

The Focal Point

Vol. 25 No. 6

The Atlanta Astronomy Club
Established 1947
November 2012

Editor: Tom Faber

Table of Contents

- Page 1...** November General Meeting, Images by Chuck Painter
Page 2... October Meeting Minutes, AL Information
Page 3... CE Outreach, Bradley Open Houses
Page 4... Next CE Chapter Meeting, PSSG 2012 Photo Gallery
Page 5... PSSG 2012 Photo Gallery
Page 6... PSSG 2012 Photo Gallery, CE Meeting Minutes
Page 7... AAC Online, Memberships, Club Officers & Contact Info
Page 8... Calendar, AAC List Serv Info, Focal Point Deadline

November General Meeting

Join us for the November meeting of the Atlanta Astronomy Club on Friday, November 16th at 8PM. The meeting will take place in the Parlor Room of the Hitson Center of the Sandy Springs Methodist Church, 86 Mt Vernon Hwy, NE, Sandy Springs, GA 30328 (see map on pg 7). Refreshments will be provided starting around 7:30PM.

The Program:

The subject of the November program will be "Nebulae". They are those faint fuzzy patches in the sky that can tell us much about what is going on in their area. They can be emission, reflection or dark nebulae. Their spectra can tell us what is glowing and information about the excitation source.

Our Speaker:

Annette Michel is currently studying physics at Georgia State University and will graduate with her bachelor's degree in the spring of 2013. She will then continue to pursue her master's degree in physics. Annette plans on becoming a high school science teacher.



Photo by Tom Faber

Future Programs:

In order to keep our programs interesting and relevant I need your help. Please let me know (Mark Banks at: programs@atlantaastronomy.org) of any subjects you may be interested in for a future program. Also, if you or someone you know would like to do a program for us please contact me.

Upcoming AAC Meetings:

Our meetings will usually be held on the 3rd Friday of the month. Future meeting dates are **Saturday** December 8th for the Christmas potluck dinner & meeting, and Jan 18, Feb 15, Mar 15, and Apr 19. Meetings will be at the Parlor Room of the Hitson Center unless noted otherwise.

Images by Chuck Painter

Club member Chuck Painter captured these images at the 2012 Peach State Star Gaze.

The top image is M20, the Trifid Nebula, and has a total exposure time of 75 minutes consisting of 15 - 5 minute subs.

The bottom image is NGC6992, the eastern portion of the Veil Nebula supernova remnant, and has a total exposure time of 3 hours 20 minutes consisting of 20 - 10 minute subs.

Both images were produced using an 8-inch Astrotech RC, Orion Starshoot Pro Color Camera, Orion Atlas EQ-G mount, guided with an Orion ST-80 and Orion Starshoot autoguider.

The image processing was done using Nebulosity and PixInsight.



October Meeting Minutes

By Pixie Bruner, AAC Recording Secretary. Photos by Tom Faber

The October meeting of the Atlanta Astronomy Club was held on October 19th starting at 8PM and had a good attendance of 34 members and guests. Ralph Howard, State Coordinator, of M.U.F.O.N (Mutual UFO Network) was the speaker at the meeting (bottom photo). Mr. Howard spoke about how M.U.F.O.N tries to come up with scientific explanations for sightings that people have of unidentified objects or lights in the sky (photo right).

The next meeting will be held at the Hitson Center on Friday, November 16th. Mark Banks will be sharing information about November's speaker soon. The AAC annual holiday party and potluck will be December 8th at the Hitson Center and is always the most social event of the year. Sharon Carruthers will be coordinating this event so we are not stuck with one turkey, one ham and five dozen green bean casseroles.

The Peach State Star Gaze 2012 was a great success and the AAC would like to congratulate two of our long-time members, award-winning astronomy club newsletter editor and hard-working volunteers, Tom Faber and Kat Sarbell on their recent engagement. Congrats and Best Wishes, TomKat! The Telescope Outreach program date for January 2013 has been moved to January 6th from the 14th. An AAC Board Meeting shall be held soon. Wishing you all a Happy Thanksgiving and Clear skies!



The four day old crescent moon sets in the trees by the Hitson Center after the October meeting.



