



# Astrofiles

Volume 20, Issue 9

September 2014

## Upcoming Events

### Monthly Meeting,

Sept 12 7:45pm in Room 215 of Davis Hall on the Auburn campus.

### New Moon Stargaze,

Sept 20th at the club's Dark Sky site.

- 1st Qtr - Sept 2nd
- Full - Sept 8th
- 3rd Qtr - Sept 15th
- New - Sept 24th

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## Letter from the President

by Roger Morrison

Greetings fellow stargazers!

Well, another summer has almost come and gone, but the weather has not yet turned cooler and clearer yet, so I haven't been able to get much observing in and therefore have no observing reports to pass on. There are a few updates on club business that I want to pass on, though.

First, much thanks to Robert Fuller for taking on the clubs communication duties. He's already getting his hands dirty with the newsletter and will soon be taking a look at some work on our website.

Next, I received an email from Chet Cifani in the Detroit area, who is restoring a classic 12.5" Cave Astrola telescope and is looking for parts. The instrument that he is restoring is very similar to our club's 12.5" Dobsonian, which was once in Newtonian configuration before it was converted to its present form. That happened LONG before I was a member, but Russell Whigham remembered that some of the parts may still be on hand. A few emails and phone calls to another club member, and yep, some parts were located. Unfortunately, a few parts may have been disposed of because they were so corroded that they were

simply unrepairable. Nevertheless, it looks like we might be able to help out Chet. He's looking for any parts that he can find, except for the OTA itself, which he has. PLEASE NOTE: My wife and I will be traveling to Detroit later this month to see our stepdaughter and hope to be able to carry parts to Chet at that time. If you happen to have any of these parts, please contact me or Russell ASAP and we'll work out the details.

More on this as it happens.

On another note, I now have the club's 8" Dobsonian telescope from Rhon Jenkins. As many of us have known for a while, this rig has seen much

*(Continued on page 3)*

## September's Objects of Interest

by Robert Fuller

Well, we finally almost hit triple digits in Montgomery, this month. With that hopefully we will have cooler, drier nights ahead. Those afternoon showers should be fading as fall starts up. Hopefully.

But speaking of Showers, there are a several minor meteorite showers this month. The Alpha Aurigid meteor shower peaks on September 1st. If you aren't familiar with its location, just find Capella in the eastern sky after midnight. Although it's nothing like last month's Perseid shower, some astronomers are forecasting a better than average shower this year.

September 9th is the final

Full "Super" Moon for the year, also called the Harvest Moon. The Harvest Moon is the full moon that occurs closest to the September equinox each year. This is a great object to share with those new to astronomy. With a good pair of binoculars the craters really stand out!

I found this information at the Arkansas Sky Observatories website, [arksky.org](http://arksky.org). About mid-month, Comet c2010c2012 K1 will be getting brighter by the night. This comet rises about 2 a.m. local time in due eastern skies in the constellation of Hydra. It is presently about magnitude 6.0, which puts it in binocular range. This comet has a huge west-facing tail and large coma. It will be well up in the east by morning twilight.

September 21st will have

Mercury appearing at its best in the evening sky this fall. Since I haven't seen Mercury with my own scopes yet, I think I am going to give this date a shot. According to Stellarium it's going to be deep in the western sky just south of Spica, so you will need a clear horizon.

The September Equinox is September 23rd. It marks the start of longer nights and that can't be a bad thing.

September 24th brings the New Moon. Yep, it's going to be dark outside, so get out there and enjoy it!

I am know there's a lot of other objects viewable in the night sky during September. Take some time to plan your observing. It definitely pays off in the end.

## Thoughts for coming months

Astronomy Day, part 2, is October 4th. My current information on this is limited, but I will be updating the Facebook page when I get more information.

The 8th of October will be a Total Eclipse of the moon. We should see be able to see the eclipse until moonset/sunrise.

18th October is the planned date for the Picnic. This was discussed at the last meeting

and some ideas were suggested for the format. I'll have more on this later.

And life wouldn't be any fun without meteors. October 21-22 will be the peak for the Orionid Meteor Shower. Best time to view will be between 1:00 am and dawn.

