

The Focal Point

The Atlanta Astronomy Club
Established 1947
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Editor: Tom Faber

Table of Contents

- Page 1**...July Meeting, Woodruff Volunteers Needed
Page 2...June AAC Meeting Minutes, AAC Events and Information
Page 3...CE Future Minutes, GASP at Tugaloo State Park.
Page 4...GASP at Tugaloo State Park (Cont.).
Page 5...Remembering Apollo 11 photo gallery.
Page 6...Remembering Apollo 11 (Cont.)
Page 7...Next BoD Meeting, GASP Info, Directions to White Hall, Web Site, Memberships, Club Officers & Contact Info
Page 8...Calendar, AAC List Serve Info, Focal Point Deadline

July General Meeting

by Keith Burns, AAC President

The next meeting of the Atlanta Astronomy Club will be held on Friday July 10th starting at 8PM. Location is White Hall on the Emory University Campus in Room 107 (*Editor's note: This room is one floor below where we normally meet*). Directions to White Hall are given below.

The meeting starts with the monthly announcements power-point program that will run before the meeting starts and at the very beginning of the meeting. After that, we move on to our featured speakers of the night. Our speaker was to be former AAC member and President Art Russell. Unfortunately Art had to postpone his talk until a later date. Our speaker and program for this meeting will be announced closer to the meeting date.

The Program

TBA

Directions to White Hall and Parking

Emory University is in the process of making improvements to the parking and roads. So for the next year, we will have to endure road construction plus the closing of some of our favorite parking spots. For now, the best places to park are the Peavine Parking Deck and the Fishburne Parking Deck. Fishburne Parking Deck is located on Fishburne Drive. When driving on North Decatur Rd, turn onto Dowman Drive (Dowman is now a one-way road into the campus now from North Decatur Road. Exit either by Oxford Road or Fishburne Drive) and then right on Fishburne Drive. You can also access Fishburne Drive from Clifton Road southbound on right before the N. Decatur Rd intersection. Note the Fishburne Parking deck is actually accessible from Fishburne Lane. When driving on Fishburne Drive, watch for the parking lot signs. The parking deck is located behind the Rich Building.

The Peavine parking deck is accessible from North Decatur Road. Take N. Decatur Rd to Oxford Road. Oxford is accessible from N. Decatur Road at

Woodruff Boy Scout Summer Camp

by Sharon Carruthers, AAC Treasurer

The Summer Scout Camping season is upon us. This is our best opportunity to fulfill our Club mandate to "educate" and "to promote the public knowledge of and interest in astronomy".

We are asking for volunteers to come up to Woodruff Boy Scout Camp (a few miles east of Blue Ridge) and set up one or more telescopes to give the scouts an opportunity to use and view through the scopes in order to earn their Astronomy Badge. You can bring and use your own telescope or we also have several telescopes in the warm-up shed that you can use - a 10-inch Discovery Dob and I also have 3 other Dobs that I will leave in the shed - however I may take one if I need it for another event during the week. (The Club's 24" is now at the DAV).

Our on-field viewing with the telescopes will be on Thursday nights, after dark (from 9:30 - 10 PM.). We need volunteers to commit to going up to Woodruff on Thursdays, from June 4 - July 23. Please phone (770-941-4640 - home) or e-mail (Treasurer@AtlantaAstronomy.org) me if you can commit to helping out on one or more evenings listed below. We will need help on the following Thursdays: July 2, 9, 16, and 23.

Club volunteers Peter Macumber, Joe Sheppard, Nicole Johnson & Philip Johnson showed campers views of the night sky at the final summer session at Woodruff on July 24, 2008. Photo by Philip Johnson.



two spots. If you are traveling east on North Decatur, then turn right onto Oxford. If traveling west, turn left onto Oxford. Take Oxford Road to the back entrance of Emory and turn onto Eagle Row. Take that to the Peavine parking deck. Note Peavine is across the street from the running track. You can also access Peavine from Clifton Road. Take Clifton south from Briarcliff Road. Turn right onto Asbury Circle. Asbury Circle changes names to Eagle Row. Parking deck will be on right side of road.