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 Outreach

By Theo Ramakers, Outreach Coordinator

<http://ceastronomy.org/tramakers>

October was probably the busiest month for our outreach efforts in many years. We put on a total of 10 events during the month which included events for elementary schools, middle schools, boy scouts, a library, and college students. The events this month included solar and night sky events, as well as presentations about our solar system, MSL's rover Curiosity, the Orionids Meteor shower and other topics. In addition Julie Thompson, the 4th grade teacher who was the coordinator for our events at East Newton Elementary school earlier this year, was elected Teacher of the Year for the 2013 school year in the Newton County school system. It takes teachers like Julie to recognize that our programs can light that flame in these students to seek an education in this field. Congratulations Julie!! Thanks for all that gave their time and efforts to make this month such a great time! Clear Skies!



Bradley Observatory Open Houses

The following are the dates of the Bradley Observatory Open House Lecture Series for the 2012-2013 school year. All Open Houses are on Fridays and begin at 8PM. Lecture topics TBA. See <http://legacy.agnesscott.edu/academics/bradleyobservatory> for more information.

Oct. 5, 2012, Nov. 9, 2012, Dec. 14, 2012, Feb. 8, 2013, March 22, 2013 (Spring Equinox Concert), April 12, 2013, May 10, 2013.



Next Charlie Elliott Chapter Meeting

Join us for our next meeting at 3 p.m., Saturday, November 17, 2012
Charlie Elliott Conference Center – ****Note the time change****

Meeting Agenda

Feature Presentation: “This Month’s Sky” by John Towne. Everyone is welcome!

Sunset Time Alert: When the meeting is indoors, and if the meeting runs extra-long, a “Sunset Time Alert” will be announced. While we’d love for everyone to stay for the entire meeting, we also realize that some folks prefer to leave a bit earlier so as to set up their equipment at the observing field before dark.

Observing after the Meeting: All are invited to the observing field immediately after the meeting on the Jon Wood Astronomy Field at Charlie Elliott Wildlife Center (weather-permitting), or to stay on the observing field if the meeting was outdoors. Everyone is welcome!

The 2012 PSSG Photo Gallery - Part 1

Another great Peach State Star Gaze is in the history books! We had some clouds Monday night but for the rest of the week nights were clear and days were sunny to partly cloudy. We had great observing and a number of interesting speakers including planetary imager Damian Peach. A big thanks to PSSG Chair Peter Macumber, Co-Chair Joanne Cirincione, Sharon Carruthers, the PSSG staff, and volunteers for organizing and running another great Star Gaze! On the next few pages are photos from this year’s Peach State. Next month there will be more photos including photos of the rest of the speakers and door prize winners. See you in 2013 for the 20th anniversary Peach State Star Gaze!! Photos by Tom Faber unless otherwise noted.



The PSSG Chair Peter Macumber and Co-Chair Joanne Cirincione with our keynote speaker Damien Peach. Photo by Frank Marchese.



The PSSG staff members had breakfast Sunday morning then got ready to “open the gates” at noon.



Setting up the dining tent in front of Micki’s Kitchen Sunday morning.



Cassiopeia shining over the dining tent Sunday night.



We had one speaker early in the week (Tuesday). Dr. Michelle Shinn from the US Department of Energy's Jefferson Lab presented a talk about dark energy.

Photo Right - Peter Macumber (behind scope) with the AAC's newly acquired 8-inch folded refractor. Photo by Frank Marchese.



This may have been the oldest scope on the field! It is an 8-inch Criterion Dynascope from circa 1965. Photo by Frank Marchese.



Steven Yood's 8-inch Astrophysics refractor.

Photo Right - Tom Crowley (right) chats with Charlie Warren, the editor of Amateur Astronomy Magazine. Photo by Frank Marchese.



By Tuesday afternoon Grier's field was filling up.



(L-R) Chuck Painter, Paul Tankersly, and David Lumpkin discuss Chuck's imaging. Photo by Frank Marchese.



Sharon Carruthers (right) is one of the driving forces behind the Peach State Star Gaze. Photo by Frank Marchese.



The International Space Station made a nice pass in the northern sky Wednesday evening. Canon PowerShot SX100IS, 15sec, f/2.8, ISO-400.



Hanging out at the Peach State's "Internet Café."

Photo Right: Students really enjoyed a recent CEC/AAC astronomy visit to their school and sent a packet of thank you notes to the chapter. Photo by Larry Owens.

