

The Focal Point

The Atlanta Astronomy Club
Established 1947
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Editor: Kat Sarbell

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May General Meeting and Election

By Keith "Kosmic Kow" Burns, AAC Program Chair

The next general meeting of the Atlanta Astronomy Club will be on Friday, May 18th, 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 to White Hall and new parking info are on page 7.

The meeting starts at 8 PM sharp. We will have our business meeting first. This includes any announcements and other things of astronomical interest. Anyone who wishes to make any 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 required. I need to know so I can put your information on a Power Point presentation slideshow that will run before and during the beginning of the business meeting. Please have the announcement info to me by no later than May 15th (Tuesday).

This month we will hold the elections during the business part of the meeting. Our slate of nominees is as follows: President: Peter Macumber; V.P./Program Chair: position open; Observing Chair: Daniel Herron; Treasurer: Sharon Carruthers; Recording Secretary: Rich Jakiel; and Corresponding Secretary: Kat Sarbell. Four individuals are running for three Board openings: Art Zorka, Mark Sandberg, Mark Banks, and Larry Wallace.

Our featured speaker of the night, Rich Jakiel, gives his 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.

The Talk: Tonight's talk topic is on Galaxies. Now you are saying, wait a minute, he talked about galaxies at the March meeting back in 2006. Yes, but I have had a chance to see this talk up close. The pictures are well

worth the trip plus the information is great. The program chair gives the talk two thumbs up. In this talk he will discuss the different types of galaxies and give examples. Plus Rich will talk about the classification system used. For those who are interested, he has co-authored a book titled "Galaxies and How to Observe Them" which is published by Springer Books.



Speaker Biography: I grew up in small college town (Fredonia) located in Western New York, about 40 miles southwest of Buffalo. Though I lived within the village, my backyard was blessed with good dark skies that were often better than 6.5 mag (visual). I got my first telescope in 1974, when I was a junior in high school. It was a 4 1/4" f/10 Edmund Newtonian on a steel pedestal German Equatorial mount (GEM). Within a year, I had seen all the "Messiers" and hundreds of other deepsky objects. Two years later, after much scrimping and saving, I bought an 8-inch Cave OTA mounted on a massive, homemade GEM, plus a small domed observatory. It would become my main instrument and it was used extensively to observe nearly 2000 objects until I moved to Atlanta, GA in August of 1987. Today I own several telescopes including a 120mm richfield refractor, 17.5-inch rebuilt Coulter Dobsonian and a 12-inch LX200 GPS that I'm still trying to figure out.

In a very short time I became an active member of the AAC serving a dozen times as a club officer or on the Board of Directors since late 1987. I spent a great deal of time using the telescopes at Villa Rica during much of that time, plus I attended all of the PSSG's since their inception. Though I've concentrated on "deep sky" observing, I am also a dedicated solar system observing and (of late) - an imager. Before acquiring a decent imaging platform, I spent a great deal of time sketching the cosmos and have a half dozen notebooks filled with many hundreds of drawings. Over the years a fair number of these have been published in magazines and in several books.

Back in 1990, I had my first major article (on galaxies in Ursa Major) published by Astronomy magazine. Since then I have had over 50 articles published in Astronomy, Sky & Telescope, ALPO's Strolling Astronomer, Astronomie Heute, Magellanies, Amateur Astronomy, and the Deep Sky Observer (Webb Society) to name a few. Most of these articles have been on "deep sky" observing, though I've written several book reviews, biographical sketches and other historical pieces too. I have also written a 1/2 dozen technical articles in geochemistry and radiochemistry for several major refereed scientific journals. Recently, I co-authored (with Wolfgang Steinicke) an observer's guide to galaxies - "Galaxies: How to Observe Them" as part of Springer's continuing amateur observer series.

Continued on next page

Currently I work for the Environmental Protection Division of Georgia as a research scientist II in the state's radiation protection program. I have a BS in the fields of Geology and Biology (1979), and an MS in Geochemistry (1983). More recently I was a Ph.D. candidate in geochemistry at Georgia Tech. From 1987 to 1990 I was a high school science teacher in Atlanta and Villa Rica and was an adjunct professor for the University of West Georgia from 1997 to 2002 (astronomy and physics).

