

The Focal Point

The Atlanta Astronomy Club
Established 1947
April 2009

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Editor: Tom Faber

Table of Contents

- Page 1**...April General Meeting
Page 2...Bradley Schedule, March Meeting Minutes
Page 3...AAC Elections, CE Minutes
Page 4...CE Meetings, PSSG Dates, Club Insurance, GASP
Page 5...January Board Minutes
Page 6...Astronomical League, "Geriatric Pulsar Still Kicking"
Page 7...GASP Info, Directions to White Hall, Web Site, Memberships, Club Officers & Contact Info
Page 8...Calendar, AAC List Serve Info, Focal Point Deadline



April General Meeting

by Keith Burns, AAC President

The April meeting of the Atlanta Astronomy Club will be held on Friday April 3rd, 2009. Unlike our usual meetings, this one is completely different. We are holding a joint event with Agnes Scott College's Bradley Observatory for the 100 Hours of Astronomy - part of the International Year of Astronomy. The event starts at 8PM. There will be no speaker but there will be plenty of viewing through telescopes, and space musician Jonn Serrie will be performing live on the front lawn while we view through the telescopes. What more could you ask for?

2009 was declared the International Year of Astronomy. It commemorates the 400th anniversary of Galileo's use of a telescope to study the skies. As part of the yearlong celebration, there is a special event called, "100 Hours of Astronomy." This includes various astronomy related events by organizations all around the world. It runs from April 3rd to the 5th. The event is designed to bring astronomy to the public.

If you have a small telescope that you can bring to setup on the front lawn that would be greatly appreciated. This is the first time in years that our general meeting is actually a large sidewalk astronomy event. Even if you do not



have a telescope, please come on down anyway and enjoy the night sky delights through other people's telescopes.

In case of inclement weather, Jonn Serrie will perform in the planetarium. So either way, you get a nice evening of space visions.



Plaza in front of Bradley Observatory

Directions to Bradley Observatory

From I-75 Downtown Atlanta:

Take I-75/85 to the Freedom Parkway exit. Continue on Freedom Parkway (at the fork, bear to the left) until it ends at Ponce de Leon Avenue. (1.9 miles) Turn right and follow W. Ponce de Leon towards Decatur. At the traffic light immediately following arched railroad trestle, bear to the right as W. Ponce de Leon forks to the right. (2.8 miles) Turn right onto W. Trinity Place. (0.5 miles) Turn right onto N. McDonough Street. (0.6 miles) Follow N. McDonough cross over the railroad to Agnes Scott College. (0.3 miles)

From the North on I-85:

Take I-85 to the Clairmont Road exit. Turn left onto Clairmont Road. Turn right onto Commerce Drive. (4.9 miles) (Disregard directional sign pointing left; continue right) Turn left onto W. Trinity Place. (0.4 miles) Turn right onto N. McDonough Street. (0.1 miles) Follow N. McDonough Street over the railroad to Agnes Scott College. (0.3 miles)

From the East on I-285:

Take I-285 to Stone Mountain Freeway, Highway 78 exit. Go west on Highway 78 (Street name changes to Scott Boulevard.) Turn left onto Clairmont Road. (4.1 miles) Turn right onto Commerce Drive. (0.7 miles)

Continued on next page

(Disregard directional sign pointing left; continue right) Turn left onto W. Trinity Place. (0.4 miles) Turn right onto N. McDonough Street. (0.1 miles) Follow N. McDonough Street over the railroad to Agnes Scott College. (0.3 miles)

From I-20:

Take Candler road exit north past Memorial Dr., past Kirk road (light) look for E. Dougherty St. on your left (at the Agnes Scott College sign). Turn left, and park your car as directed above. From I-285 (east side of city): Take the Ponce de Leon exit. Go west on Ponce de Leon toward Decatur. Stay on Ponce until Church Street. Turn left on Church Street. The second light will be Trinity. Take a left on Trinity, cross the railroad tracks (College Ave.), and you will be on Candler Road southbound. As you just pass the main part of campus, look for E. Dougherty St. on your right. Turn right and park as directed above.

Parking at Bradley

Parking is limited behind the observatory, so please park in one of the other parking lots on the Agnes Scott College campus. If you have equipment you need to unload, you can temporarily park on the drive into Bradley Observatory to unload. The Observatory is located on Hancock Street.

Parking is available next to the tennis courts on the corner of McDonough Street and Dougherty Street. There is also limited parallel parking along Dougherty Street and in a small parking lot there. There is a large parking deck on McDonough Street just south of College Avenue. This large parking deck is located on the northwest corner of the campus just south of the railroad tracks.

