

Astrofiles

Auburn Astronomical Society E-Newsletter February, 2014

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Meeting Date Changes

Our monthly meetings will rarely be on the first Friday of the month anymore and then only by coincidence. At the January meeting, the [new 2014 calendar](#) proposed by **Rodger Morrison** (planned around avoiding New Moon meeting dates that would preclude missing good star party nights), was adopted by a vote of the members present. A link to the 2014 Events calendar has been added just below the FAQ link on the [AAS navigation menu](#).

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Events Calendar

We'll hold our regular **monthly meeting** on **Friday February 21**, in [room 215 of Davis Hall, the Aerospace Engineering Building](#), on the [main campus of Auburn University](#).

Our next **star party**, originally scheduled for February 01 in conjunction with the Forest Preserve Stargaze at [Kiesel Park](#), has been **rescheduled for Feb. 8**.

January 30th - February 01, [Wetumpka Crater Lecture & Tours](#)

February 01, ~~Forest Preserve Stargaze at [Kiesel Park](#)~~ **Rescheduled for Feb. 8**.

February 08, Cloud date for the Forest Preserve Stargaze at [Kiesel Park](#)

February 21, regular business meeting in [room 215 of Davis Hall](#)

Membership Dues

If you haven't already taken care of this, AAS memberships (\$20.00/\$10.00 for full-time students) were due in January. Make checks payable to "Auburn Astronomical Society". Families are covered with a single membership. If you're unable to attend our February meeting, mail your dues to:

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

If you're not sure if you've paid already, check the "**Members**" link on the [navigation menu](#). If your name is "grayed out", we have not received your 2014 dues. If you have questions, e-mail [John Zachry](#) to resolve the discrepancy.

Member News

Forrest Ward wrote:

I had heard that membership in the AAS also assures membership in the greater [Astronomical League](#). Is this true? **Scott Carnahan** and I wished to participate in their [observation programs](#) and membership is a requirement.

You are correct. To get started on your observing list, just D/L it (them) from the Astronomical League site. The ones I'm familiar with only require completing the list and having a letter signed by Dr. Jenkins and your done.

Good luck and keep us posted on your progress.

Robert Fuller wrote:

I have a new project, of course it may take me a bit to finish. I really liked Rodger's **portable observatory** the first time we went out. I have noticed that with the new scope, the two times I have been able to get outside with it at the house, I could use something along those lines. So, I went out looking. I think there's a few options that wouldn't take much but would greatly improve my backyard observing.

I have stolen these concepts from people. I freely admit it. As I can't say I'm gifted in the design area, I try to steal the best ideas I can. Below I will link the pics and forums I found them in.

1. Datman's PVC and Tarp. This is a light weight structure made from a pvc skeleton and tarps for the skin. I like it because it can be closed up and protect the equipment from the weather/moisture that sometimes occurs. Finished pic on page 3.

<http://stargazerslounge.com/topic/125819-diy-portable-temporary-observatory/>

2. SAL's Panel o' Carpet screen. It's basically 6 panels of pvc with black carpet mounted with screws. He uses claps to connect the panels together. Looks interesting and I am thinking there could be other possibilities as well.

<<http://www.cloudynights.com/ubbarchive/showflat.php/Cat/0/Number/200654/page/0/view/collapsed/sb/5/o/all/fpart/1/vc/1>>

I know there are pre-made versions out there for sale, but I like the idea of bruising my knuckles and screaming at inanimate objects when things don't go quite right.

Have any of you built or bought something similar?

[W. A. Gayle Planetarium begins \\$500,000 Digital Upgrade](#) **Rick Evans** is the "Little Engine that Could". This once Sisyphean task has finally come to fruition. Thanks, and congratulations, Rick!

Public Stargazes

Jennifer Lolley has asked that we host her Forest Preserve group's stargaze at [Kiesel Park](#) this month. We had planned on February 1, but clouds seem likely, so we'll go with February 8, cloud date.

Jennifer writes:

The address for Kiesel Park is 520 Chadwick Lane, Auburn, Alabama 36832. The number out there – I am assuming for the caretaker is 334-501-2930. My cell is 334-707-6512 if anyone is lost and needs help with directions.

If coming from Auburn you can go out Wire road- past the soccer fields and take right on Chadwick Lane. There is a sign for Kiesel and I am planning to hang balloons on it for people to see. I like to go out Hwy 14 and take left at Kiesel Park sign- just past the RV park. The entrance for the astronomers will be that first gate- I will put some yellow balloons for them to see. I am having guests come from the other side so car lights will not affect us.

If coming from Montgomery take Wire Road ramp then go back over interstate- I am not sure how many miles it is till the sign for Kiesel on the left. If I get a chance I will go out and measure.