(Keith would also like to add that Rich is the owner of Wise-Guy Observatory located on Stooges Field south of Douglasville, Georgia. Rich is known as Curly of the three stooges. He owns and images with a 12 inch Meade SCT.)

Upcoming Speaker and Program: The June meeting is on June 22nd. The June meeting will feature Chris Hetlage. He will speak on the new astronomy village known as Deerlick Astronomy Village. The club leadership will also talk about the plans for the club's new dark site recently purchased. Come on down and find out what is going on.

April General Meeting Minutes

by Daniel Herron, Observing Chair

Peter Macumber, club president, opened the meeting at 8:03 PM. (Below, on left) He then made the following announcements: - Astronomy Day on the 21st at Fernbank - Dave Lumpkin's New Member forum at VR the following night. - The upcoming CE chapter's meeting - GASP coming up next June 23rd at Tallulah - The June meeting where Chris Hetlage will speak about the DAV and future improvements.



Keith Burns, program chair, mentioned the May election and announced the slate of candidates and once again asked for volunteers to run (especially for the Program Chair). (Above, on right)

Phil Danneman mentioned that Gainesville was having tours of the Solar System model walk for tomorrow. Larry Wallace mentioned he and Brad Isley are working on DAV build out and they need help with labor and ideas. Larry will also be discussing this with the board at the board meeting on the 29th (*Editor's Note: Board Meeting has been rescheduled to May 13th*).



Art Zorka talked about the Astronomical League and the Observing Programs, then presented a certificate and pin to Daniel Herron for completing the Binocular Messier list. (Above, Daniel is on the right.)

Alex Langoussis mentioned parking changes at Emory. The current parking lot behind the science center will be torn up and a parking deck will be built so we need to park at the visitor's deck behind White Hall. The new one will open by Fall '08.

Daniel spoke about the Hopewell Middle School sidewalk event and read letters from the students and presented the club with 100 dollars that the students collected as a donation! Dave talked about VR and the New Member Orientations Forum. Peter talked about the Zombie party and thanked all involved! Peter turned the meeting over to Keith to announce the speaker.

Our speaker for the evening was Sean Brittain, Assistant Professor at Clemson University in the Physics & Astronomy Department. His talk was entitled "McNeil's Last Gasp: A Short Lived Post-Outburst Wind from V1647 Ori". His presentation was very informative, including graphs and charts of his team's research. He accepted questions after his lecture.

Meeting photos by Tom Faber.



The Next AAC Board Meeting

The next Board Meeting of the Atlanta Astronomy Club is scheduled for Sunday, May 12th at 5:00PM at Bradford Map, Globe & Telescopes, 300 Hammond Dr, Sandy Springs. Contact Tom Crowley for details.

Upcoming Telescope & Instrument Workshop Meetings

by Sharon Carruthers

The next couple meetings of the Telescope and Instrument Workshop will be 11 AM Saturdays, May 5 and June 2 at the Bradford Map & Telescope Atlanta store, 300 Hammond Rd, Sandy Springs. We are planning to build loaner scopes. Or bring your scope problems and we will try to help you out. For more info you can contact me at 404-843-9610 (work) or scarruthers@AtlantaAstronomy.org.

Sky & Telescope Subscription Change for AAC Members

by Sharon Carruthers

S&T has been bought out by a new company and their subscription service has been transferred to an off-site location. They have changed their subscription procedures which should make it easier for our members and the Club Treasurer (me!!)

Renewal Subscriptions Only: Members can now renew directly at S&T via mail or phone (1-800-253-0245). Payment is due when you re-order. You can still renew through the Club, if you wish. S&T will send the Treasurer a subscription list once a year to vet whether or not the subscribers contacting them are actually AAC members.

New Subscriptions: Must still be submitted through the Club!

If you have any questions, please contact me at Treasurer@AtlantaAstronomy.org

Observing Events for 2007

by Daniel Herron, Observing Chair

Here are some dates in 2007 for Observing events (all dates subject to change). I am sure some will be added or changed during the course of the year but I will try and stick to them if possible. I will update the locations and times later as well as add them to the AAC web site and the Yahoo Astro Atlanta List.