Upcoming Meetings

May 8th, Dr. Chip West will talk about weather's impact on observing and tools you can use to help when deciding when to go out observing and when not to. We will also hold the club's yearly elections at this meeting.

June 5th, Speaker & Topic will be announced at a future date.

July 10th, Former AAC member Art Russell will talk about Planetary Nebulae.

Bradley Open House Series 2008-2009 "Astronomy Before Galileo"

Humans have been gazing at the stars since they could look up, and have kept written records about motions in the heavens for millennia. This year, we will explore the rich history of astronomy and astronomical thought that predates Galileo. Our speakers will come from a variety of ancient disciplines including astronomy, architecture, classical studies, history and theology. All talks at 8PM unless noted. See <http://bradley.agnesscott.edu/> for more information.

Spring 2009

April 3 - "100 Hours of Astronomy" Celebration (Jointly with the AAC)

May 8 - Bill Brown (Columbia Theological Seminary) - "The Heavens are Telling the Glory of God": The Cosmos According to Ancient Israel



March Meeting Minutes

by Richard Jakiel, AAC Recording Secretary

Meeting photos by Tom Faber

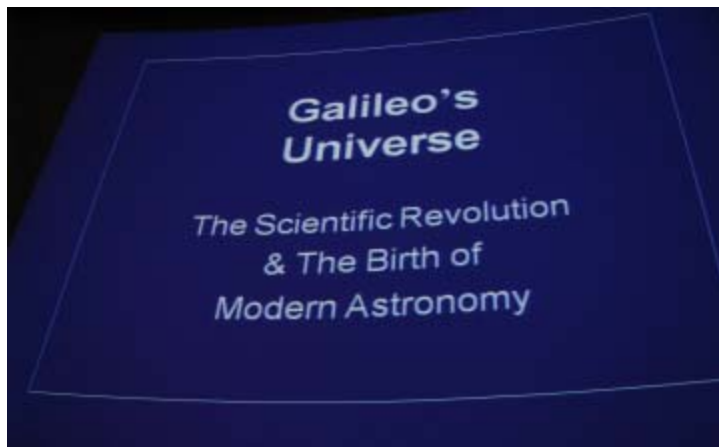
The March General Meeting of the AAC was held at Emory's White Hall. The meeting started shortly after 8 PM, with president Keith Burns presiding. About 30 members and guests were in attendance. After a few brief words, Keith introduced the evening's speaker - Steve Bieger (photo below), member of AAC and Fernbank assistant. His talk "Galileo's Wonderful Universe" was a tribute not only to Galileo's monumental work, but other great figures of the 15th to early 17th century scientific revolution - Copernicus, Tycho Brahe, Johannes Kepler and Sir Isaac Newton. He then went to show how the theories and discoveries of each scientist were used by their successors to build the foundations of modern astronomy. After the presentation, Steve awarded two door prizes to the attendees who were the first to answer trivia questions related to the talk.

After the talk, Keith discussed the upcoming Zombie Star Party to be held this year at DAV's Grier Field on March 26th to 29th. The price is \$10 a day, or \$20 for the entire event. On April 3rd, the AAC will be meeting at Agnes Scott's Bradley Observatory as part of the "100 Hours of Astronomy" commemorating the 400 years of using the telescope for astronomical use (1609 - 2009). There will be no business meeting, but an observing session with the public. Members are encouraged to bring small transportable scopes to the event.

Other topics included upcoming AAC and Charlie Elliot observing events, plus a summary of the GASP meetings/observing sessions for the next several months. The meeting ended before 9:30, and members headed off to the "meeting after the meeting" at Athens Pizza for food, drink and socialization.



Our speaker Steve Bieger (on right) talks with Alex Langoussis before beginning his talk (below).



AAC Elections for Year 2009-2010

by Keith Burns, AAC President

Originally we were going to delay the elections due to a lack of candidates, but enough people have come forward for us to hold the elections at the May meeting.

The 2009-2010 elections will take place on May 8th. There are 6 officer positions and 2 board positions. The officers handle the day to day operations of the club: The President runs the monthly meetings. The VP Programs arranges speakers for monthly meetings. The VP Observing arranges observing events. The Treasurer handles the finances of the club. The Corresponding Secretary edits and publishes our monthly newsletter, the *Focal Point*. The Recording Secretary keeps the minutes of all the meetings. The officer term is for one year.

The AAC Board members are your representatives. Their basic responsibility is to attend board meetings where they decide on club business and polity. A board member term runs for two years.

