

Astrofiles

Auburn Astronomical Society E-Newsletter May, 2011

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Events Calendar

We'll hold our May meeting and star party in conjunction with Astronomy Day on May 7, 2:00–10:00PM CDST, at the [W. A. Gayle Planetarium](#), in Montgomery's Oak. Park.

May 03, New Moon
May 07, Astronomy Day for 2011/ May AAS meeting
May 10, First quarter Moon
May 17, Full Moon
May 24, Third quarter Moon

Web Links

From **John Zachry**: Just discovered great Moon Movie on Lunar Reconnaissance Orbiter web site. <http://www.nasa.gov/mission_pages/LRO/news/lro-farside.html> provides link to 70 MB video from ASU's LROC website.

From **Larry M. Owsley**: Tuskegee Meteorite Comes Home
<<http://www2.oanow.com/news/2011/mar/06/tuskegee-meteorite-comes-home-ar-1559568/>>

Here is a look at "nothing" in deep space! Click on the following URL and turn up the sound...<<http://www.fliixxy.com/hubble-ultra-deep-field-3d.htm>>

Member News

Suryakant Bhandare "Surya" a graduate student in the Electrical Engineering Department, is our most recent member. Welcome to the group, Surya!

Astronomy Day 2011

Saturday, May 7

The Auburn Astronomical Society in partnership with the [W. A. Gayle Planetarium](#), will celebrate [National Astronomy Day](#), at the planetarium in Oak Park [\[map\]](#) in Montgomery, on **Saturday, May 7** from 2:00 – 10:00PM CDST.

Planetarium director, **Rick Evans**, has secured several presenters:

- **Susan Mallett**, Maxwell CAP Youth Development Program Coordinator
- Representatives from [Space Camp](#) and maybe (?) [Von Braun A.S.](#)
- **Dr. Michael Sterner**, and **Dr. Michael Patton**, University of Montevallo
- **Dr. George Michael**: Extraterrestrial Aliens

Volunteering their time and expertise for AAS are:

- Rhon Jenkins; Emcee
- Frank Ward; 12-inch Meade Lightbridge Dob
- Alan Cook; 10-inch Meade LX50 SCT
- Ray Kunert; 10-inch Meade LX200GPS SCT
- Russell Whigham; Celestron 11-inch SCT
- Eddie Kirkland; 16-inch or 12-inch Dob
- Allen Screws; 10-inch Newtonian
- Jim McLaughlin; Meade 8-inch LX200 SCT

And possibly: Everett Leonard; 10-inch Orion XT10 IntelliScope reflector and Bill McEveen; AAS 8-inch Dob.

Astronomy Day has traditionally been our best attended event of the year. We extend a special invitation to those of you who live too far away to attend most of our events, to come and spend the afternoon and evening with us. **If you plan to attend, please let me know.** If you're bringing telescopes, let us know what type(s) and size(s). Planetarium director, **Rick Evans**, needs a list of names for the name tags and a head count for refreshments.

If you don't have a telescope, but would like to help, we need volunteers to assist visitors with the **AAS 8-inch** and **12.5-inch Dobsonian** telescopes as well as the **ETX-90**, the **Astroscan**, **PST solar scope**, and the **20X80 binoculars** from our [loaner scope collection](#). And, we always need help at the **AAS information table** where we'll have an e-mail sign-up sheet. We will also need someone to help keep an eye on the clock to point out **satellite passes** (times and locations will be provided) to our guests. We'll also need a **digital photographer** to capture images for the Web page.

Here is this year's tentative agenda:

2:00: AAS members and friends begin setting up telescopes in time to have them ready by the time the visitors begin arriving. If you can't be there that early, just come when you can. We'll try to set up around the entrance to the planetarium first, and save the area to the east of the sidewalk for those who arrive later.

3:00PM: Early visitors will be able to view the four-day-old Moon, and the Sun in the light of hydrogen-alpha with the [AAS PST solar scope](#), and members' scopes filtered white-light images.

4:00PM- 8:00PM:

- **Outside:** Children's Activities; **Space Camp & VBAS**, Huntsville
- **Inside:** Children's Activities ; **Susan Mallett - Maxwell Civil Air Patrol**
- **TBD:** Children's Identification - Public Service

Space Camp & VBAS will have tables set up outside and be doing childrens activities (making planispheres etc....)