DSO Dates (locations noted if known/decided) May 12th @ Woodruff, June 16th, July 14th, August 11th, September 8th, October @ DAV (PSSG), November 10th, December 8th

GASP Events (only 2 known as of today, more to come) June 23rd - Tallulah Gorge State Park, November 3rd - Red Top Mtn State Park.

New member Orientation/Open Houses (all at Villa Rica for now unless noted) May 4th @ Fernbank Science Center, May 26th (Open House), July 21 (New member Orientation), September 22nd (Open House), October 20 (New member Orientation), December 15th (Open House - New member Orientation).

Charlie Elliott April Minutes

by Clevis Jones, CE Recording Secretary

April 14, 2007, ATTENDANCE: Twenty-one guests and members attended the meeting.

Business: Chapter director, Larry Owens, updated us on the club projects. He discussed some of the reasoning he used in his design to make it lighter and stronger. He also covered some fixes for the Optical Craftsman power adapter. He pointed out that our next meeting is on May 19 is Jakes Day at CE. Our club is providing a "Planetarium" for the event and will be located in the classroom where we have our meetings. Volunteers are needed. Arrival time is 8:30 a.m. and the event lasts until about 4:30 p.m. If you would like to volunteer contact Larry Owens at planetographer@CEastronomy.org. Our May meeting follows the Jakes Day event and begins at 5:00 p.m. This month is Election of Club Officers: Debbie Jones has volunteered to be on the Election Committee. Positions are Director, Observing Supervisor and Recording Secretary. Elected officers begin their duties AFTER the May meeting. At this point there are NO nominees for any of the positions. If you would like to self-nominate, or nominate someone else, contact Debbie Jones at Debbie@CEastronomy.org. After the elections, our Feature Presentation will be "PhotoShop for Astro-Imagers" by Larry Owens. Time permitting, "What's Up" by Steve Bieger and "Current Events" by Clevis Jones will follow.

The 2007 remaining schedule for the CE Meetings is May 19 (Jakes Day and ELECTION of Officers), June 9, July 7, Aug 18, September 15, October 6 (note: Peach State on the 13th), November 3 (back to 3 p.m. for the winter), December 15.

Feature Presentation: "A Dark Matter" by Fred Buls, instructor at Perimeter College. What's Up Tonight and Current Events were not presented. A line of intense storms approaching from the west cut short the meeting so those who wanted to head for home could do so.

Charlie Elliot Future Meetings

by Clevis Jones, CE Recording Secretary

May 19 at 5:00 p.m. at the Charlie Elliott Visitor's Center
ELECTION OF OFFICERS

FEATURE PRESENTATION: "PhotoShop for Astro-Imagers" by Larry Owens. Please join us for a tour of PhotoShop tools and techniques, for the astrophotographer.

June 9, 5:00 p.m. Feature Presentation - TBD

For updates & directions & LIVE broadcasts: check the CEastronomy website for the most current meeting info: <http://www.CEastronomy.org>