Here is the list of candidates we have so far. Keith Burns running for president, Dave Lumpkin running for VP Programs, Daniel Herron running for VP Observing, Sharon Carruthers running for treasurer, Rich Jakiel running for recording secretary, Tom Faber running for corresponding secretary, and Marie Lott running for a board seat.

More than one person can run for an office or a board seat. Any AAC club member, including the Elliott Chapter members, who wants to run for one of these offices or seats, should contact me at president@atlantaastronomy.org. Plus we will take nominations from the floor on the night of elections. You may also contact me if you have any questions about the election. My contact information is also listed on page 7 of the newsletter.

Thank you for volunteering!

Charlie Elliot Chapter Meeting Minutes

by Ken Poshedly, CEWMA Chapter Recording Secretary

(Minutes have been edited for space constraints.)

The February 21 meeting of the Charlie Elliott Chapter of the AAC was called to order at 3 p.m. by Chapter Director Theo Ramakers. The final attendance was a humongous 37 members and guests, including those who arrived during the presentation and even later on the observing field. Following welcoming remarks by Theo, Ken Poshedly added to Theo's comments, explaining to the many newcomers what the CE chapter of the Atlanta Astronomy Club is and what the ALPO is. Ken then introduced our featured speaker for the afternoon, Dr. Julius Benton, observing coordinator of the ALPO Saturn Section, and his presentation, "Current Programs, Recent Observations the 2009 Edgewise Orientation of the Rings of Saturn". Dr. Benton's own remarks along with his PowerPoint program made for a most enjoyable and educational afternoon.

Following a short break for refreshments was Theo's "Current Events" segment:

* The Chapter won a "Globe at Night" kit, including a "Sky Quality Meter" for individuals to measure the sky brightness in and around metro Atlanta.

* The CE chapter participated in the 2008 Night Sky Network outreach program by showing the universe to over 470 children and adults.

* The CE chapter received a \$100 gift from the George Walton Academy.

* There was a recap of recent outreach activities: Marie Lott met with 37 Girl Scout leaders at Misty Mountain Jan 23/24; Steve Ramsden, Jon Wood and Theo met with 25 "young educators" at Rock Eagle on Feb. 10; a Hightower Trail Elementary School event was set for Feb. 27.

* IYA2009 "100 Hours of Astronomy" CE chapter activities for April 2-5



Dr. Julius Benton Jr. Ph.D. during his presentation. Photo by Larry Owens.

were announced, including display of some images by member Jim Honeycutt at the Covington Library.

* There was a recap of the Jan. 26 annular solar eclipse.

* Clevis Jones was the winner of our own little contest to see Comet Lulin (early morning of Feb. 7). While doing so, a neighbor reported him as a "suspicious person" with several police cars arriving at his driveway shortly thereafter while he was with scope; all ended well and no arrests were made.

* Discussion of Saturn's earlier appearance in the night sky followed with an image by Jim Honeycutt of Saturn with several moons being shown, followed by an image by Larry Owens showing what might be a new storm in the northern hemisphere clouds.

* There were some great images, including Tim Geib's striking shot of Rosette Nebula, and one of the International Space Station near the Moon. Debbie Jones normally does our presentations, but due to her absence, Clevis Jones substituted and presented Night Sky Network "Top Star" pins to the following CE chapter members in recognition for their hours of public outreach they contributed in 2008: Stephen "SunDawg" Ramsden (over 100 hours), Jon Wood (over 25 hours), and Debbie Jones (over 15 hours). Afterwards, Theo surprised Clevis with his own "Top Star" pin for his more than 15 hours of volunteer time as well. Go to <http://nightsky.jpl.nasa.gov/> for more on this worthwhile program.

Member Steve Bieger announced the presentation of the planetarium program "Galileo's Universe: The New Astronomy" to be shown at Fernbank Planetarium March 5 thru May 16. Steve has been working on this project for some time and all of us support him and his worthy effort to contribute to astronomy outreach.

Jon Wood's "Observing 101" segment included:

* Upcoming rise/transit/set times for celestial objects in the coming weeks.

* A lunar calendar (from a subscriber-only area of www.astronomy.com)

* A list of upcoming meteor showers.

* A sky graphic showing the apparent path of Venus in the night sky over the next several weeks

* A sky map of the path of the minor planet Ceres through March 31

* A CCD image of Ceres taken February 14

* Images and sky maps of Comet Lulin (C/2007 N1 or N3)

* A few graphics detailing the recent satellite collision over Siberia

* A flyover movie of the lunar crater Tycho assembled from radar mapping data by the Japanese orbiting satellite Kaguya (wms.selene.jaxa.jp)

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 5:15 p.m.

