

Astrofiles

Auburn Astronomical Society E-Newsletter January, 2013

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Events Calendar

We'll hold our **monthly meeting** on **Friday, January 4**, 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.

Our new moon **star party** this month will be on **Saturday, January 12** at Cliff Hill's farm.

Jan. 07, Monthly meeting in [room 215 of Davis Hall](#)

Jan. 12, Dark-sky star party at [Cliff Hill's farm](#)

Jan. 19, Forest Preserve Stargaze

Public Stargaze Updates

Jennifer Lolley has asked that we try the stargaze again for the **Forest Ecology Preserve** on Saturday, **January 19**, with February 16 as the backup. Jen is looking into trying **Kiesel Park** while keeping the **Mary Olive Thomas** site as a fall back. Details will be coming soon.

Park Ranger, **Christine Biggers**, with **Tuskegee Airmen NHS**, has requested that we reschedule their stargaze for a date to be determined in March.

Randy Smithson wrote to ask about a stargaze for his scouts to get their Astronomy Merit Badges:

I'm looking for help with our Wetumpka Troop to earn the Astronomy merit badge. I particular we need some viewing through telescopes. Here's the particular requirement:

Plan and participate in a three-hour observation session that includes using binoculars or a telescope. List the celestial objects you want to observe, and find each on a star chart or in a guidebook. Prepare an observing log or notebook. Show your plan, charts, and log or notebook to your counselor before making your observations. Review your log or notebook with your counselor afterward. I will serve as the counselor.

I live between Wetumpka and Eclectic and fairly good dark sky behind my house with good open space. I can supply extension cord power quite a ways. I could provide an hour or so of "lecture" over the other requirements then go out for the 3 hour sky session. A Fri or Sat would be good but the boys are out of school from 24 Dec through Jan 7 so a week night could work as well. Thoughts! Thank you Sir.

I've been an astronomy lover ever since the Edmund Scientific catalogs were in the mail, but have never purchased a scope (yet!). I attended B'ham sky party last year.

Randy Smithson (retired USAF)
Wetumpka, AL

I replied:

Hello Randy,

I'm sure we can work something out, but not this month. We're scheduled to have a Webelos stargaze tomorrow night here in Montgomery, but it looks like we may have to reschedule because of clouds.

We have two other events that will have to be rescheduled (one will be in January) as well. Between the weather and our folks holiday activities, I'm afraid it will be at least January before we can commit to your event. I read the part in the link you sent about dressing for the cold, but if you could wait until March, it would be a bit more pleasant for everyone.

Let me get back to you next month to work out the details.

Thanks for asking and for your patience,

Russell

On Tuesday's December 11, we visited with the **Webelos** at St. James Methodist Church on Vaughn Road in Montgomery. Den leader, **Allen Gilbert**, had sent a list of the requirements for their Astronomy Belt Loop and Pin. Since the sky was completely overcast, we could only have the indoor talk about how the sky works and the tools astronomers use to study the sky and checking off the requirements as we completed each topic. They're planning a father-son camp out at Fort Toulouse this spring. We'll plan to have the telescopic viewing then.

Web Links

From: Larry McHenry: **Video-of Minor Planet Toutatis**

Last night I was able to successfully observe the Earth-crossing asteroid 4179 Toutatis from my backyard observatory. While not as bright and quick moving as last year's YU55, it was still fun to hunt down and image Toutatis. Here is the YouTube video link: <http://youtu.be/QSpmajLv1kY> . NEO Asteroid '4179 Toutatis' on 12/13/2012 from 7:26pm to 7:58 pm. Four second exposure every 20 seconds using a 8" LX200GPS SCT at f6.3 & StellaCam-3 monochrome astrovideo camera.

From **Larry Owsley**: How to Defend Earth From Asteroids <http://huff.to/12sPZN9>

ISS Tour: <http://www.wimp.com/orbitaltour/> (about 25 minutes)

From: **Leonard Mercer**: Moon - Jupiter conjunction

On Christmas Day we were honoured with a close encounter between the moon and Jupiter. I was very lucky to capture all the 4 moons of Jupiter in alignment. If one enlarges the image to full resolution, one will also notice the Great Red Spot (present at the time of my imaging session), call it "the cherry on the cake" for Christmas. I was very lucky about that.

