

Astrofiles

Auburn Astronomical Society E-Newsletter March, 2013

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Events Calendar

We'll hold our **monthly meeting** on **Friday, March 1**, 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. Rodger Morrison will be bringing the [new loaner scope](#) to show so we'll **need to leave** this month **at 6:00** to allow time to help with the set-up.

Our program this month will be a presentation and demonstration of the club's recently donated [CEGM 1100 telescope](#).

Our new moon **star party** this month will be on **Saturday, March 9**, at [Cliff Hill's farm](#).

Mar. 01, Monthly meeting in [room 215 of Davis Hall](#)

Mar. 09, Dark-sky star party at [Cliff Hill's farm](#)

Mar. 10, Begin Daylight Saving Time

Mar. 16, [Stargaze for Wetumpka Scouts](#)

Apr. 20, Astronomy Day, W. A. Gayle Planetarium

May 18, Tuskegee Airmen National Historic Stargaze

July 24 - 27, [Astronomical League Convention](#) in Atlanta

2013 Dues

Annual AAS memberships (\$20.00/\$10.00 for full-time students) were due in January. Families are covered with a single membership. If you don't see your name below, please make your check payable to "Auburn Astronomical Society". If you're unable to attend the meeting, mail your dues to:

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

If you have a question about your dues, e-mail John at : jbzachry@knology.net

AAS members who are current on their 2013 dues are:

- | | |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. Joe Albree | 12. Rodger & Vicki Morrison |
| 2. Glynn Alexander | 13. Dwight Norris |
| 3. William L. Baugh | 14. Allen Screws |
| 4. Andy Camerio | 15. Wes Schwarz |
| 5. Scott & Rebecca Carnahan | 16. Gail Smitherman |
| 6. Alan Cook | 17. William Sprankle |
| 7. Scott Cook | 18. John Tatarchuk |
| 8. Robert Fuller | 19. Frank Ward |
| 9. Rhon & Joyce Jenkins | 20. Russell Whigham |
| 10. Eddie Kirkland | 21. John Wingard |
| 11. Everett Leonard | 22. John B. Zachry |

Thanks to all for your support.

Donated CGEM 1100

Just a few hours before our February meeting, I received this message:

Dear Sir ,

I discovered the Auburn Astronomical Society on the web while searching for a connection to Auburn University 's Astronomy Department. I could not find the proper e-mail address to contact the society. Then I found your name and e-mail as a member. Please do me the favor of delivering the following letter to the appropriate person or contact me and tell me how to proceed.

In December of 2011 I received a gift of a Celestron Telescope CGEM 1100 and many of the accoutrements that support it.

My Grandson Cyrus Barker and I had grand plans to explore the Cosmos together. Three weeks after Christmas he died suddenly.

I have neither the skills nor the knowledge to do justice to the telescope. I would like to give the telescope to your organization or to some one who would appreciate it and share it with others. Cyrus spent several years as a student at Auburn. He always loved the school. I know he would support this offer.

Sincerely,
Lois Brupbacher

I replied:

Dear Ms. Brupbacher,

First let me say that we are very sorry for the loss of your grandson.

We are indeed grateful for your generous offer. I have forwarded your offer to Dr. Rhonald Jenkins, president of the Auburn Astronomical Society who also serves as the steward of our [Loaner Scope](#) program.

Be advised that while the Auburn Astronomical Society has several members who are

affiliated with Auburn University and we enjoy a cordial relationship with students and faculty, our organization is not directly affiliated with the University. Auburn University has no astronomy program so we try to fill that void for local amateur astronomers.

We hope to have an answer for you very soon.

Thank you,

Russell Whigham
Montgomery AL
[Auburn Astronomical Society](#) Webmaster and *Astrofiles* editor

Ms. Brupbacher replied:

My hope in giving the telescope is for it to be used and appreciated. I think the Astronomical Society is the ideal place. Perhaps many Auburn students will benefit.
Thank you for your attention .

Sincerely
Lois Brupbacher

Rhon had to leave the meeting before I arrived to make this announcement, but I presented the offer to those attending the February meeting. The consensus was that of overwhelming approval. **Rodger Morrison** even volunteered to drive to New Orleans to pick it up and deliver it to you at no expense to the club.

I sent the correspondence from Ms. Brupbacher to Rhon. He replied that he wanted to proceed with getting the donated CGEM 1100, but didn't have room to keep it. **Frank Ward** has room and offered to be the scope steward for this telescope. Frank suggested we should consider placing a small plaque or inscription on the scope in memory of the donor's grandson. It was also suggested that we at least pick up the tab for Rodger's gas bill.

Rhon agreed with both of those suggestions and contacted Ms. Brupbacher to acknowledge her wonderful gesture and express our appreciation of it. He also contacted Rodger to get the arrangements for picking it up started.