Charlie Elliott Future Meetings

The Meeting dates for the Charlie Elliott Chapter have now been set for 2009. All meetings are on Saturdays: Apr 18, May 16 (JAKES Day), June 20, July 18, Aug 22, Sept 19, Oct 17, Nov 14, Dec 19. Please note that the March, June, September and December Meetings are our Pot Luck Dinner Meetings. For meeting updates and other information please check the CE chapter website: <http://www.CEastronomy.org>

Thanks and Clear Skies, Theo Ramakers.

Peach State Star Gaze Date Changed

The dates for the next **Peach State Star Gaze** have been changed. The PSSG will be held from Sunday, October 11th to Sunday, October 18th. This is a week earlier than was previously announced, and was done to align the event more favorably with new moon which occurs on the 18th. Check out <http://www.atlantaastronomy.org/PSSG/> for updates. Please mark your calendar and we hope to see you there!

AAC Needs Insurance Advice

by Don Hall, AAC Board Chairman

The Atlanta Astronomy Club is in need of help related to its current insurance policy involving liability/property insurance. The club wants someone who is in the insurance business or has good knowledge of insurance to provide some advice on this matter. We want to have adequate coverage for both insurance products. Please contact Dave Lumpkin (observing@atlantaastronomy.org) who heads the committee on this matter if you can help or know someone who can provide the club with some advice.

GASP at Unicoi State Park

by Kat Sarbell - Photos by Tom Faber

On the weekend of March 21, the GASP team traveled to Unicoi State Park, just north of the small town of Helen. We were there to present a slide show and bring out telescopes for the campers' viewing. We made a whole camping trip of it - almost everyone arrived the Friday before. Volunteers included club president Keith Burns, newsletter editor Tom Faber, Kat Sarbell, club treasurer Sharon Carruthers, and Holly & John Ritger. Tom Buchanan and a couple other club members arrived Saturday night for the presentation and observing.

On Saturday night, visitors began showing up at the interpretive center while the GASP team began setting up the projector and screen for Sharon's presentation. There was no end to the visitors arriving; soon they filled up all the chairs, and the aisles and the back of the room were crowded in a "standing room only" event. The room, packed tight like a Japanese subway car, didn't discourage the late arrivals - they just waited on the deck next to the doors just so they could listen to Sharon's talk. Jessica, the park ranger on duty that night, counted 174 people!

We were really afraid that we weren't going to do any star-gazing, as it had been cloudy most of the day! Those of us waiting outside hoped that Mother Nature would cooperate with us and give us clear skies. As Sharon talked and showed Powerpoint slides, the clouds began to break up. We started to set up our scopes, and as soon as Sharon was finished we received many visitors!

Lines of kids and adults stepped up to look through the eyepieces. The youngsters really liked it; one kid, after viewing Saturn through Keith's scope, exclaimed, "that was really cool!" His friend agreed: "that was total awesomeness." Both grown-ups and the little ones were amazed to see the planet Saturn, which was up in the east. People had questions both about the club and the night sky: the teenager who asked about black holes; the

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Some of the GASP volunteers arrived at Unicoi early Friday afternoon to set up camp. Left to right: Kat Sarbell, Keith Burns, Holly & John Ritger.



Everyone gathered around Holly's "mini-campfire" (actually a citronella candle) at Tom & Kat's camp site after dinner Friday evening.



After hanging out by the "candle fire" for a while, Keith, Tom, and Kat decided to go exploring the park at night to take pictures. In this one Canis Major leaps over a tree. Canon PowerShot SX100IS, 15 sec, f/2.8, ISO 200.

January 18 AAC BoD Meeting Minutes

By Tom Faber

The meeting was started at 3:35PM by Chairman Don Hall. Officers and BoD members present were Don Hall, Mark Banks, Tom Faber, Keith Burns, and Sharon Carruthers. Other club members present were Marie Lott, Alex Langoussis, Peter Macumber, Theo Ramakers, and Larry Wallace.

Since we didn't have a quorum present Keith placed a call to Richard Jakiel, who was home sick, so that we could vote on Marie Lott and Daniel Herron to replace Larry Wallace and Marc Sandburg as Board members. Motion was so made by Keith Burns and seconded by Mark Banks. Vote was 6-0 to appoint Marie and Daniel as Board members to fill out the terms until the May elections. Since we now had a quorum present, Rich was let go from the phone call.

Old Business:

Keith spoke of the continuing need to find a new Program Chair.

We reviewed minutes of the June 22, 2008 BoD meeting as submitted earlier by email by Richard Jakiel. Motion was made by Mark Banks to accept them and seconded by Keith Burns. Vote was 6-0 to accept the minutes as submitted.

Sharon then presented a report of the 2008 budget. Budgeted - \$5400. Spent - \$5110. Dark Sky Site account has \$8268. Club made \$4460 from the PSSG and another \$4460 needs to be paid to the DAV as their portion of the PSSG profits. After some Q&A and discussion, Don moved to approve the Treasurer's report and the motion was seconded by Keith. Vote was 6-0 to approve. Don then told Sharon that she should pay DAV their portion of the PSSG profits.

There was then a discussion about if there are needs for some of the Dark Sky Site funds for things other than the build-out of the club property at the DAV. Peter said that the club's LCD projector needs to be repaired and needs a new bulb. A new bulb will be about \$300. The projector also needs the damaged bulb socket repaired. Sharon is checking with a repair shop to see what that will cost. Sharon has an OK to spend up to \$500 to repair the projector and buy a replacement bulb.

There was a short discussion of the club working with the new Tellus Science Museum in Cartersville - Keith will continue contacts with David Dundee.

New Business:

Mark Banks talked about publicity and said that the local NPR station wants \$13k/yr for us to sponsor a short daily astronomy segment. Way too much! Mark also suggested donating back issues of Astronomy, Sky & Telescope, and other science magazines to local school science departments with labels saying "Donated by Atlanta Astronomy Club" and with the club's web address on them. Mark will compile list of schools and science teachers.

Larry Wallace talked about work remaining to be done to finish up the facility for the club's 24-inch scope at DAV. This mainly involves pouring a pad around the "dog house" tracks. Also discussed was running a water line to the club's house. Mark Banks also offered to look for a used set of cabinets to put in the club house along with a kitchen type sink. He estimated that it would run \$300-\$500 for cabinets and sink. He also asked if we might want to get a small water heater for the sink. Don asked Mark to look into these items.

Keith brought up that club officers need to submit their news and updates to the club web site, then once Peter approves them, they will go up on the web site. We then looked at the club's web site, discussed how to submit items, and discussed some possible changes to the web site.

Don then made a motion to adjourn the meeting, Keith seconded, and the meeting was adjourned at 4:36PM.



Keith and Sharon set up the laptop and projector for Sharon's talk Saturday evening in the interpretive center as Kat and Holly look on.



The seats filled up and soon it was standing room only as Sharon began the talk while the other members set up telescopes outside.

mom who requested a brochure so that she and her son could join the AAC; the troop leader inquiring about how her boy scouts could earn their astronomy badge.

Campers that weekend not only got to view the heavens, but also different types of telescopes to use for that purpose. Tom Buchanan arrived that evening with his huge refractor. He later wrote to say, "I had double star h-3945 'Winter Alberio' (145 Canis Majoris) in my 5-inch apochromatic refractor. The brighter star was yellow and the fainter one was light blue. Almost everybody in turn enjoyed seeing the contrasting colors." I brought my tiny red Astroscan which was a good height for the kids to look at the Orion nebula and the Pleiades. Keith's 10-inch Newtonian from Orion (SkyQuest XT10 IntelliScope) was a great choice to show visitors the planet Saturn. A young couple, new members in the AAC, also had a Newtonian set up for the guests.

We were able to view the skies for about an hour and a half, and then the clouds returned. In just that short amount of time, the attendees got to see some celestial objects they had never seen before. We then helped each other take apart our scopes and returned to our campsites and homes to relax.

The Astronomical League

As a member of the **Atlanta Astronomy Club** you are automatically also a member of the **Astronomical League**, a nation wide affiliation of astronomy clubs. Membership in the AL provides a number of benefits for you. They include:

- * You will receive *The Reflector*, the AL's quarterly newsletter.
- * You can use the Book Service, through which you can buy astronomy-related books at a 10% discount.
- * You can participate in the Astronomical League's Observing Clubs. The Observing Clubs offer encouragement and certificates of accomplishment for demonstrating observing skills with a variety of instruments and objects. These include the Messier Club, Binocular Messier Club, the Herschel 400 Club, the Deep Sky Binocular Club, and many others.