Here is the link: <<http://www.astrophotogallery.org/december-2012-solar-system/p10757-jupiter-moon-conjunction-re-processed-with-4-moons-in-alignment.html>> This image is a composition of 2 sets of images (6 exposures each) taken with a Canon 550 DSLR + a 300mm. f/5.6 Canon Telephoto lens.

Leonard.

Member News

Glynn Alexander has re-joined for 2013 and completed our minimum requirement for the Astronomy magazine subscriptions. Thanks, Glynn and welcome back!

From: **Scott A Cook**

FINALLY got a chance to get out with my new Orion XT8 (8 inch Dobsonian) and even from the HORRIBLE location of my back deck, in my WELL lit subdivision, in the seriously light polluted suburbs of LaGrange, I got to EASILY see some AWESOME views of Jupiter & FOUR of it's moons, Aldebaran, Betelgeuse, Rigel, Capella, and LOTS of unidentified stars! Unfortunately, after an hour of viewing, you guessed it, The clouds rolled in. But I think I am officially hooked! Needless to say, I am REALLY looking forward to getting it out to the next Star Party!!!!!!!

From: **Wes Schwarz**

I took a [timelapse of the Gemenid meteor shower](#) on the 14th. I then took all of the shots with meteors and stacked them into a composite image and got this.

From: **John Wingard**

NASA has released two FREE e-books about the Hubble Space Telescope and the future Webb Space Telescope. They are available as interactive books for Apple iPads or as non-interactive PDFs for other e-readers. More info at: <http://hubblesite.org/ibooks/>

ISS Pass Photo From: **David McConnell**

Thanks for the heads up Russell. The pic looks good I thought. I took 3 and I liked [this one](#) best.

From: **Scott A Cook**

I have officially discovered the ultimate definition of irony....Dec. 25th Conjunction of the Moon & Jupiter, Check! Christmas gifts of 10x50 binoculars and Orion XT8 Telescope, CHECK!!!!!!! So what happens? TOTAL overcast, low level thick fog, and severe thunderstorms! So if my luck is this bad, what kind of weather will I get when someday I try to see a total Solar eclipse?

Telescope for Sale

From: Trevor McGuire onzie9@gmail.com

My name is Trevor and I am a member of the Baton Rouge Astronomical society. I've put a telescope up on Cloudynights, but I also thought I should let the regional clubs know just in case anyone more local was interested. The description is below:

I've had this Lightbridge for a number of years now (only owner) and I've loved every minute of it. The opportunity has arisen to get a 12" LB, so I'm seeing if I can sell this one to finance the upgrade.

The scope has all the standard parts and some upgrades. First and foremost, the mirror was recoated by Spectrum Coatings only a month ago. I had this done because the old coating was badly scratched by an unfortunate accident. It is essentially a brand new mirror. Additionally, I made a second EP holder that holds 4 2" EPs and I have that mounted on my primary observing side with the stock EP holder on the other side. I also made little aluminum brackets that attach the upper cage to the lower and allows me to store it in the included duffel bag perfectly. I'm cheap, so I never bought Bob's Knobs, but I did replace the stock philips head secondary mirror adjustment screws with some hex head bolts. Sometimes I can adjust with my fingers, but sometimes I just use a socket that I hold in my hand (no drive needed). The primary mirror has the latest (at least I think it is the latest) Catseye collimation sticker centered on it and the secondary mirror has been offset as per the Catseye procedure when you buy their collimation kit. The upper rim of the upper cage has been (albeit poorly) flocked, and that helps with outreach events in lighted areas.

Additionally, I will include the telrad and a 10" Orion solar filter.

I am asking \$575 for the whole shebang and we can meet somewhere between you and Baton Rouge if you want.

Thanks,
Trevor McGuire

[Editors note: Trevor sent images of his scope not included here. Let him know if you'd like to see them.]

Hope to see you at the meeting,

Russell