- October 21st, Saturday: Mars Conjunction with Sun, Orionid Meteors.
October 22nd, Sunday: New Moon.
October 24th, Tuesday: Venus Superior Conjunction.
October 29th, Sunday: Moon First Quarter.

Atlanta Astronomy Club Listserve

Subscribe to the Atlanta Astronomy Club Mailing List: The name of the list is: AstroAtlanta. The address for messages is: AstroAtlanta@yahoogroups.com . To add a subscription, send a message to: AstroAtlanta-subscribe@yahoogroups.com . This list is owned by Lenny Abbey.

Focal Point Deadline and Submission Information

Please send articles, pictures, and drawings in electronic format on anything astronomy related to Kat Sarbell at focalpoint@atlantaastronomy.org. Please send images separate from articles, not embedded in them. Articles are preferred as plain text files but Word documents are okay. You can submit articles anytime up and including the deadline date. **The deadline for October is Thursday, September 28th at 4:00 PM Submissions will no longer be accepted after the deadline.**

FIRST CLASS



Newsletter of The Atlanta Astronomy Club, Inc.



The Focal Point

FROM:

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