

The Focal Point

The Atlanta Astronomy Club
Established 1947
April 2013

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Editor: Tom Faber

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April General Meeting

Note Meeting Location & Date Change!

Join us for the April meeting of the Atlanta Astronomy Club on Saturday, April 20th at 4PM. As part of the Astronomy Day events at the Tellus Science Museum, the AAC will hold its April meeting at the Tellus museum.

The Program:

Our April meeting will be held in conjunction with the National Astronomy Day event at the Tellus Science Museum. The meeting will be in Classroom/Lab #4 on April 20th at 4:00PM.

The program will be a presentation by Julian Gray, Curator at Tellus Museum, about their new exhibit "Space Spinoff". It's all about the great stuff that has been created as a result of NASA research and development. I'm sure most of you have encountered people who think all the money spent by NASA is all wasted. Well, this exhibit will give you plenty of example and information you can tell them about. Many people don't realize how much of what we have today is a result of the space program. Please join us for this very interesting and informative program.

Our Speaker:

Julian received his Bachelor of Science and Master of Science degrees in geology from Georgia State University. He worked with the Denver Office of the United States Geological Survey, and worked as a geologist for a number of commercial laboratories and environmental consulting firms before joining the Tellus Science Museum in 2005.



March was Membership Renewal Month

MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS: The AAC has moved to a "one-date-for-all" membership renewal. ALL CLUB MEMBERS, with some exceptions, should submit their \$30 (\$42 if you wish to receive the *Focal Point* by mail) dues for 2013 by March 20th. Please renew your membership by this date. There will be an R1 in the upper right corner of your *Focal Point* mailing label if you receive it in the mail. If you receive the *Focal Point* online you will receive an email - be sure we have your current email address. If you see either an RF or an xxx on your mailing label that means that your membership is about to expire or has expired. Please send your renewal right away. If you wish to switch from the mailed *Focal Point* to downloading the PDF version (and save \$12) notify Sharon Carruthers at Treasurer@AtlantaAstronomy.org. Also please notify Sharon with any changes to your contact information.

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 May 17, June 21, July 19, Aug 16, Sept 20th, Oct 18th, Nov 15th, Dec date TBA. Locations TBA.

New AAC Website Feature

AAC Web master Daniel Herron has added a new feature to our web site; a "Beginners Guide to Astronomy." Here is an excerpt from the first part:

"So you are interested in astronomy and want to know where to begin? This is the most common question we are asked. The answer will lead us down a path that will hopefully answer a lot of your questions and end with you deciding to pursue what we believe is a most rewarding and fun hobby.

Hobby, that's what this is. That is what you are getting into. While there are a small few in the club that are professional astronomers, most of us are amateur astronomers and enjoy astronomy as a hobby. Whether your astronomy interest consist of visual observing, astrophotography, reading everything you can find about astronomy, or just supporting your local science community you will find what you are looking for with the Atlanta Astronomy Club. But back to your question. Where do you start? We would recommend the following list..."

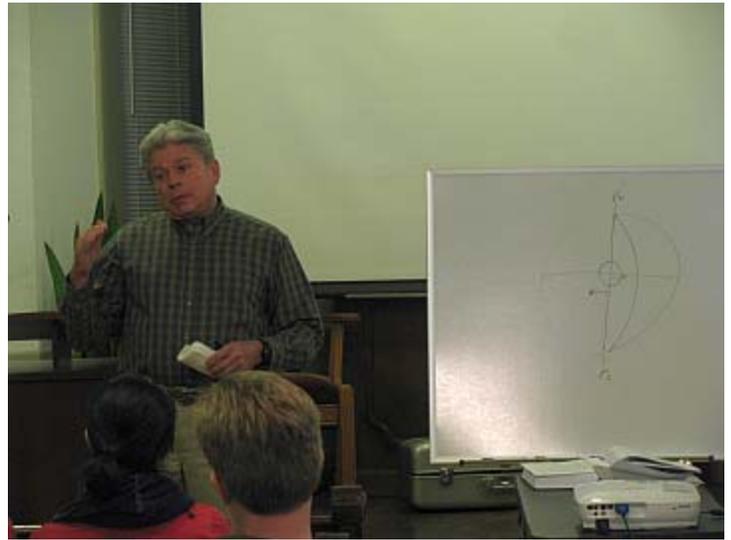
For Daniel's full article go to: http://atlantaastronomy.org/?page_id=778

March AAC Meeting Minutes

By Pixie Bruner, Recording Secretary.