To learn more about the Astronomical League and its benefits for you, visit <http://www.astroleague.org>

PSR J0108-1431: Geriatric Pulsar Still Kicking

Chandra X-ray Center News Release: February 26, 2009

The oldest isolated pulsar ever detected in X-rays has been found with NASA's Chandra X-ray Observatory. This very old and exotic object turns out to be surprisingly active.

The pulsar, PSR J0108-1431 is about 200 million years old. Among isolated pulsars - ones that have not been spun-up in a binary system - it is over 10 times older than the previous record holder with an X-ray detection. At a distance of 770 light years, it is one of the nearest pulsars known.

Pulsars are born when stars that are much more massive than the Sun collapse in supernova explosions, leaving behind a small, incredibly weighty core, known as a neutron star. At birth, these neutron stars, which contain the densest material known in the Universe, are spinning rapidly, up to a hundred revolutions per second. As the rotating beams of their radiation are seen as pulses by distant observers, similar to a lighthouse beam, astronomers call them "pulsars".

Astronomers observe a gradual slowing of the rotation of the pulsars as they radiate energy away. Radio observations of J0108 show it to be one of the oldest and faintest pulsars known, spinning only slightly faster than one revolution per second.

The surprise came when a team of astronomers led by George Pavlov of Penn State University observed J0108 in X-rays with Chandra. They found that it

glows much brighter in X-rays than was expected for a pulsar of such advanced years.

Some of the energy that J0108 is losing as it spins more slowly is converted into X-ray radiation. The efficiency of this process for J0108 is found to be higher than for any other known pulsar.

"This pulsar is pumping out high-energy radiation much more efficiently than its younger cousins," said Pavlov. "So, although it's clearly fading as it ages, it is still more than holding its own with the younger generations."

It's likely that two forms of X-ray emission are produced in J0108: emission from particles spiraling around magnetic fields, and emission from heated areas around the neutron star's magnetic poles. Measuring the temperature and size of these heated regions can provide valuable insight into the extraordinary properties of the neutron star surface and the process by which charged particles are accelerated by the pulsar.

The younger, bright pulsars commonly detected by radio and X-ray telescopes are not representative of the full population of objects, so observing objects like J0108 helps astronomers see a more complete range of behavior. At its advanced age, J0108 is close to the so-called "pulsar death line," where its pulsed radiation is expected to switch off and it will become much harder, if not impossible, to observe.

"We can now explore the properties of this pulsar in a regime where no other pulsar has been detected outside the radio range," said co-author Oleg Kargaltsev of the University of Florida. "To understand the properties of 'dying pulsars,' it is important to study their radiation in X-rays. Our finding that a very old pulsar can be such an efficient X-ray emitter gives us hope to discover new nearby pulsars of this class via their X-ray emission."

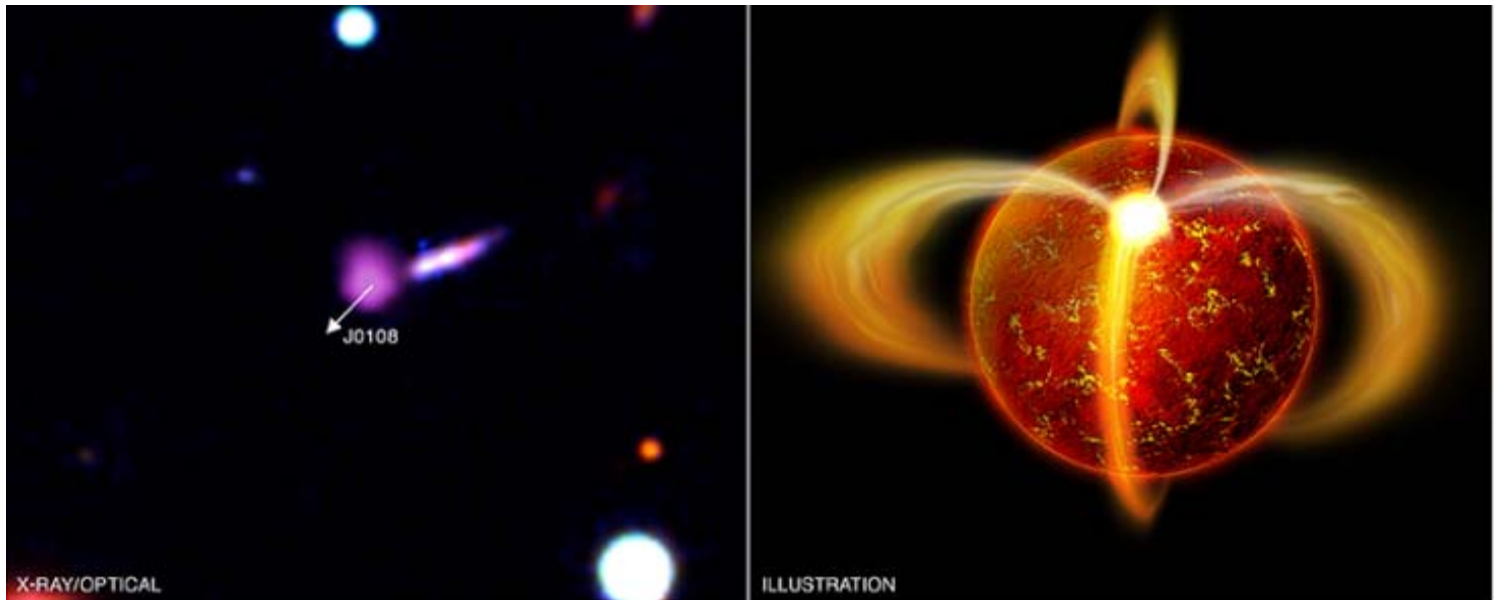
The Chandra observations were reported by Pavlov and colleagues in the January 20, 2009, issue of *The Astrophysical Journal*. However, the extreme nature of J0108 was not fully apparent until a new distance to it was reported on February 6 in the PhD thesis of Adam Deller from Swinburne University in Australia. The new distance is both larger and more accurate than the distance used in the Chandra paper, showing that J0108 was brighter in X-rays than previously thought.

