

The Focal Point

Vol. 22 No. 7

The Atlanta Astronomy Club
Established 1947
December 2009

Editor: Tom Faber

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December General Meeting & Potluck

by Keith Burns, AAC President

The Program

On December 5th (which is a Saturday evening), we will have our annual Christmas potluck dinner with a talk to follow. The dinner will take place in the atrium of the Emory Math and Science Building, located across the street from our usual meeting place at White Hall. The evening starts off at 6:30PM with drinks and snacks. Dinner will be from 7PM to 8:00PM. Jonn Serrie (photo below) is scheduled to play before and during dinner in the Atrium from 6:30PM to 8PM. Dave Gheesling will be giving a talk on meteorites starting at 8:30PM. The title of his talk is, "Caution: FALLING ROCKS." Dave says this about his presentation: "This will be a 101 introductory presentation of meteorites and things related, and of course I'll bring some fun pieces along from my collection." Dave's talk will take place in the planetarium. If you have questions, please contact Keith Burns at president@atlantaastronomy.org. Contact Julie Moore to RSVP with number of folks in your group (even if it's just yourself) and what dish you plan to bring. Contact Julie at moorequiver@bellsouth.net. Julie will also post updates to the AtlantaAstro listserv on what dishes are being brought and what is still needed.



Jonn Serrie performs at the 2008 Peach State Star Gaze. Photo by Keith Burns.

Our Speaker

Dave Gheesling is chairman and CEO of FEI Group (www.feigroup.net), a co-founder and chairman of The Scotty Foundation (www.carecuredream.org), a Georgia Tech alumnus and an Atlanta native. Also a meteorite enthusiast, Gheesling houses the largest museum quality meteorite collection in the southeastern United States and conducts volunteer educational outreach programs on the topic as much as his schedule allows. Information about Gheesling's meteorite-related activities can be found on his posting site at www.fallingrocks.com. He lives in Milton, Georgia, with his wife, three kids, two dogs, three cats and a few rocks from space.



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:

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 22, Feb 26, March 26, April 23, May 21, and June 25.

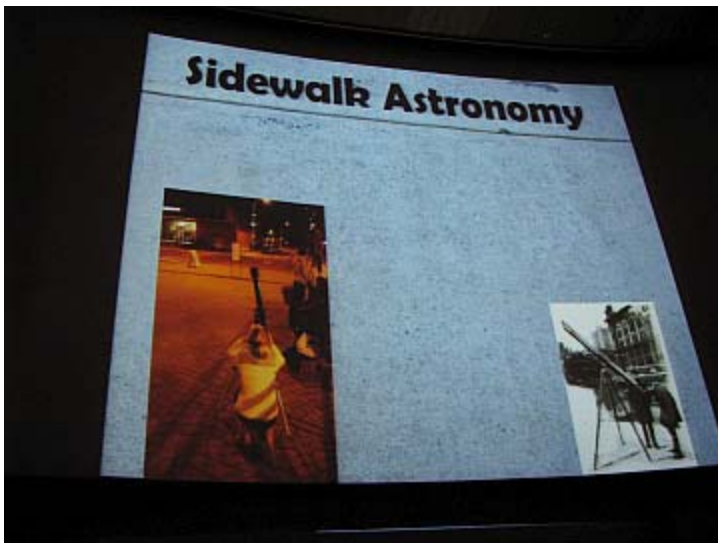
November General Meeting Minutes

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

The November 5th General Meeting of the AAC was held promptly at 8 PM, in room 207 of Emory University's White Hall. Around 35 members and guests were in attendance, including a large group of students from Georgia Tech. President Keith Burns conducted the business portion of the meeting, starting with the announcement of the resignation of the current AAC Program Chair. Both this position and the Recording Secretary will be soon vacant and need to be filled quickly. More details on filling of these positions will be made available following the November 22 BoD meeting at Emory's Math and Science building, room N301.

On December 3, 2009 the Atlanta Botanical Gardens will be holding a "Moonlight Walk" between 6 to 10 PM. AAC members are encouraged to participate in this sidewalk astronomy event. Those helping out should arrive between 5 and 5:30 PM, and will be given \$5 parking passes to help defer costs. For more information, please feel free to contact Keith Burns and/or Brad Isley.