Susan Mallett will be inside with a video presentation of Dr. Grunzke's - "The Astro Chimp" as well doing childrens activities such as making foam rockets.

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: Dr. George Michael: "**Extraterrestrial Aliens: Friends, Foes, or Just Curious.**" in the auditorium followed by AAS spiel by Rhon and door-prize drawings.

7:00 PM: Presenters: **Dr. Sterner and Dr. Patton** - University of Montevallo - **Shepherd Observatory** briefing. The directors of the James Wiley Shepherd Observatory at the University of Montevallo, will speak on the construction and operation of their new facility and its 20-inch PlaneWave telescope.

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

7:30 PM : Sunset

8:00 PM: Telescopic viewing with Auburn Astronomical Society: Our guests come out to view Saturn, the mountains and craters of the 4-day old Moon and several binary star systems.

[8:10: Directly overhead ISS Pass](#) 8:10 NW-SE

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 AAS menu, then to "**W.A. Gayle Planetarium Events**".

Here are a few reminders to help make the most of your Astronomy Day experience:

- Remember to wear your **AAS Shirt** if you have one.
- If you are considering the purchase of a telescope, this is a good place to **look and ask questions**.
- If you have a **telescope or accessories for sale**, this will be the best place in town for your yard sale.
- If you have any **old telescope catalogs**, the visitors are happy to have them.
- If you need AC power, you should bring your own cords to plug into the planetarium outlets. It's a good idea to have a tarp to put over the extension cords to prevent visitors from tripping in the dark.
- You'll probably want to bring a **lawn chair** and **sunscreen lotion**.

- Don't forget your **green laser** -- always a hit with the guests.
- Be sure to bring a **step stool** or **ladder** if you anticipate the little ones having trouble getting to your eyepiece.
- It's OK to ease your vehicle up the sidewalk to **unload your gear**. It would be nice to then move your vehicle out on the park road until the event is over.
- Many visitors will ask "**What power is your telescope?**". If you can't do it in your head, it's a good idea to print out a list of your eyepieces and their magnifications.
- As I've stressed before, most of the visitors to Astronomy Day, while impressed with the larger telescopes, are mainly interested in the more modest, entry-level models, that they would be considering. So, if you haven't volunteered because you thought your telescope was "too small", we really need your help. Remember that most of the visitors will be starting out with telescopes just like yours. Who else better to offer helpful suggestions to beginning astronomers?

Forest Preserve Stargaze

On Saturday, April 9, 2011, AAS members and friends gathered at the Mary Olive Thomas Demonstration Forest on Moore's Mill Road in Auburn, for our spring, 2011, Forest Ecology Preserve stargaze. We began arriving just after 5:30 to set up our telescopes. With both the fall and spring events for 2010 here clouded out, it was good to be back at this wonderful facility. Following **Jennifer Lolley's** presentation at the pavilion, the Forest Preserve guests came out to view through the telescopes, AAS vice president, **Allen Screws**, gave the visitors some basic information on AAS and outlined the expected decorum around the telescopes. For the first time at this venue, we had the 6-day old Moon high enough above the treeline to have some excellent views. Visitors were also treated to views of Saturn with the rings opening again nicely now, as well as a variety of star clusters, nebulae, galaxies, and binary stars. Volunteering their time and telescopes were:

Gregg Glasscock; 12.5 Starmaster & TMB 4.5" refractor
Frank Ward; 12-inch Meade Lightbridge Dob
Alan Cook; 10-inch Meade LX50 SCT & 3.5-inch Questar
Ray Kunert; 10-inch Meade LX200GPS SCT
Russell Whigham; Celestron 11-inch SCT
Eddie Kirkland; 12.5-inch Dob
Allen Screws; 10-inch Newtonian
Everett Leonard; 10-inch Orion XT10 IntelliScope reflector
Bill McEvleen; AAS 8-inch Dob
Tom McGowan; 12.5-inch Dob

Each of us were richly rewarded with the expressions of awe and appreciation by our visitors.

Hope to see everyone at the planetarium,

Russell