Dear Ms. Brupbacher,

My name is Rhon Jenkins and I am president of the Auburn Astronomical Society (AAS). First, I want to express condolences to you from myself and on behalf of all the members of the AAS on hearing of the death of your Grandson Cyrus Barker. I have grandchildren and I cannot begin to imagine what you have gone through.

We would be happy to accept your generous offer of the Celestron CGEM 1100 Telescope and the accoutrements that support it. This equipment would become part of our "Loaner Scope Program", and would support the primary purpose of our club which is to introduce others, primarily students and children, to the wonders of the night sky. We do this through public "star parties" and visits to schools and other civic organizations within a wide area of central and east-central Alabama. Our last public outing, about 3 weeks ago, brought out about 150 adults and children. As Russell Whigham has explained in a previous email to you, the AAS is not

associated with Auburn University; we do, however, attempt to fill a void since Auburn University has no astronomy program available to the public.

We will certainly go about the transfer in a manner which is most convenient for you, but we offer two possibilities for your consideration:

(1) Mr. Rodger Morrison, one of our members, has volunteered to pick up the scope and other equipment in New Orleans at a mutually convenient place and time.

(2) If you'd rather not do this, the AAS will be happy to pay all expenses associated with shipment of this equipment to us.

Finally, we are honored to have you consider us. With your permission, we will have a small plaque attached to the scope in memory of your grandson. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Rhon Jenkins, President, Auburn Astronomical Society

And followed up with:

Dear Ms. Brupbacher,

I truly believe that, as you wished, many others will be inspired by your wonderful gift. I am copying Rodger Morrison on this email so that he will have your contact information. I'm sure that he will be contacting you shortly to make arrangements. Again, thank you so much. We will send you photos of the scope when it makes its debut at its first public outing, which I anticipate will be National Astronomy Day, April 20 (weather permitting).

Rhon Jenkins

Then, on Saturday, February 16, **Rodger** made a whirlwind trip to New Orleans. On his return he wrote:

I just got back from New Orleans with the telescope and accessories. There were more accessories than I expected. Here is a list.

The telescope, mount, and tripod were as expected (plus cables, 2 counterweights, keypad, etc.). OTA has a finder attached and is in the box, the rest are not.

Celestron vinyl dew shield.

A set of Zhummel 1.25" eyepieces, filters, Barlow, all in a small metal carrying case.

Celestron GPS unit for the mount (unopened box)

Celestron Power Tank battery/flashlight unit to power the mount (unopened box)

1.25" Celestron Star Diagonal

1.25" Celestron E-Lux 40mm eyepiece

1.25" Celestron OIII filter

1.25" Celestron LPR filter

They are a nice couple. Their grandson got the telescope and accessories for Christmas and set it up outside only once to get a look at the moon. Shortly after, he had an asthma attack, which took his life. The mount was still attached to the tripod in his bedroom, and the OTA was in the box nearby on the floor. Ms. Brupbacher asked if we would keep her posted about the telescope, and I said we would. I told her it would be used as a teaching tool and we would send her a picture of it in use. I also conveyed deepest condolences on behalf of all of us before I left.

I had originally planned to go for a few days with my wife, but at the last minute she could not go. So instead, I just drove straight there and back, which only took about 10 hours or so. I was at the Brupbacher's home for less than a half hour.

Regards,

Rodger

Rhon contacted **Frank** and asked him to get with **Rodger** to pick up the scope and wrote:

Do you have any suggestions about the plaque? I was thinking about a small one with the inscription the same as what you have on the loaner page:

CGEM - 1100 Computerized Telescope
Donated in memory of Cyrus Barker
by his grandmother, Lois Brupbacher

I assume that it would be placed somewhere on the scope tube. If you want, I'll see if I can have it made up here in Auburn (unless you have a source already in mind).

Rhon

We'll bring the telescope and accessories to have on display at our meeting, Friday. Thanks to **Rhon**, **Rodger**, and **Frank** for making this happen for AAS and special thanks to **Ms Brupbacher** for considering us for the honor of accepting the fine instrument.

Public Stargaze Updates

Our next stargaze is for the **Wetumpka Boy Scouts** on March 16, at a location between Wetumpka and Eclectic, just off of AL 170. [Comet Pan-STARRS](#), should it live up to the hype, should be a primary target. Sunset will be just before 7:00PM, so comet watching can begin at 7:30 or 8:00 followed by deep-sky object viewing. This will be after we return to Daylight Saving Time. [Please let me know](#) if you think you'll be able to help with your telescope.

Our contact for the scouts, **Randy Smithson**, has written with directions and what they need for their badges:

[We have permission to use the large pasture of Ron and Melissa Welch, 5275 Old Salem Rd Wetumpka AL \[MAP\]](#) . Their son was in our Troop when he was in high school. There is a huge cell phone tower right at Old Salem Road where you turn right and arrive at the first house on the right (Welch's long white home w/barn in pasture).