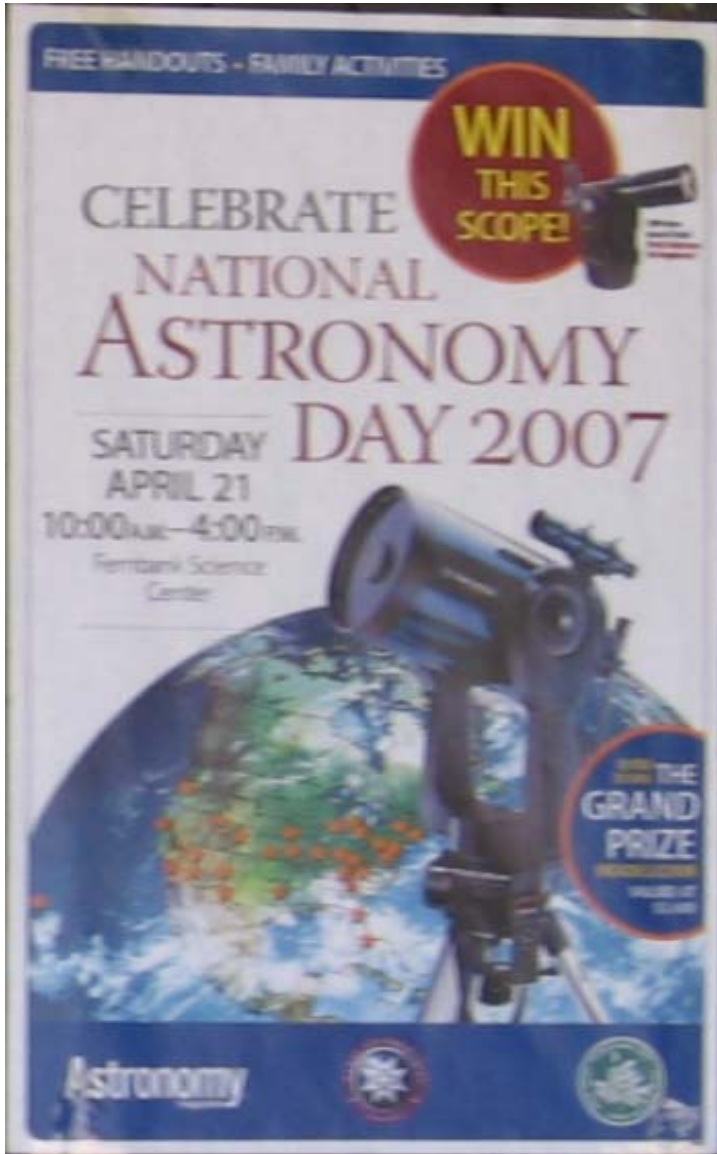
Bradley Observatory Open House Series Spring 2007

"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.

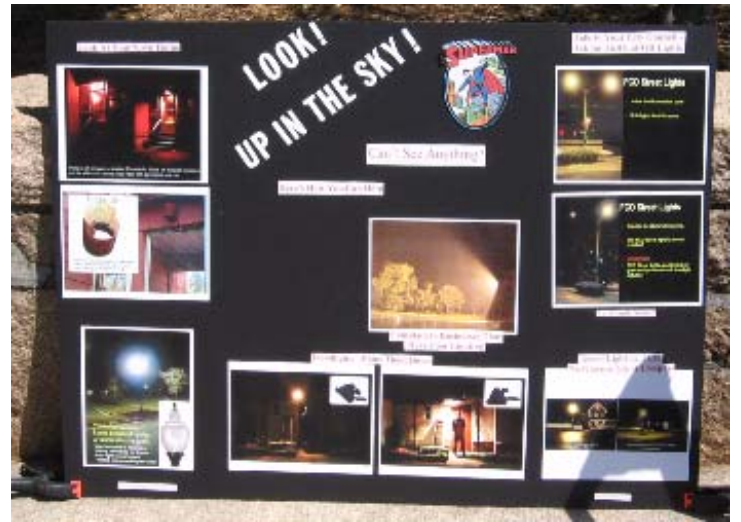
All talks are free and open to the public. Lectures begin at 8 p.m.; doors open at 7:30 p.m. Bradley Observatory and Delafield Planetarium at Agnes Scott College. The last open house until Fall is: **May 11, 2007** - "Science and the Founding Fathers" J. Young, Georgia State University Honors Program.

Astronomy Day 2007

Volunteers from the Atlanta Astronomy Club assisted Fernbank Science Center in hosting Astronomy Day on April 21st. Members from the club set up telescopes for daytime viewing of the sun and moon. In the observatory, others viewed Venus through Fernbank's 36" reflecting telescope. Club members attending the event were Daniel and Misty Herron, Mark Sandberg, Art Zorka, Steve Bieger (in the observatory), Tom Faber, Kat Sarbell, and several other people. All photos by Tom Faber.



Steve Bieger shows a young visitor Venus with the 36" telescope (left). The crowd in front of the entrance to Fernbank (top & middle). A group of boy scouts lines up to see the sun through a hydrogen-alpha telescope (above).



Another young visitor views Venus through the 36" telescope while dad looks on (top left). More visitors view through the volunteers' telescopes (middle left). A mom points up to the sun after her daughter views it through Daniel Herron's solar scope (bottom left). Mark Sandberg's light pollution displays (right top & middle). The guests await David Dundee's prize drawing announcements (bottom right).