Please let [Rhon](#) know if you can help with this.

Maxwell Air Force Base Elementary and Middle School: A date in April yet to be determined.

Web Links

Supernova in galaxy M82

< <http://www.skyandtelescope.com/community/skyblog/observingblog/Bright-Supernova-in-M82-241477661.html> >

Possible Supernova in M99 galaxy

<http://remanzacco.blogspot.com/2014/01/possible-supernova-in-m99-galaxy.html>

NASA's **New Robot** Shows Its Versatility - <http://huff.to/1eiZyDT>

RIP John Dobson a good report on John's accomplishments in Sky&Telescope at: <http://www.skyandtelescope.com/news/John-Dobson-1915ndash2014-240456881.html>

36th Annual **TEXAS STAR PARTY**, May 25-31, 2014 near Ft Davis, Texas.
<http://texasstarparty.org/get-started/>

2014 Midsouth Stargaze, Rainwater Observatory & Astronomy Conference
March 26-29

<http://campaign.r20.constantcontact.com/render?llr=gw8qyybab&v=001DcfdIOMFLbkV7n7Zwuas99KPxeo8gk1cyS4YBIWTzPsUuiC4ecbUtoIeCUBRVakmHZ8b_JciJSnSFGL93hKRqeP55J5Rk67A-aEY8bIKKpSmkW3u1dQWzA%3D%3D>

Sky & Telescope **Online course on RegiStax 6**

<http://www.skyandtelescope.tv/videoscategory/online-classes/>

Potentially **Hazardous Asteroid** Spied By Revived Space Telescope -

<http://huff.to/1cKIQwh>

Exactly **How Big Is The Universe?** Now We Know - <http://huff.to/1d2DPjZ>

Private Cargo Ship Makes Special **Space Station Delivery** - <http://huff.to/1dfq7Kz>

"**Rainbow Gravity**" Theory Says Our Universe Has No Beginning

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/12/10/rainbow-gravity-theory-universe-beginning_n_4418017.html

Moon Dust Mystery Solved With Help Of Old Apollo Data - <http://huff.to/1cGv1vp>

Giant Telescope Snaps Killer Views Of **Cosmic Dust Factory**- <http://huff.to/1cHSzA1>

New Dark-Sky Observing Site Update

Rodger Morrison

Well, I was finally able to contact the owner of the Sehoj Airport near Hurtsboro, AL. Her name is Ms. Williams and she lives in LaGrange, GA. I had a nice chat with her, but unfortunately, she was reluctant to want to give us permission to access the airport after dark for our stargazes. During my chat with her, she revealed that she herself has a telescope (a Meade) and has really enjoyed it, but she has not been able to get out much this winter. I invited her to our club web site, and she wanted to know if there was any contact information for her there. I pointed her to the right place online and invited her to attend our star gazes with her telescope, anytime she feels up to it. So, after a couple of months of trying... The Sehoj airport is out. I'll continue my search for a new location, in the blue zone areas within about 20-50 miles north and south of Auburn.

I know of a few church friends in that area that meet in rural and (mostly) unlit churches, so I plan to start calling them as well. I'll keep you and the others posted of course.

More as it develops,

Rodger

And,

Wes and I were the only ones that showed from the club [for the January 25 star party]. A friend of mine that lives in Auburn came by for a couple of hours also. Skies were clear, breeze was almost negligible, and there was no dew at all. Temp got down to about freezing by midnight, and I have to be somewhere in the morning, so I packed it in. Wes is staying a while longer yet, but not sure how long.

I wanted to let you know about Mr. Hill. Just as I got there, his “care-giver” arrived (Maria), and we had a chance to chat for a minute. It seems that Mr. Hill’s health took a turn for the worse about a year ago, when he had some sort of medical emergency.

Well, that’s the short on Mr. Hill. Our efforts to find another view site just got bumped up my priority list of things to do. I spoke with Wes about it at length and we both think that the Planesmen RC field would be our best bet to check on first. I will try to go by there soon (possibly this week) to check out what it looks like after dark. Wes also has a lead on being able to use the Horseshoe Bend National Military Park. They used to have an astronomy club there years ago, but it disbanded and no one has been there since. The person he emailed with seemed enthused about the possibility of another group being there, but we have not committed anything yet. Both the RC park and Horseshoe Bend are in solid “blue zones”, but Wes and I both like the idea of being south of Auburn rather than NW of it better. There are quite a few good targets that rarely get above the horizon to the south, but everything to the north is at least 32 degrees above the horizon at least part of the year.

Again, we’ll keep you posted.

Regards,

Rodger

Chuck Lewis has offered to let us use his property in Lowndes County about 22 miles west of Montgomery. If you know of a suitable site, [please let Rodger know](#).

Remember the meeting date change,

Russell