

Astrofiles

Auburn Astronomical Society E-Newsletter May, 2012

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Events Calendar

The Auburn Astronomical Society in partnership with the [W. A. Gayle Planetarium](#), will celebrate [National Astronomy Day](#), at the planetarium in Oak Park in Montgomery on Saturday, **April 28**. The event will also serve as our May AAS meeting, so there will be **NO FIRST FRIDAY MEETING IN MAY**.

April 28, Astronomy Day at the [W. A. Gayle Planetarium](#) in Montgomery
April 30, Venus at greatest brilliancy
May 5/6: [Larger than usual Full Moon](#) explained (video-3min., 25 sec.)
May 19, Rain Date for the Forest Preserve Stargaze at MOTDF in Auburn
June 05, [Transit of Venus](#)

Forest Preserve Stargaze Rescheduled

Given the dismal weather prospects on Saturday, April 21, **Jennifer Lolley** decided to cancel our Forest Preserve stargaze that had been scheduled for April 21. She'd like to **reschedule** for **May 19**. Thanks to all who had originally offered to help. I can't make it that day, but **David McConnell** has already stepped up for the 19th. Please [let me know](#) if you can help on that Saturday.

Astronomy Day Updates

There have been a few changes for Astronomy Day (see the [agenda](#) below).

- Chad's presentation will be on finding exoplanets.
- Dr. Sterner from Montevallo, will give an update on their observatory.
- Rick says he has a boat-load of door prizes from Orion.
- And we (AAS), are invited Thursday at 6:00PM to a demo of the new digital projector at the planetarium, prior to the VIP demo on Friday.

If you're bringing telescopes (not listed below), [let us know](#) what type(s) and size(s).

Astronomy Day 2012

The [W. A. Gayle Planetarium](#) in partnership with the [Auburn Astronomical Society](#) will celebrate [National Astronomy Day](#) at the Planetarium in Oak Park in Montgomery, on **Saturday, April 28th** from 3:00 – 10:00PM CDST.

A variety of telescopes will be set up on the grounds of the planetarium:

Mike Holley, Celestron CPC1100, SCT; **Frank Ward** 12-inch LightBridge Dobsonian; **Frank Ward**, PST Solar Scope; **Alan Cook**, 10-inch Meade LX50 SCT; **Russell Whigham**, Celestron C-11 SCT; **Chad Ellington**, 10-inch Meade LX200R SCT; **Eddie Kirkland**, 10-inch AstroSky Dobsonian; **David McConnell**, 8-inch Celestron GOTO SCT; **Joseph Jackson**, Celestron CPC 1100 ED, SCT; **Your Name Here**, AAS 12.5-inch Dobsonian.

3:00PM: Early visitors will be able to view the seven-day-old Moon, and the Sun in the light of hydrogen-alpha with PST Solar Scopes and members' scopes filtered white-light images.

4:00PM- 8:00PM:

- **Outside:** Children's Activities; **Stomp Rockets, Solar System Scale, Moon Event Card activity** ; Chad Ellington
- **Inside:** Children's Activities ; **Space Coloring Pages**
- **Inside:** Children's Identification - Public Service of New York Life Insurance

5:00PM: The “**Telescope Clinic**” will be open for guests to bring their sick, disassembled, or otherwise malfunctioning telescopes for repair.

6:00 PM: Presenter: **Chad Ellington: “Finding Exoplanets”**. (NASA/JPL [Solar System Ambassador](#) – Adjunct Astronomy Professor at Auburn University Montgomery) - Planetarium auditorium.

7:00 PM: Presenter: **Dr. Michael Sterner** - University of Montevallo - **Shepherd Observatory** briefing. The director of the [James Wiley Shepherd Observatory](#) at the University of Montevallo, will provide an update on the observatory and its 20-Inch Plane Wave telescope.

7:24 PM : Sunset

7:30 PM: "Tour of the Night Sky" (if time allows) in the planetarium, giving an overview of what the guests will see when they step outside.

8:00 PM: Telescopic viewing with Auburn Astronomical Society: Viewing Saturn (Virgo), Mars (Leo) and Venus (Auriga) and of course the mountains and craters of the 7-day old Moon and several binary star systems.

For those who have never attended one of our Astronomy Day events, you can get a feel for what goes on, by going to the “**Field Trips**” link from the Auburn Astronomical Society web page (www.auburnastro.org) then to “**W.A. Gayle Planetarium Events**”. And, here’s your [Astronomy Day Checklist](#).

Member News

Please join me in welcoming **Joseph Jackson** to the society. Joseph lives in Lowndesboro and has a Celestron CPC 1100 ED w/eq wedge; iOptron mini tower alt-az mount supporting iOptron 106 mm refractor, and Meade ETX 125 and ETX 90. His areas of astronomical interest include learning variable stars. We look forward to meeting Joseph at Astronomy Day.

From the Mobile Astronomical Society's **Rod Mollise** :

Just a thank you to those of you who helped me with my books and magazine articles way back when I was getting started. As of July, I will officially become one of *Sky and Telescope* Magazine's Contributing Editors.

Congratulations, Rod!

Web Links

From **Larry Owsley**: *Space Chronicles: Facing the Ultimate Frontier*, A Book TV [Interview with Neil deGrasse Tyson](#) (2 hours, 14 minutes)

From **Brian Combs**: [Mars, April 17](#)

[Geostationary Satellites Video](#)

Canon's new 60Da [astrophotography ready camera](#)

EHBC RA Stargaze Report

We had this request from Mr. Greg Gosselin:

I am the minister to children at Eastern Hills Baptist Church [in Montgomery] and I have procrastinated to almost the very last second. Our boys are having a campout at my house in Pike Road this Friday, April 13. It is pretty dark where I live. I would love for you or someone from the area to come out with their telescopes and show our boys the stars. They will love it. I am also open to you all inviting whoever you want to come and look too.

We received this request mid-morning the day before the event. I sent an e-mail to the AAS list seeking volunteers. **Frank Ward** and **Chad Ellington** came through for us. Frank reports:

We went out on Friday night, setting up around sunset. We gave a tour of the spring sky. While the boys on hand were interested in the scopes and the planets, the adults were the ones that wanted to view the most. There were only a handful of boys and 4 or 5 fathers and one mom in all but Chad and I enjoyed teaching and "wowing" them with our laser pointers and views of Jupiter in the west to Saturn in the east. Chad mostly focused on the planets, several double stars and deep space items while I displayed the Beehive cluster and the planets. This gave Chad a chance to get a view through his "hand grenade" - his large (42mm?) eyepiece in my 12 inch Lightbridge as we looked at the Beehive. Simply beautiful. The camp stew the boys cooked up wasn't half bad either. We knocked off around 10 p.m. It was good to meet a soon-to-be neighbor and check out the skies from that area.

Transit of Venus

From **Chad Ellington**:

I just heard from Randy Russell [AUM assistant professor of physical science], that the West room of the AUM library tower is reserved for viewing the transit of Venus. All are invited to attend. I'm hoping to set-up educational materials on a table up there as well as observing from outside before retreating to the top floor for extended viewing.

Chad

Here is [last month's article](#) on the transit of Venus.

Hoping to see everyone at Astronomy Day,

Russell