"Suddenly this pulsar became the record holder for its ability to make X-rays," said Pavlov, "and our result became even more interesting without us doing much extra work."

The position of the pulsar seen by Chandra in X-rays in early 2007 is slightly different from the radio position observed in early 2001. This implies that the pulsar is moving at a velocity of about 440,000 miles per hour, close to a typical value for pulsars.

Currently the pulsar is moving south from the plane of the Milky Way galaxy, but because it is moving more slowly than the escape velocity of the

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Credit: X-ray: NASA/CXC/Penn State/G.Pavlov et al.; Optical: ESO/VLT/UCL/R.Mignani et al.; Illustration: NASA/CXC/M.Weiss.

Galaxy, it will eventually curve back towards the plane of the Galaxy in the opposite direction.

The detection of this motion has allowed Roberto Mignani of University College London, in collaboration with Pavlov and Kargaltsev, to possibly detect J0108 in optical light, using estimates of where it should be found in an image taken in 2000. Such a multi-wavelength study of old pulsars is critical for understanding the long-term evolution of neutron stars, such as how they cool with time, and how their powerful magnetic fields evolve.

The team of astronomers that worked with Pavlov also included Gordon Garmire and Jared Wong at Penn State. NASA's Marshall Space Flight Center in Huntsville, Ala., manages the Chandra program for NASA's Science Mission Directorate in Washington. The Smithsonian Astrophysical Observatory controls Chandra's science and flight operations from Cambridge, Mass.

Georgia Astronomy in State Parks

The following GASP events are currently scheduled:

June 13 - Tugaloo State Park.

August 15 - Buck Shoals State Park.

November 14 - Red Top Mountain State Park.

For more information about these events, contact Keith Burns at 770-427-1475 or Keith_B@bellsouth.net.



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 Friday closest to full moon of each month at Emory University's White Hall or occasionally at other locations or times. Membership fees are **\$30 (\$35)** for a family or single person membership. College Students membership fee is **\$15 (\$20)**. These fees are for a one year membership (\$5 per year extra charge to receive the *Focal Point* mailed).

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.

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: Keith Burns 770-427-1475 Keith_B@bellsouth.net

Program Chair: Position Open - programs@atlantaastronomy.org

Observing Chair: Dave Lumpkin observing@atlantaastronomy.org

Corresponding Secretary: Tom Faber 770-642-4865
focalpoint@atlantaastronomy.org

Treasurer: Sharon Carruthers Treasurer@AtlantaAstronomy.org

Recording Secretary: Rich Jakiel Secretary@atlantaastronomy.org

Board Chair: Don Hall - donrhall@bellsouth.net

Board: Mark Banks 770-354-1546 markbanks51@comcast.net

Board: William Brannet - Contact Info TBA

Board: Marie Lott 770-496-5774 mtlott@comcast.net

Board: Daniel Herron - Contact Info TBA

ALCOR: Art Zorka 404-633-8822 (H) 404-824-7106 (C)
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Elliott Ch. Director: Theo Ramakers 770-464-3777
ramakers@bellsouth.net

Elliott Observing Supervisor: Jonathan Wood 404-374-8750
observing@ceastronomy.org

Elliott Recording Secretary: Ken Poshedly 678-516-1366
poshedly@bellsouth.net

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

Elliott Webmaster: Larry Owens 678-234-5399
webmaster@CEastronomy.org

Georgia Astronomy in State Parks: Keith Burns 770-427-1475
Keith_B@bellsouth.net

Light Trespass: Open - Contact Keith Burns if you would like to volunteer.

