

# Astrofiles

## Auburn Astronomical Society E-Newsletter May, 2013

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### Events Calendar

We'll hold our **monthly meeting** on **Friday, May 3**, at 7:45pm, in [room 215 of Davis Hall, the Aerospace Engineering Building](#). Our new moon **star party** this month will be on **Saturday, May 11**, at [Cliff Hill's farm](#), and the [Tuskegee Airmen National Historic Site](#) Stargaze on **May 18**.

May 03, Monthly meeting in [room 215 of Davis Hall](#)

May 11, Dark-sky star party at [Cliff Hill's farm](#)

May 18, [Tuskegee Airmen National Historic Site](#) Stargaze

May 25, Wetumpka Meteor talk by Dr. King at the [Forest Preserve](#)

May 27-28, Jupiter, Venus, & Mercury conjunction

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

Jun 08, Dark-sky star party at [Cliff Hill's farm](#)

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

### Astronomy Day, 2013

Another Astronomy Day is in the books. We had absolutely perfect weather for this year's event at the [W. A. Gayle Planetarium](#) in Montgomery, on Saturday, April 20<sup>th</sup>. We began arriving at the planetarium around 3:00pm and started setting up the telescopes and the AAS information table. Planetarium director, **Rick Evans** and planetarium assistants, **Trish Jester** and **Dana Hartsfield** had already greased the skids for us by getting out the publicity and having everything ready. Early visitors were treated to safe views of the Sun through the H-a and white-light filtered telescopes and the Moon. Rick, Trish and Dana were giving planetarium shows throughout the afternoon. At 6:00pm, our own **Dr. Rodger Morrison** gave a presentation on "Taking Good Pictures of Cool Stuff with Amateur Equipment" in the planetarium auditorium, followed by a preview of our evenings quarry, "Tour of the Night Sky". You can see the fruits of Rodger's labor at his [photography Web page](#). Since most of us were outside attending the telescopes, we've already had requests from our members for Rodger to give an encore presentation at one of our meetings.

Beginning around 8:00pm the guests came out for telescopic viewing of the Moon, Jupiter, binary stars, and later, Saturn.

Photos of the day's activities by **John Wingard** and your editor may be viewed by going to the "Field Trips" link from the [Auburn Astronomical Society Web page](#) then to "W.A. Gayle Planetarium Events".

Attendance seemed slightly down from previous years, no doubt due to the heavy competition of virtually every other organization in the River Region as well as two A-Day games out of town and the final rolling of Toomer's Corner on Auburn's doomed live oaks. For those who were able to attend, all seemed to enjoy the day. Thanks to everyone who helped with their telescopes, especially those who drove all the way from Auburn, Opelika, and Columbus:

**Rodger Morrison:** 10-inch Newtonian, AAS CGEM100 SCT & solar scope

**Russell Whigham:** Celestron C-11 SCT

**Allen Screws,** AAS 12.5-inch Dobsonian

**Frank Ward,** 12-inch Lightbridge, AAS CGEM 1100, & AAS PST solar scope

**John Wingard,** 3.5-inch Questar

**Jim McLaughlin,** 8-inch Meade SCT

**John Tatarchuk,** 25-inch Dobsonian

**Alan Cook,** 3.5-inch Questar or 10-inch Meade

**Ray Kunert,** 10-Meade LX200

Also joining us for the day were AAS members: **Camryn Smith, Melanie Folds, Rick & Michael Pastorett,** and **Eric Bair** from the [AAS Facebook Group](#).

New on our e-mail list are: planetarium assistants, **Trish Jester** and **Dana Hartsfield** as well as Astronomy Day visitors, **Alex & Cathy Alkire, Carrie Callaway, Denise Rasnek,** and **Ray Zaworski.**

Thanks also to **Robert Fuller** and **Eddie Kirkland** who wrote that they would have to sit out this one due to illness. Here's hoping for speedy recoveries for both. We also received "regrets" from **Gail Smitherman** in Selma who already had plans to be out of town.

As always, special thanks to **Rick, Debra, & Rachael Evans,** planetarium assistants, **Trish Jester,** and **Dana Hartsfield** for hosting our group and providing drinks and sandwiches for us. Thanks to you all!

## Public Stargaze Updates

We have two public stargazes planned: First is our **May 18, Tuskegee Airmen NHS** event. Ranger, **Christine Biggers,** will begin the evening with a presentation on celestial navigation learned by the Tuskegee Airmen during WWII. She writes:

Besides the telescopes I had when you visited, I have purchased some red light filters for our flashlights and a couple of regular sized tripods. We have the one large telescope and the 4 smaller ones with the tabletop tripods. The two regular sized tripods are for two of the smaller telescopes, and the other two we will set up on a little table for the children to be able to view from.

Sunset will be at 7:36 P.M. We can start viewing the 1st quarter Moon by 8:00, then Jupiter before it sets, while we're waiting Saturn to rise a little higher in the

sky. We'll set up our telescopes near the upper parking lot [[MAP](#)], [Please let me know](#) if you can help with this.

Next fall, **Jennifer Lolley** is already planning for the next [Forest Preserve](#) fall stargaze on **November 23<sup>rd</sup>**. If [comet ISON predictions](#) hold up, we could have a full calendar next November.

## Web Links

Here is a cool website that shows exactly [how far it is to Mars](#). Wait if the screen blanks out. The program hasn't crashed — it just takes a long time.

**Glynn Alexander** sent this interesting short [documentary on the Hubble Space Telescope](#). It is preceded by a skippable ad and interrupted by another skippable ad in the middle.

Here's a nice look at the [Earth's rotation](#) as seen from the southern hemisphere. As the moon is .5 degree across, it takes it almost exactly two minutes to rise. This beautiful extravaganza occurred on January 28, 2013 in Wellington, N.Z. (sound on...!)

## Member News

**Matthew Warren** and **Michael & Rick Pastorett** for 2013 A.A.S. have re-upped for 2013. Welcome back! Most recently, **Camryn Smith** and **Melanie Folds**, won the AAS free membership drawing at Astronomy Day. Congratulations and welcome to the group.

**Rodger Morrison** sent this report from our April star party:

It's just before 7am and I just got home. Wow. Robert and I were set up about sunset and it was very cloudy, though you could easily see the brighter stars off and on and Jupiter was hazy but viewable. By 8:30 or so, most of the clouds in the west were moving away to the east and we got a very nice view of the ISS passing overhead. By 9:00 or so, the sky was mostly clear and by 11pm, it was very clear. It took me until about 11pm or so to get everything lined up and working (drift aligning still takes me a while), and I started shooting Orion, but it was getting low by the time I could get on it. I ended up shooting only a couple of dozen frames from M42, then shot about the same amount of a couple of globular clusters, the Sombrero Galaxy, M51, Bode's Nebula, M13, the Swan Nebula, and the Eagle Nebula. I also piggy-backed a camera onto my tube rings and shot the Milky Way with an 18mm lens. Mounting it on my scope let me take some 1 minute exposures without star trails, which really turned out nice. I did set up my "observatory" out of tarps, which worked very well. I'll definitely do this again in the future. We were the only ones there last night, but we had a good time. The temperature was in the mid-40's, but there was only a very few minutes when there was any breeze, so it was nice. Robert left a couple of hours after midnight and I left when Mr. Hill's dogs sounded like they were heading my direction at about 5:45 or so. Fun stuff, for sure. I'll definitely go to Mr. Hill's place again, hopefully sometime in the next week or so.

Hope to see everyone at the meeting,  
Russell