

Astrofiles

Auburn Astronomical Society E-Newsletter November, 2010

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Events Calendar

We'll hold our November meeting on **Friday, November 5**, 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.

Because it's home coming football game weekend, and available parking space for the meeting will be an issue, Rhon suggests trying the on-street parking on Wright St., the first street (north) off of W. Magnolia from Toomer's Corner. John Zachry reports having success telling the guard at the barrier to our regular parking area, that he's attending a meeting and will be leaving immediately after.

Our new moon star party this month will be on the following Saturday, November 6, at [Cliff Hill's farm](#).

November 5, Monthly meeting **7:45PM**, [in room 215](#) of [Davis Hall](#).
November 6, Star Party at [Cliff Hill's farm](#)
December 4, (?) Forest Ecology Preserve stargaze in Auburn
December 11, Cloud/game date for the Forest Ecology Preserve stargaze
December 20/21, [Total eclipse of the Moon](#)

AAS 30 Year Anniversary

On October 9, the Auburn Astronomical Society's celebrated its [30-year anniversary](#) at Good Ol' Boy's restaurant, in Auburn. In attendance were: Rhon and Joyce Jenkins, Russell and Cathy Whigham, Frank and Teresa Ward, Alan Cook, Allen and Christi Screws, August and Debra Johnson, John Zachry, Robert and Gloria Rock, Elliot Errera, and Everett Leonard.

Special thanks to Joyce and Rhon Jenkins for making the arrangements. And again to Rhon for the PowerPoint presentation that he produced, summarizing the previous thirty-years of the Auburn Astronomical Society.

Public Stargazes

Tom McGowan (eight-inch Dob), **Frank Ward** (12-inch Dob) and **your editor** (11-inch SCT), met outside Prattville, on Friday evening, October 15, for our long awaited **American Heritage Girls** stargaze. Troop leader, **Terri Klose**, had asked that we help the girls with their Space Exploration badge, with emphasis on observing the Moon. We met at the BP station at US 31 N and CR 40 at 6:00PM and caravanned the circuitous route to our destination.

As soon as Tom had finished setting up his scope, he began an excellent introduction of the night sky for the girls. Following Tom's talk, even with the light of the eight-day old Moon, we were able to point out the Big Dipper and North Star, a few constellations, Jupiter and of course the Moon.

Terri wrote:

Positive feedback about American Heritage Girl's Stargaze already circulating our group site. We appreciate all you did for us. It was truly an incredible experience.

Jennifer Lolley and the members of her **Forest Ecology Preserve** group have rescheduled the Mary Olive Thomas Demonstration Forest stargaze for **December 4**, with December 11 as a cloud date. The December 4 date was chosen before it seemed possible that Auburn might be at the SEC Championship game in Atlanta, so we'll just wait and see, but I wouldn't expect a big turn-out if that, in fact, is the case.

Magazine Subscription/Renewals

John B. Zachry

AAS discount subscriptions/renewals to *Sky & Telescope* and *Astronomy* magazine are due in November. *Sky & Telescope* discount rate is \$ 32.95 (Regular \$ 42.95), and *Astronomy* magazine is \$34.00 for AAS members (Regular \$ 42.95). Subscriptions for to both will be \$66.95.

Make checks payable to Auburn Astronomical Society. Only members of Auburn Astronomical Society are entitled to club subscription rates. If you are unable to attend our November meeting, mail checks to:

Auburn Astronomical Society
c/o John B. Zachry
501 Summerfield Road
West Point, GA 31833

Editor's note: Last call. Club scrimptions to Sky & Telescope and Astronomy magazine were sent in last month. John has written that if you missed the initial offer, he'll still submit your discount subscription. Thanks to John for doing this for us. RDW

Web Links

Protostar has come up with a new method using plastic back sheets; no adhesive necessary. It is called FlockBoard: <http://www.fpi-protostar.com/flockboard.htm>

SkyandTelescope.com - News Blog - [Mike Lynch's "Exploding" Telescope](#)

Space Camp Outreach

Rhon had a call from Melissa Snider, Camp Education Programs Manager, with [Space Camp](#) in Huntsville. She explained that she and her team would be at the school in Notasulga for three days, and wanted to know if we could loan them a telescope for the students there, for some [telescopic viewing](#). Rhon suggested the [AAS 12.5-inch loaner scope](#). Melissa is a member of the [Von Braun Astronomical Society](#) and is knowledgeable about telescopes. Rhon emphasized that the scope was large and heavy, but Melissa said they would have help setting it up, and that they could handle the telescope. Rhon made arrangements for them to pick up the 12.5-inch at the [W.A. Gayle Planetarium](#) on Wednesday afternoon, October 13, and return it the following Friday afternoon.