This is a month for eclipses. On the 23rd there will be a partial solar eclipse starting about 5:00 pm, and lasting until 6:49 pm, with the maximum viewable at 4:57 pm.

-RF

## Technology and Astronomy

I recently reinstalled Stellarium on my computer. This is a great free program that really helps planning out observing sessions. I have locations set to my backyard and to the dark sky site. There are other great programs out there for multiple devices, but for the money you can't beat Stellarium.

-RF

<http://www.stellarium.org/>

## Items for sale by member of the Escambia Amateur Astronomer's Association

I received an email from Russell Whigham a few days ago, which was forwarded to him by a member of the EAAA. The items below are for sale at some very reasonable prices. If anyone is interested, email me at

[ceo@trustc3.com](mailto:ceo@trustc3.com), and I will send you the owner's contact information.

- Vixen Porta Mount ii w/ tripod \* \$180
- Celestron Super C8 w/ accessories \* \$350
- William Optics 80mm Zenithstar APO refractor\* \$400
- Orion 127mm Maksutov w/case & accessories \$275
- Astro Zap Dual channel controller w/ heating strips \$145
- Celestron f / 6.3 Focal Reducer / Corrector \$90

\* Items with an asterisk will be particularly good deals, and the owner would be delighted to avoid the risks associated with shipping these items.



"We've discovered a massive dust and gas cloud which is either the beginning of a new star, or just an awful lot of dust and gas."



**Suggestions are always welcomed!**

**Let us know!!!**

**Please feel free to distribute to friends and invite them to join the AAS**

## Astronomy News from Around the Web

International Space Station passes for our area, from [NASA](#).

A very detailed '[September 2014 Sky Events Calendar](#)' from the Arkansas Sky Observatories.

Distant merging galaxy viewed through a gravity lens from the [ESO](#).

Memory reformat planned for Mars rover Opportunity, from [NASA](#).

Labor Day Weekend Stargazing: See Moon, Mars and Saturn Meet Up, from [Space.com](#)

Voyager 2 at Neptune: A Silver Anniversary of sorts, from [Sky and Telescope](#).

Astronomers settle controversy over distance to Pleiades, maybe from [Scientific American](#).

First LOFAR observations of the Whirlpool Galaxy, from [Astronomy](#).

Follow up from last month, Rosetta Catches Its Comet, from [Sky and Telescope](#).

Voyager map details Neptune's strange moon Triton, from [Science Daily](#).

## Communications Update

*"I have loved the stars too fondly to be fearful of the night"*

This is one of the strongest quotes about amateur astronomy I have ever found. It sums up my view on the hobby. First let me say I am more of a stargazer than an astronomer. It's just what I am.

What I hope to bring to the Newsletter and Facebook is information, though it may not be quite as technical. What I also hope to bring to the newsletter is the Club. There are hundreds of years of experience in this group. I want to tap it and let others

know what we have to offer.

These next few editions I will be blatantly and shamelessly borrowing articles. What I would like to be is less of a writer and more of an editor. I am pulling some of the information straight from the FB page as its great information and not everyone follows it. But, to quote a recruiting poster, I need you. If you have any articles you have written or thoughts on Astronomy, Stargazing, or drinking coffee you want to share, please allow me to fit them in the newsletter.

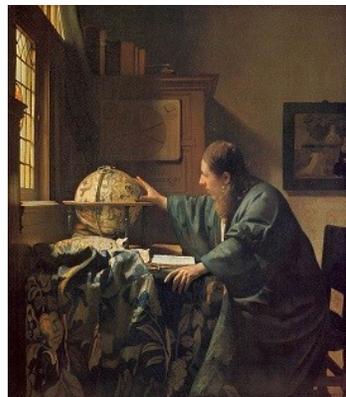
The new format is a great device to get information out there. If you have a suggestion, let me know. Don't like the way I formatted something, please let me know.

This is not my newsletter. It's ours as a whole. I am just the guy that's typing it. Well, except the parts I am borrowing.

Oh, and the quote I started off with was misquoted to me the first time. The guy said it was Galileo. I later learned it was Sarah Williams, from 'The Old Astronomer'.

-RF

Vermeer's Astronomer



Have anything of interest or just want to help?

We welcome contributions from our members and others. Just email the editor.

