

# Astrofiles

## Auburn Astronomical Society E-Newsletter June, 2010

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### Events Calendar

We'll hold our May meeting on **Friday, June 4**, 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. Riders from the Montgomery area are welcome to meet at the [home](#) of Russell Whigham, [518 Seminole Dr.](#), and carpool over to Auburn. Plan to be ready to leave for Auburn at 6:45PM.

Our dark-sky star party this month will be on Saturday, June 12, at [Cliff Hill's farm](#)

June 04, June meeting, 7:45 PM, in room 215 of Davis Hall

June 12, Star party at [Cliff Hill's farm](#)

June 14, Crescent Moon and Venus in evening sky

June 20, Venus above "Beehive" cluster

June 21, Summer Solstice

June 26, Full Moon (Honey Moon)

July 09, July meeting (2<sup>nd</sup> Friday because of the holiday weekend)

July 10, July star party at [Cliff Hill's farm](#)

### Please Welcome..

**Brenda L. Weiss** lives at Fort Rucker, AL. She currently does not have a telescope, but is "interested in nebula, constellations, & galaxies"

**Rohit Kulkarni** has joined the Yahoo! [auburnastro group](#). He writes:

Hello, I am a graduate student from Department of Aerospace Engineering, Auburn University, AL. I would like to join the Auburn Astronomical Society.

We look forward to meeting you both and seeing you at our meetings and events.

# Cub Scout Stargaze

Den Mother, Amy McKay wrote:

Would anyone from the Auburn Astronomical Society be interested in helping a group of scouts earn their Astronomy belt loops?  
We are an Opelika Pack and several of our boys would be interested. Ages would be 8-11....maybe 10 participants?

Curious,  
Amy McKay

Yes, we'd like to do this for your scouts. I'll announce your request in the next newsletter and at the next meeting. With a group of ten or so, one or two telescopes should be enough. I'll see if I can get a couple of volunteers from Auburn or Opelika.

I should add that the summer months are not the best time for this:

- More of us are on vacation
- It doesn't get dark until nearly 10:00PM in June
- It's pretty hot.

If your guys could wait until late September or October, I think they would enjoy it more. Let me know if this fall would be OK.

And finally, do you have a list of requirements for their Astronomy belt loops?

Thanks for writing,

Russell

Yes, Fall would be great if that would be the best time! I greatly appreciate the help!! The late nights don't bother my kids in the summer so if you know something neat is occurring, let me know and we can come out. There are other requirements they boys will have to research on their own to get the full amount of credit. I have just included the ones below that must be done with assistance. I have done some with my two boys over the last month but we have only gotten three constellations.

- Set up and demonstrate how to focus a simple telescope or binoculars.
- Explain how to use a star map.
- Find at least 1 planet and identify it.
- Find and identify 5 constellations..
- Find the North Star. Explain its importance.
- Interview an astronomer. This person may be a professional or an amateur astronomer from a local astronomy club.
- Visit a planetarium or a local astronomy club.

## Space News

John B. Zachry

I wish we could make a club trip to the National Infantry Museum in Columbus, GA sometime to see the IMAX 3-D film on the Hubble Telescope. Most amazing movie I have ever seen. The screen is "5 stories tall and 7 stories wide". The 3-D glasses are very comfortable even with glasses. When the astronauts were being suited up you felt like you were in the same room only a foot or two away and you could have shaken their hands. Don't know how much longer they will show his film. One precaution - bring some ear plugs. The sound is much too loud. It even hurts your ears especially during launch of the Space Shuttle.

## Web Links

From Jeff Graves via Larry M. Owsley: **Herschel Crater on Mimas** of Saturn

<http://antwrp.gsfc.nasa.gov/apod/ap100511.html>

This is spectacular and VERY interesting if you have any interest at all in NASA and the **Space Station**. [YouTube - ISS Tour - Welcome To The International Space station!](#)

### **The Universe - Created Out Of Nothing?**

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fxNbXjBbzEo&annotation\\_id=annotation\\_204755&feature=iv](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fxNbXjBbzEo&annotation_id=annotation_204755&feature=iv)

The best amateur **image of M-57** I've seen:

<<http://img31.imageshack.us/img31/6062/halrgbv7halosretiradosc.jpg>>

This isn't strictly astronomy, but you can certainly find some interesting astronomy data and comparisons. Watch the preview when you have the time and it will boggle your mind. There are no limits to what you can do with this website...it is a "keeper!" Watch the Introduction first:

<<http://www.wolframalpha.com/screencast/introducingwolframalpha.html>>

Did you miss the Forest Ecology Preserve Stargaze back in April? Some of the information in this **Plainsman** article is actually accurate:

<[http://www.theplainsman.com/view/full\\_story/7159919/article-Scoping-Stars-From-Forest?instance=home\\_news\\_lead\\_story](http://www.theplainsman.com/view/full_story/7159919/article-Scoping-Stars-From-Forest?instance=home_news_lead_story)>

**Comet C/2009 K5** in Camelopardalis is the brightest comet in the northern sky right now. It is approximately magnitude 8.9 and has a broad diffuse fan tail extending about 10 arc minutes as imaged under a full moon. My images and supporting data are here <<http://users.FoxValley.net/~dpersyk/new.htm>>

Proposed Mission Would Return Sample from **Asteroid 'Time Capsule'**: Meet asteroid 1999 RQ36, a chunk of rock and dust about 1,900 feet in diameter that could tell us how the solar system was born, and perhaps, shed light on how life began. It also might hit us someday.

<<http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2010/03/100311175049.htm>>

**Mars** Constantly **Loses Part of Its Atmosphere** to Space Due to Solar Wind: Space physicists from the University of Leicester are part of an international team that has identified the impact of the Sun on Mars' atmosphere.

<<http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2010/03/100312133725.htm>>

Mysterious Cosmic '**Dark Flow**' Tracked Deeper Into Universe: Distant galaxy clusters mysteriously stream at a million miles per hour along a path roughly centered on the southern constellations Centaurus and Hydra. A new study led by Alexander Kashlinsky at NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center in Greenbelt, Md., tracks this collective motion -- dubbed the "dark flow" -- to twice the distance originally reported.

<<http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2010/03/100310162829.htm>>

Galaxy Study Validates **General Relativity** on Cosmic Scale, Existence of Dark Matter: An analysis of more than 70,000 galaxies by University of California, Berkeley, University of Zurich and Princeton University physicists demonstrates that the universe -- at least up to a distance of 3.5 billion light years from Earth -- plays by the rules set out 95 years ago by Albert Einstein in his General Theory of Relativity.

<<http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2010/03/100310134152.htm>>

## Georgia Sky View 2010

On May, 13-16, Ray Kunert, Alan Cook, and your editor attended the [Georgia Sky View 2010](#), at Camp McIntosh - Indian Springs Park, near Jackson, GA, hosted by the Flint River Astronomy Club, FRAC. Due to different conflicts, it's been several years since my last visit there. Ray and Ann traveled over on the Wednesday before, setting up their camper trailer in the park's campground area. Ray already had his canopy and tripod/mount set up on the field when I arrived around 2:00PM Thursday.

My first impression was how sparsely populated the observing field was, compared to the years when the Atlanta Astronomy Club hosted the event. I'm guessing that there were fewer than 20 telescopes contrasted to the 150-200 scopes with the AAC days. It was good to have the extra elbow room. Alan arrived later Thursday afternoon and set up his 10-inch Meade next to Ray and me. I slept in the bunkhouse where I shared the entire north side with one other guy. Alan and many of the others camped on the field.

The skies (especially to the north) were a little brighter than I remembered, of course, but, for it to be so hot, the skies were fairly transparent between the occasional clouds. FRAC is to be commended for hosting the event that fills the spring star party vacuum in the southeast. Mid-May is a little too warm for really clear skies, but April is out because of the National Astronomy Day schedule and the spring pollen storms from the Pine trees. The fall regional star party calendar is already crowded. A significant improvement that FRAC has instituted is breakfast, lunch, and midnight sausage-biscuits. The meals I had there were tasty and reasonably priced. An unexpected surprise was the vendor from Camera Bug in Atlanta. The programs were by the FRAC members but were well done. The final benefit of a smaller crowd was that everyone present won door prizes. Thanks to Steve Bentley, GSV organizer, and all of the FRAC members who worked to make the event a success. And, special thanks to Ray and Ann for having Alan and I over to the campground for supper Friday evening.

Hope to see everyone at the meeting,

Russell