The AAC Meeting for March was held on the 15th at our new location at Atlanta Freethought Hall in Smyrna (photos below and bottom). Our speaker was Don German, and his talk dealt with the fascinating conventions of celestial navigation (photos right). There was a small turnout due to Comet Pan-STARRS and change of location - 26 attended. After Don's talk club officers reported on club activities and upcoming events. After the meeting a number of people went to a nearby restaurant for food, drink, and discussions.

Next month's meeting is very special, instead of our normal Friday evening meeting, the AAC is invading Tellus Science Museum for Astronomy Day (on Saturday, April 20) and will be having a special presentation by the museum curator Julian Gray on their special exhibit "Spinoffs" which is a exhibit of things used that were created originally by NASA and other engineers for the space program and how they became consumer items. (Of course, Star Trek had the first tablets!). Bring your scopes, a cooler and be there at 4pm for the club presentation. We will also be doing outreach and sharing our passion for the skies with museum guests. Free museum admission is part of the program. April is also the wedding of Tom Faber, our award winning newsletter editor and his fellow longtime AAC member, Kat Sarbell, a match certainly made in the heavens and the AAC congratulates "TomKat" and wishes them the best as a binary star system.



Meeting panorama below by Daniel Herron. Other photos by Tom Faber.



Charlie Elliott Chapter Outreach

By Theo Ramakers, Outreach Coordinator

<http://ceastronomy.org/tramakers>

The year 2012 was extremely busy for outreach in the Chapter. We registered exactly 100 events. Of these 13 had to be cancelled because of various situations, most of them weather. We had 8 members who qualified for the Night Sky Network outreach pin. Congratulations to Marie Lott, Frank Garner, Dan Schmitt, Jeff Rebitzki, Kieran Rebitzke-Brown, Jack Fitzmier, Steve Siedentop and Theo Ramakers who received the pin and certificate in the February meeting for each participating in more than 5 events. The top runners were Theo Ramakers with 61 events, Frank Garner with 57 and Steve Siedentop with 16. Thanks to all who did participate, even if it were only a few. We hope that this year the same enthusiasm will prevail and we will be able to reach many young students. In February we did some of our favorite events again: Pucketts Mill Elementary and three days at Memorial Middle School.

March focused on public outreach to observe the Comet C/2011-L4 PanSTARRS. Five local newspapers covered the story and many came out to observe at Lake Varner as well as the Dove fields at Charlie Elliott, including a large group of the Atlanta Outdoor Club. In addition, we reached out to some cub scouts in Dunwoody, and Summerour Middle School in Norcross and the library system in Gwinnett. Unfortunately some events had to be cancelled because of weather. Thanks to all who gave a little of their time.

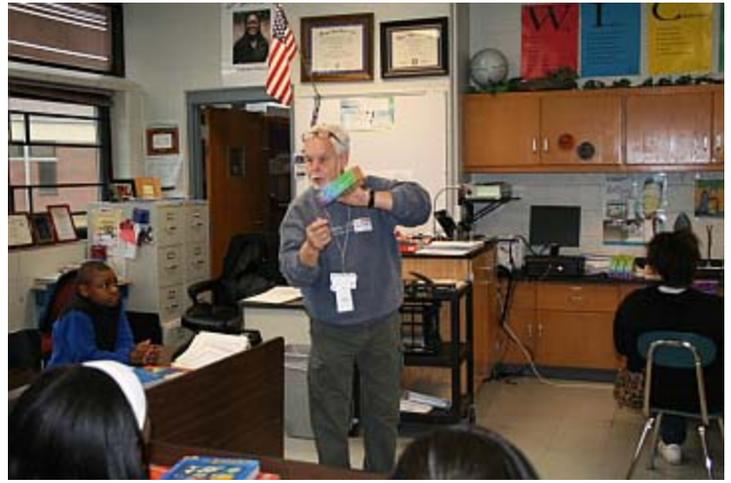


Photo above by Larry Owens.



The Next Charlie Elliott Meeting

Join us for our next meeting at 5 p.m., Saturday, April 13, at the Charlie Elliott Conference Center.