[A three hour observation session is just one of many requirements \(mostly scout study or research\). Here are some for the astronomers to be mindful of while at our session.](#)

[Explain what light pollution is and how it and air pollution affect astronomy.](#)

Observe a planet and describe what you saw.

List the names of the five most visible planets. Explain which ones can appear in phases similar to lunar phases and which ones cannot, and explain why.

With the aid of diagrams (or real telescopes if available), do each of the following:

Explain why binoculars and telescopes are important astronomical tools.

Demonstrate or explain how these tools are used.

Describe the similarities and differences of several types of astronomical telescopes.

Explain the purposes of at least three instruments used with astronomical telescopes.

Describe the proper care and storage of telescopes and binoculars both at home and in the field.

Identify in the sky at least 10 constellations, at least four of which are in the zodiac.

Identify at least eight conspicuous stars, five of which are of magnitude 1 or brighter.

Some of these would be amenable to the boys observing or possibly helping with setup and discussing equipment during daylight. Let's hope we have a rain break that Fri/Sat.

Also see the [Merit Badge Workbook](#)

Still planned are our stargazes, for May 18, **Tuskegee Airmen NHS**, and Jennifer Lolley is already planning for the next **Forest Preserve** fall stargaze. Jennifer wrote:

I wanted to thank all AAS members who participated in Astronomy Night in Auburn. It was a big success even though we did have clouds. We had a total of around 125 show up for the event. Nice showing considering the cold and clouds. I do think I want to move it to Kiesel park for the next one and compare visibility and light pollution. The guy with the really big scope [John Tatarchuk] stayed a little longer and the skies became perfect, of course. I enjoyed a spectacular view of Orion's nebulae.

I am interested in setting a fall date. I now have access to the city calendars because they are helping to fund us now, but have to have dates in early to make their print deadlines. Do we have anything astronomically spectacular to view this year? We have no game on September 28th and November 23rd. Would be great if ya'll could come up with a date for me.

Thanks, Jen

I replied:

From [Sky & Telescope](#) :

"Comet ISON could peak at magnitude -10 or brighter at perihelion (when it will be just 1° from the Sun), and that it could remain visible to the unaided eye from early November to the first weeks of 2014. "

So, let's plan to shoot for **November 23rd**.

Web Links

Blue Beauty <http://www.greatdanepro.com/Blue%20Beauty/index.htm> as much art as science, and probably you've seen it before, but still very nice to watch.

Voyager I, Postcard from the Edge
<http://www.economist.com/blogs/babbage/2013/02/voyager-mission>

From: **Rodger Morrison:**

I enjoyed the [February] meeting . After I got home, I looked up which horizon PANSTARRS should be on and found the following website:
<http://waitingforison.wordpress.com/comet-panstarrs/>

It looks like the western horizon will be the one to look toward, but the comet will rise quickly after its solar pass and will be very high in the sky shortly a little later.

It's about 2 weeks until comet PanSTARRS will sit next to the thin crescent moon in the evening sky. Attached is a projection for finding it about 45 minutes to an hour after sunset locally. However, Sky&Telescope warns it may not be quite this bright in this latest update perhaps only peaking at 3rd magnitude.

Rodger again:

I remember someone asking where I saw the 2" color filters, but can't remember who it was (and don't have any email addresses anyway). I think it was the gentleman with the big Dob, but not sure. Anyway, I made a note and looked it up. Here are a few of the links.

Orion has a set of LRGB filters at <http://www.telescope.com/Accessories/Telescope-Eyepiece-Filters/2-Orion-LRGB-Astrophotography-Filter-Set/pc/-1/c/3/sc/48/p/5567.uts>

Agena has a set available on eBay for \$20.95, but the quality may be an issue. The listing is at http://www.ebay.com/itm/Agena-2-Color-Planetary-Filter-for-Telescope-25-Red-/110969156116?pt=LH_DefaultDomain_0&hash=item19d646f214

Also, a search on eBay returns quite a long list of 2" filters of various types, including the Celestron filters, at http://www.ebay.com/sch/Telescope-Filters-/74923/i.html?from=R40&_nkw=2%22+filters

Here's a [link](#) to a press release has details that are simply amazing about the [African Dung Beetle using the Milky Way](#) to navigate at night:

This looks like a promo for the revised "[Cosmos: A Personal Voyage in 2013](#)" series Neil is doing with Carl Sagan's widow, Ann, for FOX network. Don't know when it will be coming out, perhaps this fall? The [Most Astounding Fact](#) excerpt:

And, here's a fresh interactive take on the earlier the Powers of 10 video: [Scale of the Universe 2](#).

Member News

Rodger Morrison has hit ground running. Here's his Member Bio:
<http://www.auburnastro.org/vita/r-morrison.htm>

Hope to see everyone at the meeting,

Russell