October Charlie Elliott Chapter Minutes

by Marie Lott, CE Chapter Recording Secretary

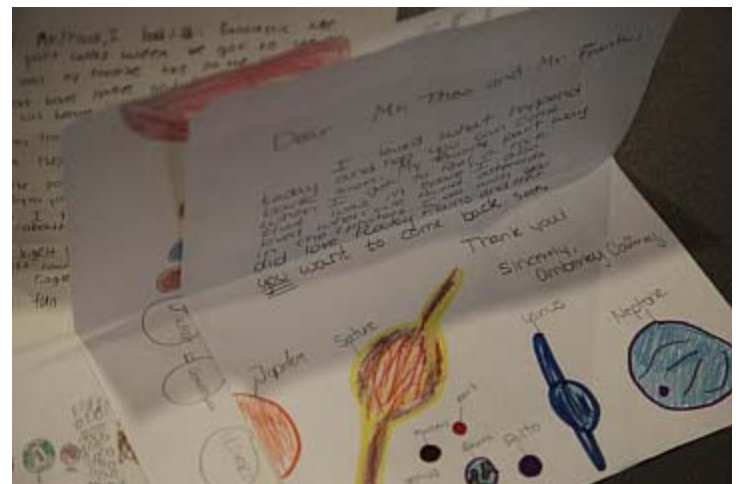
The October 20th meeting of the Charlie Elliott Chapter of the Atlanta Astronomy Club was held in the CEWC Conference Center in Mansfield, GA at 4 PM with 18 people attending the meeting and a large number of additional guests at the public observing session afterwards.

Outreach coordinator Theo Ramakers reported that over 70 astronomy events at schools, libraries & scout trips have been held so far this year. Club members are always needed to help out when able. Future outreach dates are on the chapter calendar at <http://ceastronomy.org>.

Annette Michel gave an excellent feature presentation, "Wonderful World of Nebulae". Jeff Rebitzke presented John Towne's monthly observing report "What's Up", which featured observing targets and current sun, moon and planet rise/set times.

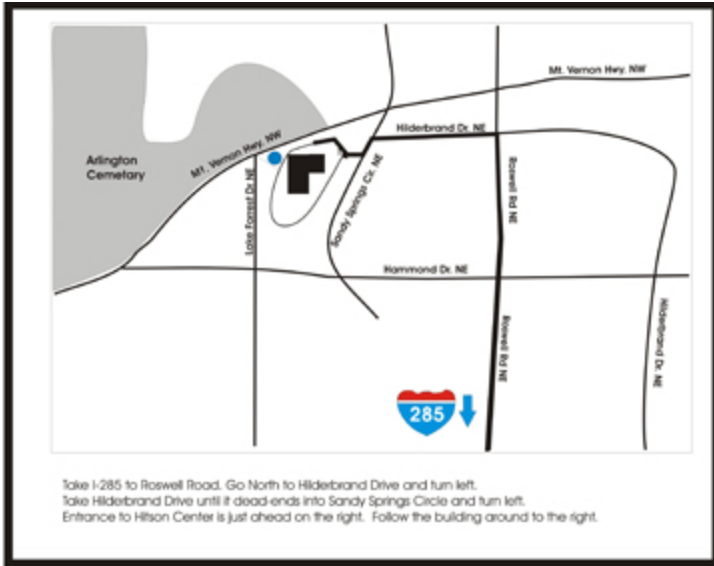
After the meeting, members enjoyed a clear night of observing on Jon Wood Astronomy Field along with visitors from Stone Mountain Middle School and members of Chamblee Charter School's astronomy club. Larry Owens made a beautiful time lapse video of the night sky during the observing session and captured a few passing Orionid meteors. See http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3_-XaWG2qX0 (best viewed with settings @ 1080p & in full screen mode).

The next meeting and public observing session for the Charlie Elliott Chapter of the AAC will be held on Saturday, November 17, 2012 at 3 PM at the Charlie Elliott Conference Center. See <http://ceastronomy.org>



The Focal Point Archives

The AAC began publishing the *Focal Point* as a PDF online in June 1998. Since then every issue has, and still is, available for download from the club's web page. Recently that archive has expanded. Sharon Carruthers has scanned 61 issues of the AAC's newsletter (then called *The Atlanta Astronomers' Report*) from 1948 to 1977. Although many issues from this period are still missing these provide a valuable record of the club's early years. In addition I (Tom Faber) came across 19 issues of the *Focal Point* from the years 1995-1998 that I scanned to make available on the club's web site. Again not every issue during this period is available but it is another step in maintaining and making available to all a record of the AAC's history. Our web master Daniel Herron has uploaded these to the web site as PDF's for download. Just visit www.atlantaastronomy.org and click on the "Focal Point Archives" link on the right side of the page. If you have any of the missing issues of the club's newsletter that you would like to scan and submit to Daniel as a PDF please do!