## Welcome to the club!

I would like to welcome our newest members, Bob Blackstock and Michael Lewis.

Michael is bringing over 18 years of observing experience. For more information about Michael check out his [vita](#) on the website.

Bob, I didn't have your information accessible, but please drop by the Facebook page and introduce yourself.

## Letter

(Continued from page 1)

usage over the years, and it now needs a little work. Specifically, the Teflon needs to be replaced and the bottom bearing needs work. It's usable, but it is not smooth by any stretch of the imagination. Does anyone want to volunteer to repair it? Perhaps this might be a good repair project for an engineer or a student engineer? (yes, that was a blatant hint to the young Auburn Engineering senior who wants to borrow it, who also happens to be building her own

telescope, haha).

As I said above, my wife and I are planning a trip to the Detroit area to see family. After that, we plan to drive up and around to the upper peninsula, and possibly into Canada for a road trip. If the skies are dark and clear, I plan to take some (very) widefield shots from a static mount. Hopefully, I'll have some observing reports from the trip.

Finally, as some of you know, we will not be showing a video at our September club meeting. Rather, I volunteered to make a presentation

to the club on astrophotography. Specifically, I plan to show how I modified a 10" Orion Newtonian OTA, a Celestron CGEM mount, and a few other goodies, to improve performance. So, this will be something of a show-and-tell, along with a here's-how-I-did-it. I hope to see everyone there. Until then... DARK SKIES TO ALL!!!



Having Trouble?

Visit the online edition at [www.auburnastro.org](http://www.auburnastro.org) to use the active hyperlinks located throughout this issue of the *Astrofiles*

See more astrophotography by the AAS club members by visiting the club's website at [www.auburnastro.org](http://www.auburnastro.org) and clicking on "Astrophotos"

[The latest LASCO imagery](#)

[The latest Auburn/Opelika Clear Sky Chart](#)

[The AAS Facebook Group](#)

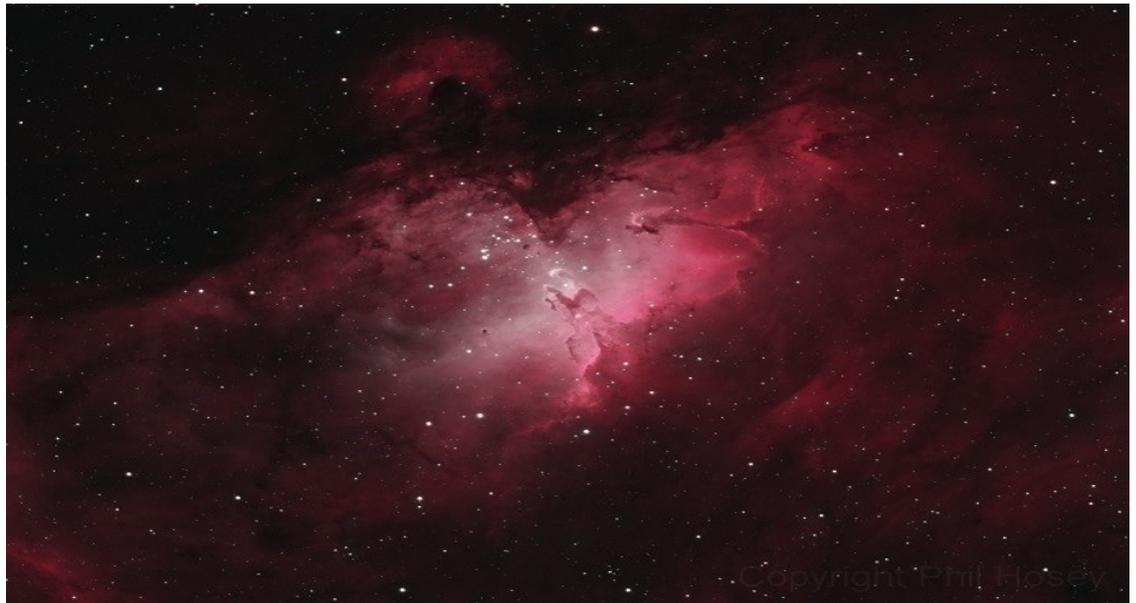
[Sun and Moon Calendars](#)

[The latest National Hurricane Center Forecast](#)

[The Dark Sky Finder](#)

## Member Astrophotography

M16 by Phil Hosey, originally taken 11-12 Aug, 2012



Since the weather is so bad lately I'm going back and re-processing some old data. Here's a narrowband image of M16 taken nearly two years ago. I used pixel math to combine Ha, OIII and SII in specific ratios for red, green and blue. The recipe used attempts to replicate natural colors, as opposed to the more common Hubble palette that is usually done with narrowband data.

