

Astrofiles

Auburn Astronomical Society E-Newsletter August, 2011

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Events Calendar

We'll hold our August meeting on **Friday, August 5**, at **7:45PM**, [in room 215](#) of [Davis Hall](#), the Aerospace Engineering Building. One lane of West Magnolia (where we enter the parking lot) will (may be) be closed for maintenance. Wright Street may be our best parking alternative if you can't get to the usual parking lot behind Davis Hall.

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.

We'll resume our dark-sky star parties in the fall.

Aug. 04, Waxing crescent moon passes seven degrees south of Saturn
Aug. 05, Monthly meeting 7:45PM, in room [215 of Davis Hall](#).
Aug. 12, Perseid meteor shower ☺
Aug. 13, Full Moon ☺
Aug. 19 Moon passes north of Jupiter in morning sky
Aug. 21 Last Quarter moon
Aug. 22 Neptune at opposition (It has now completed an orbit of the Sun since discovery.)
Aug. 29 New Moon
Sep. 25 - Oct. 02, Peach State Star Gaze 11, [Deerlick Astronomy Village](#) GA

Web Links

4th moon of Pluto found

Hubble's Fine Guidance Sensors were used to refine the orbit of Pluto and its [then] 3 moons. Pluto is also in retrograde at the moment (until September) and this year will likely be the last, for quite some time (beyond our lifetimes), to be able to view it using [most] ground-based amateur scopes. New Horizons will be reaching Pluto in 2015.

<http://www.nasa.gov/mission_pages/hubble/science/pluto-moon.html>

<http://www.as.utexas.edu/~fritz/astrometry/Papers_in_pdf/%7B01k03%7DPlutoCharon.pdf>

Member News

Please join me in welcoming our most recent member, **Jeff Elliott**, from Dothan. It's been a while since we've had members from the Wiregrass. We look forward to seeing Jeff soon at our meetings and star parties.

David McConnell has sent some of his [astro images](#). David also had a photo of the recent lunar eclipse published in the O-A News. Good work, Dave!

Chad K. Ellington, IOTA Secretary/Treasurer, wrote:

I'll be moving into Montgomery the first couple weeks of August. ...I'm hoping to teach an evening astronomy course over at Auburn @ Montgomery in the Fall and would like to have information on meetings for students to earn extra credit by attending as well. You may also deduce from my signature line below that I am involved in asteroid occultations and could give a brief introduction to these events at a meeting...schedule permitting.

I replied:

We would certainly welcome your program on [IOTA](#) and occultation timings. Our last attempt at this was back in 1983 (see the [AAS History page for 1983](#)), and I still consider it one of my high points in the hobby. We hope you'll consider being part of our group.

Astro Posers

One of the advantages of being a part of AAS is the extensive knowledge base of our membership. For me, the best part of the meetings are the discussions that follow our programs. I would like to propose a segment of a meeting, or an entire program from time to time if there's enough interest, for astro-posers. Here are a couple of my questions:

Would it be possible to do approximate transit timings to determine lunar crater diameters?

I know there are many variables such as the Moon's orbital speed and distance and how near the crater is to the center of the lunar surface, but given a mean orbital speed and distance; and for a crater near the middle of the Moon, shouldn't we be able to time the transit of a crater to approximate its diameter. (It seems to me that this would be independent of magnification.) I just can't do the arithmetic.

Why is the Moon farther north in the sky during the winter months?

I know about the ~5 degree tilt of the Moon's orbit with respect to Earth's orbit around the Sun, but it seems like that would be independent of the Earth/Moon position in their orbit around the Sun. Does it have something to do with Earth's 23.5 degree tilt that makes the Sun higher in Summer?

There must be something you'd like to know. If so, send your [questions to me](#). I'll publish them in the newsletter and we'll see if we can come up with an answer at the next meeting.

Hope to see everyone at the meeting,

Russell