PSSG Chairman: Peter Macumber pmacumber@nightsky.org

PSSG Co-Chair: Joanne Cirincione
starrynights@AtlantaAstronomy.org

Sidewalk Astronomy: Brad Isley
sidewalkastronomy@atlantaastronomy.com

Woodruff Observ. Coordinator: Sharon Carruthers
Treasurer@AtlantaAstronomy.org

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

Directions to White Hall at Emory

Our meetings are generally held in White Hall. To get to White Hall, turn onto Dowman Drive from North Decatur Rd at the five way intersection (across from Everybody's Pizza). White Hall is located across from the new Science & Math building. The best places to park are the Peavine and the Fishburne Parking Decks. The Fishburne deck is located on Fishburne Drive which is accessible from N. Decatur Rd. Turn onto Dowman and then right on Fishburne. You can also access Fishburne Drive from Clifton Road just north of N. Decatur. The Peavine parking deck is accessible from N. Decatur Rd. Turn onto Oxford Rd, go to the back entrance of Emory and turn onto Eagle Row. Take that to the Peavine deck. You can also access the Peavine deck from Clifton Rd. Turn onto Asbury Circle. It's the intersection next to the railroad tracks on Clifton. For maps to the decks see <http://map.emory.edu>. For more detailed directions to Emory University, visit www.atlantaastronomy.org or go to the Emory web site.

Calendar by Tom Faber (Times EDT unless noted)

- April 2nd, Thursday: Moon First Quarter.
April 3rd, Friday: **AAC/Bradley 100 Hrs of Astronomy Event at Bradley Observatory.**
April 9th, Thursday: Full Moon.
April 17th, Friday: **May Focal Point Deadline.** Moon Last Quarter.
April 18th, Saturday: **CEC Meeting - See pg 4 for details.**
April 19th, Sunday: Moon near Jupiter.
April 22nd, Wednesday: Moon near Venus. Lyrid Meteors.
April 24th, Friday: New Moon.
April 26th, Sunday: Mercury at Greatest Elongation East. Moon near M45.
May 1st, Friday: Moon First Quarter.
May 2nd, Saturday: Venus at Greatest Brilliance.
May 6th, Wednesday: Eta Aquarids Meteors.
May 8th, Friday: **AAC Meeting/Elections at White Hall, 8PM, Emory University.** Bradley Open House - See pg 2 for details.
May 9th, Saturday: Full Moon.
May 15th, Friday: **June Focal Point Deadline.**
May 16th, Saturday: **CEC Meeting - See pg 4 for details.**
May 17th, Sunday: Moon Last Quarter.
May 18th, Monday: Mercury Inferior Conjunction.
May 21st, Thursday: Venus near Mars.
May 24th, Sunday: New Moon.
May 25th, Monday: Jupiter near Neptune.
May 30th, Saturday: Moon First Quarter.
June 5th, Friday: **AAC Meeting at White Hall, 8PM, Emory University.** Venus at Greatest Elongation west.
June 7th, Sunday: Full Moon.
June 13th, Saturday: **GASP at Tugaloo State Park - See pg 7 for details.**

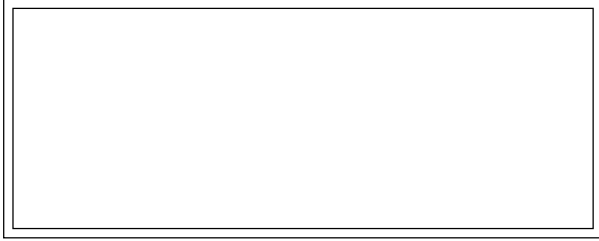
Atlanta Astronomy Club Listserv

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Focal Point Deadline and Submission Information

Please send articles, pictures, and drawings in electronic format on anything astronomy, space, or sky related to Tom Faber 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 to the deadline. **The deadline for May is Friday, April 17th at 4:00 PM. Submissions will not be accepted after the deadline.**

FIRST CLASS



Newsletter of The Atlanta Astronomy Club, Inc.

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



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