Red = Hydrogen-alpha + Sulfur II (approx 75% / 25%)

Green = Oxygen III

Blue = Oxygen III + Hydrogen-alpha (approx 85% / 15%)

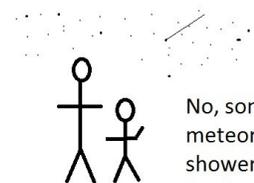
**Great job, Phil! Keep up the good work.** (Image on [Phil's Astrobin](#))

This is from Phil's post on FB back on 7 June.

## Funny

Copernicus' parents once stated: "Copernicus, young man, when are you going to come to terms with the fact that the world does not revolve around you."

It is estimated that  $3.71 \times 10^{10}$  "first-star-tonight" wishes have been wasted on Venus.



No, son, meteor showers don't wash stars.

## Officers & Others

- Rodger Morrison, AAS President and Observing Director  
([ceo@trustc3.com](mailto:ceo@trustc3.com))

- Rhon Jenkins, AAS Official Keeper of the Door Key  
([rhon\\_j@bellsouth.net](mailto:rhon_j@bellsouth.net))

- Allen Screws, AAS Vice President and Program Chairman  
([screwewa@mindspring.com](mailto:screwewa@mindspring.com))

- Russell Whigham, Montgomery area Contact  
([russellwhigham@bellsouth.net](mailto:russellwhigham@bellsouth.net))

- John Zachry, AAS Treasurer  
([jbzachry@knology.net](mailto:jbzachry@knology.net))

- Robert Fuller, AAS Communications Director  
([ssgtalon@aol.com](mailto:ssgtalon@aol.com))



## GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE AUBURN ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY

**Established in September 1980, the Auburn Astronomical Society welcomes anyone with an interest in astronomy, including beginners, amateurs, educators, or professionals.**

The monthly club meetings of the AAS are held at 7:45pm on Friday evenings near each Full Moon in room 215 of Davis Hall, the Aerospace Engineering Building on the main campus of Auburn University (see club website for specific [dates](#) and [directions](#)). The AAS is not directly affiliated with Auburn University. Regular club meetings are informal and typically include discussing club issues and recent club member activities, hearing reports from recent star parties, sharing [astrophotos](#), new objects observed, new telescope or accessory reviews, book reviews, and/or news of recent astronomical discoveries. The program feature can range from astronomy-related videos, astronomy software demonstrations, and how-to programs presented by our members, to programs given by invited professional astronomers. Again, visitors are welcome.

Monthly stargazes are held each month, on a Saturday evening near the New Moon, at the AAS dark sky viewing site near the intersection of Macon County Roads 22 and 24 (see club website for specific [dates](#) and [directions](#)). Other stargazes are held periodically, upon request by schools or other local organizations. At these stargazes, all AAS members are especially encouraged to attend, as they are typically one of our best outlets for sharing our hobby with the general public.

Club dues are \$20 per year (\$10 for students), payable in January. Club members enjoy a number of benefits, which include access to the club's library of videos and other material, borrowing permission for club equipment (some restrictions apply), membership in the [Astronomical League](#), permission to access the AAS dark sky viewing location, discounts on purchases from select suppliers, discounts on subscriptions for [Astronomy](#) and [Sky&Telescope](#) magazines, and much more. Spouses and family are encouraged to attend club events, as well as visitors who are interested in astronomy.

As part of our mandate to promote amateur astronomy, and as a service to the community, the Auburn Astronomical Society makes itself available to school and scout groups, to supplement their classroom studies with some real hands-on observing. For more information, please contact the AAS President, Rodger Morrison, by sending an email to [ceo@trustc3.com](mailto:ceo@trustc3.com).

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is the monthly  
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## AUBURN ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY

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