

Astrofiles

Auburn Astronomical Society E-Newsletter July, 2012

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Events Calendar

We'll hold our **monthly meeting** on **Friday, July 6**, at 7:45PM, in [room 215 of Davis Hall, the Aerospace Engineering Building](#). 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 this fall when the overnight temperatures return to a bearable level.

Transit of Venus

As it was in 2004, our 2012 transit of Venus was near the horizon, for many of us from the same location, and partially obscured by clouds. Our 2012 event enjoyed much better public participation and feedback from our members and the media. To navigate to the remarks, video links, and photos of [our 2012 Transit of Venus Webpage](#), select "Field Trips"/"Transit of Venus"/2012. Or to go directly to the page (without the navigation menu), the link is: <<http://www.auburnastro.org/tov-2012.htm>>

We added sixteen new names for the AAS mail list from the sign-up sheet made available to the guests. Thanks to all who participated.

AUM astronomy professor, Randy Russell, wrote:

Please convey my thanks to all of the Auburn Astronomical Society members who helped make the AUM viewing a great success.

I replied:

You're welcome, but it would not have been the success it was without your hosting the event for the public. And, of course, Chad. He's leaving a huge void in our group.

Darksky Giveaway

From:

W. Scott Kardel, Public Affairs Director

International Dark-Sky Association

email: wskardel@darksky.org

website: www.darksky.org

Enter the International Dark-Sky Association's Darksky Giveaway for an astronomically grand prize— a set of eight Televue Ethos eyepieces valued at \$5,665, generously donated by Televue Optics.

To enter the IDA's Darksky Giveaway, you must be an IDA member before the entry closeout date of August 31, 2012. If you are not a member, joining is easy and the cost of a one-year membership is only \$35.00. To join or renew your membership, visit www.darksky.org and select the "Join" tab at the top of the webpage. You can also join by calling the IDA office at (520) 293-3198. Entering to win is also a breeze. Visit darksky.org/giveaway where you can fill out the entry form online and read the official rules.

Individual memberships help IDA perform its mission in stopping light pollution and helps to support its many programs. Through the International Dark Sky Places program, IDA and its partners certify locations with exceptional nightscapes as International Dark Sky Communities, International Dark Sky Parks, and International Dark Sky Reserves. The Dark Sky Parks and Protected Area Program currently works with national parks to help them utilize quality outdoor lighting. IDA's new Suburban Outreach Sites project partners with astronomy clubs to establish accessible programs for kids and their parents. These programs help IDA to engage communities and to raise awareness and ultimately "to preserve and protect the nighttime environment and our heritage of dark skies through environmentally responsible outdoor lighting."

IDA members make a big difference in their communities and around the world, which is why IDA is thrilled to offer its members such a premium giveaway from Televue Optics. Make sure you enter the DarkSky Giveaway by the deadline and good luck!

To learn more, visit www.darksky.org.

The winner will be announced at the Pacific Astronomy and Telescope Show in September 2012, but does not need to attend PATS to win.

On the Tube

A documentary film by Ian Cheney [[17 min. video interview](#)], "**The City Dark**" will air July 5, 2012 on PBS. Watch the 2.5 minute trailer at:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hfdq24PIUzg>

Check your local listings for air times. Alabama Public Television viewers may need to set their DVRs:

- Fri, July 6 at 1 a.m.;
- Sun, July 8 at 2 a.m.;
- Wed, July 11 at midnight

Web Links

[America's spies donate two spare Keyhole-11 mirrors to NASA](#)

[Optical trick may help to find life in other solar systems](#)

[Earth's oldest impact crater found in Greenland](#)

[Mad about Mars](#) (No, not angry — just excited)

[Communicating Science to Kids](#) and [Looking for the next Carl Sagan](#)

[Higgs Boson Announcement](#) from CERN, imminent

Member News

We must bid farewell **Chad Ellington** who has relocated to the Washington DC area. Rarely, if ever, has one AAS member brought so much energy to our group. Aside from being the consummate occultation observer and an adjunct professor of astronomy at AUM, Chad brought a new level of enthusiasm to our public outreach efforts as a NASA/JPL Solar System Ambassador while he was here, initiating most of these himself with some help from AAS. It was our pleasure to have had Chad with us for the past year. We wish Chad the best in all his endeavors with his new club. It's our loss and their gain.

Loaner Scope Repaired

[For background on the ASS 8-inch Dobsonian Loaner Scope repair project, see the [June Astrofiles article](#).]

Rhon's tireless efforts to get any cooperation from Orion Telescopes and Binoculars have been for naught. Since AAS was not the original owner, they would not discuss any replacement part options. Rick Allen, the original owner couldn't prove that he purchased the scope from Orion, so we were back to square one. Plan B, was to have a local woodworker see if they could fashion a replacement base and rocker box, using the dimensions and some of the Teflon bearings and hardware from the delaminated pressboard original. At our June meeting, we discussed possible materials for the replacement. The consensus was that it should be $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch marine-grade plywood, sealed with polyurethane varnish. The rocker box and base have been reconstructed by Mr. Don Spring, a good friend of Rhon's, who likes to make furniture. Rhon called Friday to say that the rebuild was complete and that it looked better than the original! Rhon will bring it to Friday's meeting.

Thanks to Rhon for persevering to see this frustrating and at times, awkward issue to its completion with his usual aplomb.

Hoping to see everyone at the meeting,

Russell