



# ASTROFILES

## Auburn Astronomical Society Newsletter

January 2016

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*John Wingard - Secretary/Treasurer - Auburn Astronomical Society - [jwin2485@bellsouth.net](mailto:jwin2485@bellsouth.net)*

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We hope that everyone enjoyed the busy holiday season and as the new year gets underway, hopefully things will settle down into a more relaxed routine. The AAS is also getting back on track with our monthly club meetings to be held on the first Friday of each month, unless there are conflicts with holidays or Auburn football home game weekends. In those cases, we may meet on an alternate Friday. A copy of the proposed 2016 meeting schedule is included in this newsletter.

The next meeting of the AAS will be Friday, February 5, 2016. We will meet in Room 215 of Davis Hall (Aerospace Engineering) on the AU campus. The meeting starts at 7:45 PM CT. Specific directions to the meeting location can be found on the AAS web page:

<http://www.auburnastro.org>

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### **Important AAS Dues Reminder...**

The normal AAS dues cycle runs from January 1 - December 31 of each year. That means that it is time to renew your dues for 2016, or better yet, consider joining the AAS to help support our activities throughout the year. Individual and family memberships are \$20.00 and *full-time* student membership is half the normal rate. A membership application is included with this newsletter. It is important that all of your contact information including full mailing address and e-mail address is included. As a benefit of being a paid-up AAS member, you are also enrolled as a member of the Astronomical League, the national association of astronomy clubs in the U.S. You are then eligible to receive their quarterly magazine *The Reflector*. However, they must have your mailing address for the magazine. Your e-mail address is also important for us since this is our primary means of sending announcements, meeting reminders, and of course this monthly newsletter. Take a minute to send in your dues for 2016 to the address indicated on the membership form.

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Mark your calendars now for the major meteor showers that are coming up throughout the year. We've already had the Quadrantids, but there's plenty of time to prepare for the next one in April. The moon phases are also listed as this does determine how dark the sky is. And in general, the best times for viewing are after midnight local time.

## Meteor Shower Prospects for 2016

Month	Shower	Date	Moon Phase
January	Quadrantids	3-4	Waning Crescent (Last Qtr on 2nd )
April	Lyrids	21-22	Full Moon
May	Eta Aquarids	5-6	New Moon
July	Delta Aquarids	28-30	Waning Crescent (Last Qtr on 26th)
July	Capricornids	29-30	Waning Crescent (Last Qtr on 26th)
August	Perseids	12-13	Waxing Gibbous (First Qtr on 10th)
October	Orionids	20-21	Last Quarter
November	Leonids	16-17	Waning Gibbous (Full Moon on 14th)
December	Geminids	13-14	Full Moon

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Most of us probably don't pay much attention to what types of stamps we purchase, and we typically see fewer and fewer stamps since a lot of mail now is metered. However, I happened to see that the USPS is releasing a new series of stamps in 2016 that will feature a number of planet images, along with some that feature the New Horizons spacecraft that recently passed by Pluto on its way out beyond our solar system. There is also a new international stamp that



features an image of our moon. I'm not sure when all of these will be available, but here are some images so that you can be on the lookout for them.



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For those that are not aware, there is a new comet that is a fairly easy target for most observers with a reasonably dark sky. We're talking about Comet Catalina and currently it is drifting between Ursa Major (the big dipper) and Ursa Minor (the little dipper), which has our pole star Polaris at the end of it's handle. Catalina had it's closest approach to Earth on January 17 and although it is just beyond the limit of visual observation, it should be easily found in binoculars or a small telescope. It should appear as a faint, fuzzy ball rather than a sharply defined point of light. It actually has at least two short tails, but these are not usually visible unless you have a very large scope with dark skies, or a camera with a time exposure. It currently rises in the north-northeast around 9 PM ET and should be well placed for observing well before dawn. Below is a recent photo of Catalina taken by member Wes Schwarz.



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If you have a Facebook account, the AAS also has a FB page where we share club news and other information. Search for Auburn Astronomical Society and you'll find us!





## Auburn Astronomical Society Membership Application Form

Name:

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Address:

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City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Application\* \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

E-mail:

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Telescope(s):

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Area(s) of special interest:

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Enclose: \$20.00 for regular membership, payable in January. *Full-Time* student membership is half the Regular rate.

\* If you're joining after January, refer to the Prorated Dues Table below:

Jan \$20.00	Feb \$18.33	Mar \$16.66	Apr \$14.99	May \$13.33	Jun \$11.66
Jul \$10.00	Aug \$8.33	Sep \$6.66	Oct \$4.99	Nov \$2.33	Dec \$1.66

Make checks payable to: Auburn Astronomical Society and return this application to:

Auburn Astronomical Society  
c/o John Wingard, Secretary/Treasurer  
#5 Wexton Court  
Columbus, GA 31907

For questions about your dues or membership status, contact: [jwin2485@bellsouth.net](mailto:jwin2485@bellsouth.net)

**Thank you for supporting the Auburn Astronomical Society!**

## Auburn Astronomical Society - Scheduled 2016 Club Meeting and Events Schedule\*

Date	Event
08-Jan-2016	Club Meeting (Delayed 1 week due to 1st Friday being New Year's Day)
09-Jan-2016	New Moon
05-Feb-2016	Club Meeting
08-Feb-2016	New Moon
04-Mar-2016	Club Meeting
08-Mar-2016	New Moon
01-Apr-2016	Club Meeting
07-Apr-2016	New Moon
06-May-2016	Club Meeting
14-May-2016	National Astronomy Day - Traditional Open House at Gayle Planetarium - Montgomery - AAS Participation Requested
31-May - 04-Jun-2016	SE Planetarium Association Conference - Gayle Planetarium - Montgomery - AAS Volunteers Needed
03-Jun-2016	Club Meeting
04-Jun-2016	New Moon
01-Jul-2016	Club Meeting
04-Jul-2016	New Moon
02-Aug-2016	New Moon
05-Aug-2016	Club Meeting
01-Sep-2016	New Moon
02-Sep-2016	Club Meeting (Three straight AU home football games this month - may need to cancel or meet off-campus)
30-Sep-2016	New Moon
07-Oct-2016	Club Meeting
30-Oct-2016	New Moon
11-Nov-2016	Club Meeting (Delayed 1 week due to AU home football game on 11/5/2016)
29-Nov-2016	New Moon
02-Dec-2016	Club Meeting
29-Dec-2016	New Moon

\* Club meetings are normally held on the 1st Friday of each month unless there is a conflict with holidays or other events  
 Unless otherwise noted club meetings start at 7:45 PM CT