Hubble Sees Extreme Star Birth in the Carina Nebula

Hubble News Release - April 24, 2007

One of the largest panoramic images ever taken with Hubble's cameras has been released to celebrate the 17th anniversary of the launch and deployment of the NASA/ESA Hubble Space Telescope. The image shows a 50 light-year-wide view of the tumultuous central region of the Carina Nebula where a maelstrom of star birth - and death - is taking place.



Hubble's new view of the Carina Nebula shows the process of star birth at a new level of detail. The bizarre landscape of the nebula is sculpted by the action of outflowing winds and scorching ultraviolet radiation from the monster stars that inhabit this inferno. These stars are shredding the surrounding material that is the last vestige of the giant cloud from which the stars were born.

This immense nebula contains a dozen or more brilliant stars that are estimated to be at least 50 to 100 times the mass of our Sun. The most opulent is the star Eta Carinae, seen at far left. Eta Carinae is in the final stages of its brief eruptive lifespan, as shown by two billowing lobes of gas and dust that presage its upcoming explosion as a titanic supernova.

The fireworks in the Carina region started three million years ago when the nebula's first generation of newborn stars condensed and ignited in the middle of a huge cloud of cold molecular hydrogen. Radiation from these stars carved out an expanding bubble of hot gas. The island-like clumps of dark clouds scattered across the nebula are nodules of dust and gas that have so far resisted being eaten away by photoionisation.

The hurricane-strength blast of stellar winds and blistering ultraviolet radiation within the cavity is now compressing the surrounding walls of cold hydrogen. This is triggering a second stage of new star formation.

Our Sun and Solar System may have been born inside such a cosmic crucible 4.6 billion years ago. In looking at the Carina Nebula we are seeing star formation as it commonly occurs along the dense spiral arms of a galaxy.

This immense nebula is an estimated 7,500 light-years away in the southern constellation Carina, the Keel of the old southern constellation Argo Navis, the ship of Jason and the Argonauts from Greek mythology.

This image is an immense (29,566 x 14,321 pixels) mosaic of the Carina Nebula assembled from 48 frames taken with Hubble's Advanced Camera for Surveys. The Hubble images were taken in the light of ionized hydrogen. Colour information was added with data taken at the Cerro Tololo Inter-American Observatory in Chile. Red corresponds to sulphur, green to hydrogen, and blue to oxygen emission.

In its 17 years of exploring the heavens, NASA's Hubble Space Telescope has made nearly 800,000 observations and snapped nearly 500,000 images of more than 25,000 celestial objects. Hubble does not travel to stars, planets and galaxies. It takes pictures of them as it whirls around Earth at 17,500 miles an hour. In its 17-year lifetime, the telescope has made nearly 100,000 trips around our planet. Those trips have racked up plenty of frequent-flier-miles, about 2.4 billion, which is the equivalent of a round trip to Saturn.

The 17 years' worth of observations has produced more than 30 terabytes of data, equal to about 25 percent of the information stored in the Library of Congress.

Each day the orbiting observatory generates about 10 gigabytes of data, enough information to fill the hard drive of a typical home computer in two weeks.

The Hubble archive sends about 66 gigabytes of data each day to astronomers throughout the world.

Astronomers using Hubble data have published nearly 7,000 scientific papers, making it one of the most productive scientific instruments ever built.

The Hubble Space Telescope is a project of international cooperation between ESA and NASA.

Image Credit: NASA, ESA, N. Smith (University of California, Berkeley), and The Hubble Heritage Team (STScI/AURA)



Directions to White Hall at Emory

Meeting Location Information:

Our meetings are generally held in a classroom in White Hall. To get to White Hall turn onto Dowman Drive from North Decatur Road at the five way intersection (across from Everybody's Pizza). White Hall is located on the across from the new Science & Math building. Parking is available along Dowman Drive on both sides of the road. **The parking lot on the left behind the Admissions Building is now closed.** Additional parking is available in two parking decks near White Hall. For maps to the decks see <http://map.emory.edu>. For more detailed directions to Emory University, visit www.atlantaastronomy.org, to the Emory web site.

