

Astrofiles

Auburn Astronomical Society E-Newsletter
May, 2010

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Events Calendar

We'll hold our May meeting on **Friday, May 7**, at **7:45PM**, [in room 215](#) of [Davis Hall, the Aerospace Engineering Building](#). The doors to the building automatically lock at 8:00PM, so if you're running late, rap on the door nearest our meeting room and we'll let you in.

Our dark-sky **star party** this month will be on **Saturday, May 15**, at [Cliff Hill's farm](#)

May 07, May meeting, 7:45 PM, [in room 215](#) of [Davis Hall](#)

May, 13-16 [Georgia Sky View 2010](#), Camp McIntosh - Indian Springs Park (near Jackson, GA)

May 15, Star party at [Cliff Hill's farm](#)

Please Welcome..

Please join me in welcoming **Brandon Clearman**, a student from Opelika. Brandon has an AstroMaster 114 EQ reflector. We look forward to many evenings under the stars with Brandon.

April Stargazes

American Heritage Girls Stargaze (Cancelled... Again)

April 3, was our second attempt to have the stargaze for troop led by Terri Klose, and her American Heritage Girls, in Prattville. We had to cancel the original stargaze date because of clouds. The back-up date of Saturday, April 3, was cloudy as well. Terri, asks that we try again in the fall.

Eastwood Christian School Stargaze

Our Eastwood School stargaze in Pike Road on April 16, went very well. **Frank Ward** and I, showed off the hidden treasures of the night sky to 25-30 enthusiastic students and their parents. Special thanks to our gracious hosts, Charlie and Tracy Shamberger.

Forest Ecology Preserve Stargaze (Cancelled)

Jennifer Lolley and the members of her Forest Ecology Preserve group invited us back to the Mary Olive Thomas Demonstration Forest for a stargaze in Auburn, on Saturday, April 17. Unfortunately, the clouds precluded any chance of telescopic observing. Thanks to Rhon Jenkins, Russell Whigham, Alan Cook, Elliot Errera, Chris Young, Everett Leonard, and Frank Ward for being there, hoping for clearer skies.

Jennifer writes:

Thanks again to all who showed up- I have had several calls about a rain date- any date available? Jen Lolley

Astronomy Day 2010 Saturday, April 24 (Cancelled)

For the first time in 13 years that we had to cancel our annual Astronomy Day event because of the threat of tornadoes. It was a tough decision, but safety was paramount. Perhaps we could reschedule it, and maybe do it in conjunction with one of our meetings this summer.

St. James School
Frank Ward

On Friday, April 23rd, I had the opportunity to speak to my son's 3rd grade class at St. James school here in Montgomery. They have been studying Astronomy recently and were very interested in my hobby. I took along my 12 inch LightBridge Dobsonian and my 3 inch Celestron telescopes as well as the 10X50 Nikon binoculars and explained the function and use of each in amateur Astronomy. The 4 classes assembled were spellbound. They were full of questions but allowed me to do some introductory statements first. I introduced them to the instruments and the green laser. In order to simulate the green beam, I used a squirt bottle, placing a mist through the beam. "Wow"s followed. I asked them some questions as we went along and they were surprisingly knowledgeable of many astronomical facts already. They enjoyed being able to see themselves in the 12 inch mirror and seeing the red dot on the ceiling as I demonstrated the use of the collimator.

When the question portion began, most of the queries were about the use of the laser though some were very hypothetical in nature, asking about what may happen to some unfortunate astronaut and a black hole. They did ask about the biggest telescope in the world and I got to explain that there were several under construction as we spoke. I had several older issues of Sky and Telescope with me which I left for their teachers and one issue featured "Monster Scopes" on the cover. They wanted to know what I could see through my LightBridge and what was the strangest thing. The rocket full dump following the exploding comet in Perseus back in '08 came to mind.

All in all, the experience was rewarding. The class got some insight to what we do as a club and I was able to help spark some interest in scientific endeavors in these young minds. I would highly recommend any of our members to jump at such a chance whenever possible. I have a sneaky suspicion I will be asked back next year. We obviously couldn't see any stars in the sky that morning but I did see stars in the eyes of these kids.

Georgia Sky View 2010

May, 13-16

Ray Kunert and your editor are going to the [Georgia Sky View 2010](#), at Camp McIntosh - Indian Springs Park (near Jackson, GA) Alan Cook and Eddie Kirkland have also expressed interest in attending this year. Want to join us there?

Space News

John B. Zachry

May 11 - SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket to launch "qualification unit" for SpaceX's Dragon

May 13 – Mars Winter Solstice in Southern Hemisphere (where Mars Rovers Spirit and Opportunity are located). Unlike Earth, temperature will increase daily along with sunlight.

May 14 - Space Shuttle Atlantis (STS-132) to be launched 2:19 p.m. EDT with Russian Mini-Research Module 1.

May 17 – Japan's [Akatsuki \(Planet-C\)](#)/[Ikaros](#)/ Japan Venus Climate Orbiter) to be launched to Venus at 4:44 p.m. CDT.

May 26 - [Mercury](#) At Its Greatest Western [Elongation](#) (25 Degrees) spacecraft which company plans to fly resupply missions to International Space Station.

Web Links

[Apollo 11 Saturn V Launch](#) This clip is raw from Camera E-8 on the launch umbilical tower/mobile launch program of Apollo 11, July 16, 1969. This is an HD transfer from the 16mm original. Even more excellent footage is available on our DVDs at our website at [spacecraftfilms.com](#) The camera is running at 500 fps, making the total clip of over 8 minutes represent just 30 seconds of actual time. Narration is provided by Mark Gray, Executive Producer for Spacecraft Films.

[A Saturn Spectacular, With Gravity's Help](#) Scientists have a plan to extend the life, on relatively little fuel, of NASA's Cassini spacecraft, now in its sixth year of studying Saturn.

Comet 81P in Virgo is the brightest comet in the sky right now. It is approximately magnitude 8.9 and has a broad diffuse fan tail extending some 15-20 arc minutes. Images and supporting data are at <http://users.FoxValley.net/~dpsyk/new.htm>.

Hodges Meteorite "Update"

For those that do not know about Hodges Meteorite Google "Hodges Meteorite" and/or click this link: <http://www.encyclopediaofalabama.org/face/ArticlePrintable.jsp?id=h-1280>

[Why it's important and how to clean pollen from your optics](#)

Turn on the speakers, then sit back and enjoy **Carl Sagan and Stephen Hawking** in song.
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zSqiXGELjbc>

Hubble Ultra Deep Field 3D Video

<http://www.flixy.com/hubble-ultra-deep-field-3d.htm>

astrophotographer Ken Crawford has been working on a project to create a tribute to those of us who love the deep sky. This creation is a compilation of Ken's images since 2004 and is the result of thousands of hours of image acquisition and processing.

This is a four minute journey through the cosmos narrated by one of Ken's favorite instruments, the piano. What is amazing to me is that the ancient photons Ken captured are still so beautiful to our eyes, and when mixed with music, can be an inspiration to our soul.

<http://www.imagingdeepsky.com/AstroSlide/AstroSlide.html>

For those with slower connections please try this link on Ken's YouTube account:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JqIaSZujtS0>

Scale of the Universe

When the black shapes appear in the grids, click on them for graphics and explanations. If the grids are empty, click on the powers of ten at the bottom to skip over the empty bits.

http://www.nikon.com/about/feelnikon/universscale/index_f.htm

Part 1 of 6 of the new **Celestron 50-year anniversary video** can now be seen at

<http://www.vimeo.com/10073192>

For Sale

For Sale: 2x Televue Big Barlow Excellent Condition.

\$130 Tom McGowan <<mailto:midnighttelescope@yahoo.com>>

Have a good meeting,

Russell