The AAC's meeting location at the Hitson Center in Sandy Springs.

The **Atlanta Astronomy Club, Inc.**, one of the South's largest and oldest astronomical society, meets at **8:00 P.M.** on the **3rd Friday of each month** in the Parlor Room - Hitson Center in Sandy Springs, or occasionally at other locations or times. Membership fees are **\$30 (\$42)** for a **family or single person membership**. College **Students membership fee** is **\$15 (\$27)**. These fees are for a one year membership (\$12 per year extra charge to receive a printed *Focal Point* by mail).

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.

Atlanta Astronomy Club Online

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 and other information. <http://www.atlantaastronomy.org> You can also follow the AAC on Facebook by joining the AAC group, and on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/atlastro>.

AAC Officers and Contacts

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Board: David Lumpkin, Contact info TBA
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PSSG Co-Chair: Joanne Cirincione
starrynights@AtlantaAstronomy.org
Sidewalk Astronomy: Brad Isley
sidewalkastronomy@AtlantaAstronomy.org
Light Tresspass: Open - Contact Mark Banks if you would like to volunteer for this position
Woodruff Observ. Coordinator: Sharon Carruthers
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AAC Webmaster: Daniel Herron, Observing@AtlantaAstronomy.org

Calendar by Tom Faber (Times EDT/EST unless noted)

AAC Events are listed in BOLD

- Nov 6th, Tuesday: Moon Last Quarter.
- Nov 10th, Saturday: **DSO at location Deerlick Astronomy Village.**
- Nov 13th, Tuesday: New Moon.
- Nov 16th, Friday: **AAC Meeting, 8PM.**
- Nov 17th, Saturday: **GASP at Redtop Mountain State Park, CE Chapter Meeting, 3 PM.**
- Nov 20th, Tuesday: Moon First Quarter.
- Nov 28th, Wednesday: Full Moon.
- Dec 2nd, Sunday: Jupiter at Opposition.
- Dec 6th, Thursday: Moon Last Quarter.
- Dec 10 & 11th, Monday, Tuesday: Moon, Mercury, Venus, Saturn grouping in morning sky.
- Dec 13th, Thursday: New Moon. Geminid Meteors.
- Dec 8th, Saturday: **AAC Christmas Potluck/Meeting, 6PM.** Earliest Sunset in Atlanta: ~5:27PM.
- Dec 15th, Saturday: **CE Chapter Meeting, 3 PM. DSO at Deerlick Astronomy Village.**
- Dec 20th, Thursday: Moon First Quarter.
- Dec 21st, Wednesday: Winter Solstice at 6:12 EST.
- Dec 25th, Tuesday: Moon near Jupiter in evening sky.
- Dec 28th, Friday: Full Moon.
- Jan 2nd, Wednesday: Earth at Perihelion.
- Jan 4th, Friday: Latest Sunrise in Atlanta: ~7:42 AM.
- Jan 5th, Saturday: Moon Last Quarter.
- Jan 11th, Friday: New Moon.
- Jan 12th, Saturday: **CE Chapter Meeting, 3 PM.**
- Jan 18th, Friday: **AAC Meeting, 8PM.** Moon First Quarter.
- Jan 26th, Saturday: Full Moon.

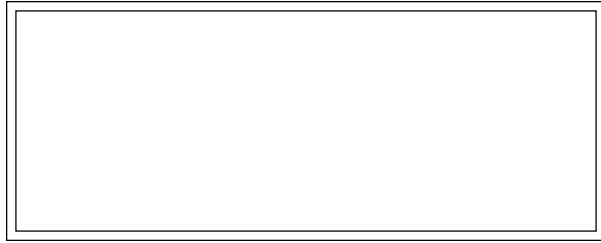
For more event listings see the calendar at www.atlantaastronomy.org

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 or PDF's are okay. You can submit articles anytime up to the deadline. **The deadline for December is Friday, November 23th. Submissions after the deadline will go in the following issue.**



FIRST CLASS



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

Newsletter of The Atlanta Astronomy Club, Inc.



The Focal Point

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