Other important business matters included the Deep Sky Observing schedule for the rest of this year, and the Charlie Elliot Christmas Buffet on December 19th. This year's AAC Christmas Potluck dinner will be back at Emory's Math and Science building. It will be held on Saturday, December 5th and last from 6:30 to 9:30 PM. Jon Serrie will be playing a selection of his work during dinner, while the main program will feature Dave Gheesling, a world-class meteorite collector. It promises to be an exceptional program, with rumored free 'rocks from space'.



After the conclusion of the business portion, Keith introduced AAC member and Observing Chair Dan Herron (photo left top) for the evening's presentation. The main part of the talk was on "Sidewalk Astronomy" (photo left bottom) which was both quite enlightening and amusing and very well received. Part II of his presentation was a slide show of recent Space Shuttle and other large rocket launches. A combination of special passes and good camera equipment produced a truly stunning series of lift-off images.

Following the general meeting, many AAC members headed over to Athens Pizza for the classic "meeting after the meeting" of food, drink and fellowship.

August 9th, 2009 - Board of Directors Meeting of the AAC

By Richard Jakiel, AAC Recording Secretary

The August 9th, 2009 BoD meeting of the AAC was held at Don Hall's residence between 3 and 5 PM. A total of 8 AAC officers and BoD members were in attendance.

Old Business:

The July 2009 BoD minutes were recorded as 'read' by the BoD. The motion was carried by 8 to 0 vote.

Solar Glasses (purchase request) - retracted by Stephen Ramsden.

Insurance - Dave Lumpkin will examine the specifics during his trip to NY.

Lawn Mower - A riding lawn mower in full working order was delivered to the VR site

AAC Website - Dan Herron working on a 'ghost site', needs to be fully tested before final implementation.

Treasurer's Report - Sharon Carruthers - distributed an Excel worksheet with all the main specifics. (Attached to a hard copy of the July BoD report for records). Overall, the AAC is operating well in the 'black'.

New Business:

Dragon*Con 2009 - AAC will help host a public observing event for the Space and Science Track on September 4 and 5 (Friday and Saturday) between 8 to 11 PM (or later). Efforts will be coordinated with the Space and Science Track director for the final location - etc.

What is needed?

- Slide show of AAC images
- Projector and screen
- AAC (and DAV?) information brochures.

2009 PSSG - Final details (speakers, vendors and website information) being coordinated by the PSSG director and committee,

Next BoD meeting - was set for 4 to 6 PM on November 22, at Emory University.

Motion to adjourn!

The Next AAC Board Meeting

by Keith Burns, AAC President

The next Board Meeting of the Atlanta Astronomy Club is scheduled for Sunday, January 31st 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.

CE Chapter October Meeting Minutes

by Theo Ramakers, Chapter Director. Photos by Theo Ramakers

Charlie Elliott Chapter Meeting Minutes

The October 17 meeting was called to order by Chapter Director Theo Ramakers who welcomed the 17 members, and visitors from George Walton Academy in Monroe. The feature presentation for this month was presented by Dan Schmitt: "The Milky Way, A Different Perspective" (photo below). The presentation was addressed to beginners in Astronomy



and discussed Dan's thoughts and impressions from the first nights he was out with other chapter members earlier this year observing the night sky, with some interesting parallels to the size of the Milky Way and Universe. Dan also presented some basic but sometimes funny ideas that went through his mind as he started observing which were very well received by our guests. The presentation was a welcomed interlude to the more advanced presentations which most of the time are being presented at our meetings.

Jon Wood, who was back from his 3 month trip, presented his 101 in Observing again. In addition he showed some nice pictures from his trip through the states he passed through. Jon presented again what one can expect of the night sky in the current month and also presented his "Ghost Challenge", a number of sky objects one can see at this time of the year.

Theo finished the meeting with his Current Events in Astronomy and Space Exploration with an update on the Outreach program. Four outreach programs were held during the last month and at least 5 were scheduled for the coming month.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:30 P.M. with a reminder that next meeting we will go back to our winter schedule. This means the meeting will start at 3:00 P.M.