Directions to White Hall are on page 7. See the Emory web site for more details and directions: www.emory.edu

Upcoming Meetings

August 7th, Speaker and Topic TBA.

September 11th, Speaker and Topic TBA.

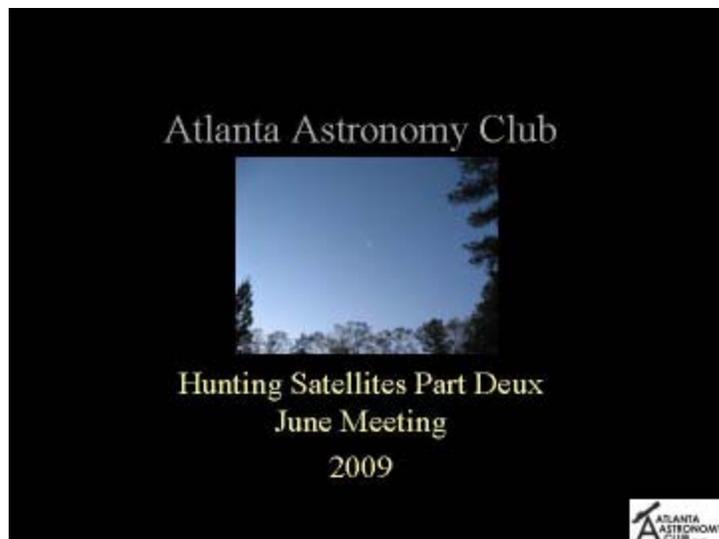
June General Meeting Minutes

by Richard Jakiel, AAC Recording Secretary

The June 2009 general meeting of the AAC started at 8 PM, with re-elected president Keith Burns presiding, Nearly 40 AAC members and their guest were in attendance. After a few brief announcements, Tom Faber and Keith began their talk on "Satellite Hunting". Tom (slide below)



discussed the technical side of the topic - the types of orbits, plus the characteristics of the more commonly observed satellites/craft such as the Iridium, ISS, Hubble, and the Space Shuttle. Tom also reviewed and demonstrated websites that specialize in the predicting the orbits and visibility of specific satellites for a given location. At the conclusion of Tom's "part one", Keith (slide below) discussed the methods and



equipment he uses to image satellites - especially the often dramatic Iridium flares. These are short-lived brightness spikes produced by the satellites reflective panels. They can hit -7 magnitude or brighter, and even a few mile deviation from the predicted centerline can be the difference between a brilliant intensity surge and a dud.

After the presentation, Dave Lumpkin asked the audience for input on having one or two possible AAC meetings at the new Tellus Museum in Cartersville, Georgia. Due to traffic and distance concerns, these meetings would be held on a Saturday instead of the usual Friday at Emory. After a

brief discussion, the motion received a relatively positive response from the membership. More on this topic to come in future FP articles, as details become known.

Tom Crowley brought up the Starquest Star Party held in the mountains of West Virginia from June 24 to 27th. Tom will be one of the featured speakers and encouraged everyone to try to attend.

Finally, Astronomical League (AL) representative Art Zorka discussed the new league Galileo observing award. Art introduced interesting historical material, including excerpts from Galileo's observations of the Moon, Jupiter and Venus and how this relates to his own experience in observing.

After the meeting's conclusion, it was time to head out once again to Athens Pizza for more food, drink and socializing.

AAC Events and Information

by Keith Burns, AAC President

I wanted to welcome all our returning and new officers and board members. The 2009-2010 group includes, President: Keith Burns, VP Programs: Dave Lumpkin, VP Observing: Daniel Herron, Treasurer: Sharon Carruthers, Recording Secretary: Rich Jakiel, Corresponding Secretary: Tom Faber, Board: Don Hall, Marie Lott, and Misty Herron.

We are planning to have our next board meeting on August 9th. The meeting time, date, and location will be announced as soon as the details are worked out. Updated information will be posted on the AAC board listserv and time permitting on the AAC website.

The general meeting dates for the remainder of 2009 are the following: July 10th, Aug. 7th, Sept. 11th, Oct. 2nd, Nov. 6th and Dec. 5th.

The proposed general meeting dates for 2010 are the following. Jan 16th, Feb 12th, March 12th, April 16th, May 14th, June 11th, July 9th, Aug 6th, Sept 10th, Oct 8th, Nov 5th, and (Saturday) Dec 4th.

The 2009 Peach State Star Gaze is a week long star gaze sponsored by the Atlanta Astronomy Club that will be held on October 11th-18th, 2009. Updated information on the event including speakers and pricing will be posted on the PSSG website at <http://www.atlantaastronomy.org/PSSG/> in the next couple of months.

Our new speaker chairman (Dave) is working on speakers for the coming meetings. He is asking for input from members on speakers, so this is your chance to suggest someone you want to see come and speak on an astronomy related topic at one of our meetings. Dave's email is DaveLump@Bellsouth.net.

Daniel Herron is working on a new observing schedule for the remainder of 2009 and the first part of 2010. Soon he will post details of upcoming events to the newsletter, the website, and the AAC listserv.

Sharon Carruthers has asked for help again with the summer Boy Scout program up at Woodruff. The Summer Scout Camping season is fast upon us. This is our best opportunity to fulfill our Club mandate to "educate" and "to promote the public knowledge of and interest in astronomy".

We ask that our volunteers set up one or more scopes and give the scouts an opportunity to use & view to earn their Astronomy Badge. You can or use your own scope; we also have several other scopes in the warm-up shed that you can use - a 10" Discovery dob and I have 3 dobs that I will leave in the shed (I may take one if I need it for another event during the week.). Note the Club's 24" is at the DAV.

Our on field viewing with the scopes will be on Thursday night, after dark (from 9:30 - 10 p.m.).

We need volunteers to commit to go up on Thursdays, from July 2, 9, 16 and 23. Please phone or e-mail us if you can commit to one or more

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evenings. You can reach Sharon at Treasurer@AtlantaAstronomy.org or phone at 770-941-4640 (h).

The GASP group is continuing to bring the stars to the campers at various State Parks in Georgia. The remaining schedule for 2009 is November 14th at Red Top Mtn State Park (*Editor's Note: The August 15th event at Buck Shoals State Park has been cancelled*). For more information, please contact Keith Burns at Keith_B@Bellsouth.net.

The Charlie Elliott Chapter of the AAC continues to hold meetings and observing events at the Charlie Elliott Wildlife Management Area. The meetings are held on Saturday afternoons with observing in the evening weather permitting. For more information, see the Elliott website at CEastronomy.org. Note the Elliott website can be accessed from the main AAC website via a link located at the top of the main page. The Elliott Group also posts updates on events in their area on the AAC listserv.

Charlie Elliott Future Meetings

The Meeting dates for the Charlie Elliott Chapter have now been set for 2009. All meetings are on Saturdays: July 18, Aug 22, Sept 19, Oct 17, Nov 14, Dec 19. Please note that the 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.

GASP at Tugaloo State Park

by Kat Sarbell, Photos by Tom Faber

On June 12, the Georgia Astronomy in State Parks (GASP) crew visited Tugaloo State Park on Lake Hartwell for our first summer astronomy outreach program. We had a big crowd: myself, Tom Faber, Keith Burns, John and Holly Ritger, Peter Macumber, Sharon Carruthers, Joanne Cirincione, and Harold and Claudia Champ. Luckily we were able to reserve all our campsites on the same road in the park. Being set up together made it easier to plan for the event the next day.



Keith Burns' tent and the Ritgers' trailer set up at the campsite.

On Saturday night before sundown, we all drove to the group shelter building. Tom Buchanan arrived with his giant refractor. The rest of us also set up our telescopes and chairs on the lawn in front of the building. From there we had a great view of the lake. Meanwhile, Sharon gave a talk and slide show to the visitors in the group shelter building. When they were finished, parents and children visited our scopes and some of us used laser pointers to show them the constellations. We also tracked about a dozen satellites, including the Hubble Space Telescope and an Iridium Flare (*Editor's Note: Unfortunately it was only a mag 0, not a -7 or -8 blazer!*). The favorite object to look at that night was Saturn, which was in the western sky in Leo. The rings were almost edge-on, but the paper-thin line was still visible. It was a fun night, and we hope the campers learned more about the night sky.



Kat Sarbell takes a much-needed drink of water. It was a hot weekend!



Time to relax at the campsite. From left to right: Harold Champ, Peter Macumber, Joanne Cirincione, Holly Ritger, and Claudia Champ.



Peter checks his telescope before the talk is finished. Behind him on the lawn are (from left to right) Kat Sarbell, Harold Champ, Keith Burns, John Ritger, and Holly Ritger.

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Keith Burns and his scope are ready for anything! In the background is Tom Buchanan getting ready to set up.



A chance to relax before the campers visit the telescopes. From left to right: John and Holly Ritger, Peter Macumber, Joanne Cirincione, Harold Champ, and Kat Sarbell.



The Group Shelter building sits on a low hill overlooking Lake Hartwell.



Kat Sarbell practices sighting through her Astroscan.



The GASP group wait for nightfall. From left to right: Keith Burns, John Ritger, Joanne Cirincione, Holly Ritger, and Harold Champ.



Sunset on the lake. If you look to the lower left, you will see the cylinder of Tom Buchanan's refractor.

Remembering Apollo 11

by Tom Faber

Forty years ago this month humans set foot on another world for the first time. Apollo 11 lifted off from the Kennedy Space Center at 9:32AM (EDT) on July 16, 1969. Four days later, on July 20th, Neil Armstrong and Edwin E. “Buzz” Aldrin, Jr. landed the Lunar Module *Eagle* on the moon’s Sea of Tranquility at 4:17PM while Michael Collins circled the moon in the Command Module *Columbia*. After Armstrong and Aldrin made sure that LM was in the proper post-landing configuration, Armstrong spoke those historic words “Houston, Tranquility Base here. The Eagle has landed.”

At 10:56PM that evening Armstrong stepped off of the front footpad of the Lunar Module and spoke the famous words “That’s one small step for [a] man, one giant leap for mankind”. Armstrong and Aldrin spent more than 2.5 hours on the surface setting up experiments - including a seismometer and a laser reflector, collecting rock and soil samples, and taking photographs. They also spoke with President Richard Nixon and left various mementoes on the lunar surface.

After resting for a few hours, Armstrong and Aldrin lifted off from the moon in *Eagle’s* ascent stage at 1:54PM on July 21, along with about 48lbs of rock and soil samples, hundreds of photos, and a solar wind particle collector. Later that day they rendezvoused with *Columbia*, then after transferring the samples and other equipment, jettisoned *Eagle’s* ascent stage in lunar orbit. Later they rocketed out of lunar orbit to begin the 2.5 day trip back to Earth. On July 24 the *Columbia* splashed down in the western Pacific Ocean south of Johnston Atoll, and the ship and crew were picked up by the recovery ship, USS *Hornet*.

Those of us who watched these events on TV as they happened will never forget those amazing 8 days in the summer of 1969. On the following pages are a photo gallery of this historic trip. All photos by NASA.



The Apollo 11 crew pose in front of their Saturn V rocket on the launch pad. From left to right are Neil Armstrong, Michael Collins, and Buzz Aldrin.

Right: The plaque on the front landing leg of the Lunar Module Eagle with the signatures of the crew members and President Nixon.

NASA Launch commentator:

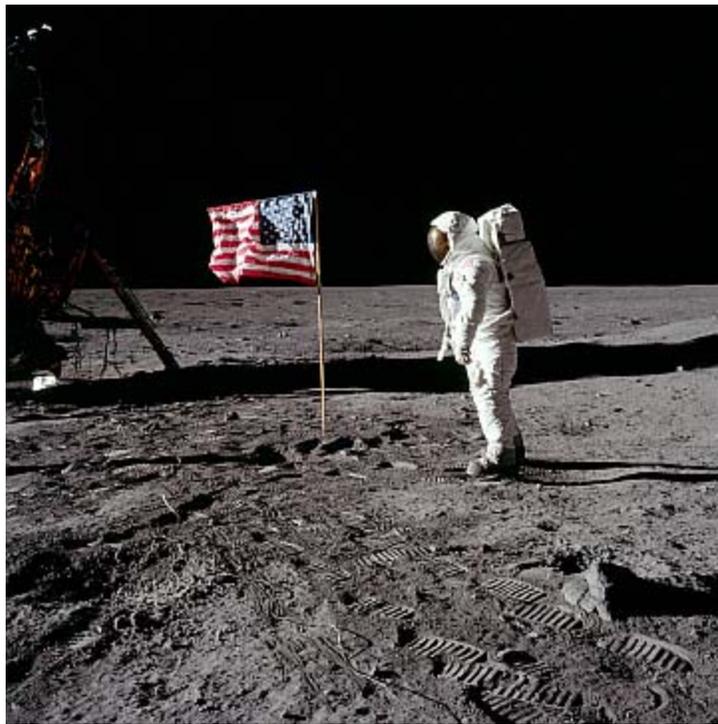
“T-minus 15 seconds; Guidance is internal; 12, 11, 10, 9, Ignition sequence start, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1, 0, All engines running; Lift-off! We have a lift-off! 32 minutes past the hour; Lift-off on Apollo 11! Tower Cleared!”



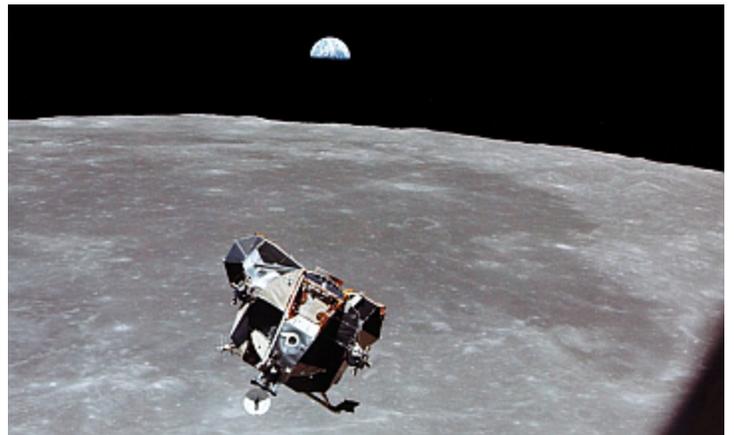
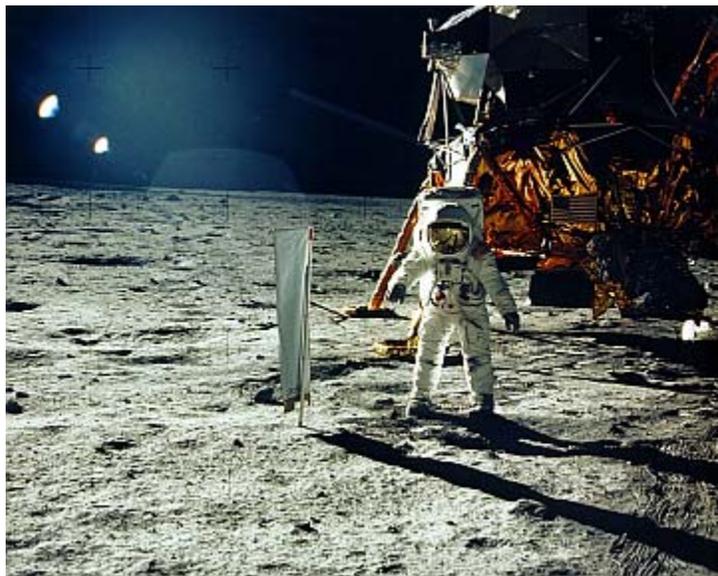
The Lunar Module Eagle after separating from Columbia shortly before Armstrong and Aldrin began their descent to the Sea of Tranquility.