Rhon and **Joyce** drove over from Auburn and I met them at the planetarium to help load the telescope. Planetarium director, **Rick Evans**, also loaned them the planetarium's 8-inch SCT as well. Here is Melissa's note that she sent after they had arrived back in Huntsville:

From: "Snider, Melissa" <MELISSAS@SPACECAMP.COM>

Rhon, Joyce, Russell, Rick:

Thank you so much for your hospitality and helpfulness! The attached pictures will show how much the Notasulga students and community appreciated the opportunity to view the Moon and Jupiter through your telescope.

I have higher-res versions available if you need them. Most of the pictures should be fine to redistribute via websites, brochures etc. If any picture shows an easily identifiable view of a child, we would need to check with the school to get permission before publishing.

I also included pictures of the rest of our weeklong project. You were a part of a life-changing experience for these 100 students and all their families!

We will be back in the area for two more Science Nights: Tuskegee Public School November 4, and DC Wolfe (in Shorter, AL) on December 2. While we now have our own telescope properly packed in the van and ready to travel 😊, you would be welcome to visit us at either of these events or send us some flyers to distribute.

Thanks again and we will have a small token of our appreciation headed your way, either in the mail or in the van on our December trip.

Melissa Snider
Camp Education Programs Manager
ofc 256-721-7212
cell 256-684-9036

Never one to let an opportunity slip through the cracks, Rick followed up with this proposal for a return visit on Astronomy Day:

Astronomy Day 2011

From: Rick Evans [mailto:rlevans@troy.edu]
Sent: Thursday, October 28, 2010 12:22 PM
To: Snider, Melissa
Subject: Science Nights

Melissa,

How would we go about having your team come down to Montgomery for a Science Night at the Planetarium perhaps in conjunction with Astronomy Day next year?

Rick

From: Snider, Melissa
To: Rick Evans
Sent: Thursday, October 28, 2010 1:19 PM
Subject: RE: Science Nights

What a fun idea!

I can come as a representative of VBAS for free! I have simple Dark Sky education crafts and puzzles, solar system activities, or galaxies/black holes. Fuel donation (about \$40) would be appreciated but not required.

I was telling my Space Camp Education Dept director that the Notasulga equipment loan was worth at least \$300 – which, incidentally, is what I charge to have a Space Camp rep travel for a full day's activities. If you thought you could arrange food and accommodations, and pay for a van rental (should be about \$150 on a weekend), I would happily send you a pair of presenters for air/water rockets, star map construction or other learning frivolity. The program fee itself (\$600 for the two presenters) would be free, and I am willing to discuss reducing the travel fee if we need to.

It may be that our Space Camp sales team would be interested in setting up a table (they had one at VBAS Astronomy Day this Fall). They would just need anticipated numbers and a demonstrated "valuable market" – i.e., lots of middle schoolers and their parents with significant disposable income.

Space Camp travels to Maxwell Air Force Base every year – generally the first Friday in May – for a Space Day. If the timing works out, that might reduce/eliminate the travel fees.

Lots of options – we loved working with you and I want to come play at the Gayle!

[Here is the link to] our Traveling Classroom brochure just as background.
<<http://www.spacecamp.com/educators/gens/pdfs/Traveling%20Classroom.pdf>>

Just by-the-by, do you know Lonnie Puterbaugh of the Astronomy Channel? We try not to have an event without him – he sets up a van with telescopes and astronomy videos, and gives impromptu presentations all evening long. He's quite a crowd-pleaser! There is some info about TAC here, linked to a page about him. I can dig up contact info if you need it. <<http://theastronomychannel.bsasnashville.com/>>

Melissa Snider

Camp Education Programs Manager

Rick Replied:

Awesome, I am going to run this up the flag pole (send it thru to the Chancellor) and see what kind of response we get from the University as far as coming up with the necessary funds. Astronomy Day for 2011 is on May 7th, (first weekend in May) which would be in conjunction with your trip to Maxwell. We have never charged anything for our Astronomy Day festivities, so its not like we would be looking at this as a money raising venture. To the end, we do have to balance out the expenses, (guest speaker, promotional advertising, travel etc...) if that makes any sense.

I would say, if nothing else, lets tentatively start planning to do this, (i.e...make sure there are no scheduling conflicts on your end) and we can start "building" it and see what we come up with....if you agree?

I will also coordinate with the Auburn Astronomical Society (Russell and Rhon).

From: "Rick Evans" <rlevans@troy.edu>
To: <russellwhigham@bellsouth.net>
Subject: Fw: Science Nights

Would you mind looking over this and giving me your input? Astronomy Day for 2011 is May 7th, which is the first weekend in May.

Let me know what you think.

Rick

I replied:

Sounds good to me. I'm passing it along to Rhon for his input, but go ahead and pencil us in for May 7.

Hope to see everyone at the meeting,

Russell