Next CE Chapter Meeting

Join us for our next meeting on December 19. Please note our winter meeting start time of 3:00 P.M. This will also be one of our quarterly Potluck Dinner Meetings.

Meeting Agenda:

Lecture: "Ice Planet Hoth - Err, I mean Earth!" Richard Jakiel, AAC Program Chair.

"What's Up for December" by Steve Bieger, previous Chapter Observing Supervisor.

"Current Events in Astronomy and Space Exploration" by Theo Ramakers, Chapter Director.

CE Chapter Outreach Programs

2009-11-03 Chamblee Middle School Star Party

Steve Bieger and Stephen Ramsden (photo below) held a mini star party at Chamblee Middle School on Tuesday, November 3rd. The gathering had more than two hours to observe and ask questions. There were about 50 people that came by. Students and parents alike had many great questions about the sky and telescopes. Steve and Stephen had a chance to make some new friends and promote the Chapter.



Stephen Ramsden was also very active again with two solar events at White Water High School (photo below) and Ashley Forest HOA Festival (photo bottom).





Mars Image by Dan Llewellyn

Image made on 11/03/09 at 10:09UT from Decatur, GA. Mars' size was 8.03 arc-seconds, CM 269.9, Seeing 3 of 10 (poor), Best of 8800 Frames, C-14 with Zeiss 2X barlow with spacer.

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).

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 2

The PSSG '09 photo gallery continues this month with photos of the speakers and door prize winners, along with other shots from the event.



The PSSG '09's keynote speaker was Brother Guy Consolmagno of the Vatican Observatory who presented an entertaining and informative talk on the history of the Vatican Observatory. Photo by Frank Marchese.



After his lecture on low cost imaging, speaker Michael Covington assists a young visitor with his camera. Photo by Frank Marchese.

Continued on next page



Photo by Tom Faber.



Photo by Tom Faber.



Photo by Tom Faber.



Photo by Tom Faber.

More PSSG Speakers

In addition to Brother Guy and Michael Covington, the PSSG '09 had a large numbers of speakers who presented many great talks on a number of topics related to astronomy. From top left going clockwise: Art Zorka begins his talk "In Search of Ancient Astronomers"; Sharon Carruthers was our first speaker with her talk "2012: Doom? or Dumb!"; speaker and vendor Dave Lacko talked about meteorites; Paul Jones of Star Instruments talks about telescope design; Chris Hetlage presented a talk and demonstrations about remotely controlled observatories and imaging; and Dan Llewellyn talks about planetary imaging; Steve Bieger begins his talk "Galileo's Universe - The Scientific Revolution & The Birth of Modern Science"; Richard Jakiel presented "Ice Planet Hoth - I mean Earth!" which explored the times in the distant past when the Earth experienced deep "global cooling"; deep sky and planetary imager Brian Combs also presented an imaging talk; and AAC President Keith Burns gave a talk on how to observe and image satellite passes and Iridium Flares.



Photo from PSSG web site.

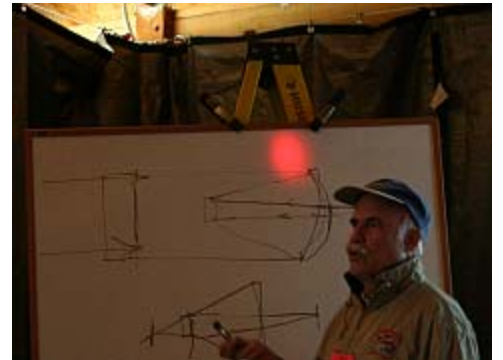


Photo by Frank Marchese.



Photo by Frank Marchese.



Photo by Tom Faber.

