

The Focal Point

The Atlanta Astronomy Club
Established 1947
November 2009

Vol. 22 No. 6

Editor: Tom Faber

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November General Meeting

by Keith Burns, AAC President

The next general membership meeting of the Atlanta Astronomy Club will be held on Friday, November 6th, at White Hall on the Emory University Campus in Room 207. The meeting starts at 8PM. Refreshments and snacks will be served starting around 7:30PM. Directions to White Hall are at the bottom of this article.

The Program

The meeting starts out 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 speaker of the night. AAC VP Observing Chairman Daniel Herron will be giving a talk on,



Daniel at the July DSO near Mentone, Alabama. Photo by Tom Faber.

“Sidewalk Astronomy.” Plus he will show pictures of recent events he has attended in regards to astronomical events that have occurred in the past year. The business meeting will follow after questions and answers with Daniel.

Our new program chairman is working on speakers for the year 2010. As soon as he has information, it will be passed on to you. Meeting dates are the following: Jan 22nd, Feb 26th, March 26th, April 23rd, May 21st, and June 25th.

Directions to White Hall and Parking

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 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 AAC Meetings:

December 5th (Saturday) - We will have our annual Christmas dinner with a talk to follow. The dinner will take place in the atrium of the Math and Science Building located across the street from our usual meeting place at White Hall. The evening starts at 6:30PM with drinks and snacks. Dinner will be from 7PM to 8:00PM. Jonn Serrie is tentatively schedule to play during dinner in the atrium. Starting at 8:30PM Dave Gheesling will be giving a talk on meteorites. Dave is a major collector of meteorites and has given talks on this subject at many schools and other places. Dave's talk will take place in the planetarium. Note that this schedule is being hammered out as of publication of this article and may change. If you have questions, please contact Keith Burns at 678-229-7250 or email president@atlantaastronomy.org. I am in the process of getting together a contact person/committee for food arrangements.

January 22nd - Program and speaker TBA.

October General Meeting Minutes

by Richard Jakiel, AAC Recording Secretary - Photos by Tom Faber

The October 2009 General Meeting of the AAC was held at Emory's White Hall. The meeting began at 8 PM, with over members and guests in attendance. After a few brief announcements by president Keith Burns (photo below), program chair Dave Lumpkin introduced the evening's



speaker - Paul Tankersley. Over the past couple years, Paul (photo right) has posted an incredible series of narrow-band (plus "regular" RGB) CCD images of nebulae and distant galaxies.

Unlike many other types of Astrophotography, narrowband imaging can be done under light polluted urban skies (photo below). Paul uses only a 106mm refractor on an AP900 German equatorial mount to capture images of stunning detail and color. But instead of the



typical red, green and blue filters (or RGB) - narrow band hydrogen-alpha (H-a), sulfur (S II) and oxygen (OIII) are used instead with a CCD. He discussed how the images are then combined and a used to produce a highly detailed, false color image. As a result of the narrow bandwidth and the CCD sensitivity, exposures for each filter may require hundreds of minutes of exposure time. But the beautiful end result more than justifies the extra telescope time. As a longtime AAC member, I will say that this was one of the most impressive visual presentations ever seen at an AAC general meeting.

After Paul's presentation, Keith discussed the upcoming PSSG 2009 event at DAV. As an alternative, the October DSO was to be held at the Mentone, Alabama site. (Post Note - while the DSO was cancelled due to weather - the PSSG was NOT!). The last GASP event for the year will be held on November 14th at Red Top Mountain state park. Other club news/events included Georgia Tech's "Astrophysics Unplugged" on October 21. The presentation topic - the IceCube - a neutrino telescope located in Antarctica.

The meeting was adjourned at ~ 9:30 PM, and many members headed over to Athens Pizza for the "meeting after the meeting".

Opening of Two Offices in the AAC

by Keith Burns, AAC President

The current program chairman is stepping down from his position. Per the bylaws, I am announcing the opening of the program chair position. The term to be served is for the remainder of the 2009-2010 term of 6 months that will end on June 1st 2010. I am taking over as program chairman temporarily until the post can be filled.

I have asked Rich Jakiel to fill the position for the remainder of the term. Since Rich is currently our recording secretary, he will step down as recording secretary if elected to office as the replacement. This will mean the recording secretary position will need to be filled for the remainder of the term that will end as of June 1st 2010. The recording secretary records the minutes of the monthly meetings and board meetings held during the term year. The monthly meeting minutes are to be published in the club newsletter the month following the meeting. The board meeting minutes are published the month following their approval by the board. Anyone who wants to be a candidate for one of these two positions, please notify the AAC president (me) at president@atlantaastronomy.org.

The election of replacement candidates will take place on Nov 22nd 2009 at the next board meeting to take place at Emory University in the Math and Science building room N301 starting at 4 PM.

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>

CE Chapter September Meeting Minutes

by Ken Poshedly, CE Recording Secretary. Photos by Theo Ramakers
(Minutes have been edited for space constraints.)

The September 19 meeting of the Charlie Elliott chapter of the Atlanta Astronomy Club was called to order at 5:05 p.m. by chapter director Theo Ramakers at the CE Visitors Center. 28 members and guests were present, including a group from the Atlanta Outdoors Club, led by former AAC member Charlie Cottingham. After opening remarks by Theo welcoming all, the meeting was recessed for the potluck dinner (photo below).



The meeting was called back to order at 5:55 p.m.; at that time, CE member and extremely proficient solar observing expert Stephen Ramsden (photo below) gave his presentation about all NASA missions launched to primarily study the Sun in many wavelengths of energy, how those satellites function and where their orbits are in the Solar System. At one point, souvenir special viewing glasses were distributed to all in attendance for a 3D portion of the presentation. After the talk, Keith Burns and Rich



Jakiel posed for promotional photos of merchandise exchanged for donations to the "Charlie Bates Solar Astronomy Project", Stephen's own solar astronomy outreach project named for a close friend and coworker who passed away. Go to the website at www.charliebates.org

After another short break, Theo's "Current Events in Astronomy and Space Exploration" was presented.

* No previous outreach (sidewalk) astronomy events were held, but there was an appeal for participation in the upcoming Galilean Nights event

(Oct. 22 - 24) being coordinated by the IYA (International Year of Astronomy) 2009 project.

* There were extended coverage and comments about the recent impact -- nicknamed "Bird Strike" -- into the South Polar Region of Jupiter's cloud tops. Our own Theo Ramaker's polar projection map of Jupiter showing the impact location was carried on a number of sites including www.Spaceweather.com, www.SkyandTelescope.com and NASA's Astronomy Picture of the Day.

* There was a reminder of the upcoming LCROSS impact into or very near the 98-km far-southern crater Cabeus on Friday morning, October 9. For more info, go to <http://www.nasa.gov/lcross> and <http://lcross.arc.nasa.gov/>)

Next were reminders of the current and beautiful appearance of both Mars and Venus in our pre-sunrise sky, with some great images by Larry Owens and Theo. The meeting was adjourned at 7:30 p.m. Due to the overcast skies, no sky observing activities were held.

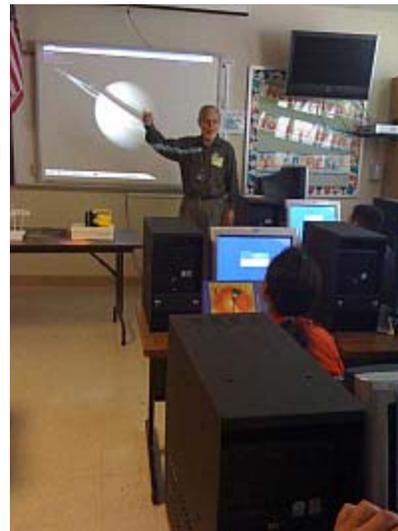
The remaining 2009 meeting for the Charlie Elliott Chapter are on Saturday Nov 14 and Dec 19. Please note that the December meeting will be a Pot Luck Dinner meeting. For more info on the Charlie Elliott chapter of the AAC, go to www.ceastronomy.org

CE Chapter Outreach Programs

by Theo Ramakers, CE Chapter Director

CE chapter members recently did outreach programs at Stone Mountain Middle and Chamblee Middle schools.

On September 30th Frank Garner and Theo Ramakers (photo right) went to the Chamblee Middle School for an entire school day and did 6 presentations for all the 6th graders of Dr. Victoria Rao. Frank's presentation explained and showed the students how telescopes work. They could touch and feel the optics and after Frank built the "open" telescope they could look through it and saw the results. Frank's presentation included refractors and reflectors.



Theo (photo left) took the students on a flight through the solar system and they did visit a number of planets from a viewpoint you only can get from a spacecraft that orbits a planet, or moon. Most of the students were very surprised to find out that other planets have moons that do not look like moons but more like asteroids. The event was very rewarding for us and the students did like it too I believe. Some of them made it home with some nice sun posters and stereo cards of the sun.

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October 6th Steve Bieger went to the Stone Mountain Middle School (photo above) and did a presentation for three 6th grade classes about Galileo's discoveries. Steve's presentation was well received by the students who in the end came up with some very good questions for Steve. Thanks to teacher Madeline Hill who invited us to do this for her 75 students in her astronomy class.

The Next AAC Board Meeting

by Keith Burns, AAC President

The next Board Meeting of the Atlanta Astronomy Club is scheduled for Sunday, November 22nd from 4PM to 6PM at Emory University in the Math and Science building room N301. Contact Keith Burns or Board Chair Don Hall for more information about the meeting agenda.

Bradley Observatory Open House Series 2009-2010

The Galileo Project: Revealing Hidden Worlds

During the 2009-2010 academic year, the 400th anniversary of Galileo's first astronomical use of his telescope, Agnes Scott College is hosting "Project Galileo: Revealing Hidden Worlds". This year-long series of events will explore Galileo's complex life and innovative work, and it will help us engage the challenges we all face when pushing the boundaries of exploration in the quest for knowledge. Lectures focus on Galileo's contributions to astronomy and to changing the way we see the universe. Programs begin at 8PM and will be followed by a planetarium show and observing with the Beck telescope (weather permitting).



November 13th - "Galileo's Universe"

December 11th - "Hidden Worlds in the Asteroid Belt"

February 12 - Brother Guy Consolmagno, Vatican Observatory

March 19 - Spring Equinox Concert and Open House

April 9 - Tina Pippin, professor of religion, Agnes Scott College: "Galileo and the Church"

May 7 - Jeffrey Young, Georgia State University Honors Program: "Galileo and the Birth of the Modern"

For more info see: <http://www.agnesscott.edu/academics/bradleyobservatory/open-house-series.aspx>

The 2009 Peach State Star Gaze Photo Gallery, Part 1

The PSSG '09 is now history. Although the weather wasn't as good as the past two years we did get to do observing on three nights, watched vintage and more recent movies on the cloudy nights, had a great lineup of speakers and vendors, enjoyed the food (especially the brownies!) provided by Micki's Kitchen, and had a large assortment of door prizes awarded. Special thanks to Peach State Chairman Peter Macumber, Co-Chair Joanne Cirincione, Sharon Carruthers, Keith Burns, Tom Faber, Kat Sarbell, Frank Marchese, Mark Banks, and the other staff members and volunteers for organizing and running another great Peach State! On the next few pages is part 1 of a photo gallery of the sights and events of the PSSG '09. Part 2 in next month's *Focal Point* will feature photos of the speakers and door prize winners, along with other shots from the event. All photos by Tom Faber unless noted otherwise.



Keith Burns puts up the "Welcome to the Peach State Star Gaze" banner on the check-in building on "Set-up Saturday."



PSSG Staff members working Saturday afternoon to get the check-in area set up and information packets put together for the attendees. From left to right are Sharon Carruthers, Keith Burns, PSSG Co-chair Joanne Cirincione, and Kat Sarbell.

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The setup work continued well into Saturday evening and on into Sunday morning. Here Joanne and Kat organize attendee information packets before the noon opening on Sunday.



Above and below: Attendees began arriving and setting up their telescopes and tents on Gier's Field early Sunday afternoon.



There was a lot of work to do outside too. Here Frank Marchese (left), Keith Burns (right-white shirt), and a volunteer set up the tent to cover the dining area in front of Micki's Kitchen Sunday morning.



For the third year Micki's Kitchen provided lots of hot food, hot coffee, hot chocolate and especially hot brownies to the people at the Peach State. Photo by Frank Marchese.



Astro Gizmos was the first of several vendors to arrive.

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The pavilion became the Peach State's "Internet Cafe" especially on the days when the weather wasn't so good.



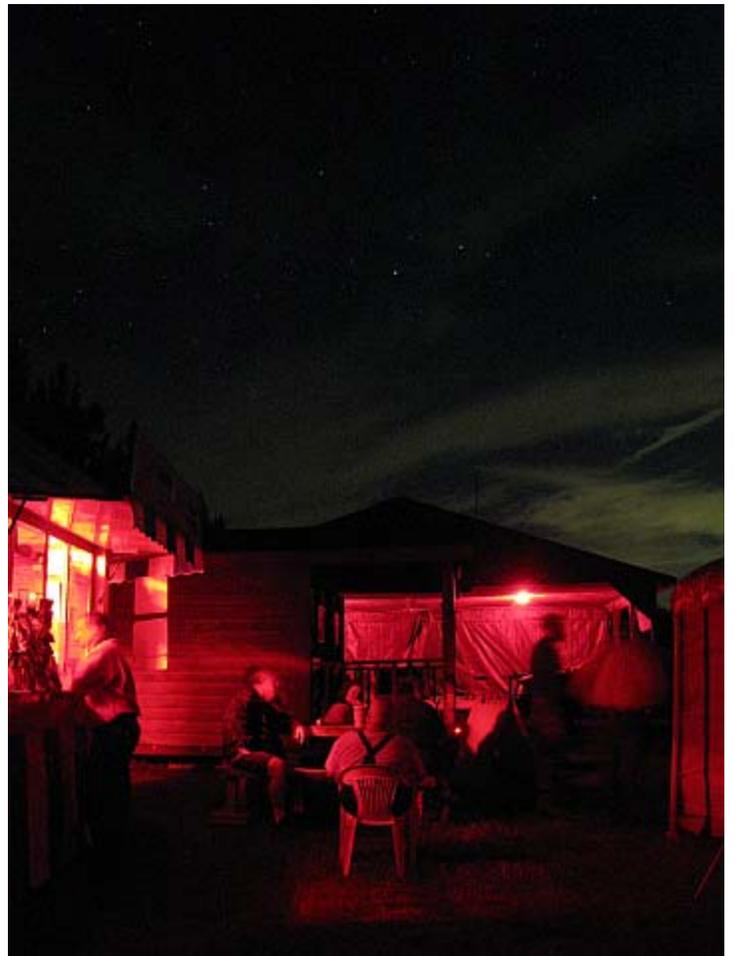
AAC President Keith Burns gets the club's 24-inch Dobsonian ready for use.



Longtime AAC members Alex and Nelda Langoussis with Alex's 24-inch Dob. Photo by Frank Marchese.



Peach State Chairman Peter Macumber (left) confers with Keith Burns and Frank Marchese (right).



Like the scene in Van Gogh's painting "The Cafe at Night", Peach State visitors gathered together for coffee, hot chocolate, and baked desserts at Micki's Kitchen. In this photo from Tuesday night the tiny zodiacal constellation of Aries is visible rising in the east despite a few high thin cirrus clouds in that part of the sky.

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Despite the weather we did get a couple of hours of observing in on Sunday and Tuesday nights and 4-5 hours on Friday night. Here Friday night Taurus and the Pleiades rises in the east over the observing field a little past 11PM. Camera Info: Canon PowerShotSX100IS, 15-sec, ISO 400.

Georgia Astronomy in State Parks

The following GASP events are currently scheduled:

November 14 - Red Top Mountain State Park.

March 20 - Unicoi 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.

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: Open

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/EST unless noted)

AAC Events are listed in **BOLD**

November 1st, Sunday: Daylight Saving Time Ends 2AM.
November 2nd, Monday: Full Moon.
November 5th, Thursday: Southern Taurids Meteors. Mercury at Superior Conjunction.
November 6th, Friday: **AAC Meeting at White Hall, 8PM, Emory University.**
November 9th, Monday: Moon Last Quarter.
November 13th, Friday: **December Focal Point Deadline.** Bradley Observatory Open House, 8PM - see pg 4 for details.
November 14th, Saturday: **GASP at Red Top SP - see pg7, DSO at DAY, CEC Meeting.**
November 16th, Monday: New Moon.
November 17th, Tuesday: Leonids Meteors.
November 24th, Moon First Quarter.
December 2nd, Wednesday: Full Moon.
December 5th, Saturday: **AAC Meeting & Christmas Potluck Dinner.**
December 7th, Monday: Earliest Sunset in Atlanta: ~5:27PM.
December 8th, Tuesday: Moon Last Quarter.
December 11th, Friday: Bradley Observatory Open House, 8PM - see pg 4 for details.
December 14th, Monday: Geminids Meteors.
December 16th, Wednesday: New Moon.
December 18th, Friday: Moon near Mercury. Mercury Greatest Eastern Elongation.
December 19th, Saturday: **CEC Meeting. DSO at Charlie Elliott.** Jupiter near Neptune.
December 21st, Monday: Solstice at 12:48PM, Mars Stationary.
December 23rd, Wednesday: **January Focal Point Deadline.**
December 24th, Thursday: Moon First Quarter. Pluto Conjunction with Sun.
December 31st, Thursday: Full Moon.
January 7th, Thursday: Moon Last Quarter.
January 22nd, Friday: **AAC Meeting at White Hall, 8PM, Emory University.**

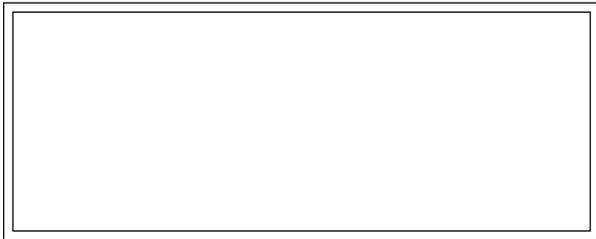
Atlanta Astronomy Club Listserv

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 Lemmy 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 December is Friday, November 13th at 4:00 PM. Submissions will not be accepted after the deadline.**

FIRST CLASS



The Focal Point

Newsletter of The Atlanta Astronomy Club, Inc.

FROM:

Tom Faber

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Alpharetta, GA 30022

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



Atlanta Astronomy Club

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