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Clockwise from below: Aldrin sets up the solar powered seismometer. Eagle's ascent stage as seen from Columbia after the astronauts left the lunar surface, with the Earth in the background. Columbia after splashdown in the Pacific with the crew, wearing isolation suits, in a raft. Armstrong working at the Lunar Module (This is one of the few pictures of Armstrong on the surface. He had the only camera the astronauts used on the surface so most of the pictures of an astronaut on the surface show Aldrin. But Armstrong gave the camera to Aldrin while he unpacked some equipment from the LM). Aldrin near the Lunar Module after setting up the solar wind collector - a sheet of highly pure aluminum foil. Aldrin standing near the American Flag.



The Next AAC Board Meeting

by Keith Burns, AAC President

The next Board Meeting of the Atlanta Astronomy Club is scheduled for Sunday, August 9th from 4PM to 6PM. Meeting location is TBA. Contact Keith Burns or Board Chair Don Hall for more information about the meeting agenda.

Georgia Astronomy in State Parks

The following GASP events are currently scheduled:

(Editor's Note: The August 15th event at Buck Shoals State Park has been cancelled)

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: Dave Lumpkin programs@atlantaastronomy.org

Observing Chair: Daniel Herron observing@atlantaastronomy.org

Corresponding Secretary: Tom Faber
focalpoint@atlantaastronomy.org

Treasurer: Sharon Carruthers Treasurer@AtlantaAstronomy.org

Recording Secretary: Rich Jakiel Secretary@atlantaastronomy.org

Board Chair: Don Hall - donrhall@bellsouth.net

Board: Misty Herron - Contact Info TBA

Board: Theo Ramakers 770-464-3777 director@ceastronomy.org

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

ALCOR: Art Zorka 404-633-8822 (H) 404-824-7106 (C)
star.myth@juno.com

Elliott Ch. Director: Theo Ramakers 770-464-3777
director@ceastronomy.org

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)

Upcoming AAC Events are listed in BOLD

- July 7th, Tuesday: Full Moon.
July 10th, Friday: **AAC Meeting at White Hall, 8PM, Emory University.**
July 13th, Monday: Mercury at Superior Conjunction. Jupiter 0.6deg S of Neptune.
July 15th, Wednesday: Moon Last Quarter.
July 17th, Friday: **August Focal Point Deadline.**
July 18th, Saturday: **DSO at location TBA. CEC Meeting - See pg 3 for details.**
July 21st, Tuesday: New Moon.
July 27th, Monday: Delta Aquarid Meteors.
July 28th, Tuesday: Moon First Quarter.
August 2nd, Sunday: Mercury near Regulus.
August 5th, Wednesday: Full Moon.
August 7th, Friday: **AAC Meeting at White Hall, 8PM, Emory University.**
August 9th, Sunday: **AAC BoD Meeting at Location TBA.**
August 11-12th, Tuesday-Wednesday: Perseid Meteors.
August 13th, Thursday: Moon Last Quarter.
August 16th, Sunday: Moon near Mars.
August 17th, Monday: Moon near Venus (M). Mercury near Saturn(E).
August 20th, Thursday: New Moon.
August 21st, Friday: **September Focal Point Deadline.**
August 22nd, Saturday: **DSO at Brasstown Bald. CEC Meeting - See pg 3 for details.**
August 27th, Thursday: Moon First Quarter.
September 4th, Friday: Full Moon.
September 11th, Friday: **AAC Meeting at White Hall, 8PM, Emory University.** Moon Last Qtr.
September 19th, Saturday: **DSO at Woodruff. CEC Meeting - See pg 3 for details.**

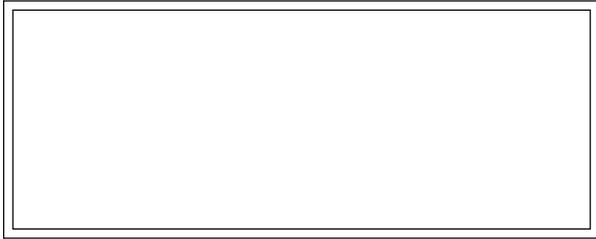
Atlanta Astronomy Club Listserv

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, 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 August is Friday, July 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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2206 Tretridge Parkway
Alpharetta, GA 30022

Atlanta Astronomy Club

P.O. Box 76155

Atlanta, GA 30358-1155

www.atlantaastronomy.org