Meeting Agenda

Feature Presentation: Time-lapse Photography of the Night Sky. Please join us for a presentation on time-lapse photography of the night sky. Everyone is welcome. John Towne will also present "What's Up"; a presentation about the skies over Charlie Elliott this month. Place: The Charlie Elliott Conference Center. Observing after the meeting - All are invited to the observing field immediately after the meeting (weather-permitting) (or to stay on the observing field if the meeting was outdoors).

Images by Chuck Painter

Chuck made these images at the 2012 Peach State Star Gaze. Both images were taken with my usual set up:

8" Astrotek Ritchie-Chretien

Orion ST-80 guidescope

Orion Starshoot Pro Camera

Orion Starshoot autoguider

Atlas EQ-G mount

Image captured with Maxim DL (limited edition) and guided with PHD (Push Here Dummy)

Image processed with Nebulosity and PixInsight



M45: 2 hours, 10 minutes same set up and processing. My FOV is a little too small to get this object in a single frame.



M20: only 75 minutes on this one. Again, same set up and processing.

Bradley Observatory Open Houses

The following are the remaining 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. April 12, 2013 and May 10, 2013.

ALCon 2013 — Call for Papers

Interested parties are hereby invited to submit papers on the astronomy-related topics of their choice for presentation at the Astronomical League's 2013 convention, ALCon2013, being held here in Atlanta, Georgia, July 24 through 27. The Atlanta Astronomy Club is working with the Astronomical League in presenting this year's event. Papers will be presented on Wednesday, July 24, and Thursday, July 25, at the Fernbank Science Center Jim Cherry Planetarium; the location is equipped with a full array of audio-visual equipment. A total of 22 time slots are available. Participants are encouraged to submit research papers, presentations, and experience reports concerning various aspects of Earth-based observational astronomy. Suggested topics for papers and presentations include the following:

- New or ongoing observing programs and studies, specifically, how those programs were designed, implemented and continue to function.
- Results of personal or group astronomical studies.
- New or ongoing activities involving astronomical instrumentation, construction or improvement.
- Challenges faced by Earth-based observers such as changing interest levels, deteriorating observing conditions brought about by possible global warming, etc.

The preferred format is Microsoft PowerPoint, though 35mm slides are also acceptable. The final presentation should not exceed 20 minutes in length, to be followed by no more than five (5) minutes of questions (if any) from the audience. A hard-copy version of the paper should be made available for future web site publication. Two consecutive 20-minute sessions can be scheduled if the subject material so requires.

Please submit by June 15, 2013, the following:

- Title of the paper being presented.
- A four- or five-sentence abstract of each paper.
- The format in which the presentation will be.
- A 100-word biography and a recent photograph of the presenter for posting on the ALCon 2013 website and inclusion in the printed program guide.

Address all materials to:

ALCon 2013

c/o Ken Poshedly

1741 Bruckner Court

Snellville, Georgia 30078 USA

E-mail is the preferred method for contact: ken.poshedly@alpo-astronomy.org

Besides the daily technical presentations, there will several optional side-trips

- A Thursday evening trip to the AAC's other observing site at the Deerlick Astronomy Village well east of Atlanta.
- A Friday night "Star B-Q" at the nearby Agnes Scott College Bradley Observatory, which is where the AAC was founded.
- A midday Saturday venture to the AAC's William Barber Observatory site.

Lodging for out-of-towners will be at the nearby Emory Conference Center Hotel, which is lowering its standard room rate considerably for attendees of ALCon 2013. Registration and other fees are included in the event registration form.

The Astronomical League is coming to Atlanta!



ALCON 2013 ATLANTA

Summer Skies, Southern Hospitality

July 24-27, 2013 • Atlanta, Georgia

Location: Fernbank Science Center

Host Organizations: Atlanta Astronomy Club, Astronomical League

Partnering Organization: Association of Lunar and Planetary Observers (ALPO) • This year, ALPO presentations will be mainstreamed with League talks



Accommodations...

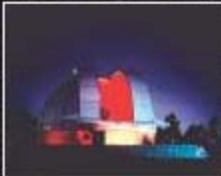
Emory Conference Center Hotel

- Shuttle service between hotel and presentations at Fernbank Science Center and Agnes Scott College Bradley Observatory for those without transportation
- Be sure to ask for the Astronomical League rate. 1-800-933-6679, emoryconferencecenter.com/index.cfm
- Saturday night's Awards Banquet



Primary Venue: Fernbank Science Center

- Talks held in 70 foot planetarium
- Evening shows with Zeiss Mark V projector coupled with various special effects projector
- 0.9 meter Cassegrain reflector in the Ralph Buice Memorial Observatory
- Vendor displays



Atlanta Attractions

- World of Coca-Cola
- Georgia Aquarium
- Zoo Atlanta
- Inside CNN
- Atlanta Botanical Garden
- Olympic Games venues



Conference Speakers...

Chris Hetlage, Deerlick Astronomy Village, a distinctive dark sky community.

Tim Puckett, Supernovae Research



Saturday night's Awards Banquet Keynote Speaker:

Charles Wood, Sky and Telescope Lunar 100 creator

Star BQ, Friday, July 26, Agnes Scott College Bradley Observatory:

Bradley Observatory Tour; 30-inch Beck Cassegrain; Planetarium Presentation

Other ALCon 2013 Excursions

- Atlanta Astronomy Club's Villa Rica Observatory; Full size roll-off roof observatory with 20-inch Newtonian reflector
- Atlanta Astronomy Club's observing site at the Deerlick Astronomy Village



Check www.ALCon2013.astroleague.org for more information as it becomes available.



The Astronomical League is coming to Atlanta!

ALCon 2013 Registration Information—July 24-27, 2013

Mail completed form with your check made payable to ALCon 2013 to:
Astronomical League, ALCon 2013 Registration,
9201 Ward Parkway, Suite 100, Kansas City, MO 64114

Please use one form for each attendee. One check is acceptable for your group. You may also register online at www.alcon2013.astroleague.org and make remittance with PayPal.

First Name: Last Name:

Name and Title for ID badge:

E-mail Address:

Mailing Address:

Address, Line 2 (if needed):

City, State or Province and ZIP or Postal Code:

Country: ALPO Member?

Daytime Phone Number: Alternate Phone Number:

Astronomical Club, Society, or Organization Affiliation:

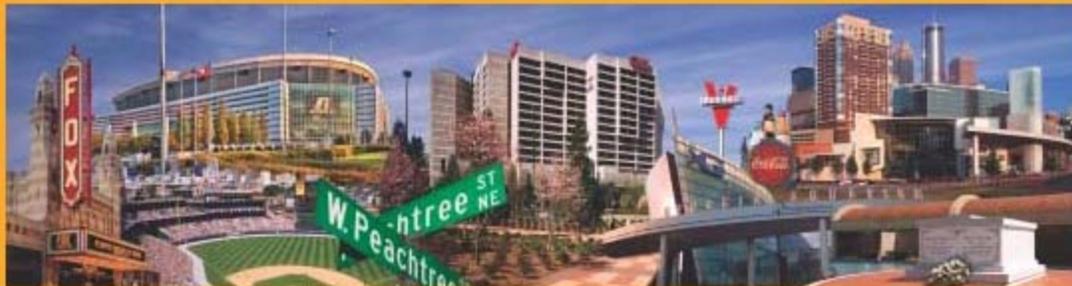
You may make your room reservations at the Emory Conference Center Hotel by calling 800-933-6679. Be sure to ask for the Astronomical League ALCon 2013 special rate before the room block is fully booked. Free parking and free Internet.

The organizers reserve the right to make such changes to the program and speakers as may be necessary due to conditions outside of their control.

Early Registration Fees (after July 8, add \$20)

Please check each item you wish to include in your registration and enter the amount in the box on right.

	Amount
Individual 2 or 3 day registration: \$50	<input type="text"/>
Single day registration: \$35	<input type="text"/>
Couples 2 or 3 day registration: \$75	<input type="text"/>
Students: \$20	<input type="text"/>
Children younger than 15 years of age accompanying adults registering: free	
Shuttle bus from Emory Conference Center Hotel and the Fernbank Science Center (for those needing transportation), 8:15 a.m. to 11:15 a.m. and 2 p.m. to 5 p.m.	
\$20 Wednesday <input type="checkbox"/> \$20 Thursday <input type="checkbox"/> \$20 Friday <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text"/>
Boxed Lunches: Choice of Ham and Swiss, Turkey and Cheddar, or Mediterranean Veggie sandwiches with a pickle spear, a half-sized Jumbo Cookie, chips, and water bottle: \$9. Check one for each day. Wednesday: Ham and Swiss <input type="checkbox"/> ; Turkey and Cheddar <input type="checkbox"/> ; or Mediterranean Veggie <input type="checkbox"/> Thursday: Ham and Swiss <input type="checkbox"/> ; Turkey and Cheddar <input type="checkbox"/> ; or Mediterranean Veggie <input type="checkbox"/> Friday: Ham and Swiss <input type="checkbox"/> ; Turkey and Cheddar <input type="checkbox"/> ; or Mediterranean Veggie <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text"/>
Friday night Star BQ (Please select one) Pan Roasted Chicken Breast with mushroom ragout \$32 <input type="checkbox"/> Tender Beef Brisket with a caramelized onion jus \$37 <input type="checkbox"/> Grilled Eggplant Steak with chick peas and feta cheese \$32 <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text"/>
Shuttle from Emory Conference Center Hotel to Star BQ at Agnes Scott College Bradley Observatory and return: \$20	<input type="text"/>
Saturday night banquet: 1. Vegetarian: Gnocchi with pesto cream, olive oil poached tomatoes, grilled zucchini and shitake mushrooms: \$45 <input type="checkbox"/> 2. Pan seared sage and garlic infused chicken breast served with red onion marmalade on creamy polenta: \$45 <input type="checkbox"/> 3. Grilled bourbon glazed boneless pork loin with mustard braised greens and smoked cheddar mashed potatoes: \$45 <input type="checkbox"/> Please select one	<input type="text"/>
ALCon merchandise Silk-screened T-shirt, White <input type="checkbox"/> ; or Royal Blue <input type="checkbox"/> S <input type="checkbox"/> M <input type="checkbox"/> L <input type="checkbox"/> XL <input type="checkbox"/> XXL <input type="checkbox"/> XXXL <input type="checkbox"/> : \$20 Embroidered polo shirt, White <input type="checkbox"/> ; or Royal Blue <input type="checkbox"/> Mens: S <input type="checkbox"/> M <input type="checkbox"/> L <input type="checkbox"/> XL <input type="checkbox"/> XXL <input type="checkbox"/> XXXL <input type="checkbox"/> : \$25 Womens: S <input type="checkbox"/> M <input type="checkbox"/> L <input type="checkbox"/> XL <input type="checkbox"/> XXL <input type="checkbox"/> XXXL <input type="checkbox"/> : \$25	<input type="text"/>
Help the League help amateur astronomy by making a tax deductible donation	<input type="text"/>
Total Enclosed:	<input type="text"/>



Birth Certificate of Oldest Known Star

STScI News Release - March 7, 2013

You can't be older than your parents. But there is a nearby star that at first glance looks like it is older than the universe! Hubble Space Telescope astronomers are coming to grips with this paradox by improving the precision of the observations used to estimate the age of this "Methuselah star." Around the year 2000, estimates for the star's age were about 16 billion years. But the universe is about 13.8 billion years old, based on a meticulous calibration of the expansion of space and analysis of the microwave afterglow from the big bang. Hubble data and improved theoretical calculations were used to recalculate the star's age and lower the estimate to 14.5 billion years, within a measurement uncertainty of plus or minus 800 million years. This places the star within a comfortable range to be younger than the universe. Astronomers have to collect a lot of information to deduce a star's age because it doesn't come with a birth certificate. They have to take into account where the star is in its life history, the detailed chemistry of the star, and its intrinsic brightness. Hubble's contribution was to reduce the uncertainty on the star's true distance. With that improved accuracy, the intrinsic brightness of the star is better known. The ancient star is still spry for its age. It is speeding past us at 800,000 miles per hour. Its orbit can be traced back to the halo of our galaxy, which is a "retirement home" for stars that were born long before the Milky Way was even fully assembled. For the full story go to:



<http://hubblesite.org/newscenter/archive/releases/2013/08/full/>

DSO Dates and Locations

The dates and locations for the AAC Dark Sky Observing for the remainder of the year are: April 13th at DAV, May 11th at Charlie Elliott, June 8th at DAV, July 13th at Woodruff, August 10th at Brasstown Bald, September 7th at Woodruff, October 18th at DAV, November 2nd at DAV, and December 7th at Charlie Elliott.

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

President: Richard Jakiel President@AtlantaAstronomy.org

Program Chair: Mark Banks Programs@AtlantaAstronomy.org

Observing Chair/BoD Chair: Daniel Herron
Observing@AtlantaAstronomy.org

Corresponding Secretary: Tom Faber
Focalpoint@AtlantaAstronomy.org

Treasurer: Sharon Carruthers Treasurer@AtlantaAstronomy.org

Recording Secretary: Pixie Bruner
Secretary@AtlantaAstronomy.org

Board Chair: Daniel Herron, Observing@AtlantaAstronomy.org

Board: Brigitte Fessele, Contact info TBA

Board: David Lumpkin, Contact info TBA

Board: Steve Phillips sandsphillips@att.net

ALCor: Open - President@AtlantaAstronomy.org

Elliott Chapter Director: Larry Owens director@ceastronomy.org

Elliott Observing Supervisor: John Towne
observing@ceastronomy.org

Elliott Recording Secretary: Marie Lott mtlott@comcast.net

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

Elliott Webmaster: Theo Ramakers 770-788-0843
webmaster@CEastronomy.org

Elliott Outreach Coordinator: Theo Ramakers 770-788-0843
outreach@ceastronomy.org

Georgia Astronomy in State Parks: Sharon Carruthers
Treasurer@AtlantaAstronomy.org

PSSG Chairman: Peter Macumber pmacumber@nightsky.org

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
Treasurer@AtlantaAstronomy.org

AAC Webmaster: Daniel Herron, Observing@AtlantaAstronomy.org

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

AAC Events are listed in BOLD

- Mar 28th, Thursday: Venus at Superior Conjunction.
- Mar 29th, Friday: Uranus conjunction with sun.
- Mar 30th, Saturday: Mercury at greatest western elongation.
- Apr 3rd, Wednesday: Moon Last Quarter.
- Apr 10th, Wednesday: New Moon.
- Apr 11th, Thursday: Thin crescent moon in west after sunset.
- Apr 13th, Saturday: **DSO at DAV, CE Chapter Meeting, 5 PM.**
- Apr 14th, Sunday: Moon near Jupiter.
- Apr 18th, Thursday: Moon First Quarter. Mars conjunction with sun.
- Apr 20th, Saturday: **AAC Meeting, 4PM at Tellus.** Astronomy Day at Tellus Museum 10AM-10PM.
- Apr 21st, Sunday: Lyrid Meteor Shower.
- Apr 25th, Thursday: Full Moon.
- Apr 26th, Friday: **May Focal Point Deadline.**
- May 2nd, Thursday: Moon Last Quarter.
- May 4th, Saturday: Eta Aquarids Meteor Shower.
- May 9th, Thursday: New Moon.
- May 11th, Saturday: **DSO at CE, CE Chapter Meeting, 5 PM.**
- May 17th, Friday: **AAC Meeting, 8PM at AFS.**
- May 18th, Saturday: Moon First Quarter.
- May 25th, Saturday: Full Moon.
- May 31st, Friday: Moon Last Quarter.

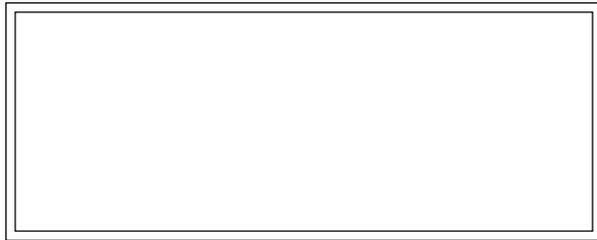
For more event listings see the calendar at www.atlantaastronomy.org

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 May is Friday, April 26th. Submissions after the deadline will go in the following issue.**



FIRST CLASS



www.beclage.com



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

Newsletter of The Atlanta Astronomy Club, Inc.

The Focal Point



FROM: Tom Faber
2206 Treeridge Parkway
Alpharetta, GA 30022

Atlanta Astronomy Club
P.O. Box 76155
Atlanta, GA 30358-1155

www.atlantaastronomy.org
On Twitter at <http://twitter.com/atlastro>