Georgia Astronomy in State Parks (GASP) Events

The GASP events for 2007 are being planned. Scheduled so far are:

June 23rd - Tallulah Gorge State Park

November 3rd - Red Top Mountain State Park

For more information about these events, 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. Photo by Holly 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

President: Peter Macumber 770-941-4640
president@atlantaastronomy.org

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focalpoint@atlantaastronomy.org

Treasurer: Sharon Carruthers Treasurer@AtlantaAstronomy.org

Recording Secretary: Rich Jakiel
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Board: Brad Isley - Contact Info TBA

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Elliott Recording Secretary: Clevis Jones cjones@aaahawk.com

Elliott Coordinator: Alesia Rast Alesia_Rast@mail.dnr.state.ga.us

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planetographer@comcast.net

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zoser@mindspring.com

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starrynights@AtlantaAstronomy.org

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sandberg235@earthlink.net

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Co-Chair: Joanne Cirincione starrynights@AtlantaAstronomy.org

Sidewalk Astronomy: Brad Isley
sidewalkastronomy@atlantaastronomy.com

Woodruff Observ. Coordinator: John Lentini 770-984-0175
johnlentini@yahoo.com

Webmaster Atlanta Astronomy: Peter Macumber 770-941-4640

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.

Calendar by Tom Faber (All times EDT unless noted)

- May 2nd, Wednesday: Full Moon (Planting or Milk Moon)
May 3rd, Thursday: Mercury Superior Conjunction.
May 4th, Friday: **Open House - Fernbank Science Center. Contact Daniel Herron for Details.**
May 5th, Saturday: Moon near Jupiter.
May 6th, Sunday: Eta Aquarid Meteors.
May 10th, Thursday: Moon Last Quarter.
May 11th, Friday: Open House at Bradley Observatory, Agnes Scott College, 8PM, Lecture: "Of Druids and Priests: Ancient Astronomy and its Tools" by C. G. De Pree of Agnes Scott College.
May 12th, Saturday: Moon near Uranus. **DSO at Woodruff - Contact Daniel Herron for Details.**
May 13th, Sunday: **AAC Board Meeting 5PM at Bradford Map & Telescope, 300 Hammond Rd, Sandy Springs. - Contact Tom Crowley for details.**
May 16th, Wednesday: New Moon.
May 17th, Thursday: Moon near Mercury.
May 18th, Friday: **AAC Meeting at White Hall, 8PM, Emory University.**
May 19th, Saturday: Moon 3/4 deg north of Venus at 10:30PM.
May 21st, Monday: Moon near M44.
May 22nd, Tuesday: Moon near Saturn.
May 23rd, Wednesday: Moon First Quarter.
May 27th, Sunday: Moon near Spica.
May 30th, Wednesday: Moon near Castor & Pollux.
May 31st, Thursday: Full Moon (2nd Full Moon of May - sometimes referred to as a Blue Moon). Vesta Brightest (Mag. 5.4).
June 2nd, Saturday: Mercury Greatest Elongation East. Venus near Castor & Pollux.
June 7th, Thursday: Jupiter at Opposition.
June 8th, Friday: Moon Last Quarter.
June 9th, Saturday: Venus Greatest Elongation East.

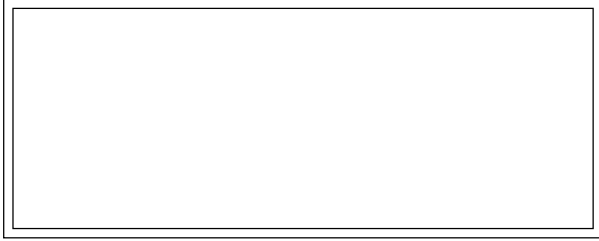
Atlanta Astronomy Club Listserve

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 June is Thursday, May 24th at 4:00 PM ... Submissions will no longer be accepted after the deadline.**

FIRST CLASS



Newsletter of The Atlanta Astronomy Club, Inc.



FROM:

Kat Sarbell

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Alpharetta, GA 30022

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

Atlanta Astronomy Club

P.O. Box 76155

Atlanta, GA 30358-1155

www.atlantaastronomy.org