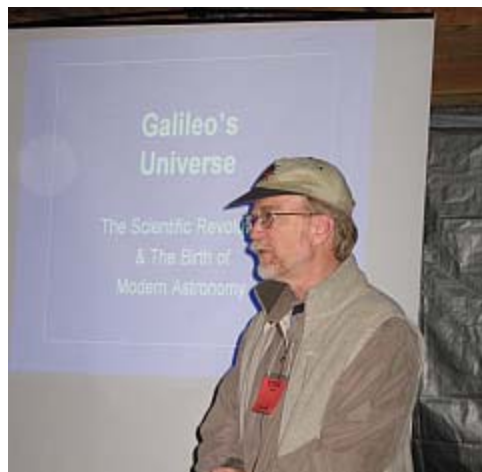


Photo by Keith Burns.



Photo by Frank Marchese.

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Vendors, Some Door Prize Winners, and other Images of the PSSG '09



Brother Guy is presented with an AAC coffee mug and PSSG T-Shirt by Sharon Carruthers and Peter Macumber. Photo by Tom Faber.



Local vendor Camera Bug's owner Tim Nix (right) talks with club member Ken Poshedly. Photo by Frank Marchese.



Star Structures Telescopes displayed their truss tube Dobsonian. Photo by Frank Marchese.



Astro Gizmos had a large selection of merchandise for sale. Photo by Keith Burns.



Micki's Kitchen provided meals, drinks, and snacks to the attendees. Photo by Tom Faber.



PSSG Staff members (l-r) Frank Marchese, Sharon Carruthers, Chair Peter Macumber, Keith Burns, Co-Chair Joanne Cirincione, and Kat Sarbell have breakfast Sunday morning at the end of the PSSG. Photo by Tom Faber.



PSSG Chair Peter Macumber (right), Co-Chair Joanne Cirincione (left), and Sharon Carruthers begin the door prize drawing. Photo by Frank Marchese.



This year we had door prizes just for the kids. This girl won a Celestron FirstScope! Photo by Frank Marchese.



An Orion GoScope 350 was among the top prizes for adults. Photo by Frank Marchese.



Joanne Cirincione won a nebula image print provided by Chris Hetlage. Photo by Frank Marchese.



Long time AAC member Don Hall won a 12V dew zapper (a/k/a hair dryer) provided by Sharon Carruthers. Photo by Frank Marchese.



Jim Fly won a meteorite provided by vendor Dave Lacko. Photo by Frank Marchese.

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>

Georgia Astronomy in State Parks

The following GASP events are currently scheduled:

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.

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: Rich Jakiel 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: Julie Moore 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) 404-247-2474 (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

- December 2nd, Wednesday: Full Moon.
- December 5th, Saturday: **AAC Meeting & Christmas Potluck Dinner**. See pg. 1 for details.
- 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 25th, Friday: Merry Christmas!

- December 31st, Thursday: Full Moon.
- January 2nd, Saturday: Earth at Perihelion.
- January 3rd, Sunday: Quadrantid Meteors.
- January 4th, Monday: Latest Sunrise in Atlanta: ~7:42 AM.
- January 7th, Thursday: Moon Last Quarter.
- January 15th, Friday: New Moon.
- January 22nd, Friday: **AAC Meeting at White Hall, 8PM, Emory University.**
- January 23rd, Saturday: Moon First Quarter.
- January 29th, Friday: **February Focal Point Deadline.** Mars at Opposition.
- January 30th, Saturday: Full Moon.
- January 31st, Sunday: **AAC BoD Meeting** - See pg 2 for details.
- February 5th, Friday: Moon Last Quarter.

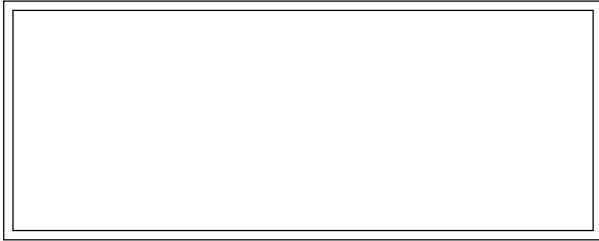
Atlanta Astronomy Club Listserv

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 January is Wednesday, December 23rd at 4:00 PM. Submissions will not be accepted after the deadline.**

FIRST CLASS



The Focal Point

Newsletter of The Atlanta Astronomy Club, Inc.

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

Tom Faber
2206 Tretridge Parkway
Alpharetta, GA 30022

FROM: