

The Focal Point

The Atlanta Astronomy Club
Established 1947
September 2017

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Editor: Tom Faber

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Richard Jakiel is shown here running a panel discussion about the total solar eclipse in August 2017 as part of the Science Track at the 2017 AnachroCon. Photo by Marie Lott.

September AAC General Meeting

Please join us for the next general meeting of the Atlanta Astronomy Club, to be held on Saturday, September 16th at 7PM, at the Atlanta Freethought Hall, 4775 North Church Lane S.E., Atlanta/Smyrna. North Church Lane is located off of Atlanta Road, which is exit 16 on I-285 (See map on page 4). Our Speaker will be AAC member Richard Jakiel. Rich will present a talk about comet hunter Charles Messier.

The Talk

If I were to attend a Star Party or even a large astronomical convention and asked “Who is Charles Messier and what is he known for?”, nearly everyone would respond that he produced a catalog of 110 Deep Sky Objects. A few others might also respond that he was known as “Comet Ferret” and that his catalog was to help observers distinguish between real comets and stationary background objects. But if I were to push harder and ask “How many comets did he discover?” or “What were his most famous comet discoveries?” - very few if any would be able to satisfactorily answer this simple question. It now seems that history has gotten the better of Messier, who is far better known for his list of “non comets” than being the greatest comet hunter of the 18th century. Today, very few biographies discuss the merit of Messier's numerous comet discoveries – so it's past time to rectify this omission!

Our Speaker

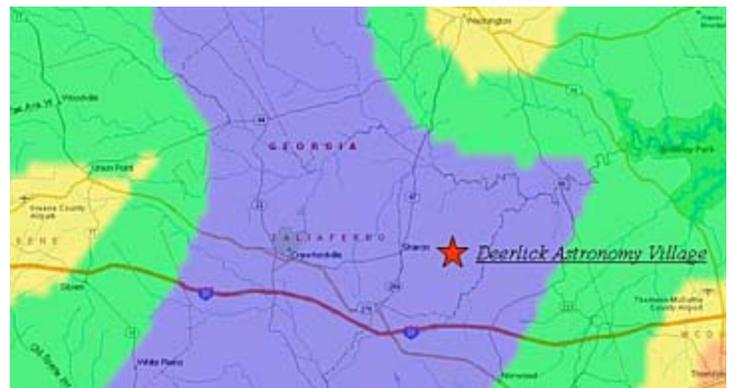
Richard Jakiel is a long time member of the Atlanta Astronomy Club. He has held a number of offices in the Club including Observing Chair, Program Chair, and Corresponding Secretary. Rich has written numerous articles published in *Sky & Telescope*, *Astronomy*, and several other publications.

For additional meeting information go to www.meetup.com/Atlanta-astronomy-club-meetup/

Please join us for this very interesting and informative talk. All Astronomy club meetings are free and open to the public. For more information on the Club go to www.atlantaastronomy.org

The 2017 Peach State Star Gaze

Mark your calendars for the 2017 Peach State Star Gaze which will be held from Sunday, October 15 to Sunday, October 22 at the Deerlick Astronomy Village! Information about the programs, speakers, and a link for on-line registration can be found at: <http://atlantaastronomy.org/pssg/> And of course there will be lots of observing under some of the darkest skies in Georgia. The new moon occurs on Thursday, October 19. Micki's Kitchen is also scheduled to return with meals, sandwiches, hot coffee, hot chocolate and other drinks, and her famous brownies! See you there!



The AAC field at the DAV during the 2013 PSSG - Photo by Tom Faber.

May AAC Meeting Report

Photos by Tom Faber unless noted

The May AAC general meeting was held on Saturday, May 20th at the Fernbank Science Center. Our guest speaker was mathematician and science fiction author Steven Brazeale. Steven talked about various themes in science fiction and how they have been used by various SF authors and in movies and TV shows. Steven Brazeale is a lifelong reader. He cut his teeth on Heinlein, Asimov, Le Guin, and Clark. But that's not all. He also invents imaginary people in his head. He also writes. His first novel, Rosetta, (written under his pen name Stephen Patterson) is a dystopian, science fiction tale. Steve is a trained Mathematician and a hardworking industrialist by day. He makes his home in Atlanta and enjoys the many activities of its vibrant science community.

After the program, club officers then announced upcoming AAC events and activities. Then some of us went to a nearby restaurant for late dinner and more conversations.



The Next Charlie Elliott Meeting

Meeting Details

Join us on Saturday September 23rd, 2017 at 5:30 p.m. in the Campbell Aquatics Building at Charlie Elliott Wildlife Center for our quarterly potluck! If you have been to one of our potlucks, you're probably looking forward to the good food (banana pudding...hint, hint!) and good company these events have become known for.

Potlucks take a lot of effort to organize and ours are no different. In addition to all of the good things like banana pudding, barbecue sandwiches, and potato salad, we need help with set up and clean up as well. Note that we'll be meeting in the Campbell Aquatics Building rather than the Shepard Building. It's not hard to find and you can actually see our usual meeting place across the pond.

Check here for updates: <http://ceastronomy.org/blog/home>



Note: For those of you planning ahead, please note that the October meeting has been moved to October 14, 2017.

All of the Above!

David Whalen, the most interesting observer in the world, who also happens to be the Observing Supervisor for Charlie Elliott Astronomy, will give a short talk about what you can expect to see in the sky this month with binoculars and small telescopes. David will also cover the Charlie Elliott Observing Challenge. Be sure to ask for the monthly target list and a SkyMap!

Observing After the Meeting

All are invited to Jon Wood Astronomy Field immediately after the meeting (weather-permitting). As always, the event is free and everyone is welcome.

Technical Workshops

There is no Technical Workshop scheduled for September. If you have an idea for a 15-30 minute discussion or presentation that you would like to see or would like to give, contact the Charlie Elliott Program Coordinator, Steve Siedentop.

Future meetings are on: October 14, November 18, December 16. Meetings start approximately 2 hours before sunset.

Georgia Regional Astronomers Meeting

All members of the Atlanta Astronomy Club are invited to the next Georgia Regional Astronomy Meeting (GRAM) to be held Friday and Saturday, October 27 and 28, at the University of Georgia in Athens. The event is free and there is no registration fee. That weekend's UGA football game with Florida will be in Jacksonville, Florida, so traffic and parking in Athens will be light.

Also participating will be members of the Assn of Lunar & Planetary Observers, who will present several papers and hold an awards dinner on Saturday evening to which all are invited.

The GRAM event will begin with an informal get-together on Friday evening at the UGA Physics Building and observing through UGA's 24-inch telescope also located there (weather permitting).

Papers on various aspects of astronomical research, education and amateur topics will be presented at the Physics Building from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Those with table-top poster presentations are also invited to set them up.

The ALPO awards dinner will be held at the UGA Center for Continuing Education & Hotel from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m., and feature Professor of Astronomy at UGA, Dr. Loris Magnani as the keynote speaker. While there is no registration fee for the meeting, pre-registration for the awards dinner will be required so proper arrangements can be made.

Finally, a block of rooms for reduced rates at the UGA Center is being secured for those who prefer to lodge there overnight Friday and/or Saturday.

The GRAM itself was started in 2002 by Dr. Chris DePree (Bradley Observatory at Agnes Scott College) and Dr. Magnani as a time for astronomers in and near Georgia to get together and meet one another. The GRAM is open to anyone with an interest in astronomy (amateurs, too!). The yearly meetings -- usually held in the fall -- feature both oral and poster presentations on research, education, and amateur topics. Previous GRAM events have been held at Agnes Scott College, Berry College, Emory University, UGA, Valdosta State University, Georgia Perimeter College, North Georgia College & State University (now part of the University of North Georgia), Georgia Tech, Georgia Southern University (Statesboro), Columbus State University, Tellus Museum, Georgia College & State University (Milledgeville), and Georgia State University.

For information about the GRAM event, e-mail Dr. Magnani at loris@physast.uga.edu

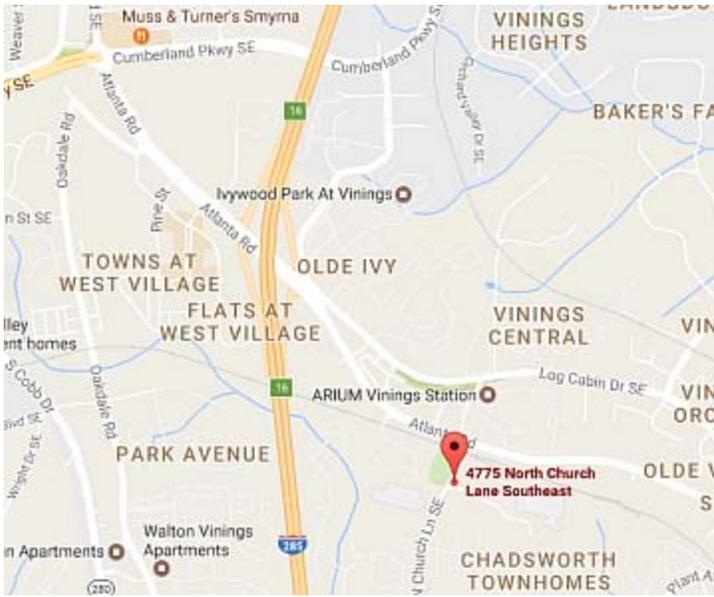
For information about the ALPO awards dinner and lodging arrangements, e-mail ken.poshedly@alpo-astronomy.org

The Next AAC Board Meeting

The next Board of Directors Meeting of the AAC is scheduled for Sunday, October 29th, starting at 3PM at the home of Peter and Sharon, 1057 Trestle Drive, Austell. Contact AAC President Mark Banks or Board Chair Sharon Carruthers for more information. Any member of the club who has any questions, concerns, or issues about club operations is welcome to attend the meeting and address the Board.

Map to the AFS Building

This map shows the location of the Atlanta Freethought Hall, 4775 North Church Lane S.E., Atlanta/Smyrna. North Church Lane is located off of Atlanta Road, which is exit 16 on I-285.



Credit: Google Maps

The July 22 Charlie Elliott Meeting

By Stephanie Dickson, Charlie Elliott Chapter Recording Secretary
Pre-meeting start time: 6:40 pm; Pre-meeting presenter: Mark; Pre-meeting topic: AP

Attendees: Meeting - 38, Field - 50

Meeting time: 7:13 pm. Meeting called to order by: Mike

Outreach

7/27/17 - Morton County Library

8/10/17 - Jackson/Butt County

8/12/17 - GA Geocachers

Awards - None

Other news:

1. Hospitality - Cynthia passed out a signup sheet for each meeting. (Sheet did not make it fully around).
2. Tim (Equipment Manager) - Anyone with instructions on the group equipment should send them to him.
3. Ken (ALPO) - Went over membership and had sample reading

David gave his presentation on "All of the Above" at 7:22 pm on The Milky Way Season. Valerie has 9 constellations to review. Target list by David is the Summer Messier and the Milky Way.

AP Targets:

Beginner

Intermediate Target - Veil Nebula

Advanced Target - Antares Rho Ophiuchi

Narrow Target - Ring Nebula

Main Presentation started at 8:10 pm

Presenter: Dr. Paul Camp, Physics Professor

Subject: Inflationary Model as a central feature in cosmology

Notes:

The Big Bang theory presents issues in formation.

There are 3 models being reviewed: Closed universe (will reach max and collapse), Open universe (expand forever), Flat universe (this is the median of the prior two and what we see).

Grand unified theory has faults. Cannot find magnetic monopoles. Inflation - physics to help explain the universe. Black holes radiate. Universe can change faster than the speed of light. Higgs particle has issue as it is too small. To solve the monopole and flatness issue by inflation and therefore we only see a small sliver of the universe.

Field conditions: Clear and perfect for viewing

From the President's Desk

By Mark Banks, AAC President

Our club needs to make some changes to better serve our membership. The manner in which we hold meetings, stay in contact other members and enjoy all that Astronomy has to offer needs to be updated. Our current officers have been serving the club faithfully for many years but it's time we move on with new people and new ideas. That's where you, our members, come in. Please consider volunteering as a board member or club officer. The club is what you make it. So please contact me or any other club officer and let us know what you think. Any ideas or suggestions are welcome.

The August 21, 2017 Total Solar Eclipse

On the next few pages are some images of the total solar eclipse taken by AAC members.

Note: All photos are property of the persons named and are used here with permission. Do not reproduce without the owner's permission.

Images by Tom Faber

Taken from near Stapleton, Nebraska. These images were taken with a Canon T5i with a 300mm telephoto lens. The partial phase images were taken using a solar filter; the totality image with no filter.



Taken about 40 minutes after the eclipse began.

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Images by Frank Marchese

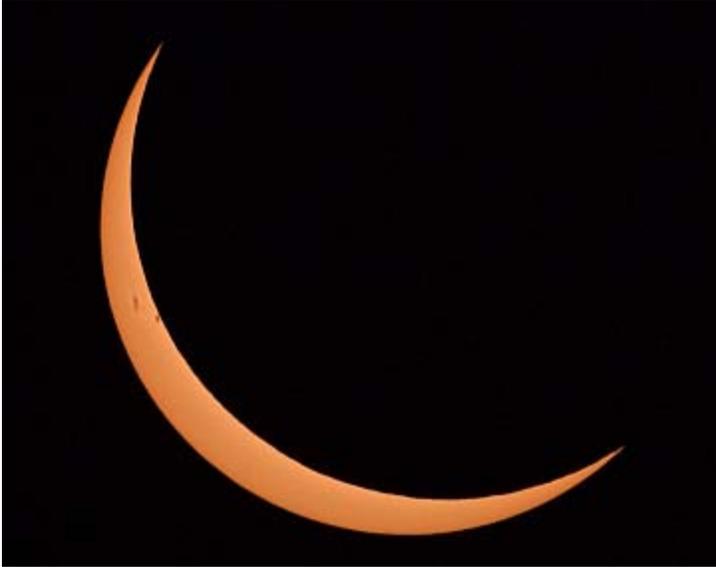
Taken from near Grayson, Georgia



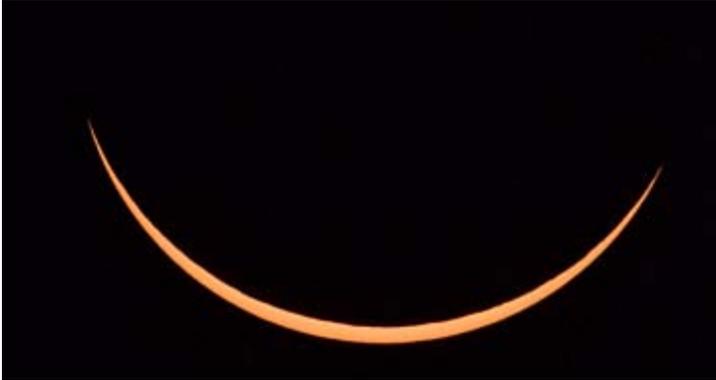
Taken shortly after mid-totality.



Taken about 2.5 minutes after totality ended.



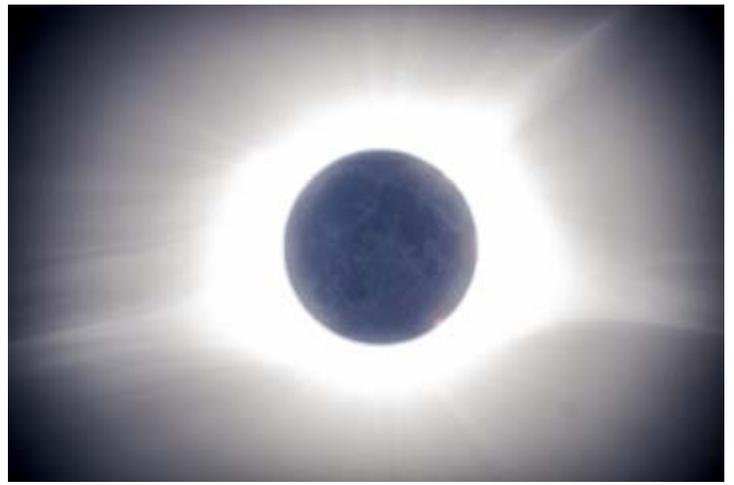
This image was taken with a Canon SX160IS hand held at 16x optical zoom, about 40 minutes after totality ended. Thicker clouds had moved in and they dimmed the sun enough that I was able to take some photos without using a solar filter.



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Frank's observing setup and a series of his eclipse images.

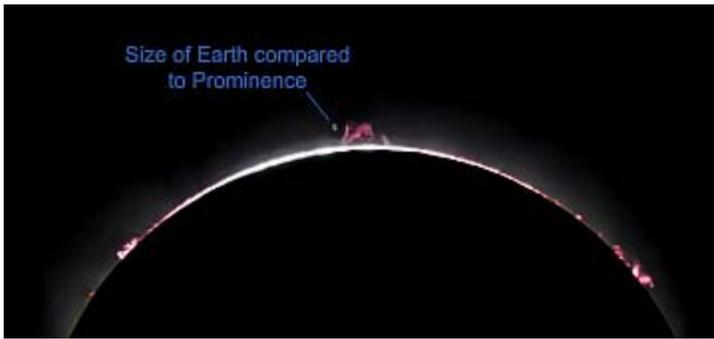


A long totality exposure showing Earthshine on the moon.

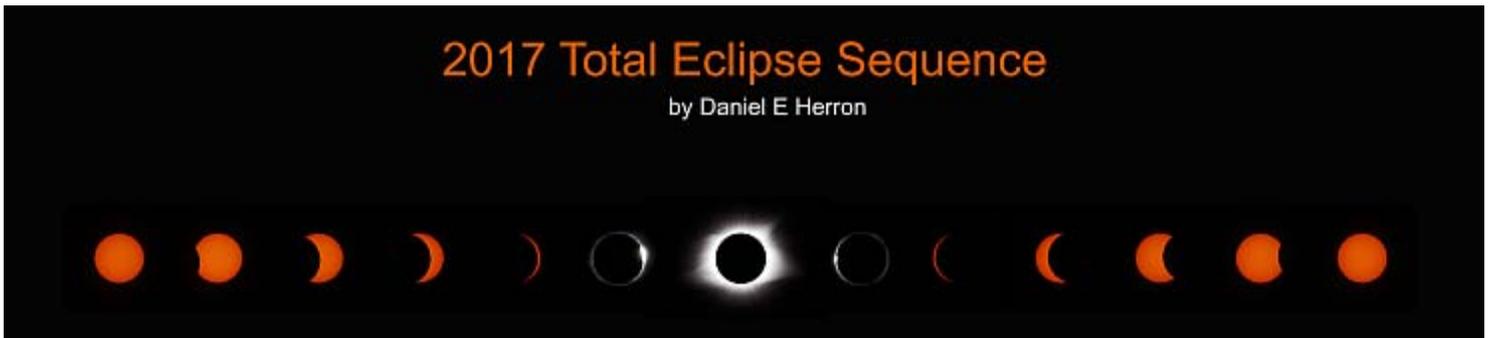
Images by Daniel Herron

Taken from near Douglas, Wyoming

More of Daniel's images can be found here: <https://flic.kr/s/aHsm6Sz5qy>

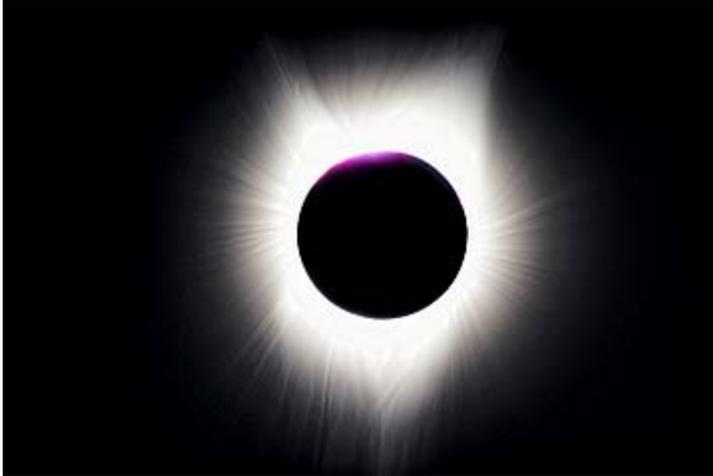


Several nice sunspot groups were visible.



Images by Dan Llewellyn

Taken from near Agate, Nebraska



The **Atlanta Astronomy Club, Inc.**, one of the South's largest and oldest astronomical society, meets at **3:00 P.M.** on the 2nd Saturday of each month at the Fernbank Science Center in Decatur, or occasionally at other locations or times. Membership fees are **\$30** for a family or single person membership. College Students membership fee is **\$15**. These fees are for a one year membership.

Magazine subscriptions to *Sky & Telescope* or *Astronomy* can be purchased through the club for a reduced rate. The fees are **\$33** for *Sky & Telescope* and **\$34** for *Astronomy*. Renewal forms will be sent to you by the magazines. Send the renewal form along with your check to the Atlanta Astronomy Club treasurer.

The Club address: Atlanta Astronomy Club, Inc., P.O. Box 76155, Atlanta, GA 30358-1155. AAC Web Page: <http://www.AtlantaAstronomy.org>. Send suggestions, comments, or ideas about the website to webmaster@AtlantaAstronomy.org. Also send information on upcoming observing events, meetings, and other events to the webmaster.

Atlanta Astronomy Club Online

While this newsletter is the official information source for the Atlanta Astronomy Club, it is only up to date the day it is posted. So if you want more up to date information, go to our club's website. The website contains pictures, directions, membership applications, events, updates, and other information. <http://www.atlantaastronomy.org> You can also follow the AAC on Facebook by joining the AAC group, and on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/atlaastro>.

AAC Officers and Contacts

President: Mark Banks President@AtlantaAstronomy.org

Program Chair: Open Programs@AtlantaAstronomy.org

Observing Chair: Daniel Herron Observing@AtlantaAstronomy.org

Corresponding Secretary: Tom Faber
Focalpoint@AtlantaAstronomy.org

Treasurer: Sharon Carruthers Treasurer@AtlantaAstronomy.org

Recording Secretary: Alan Coffelt,
Secretary@AtlantaAstronomy.org

Board Chair: Sharon Carruthers Treasurer@AtlantaAstronomy.org

Board: Brigitte Fessele, Contact info TBA

Board: David Lumpkin, Contact info TBA

Board: Steve Phillips sandsphillips@att.net

ALCor: Ken Olson, keneolson@yahoo.com

Elliott Chapter Director: Tim Geib director@ceastronomy.org

Elliott Observing Supervisor: David Whalen
observing@ceastronomy.org

Elliott Recording Secretary: Brian Tucker
secretary@ceastronomy.org

Elliott Chapter ALCor: Jack Fitzmier

Elliott Coordinator: Lacy Mitchell, Lacy.Mitchell@dnr.ga.gov

Elliott Webmaster: Larry Owens webmaster@CEastronomy.org

Elliott Outreach Coordinator: Dan Thoman
outreach@ceastronomy.org

Georgia Astronomy in State Parks: Sharon Carruthers
Treasurer@AtlantaAstronomy.org

PSSG Chairman: Peter Macumber pmacumber@nightsky.org

PSSG Co-Chair: Open

Sidewalk Astronomy: Brad Isley
sidewalkastronomy@AtlantaAstronomy.org

Light Trespass: Ken Edwards, Contact info TBA

Woodruff Observ. Coordinator: Sharon Carruthers
Treasurer@AtlantaAstronomy.org

AAC Webmaster: Daniel Herron
Observing@AtlantaAstronomy.org

Calendar by Tom Faber (Times EDT/EST unless noted)

AAC Events are listed in BOLD

Sept 12th, Tuesday: Moon occults Aldebaran. Mercury at Greatest Elongation west.

Sept 13th, Wednesday: Moon Last Quarter.

Sept 16th, Saturday: **AAC Meeting at the AFS building at 7:00PM.** Mercury near Mars.

Sept 18th, Monday: Morning grouping of the Moon, Mercury, Venus, Mars, and Regulus.

Sept 20th, Wednesday: New Moon.

Sept 22nd, Friday: Fall Equinox at 4:01PM. Moon near Jupiter.

Sept 23rd, Saturday: **CEA Chapter Meeting at 5:30PM.**

Sept 26th, Tuesday: Moon near Saturn.

Sept 27th, Wednesday: Moon First Quarter.

Oct 5th, Thursday: Full Moon. Venus near Mars.

Oct 8th, Sunday: Mercury at Superior Conjunction. Draconid Meteors.

Oct 12th, Thursday: Moon Last Quarter.

Oct 14th, Saturday: **CEA Chapter Meeting.**

Oct 15th, Sunday: **Peach State Star Gaze Opens at 12:00PM.** Moon occults Regulus.

Oct 17th, Tuesday: Moon near Venus and Mars.

Oct 19th, Thursday: New Moon. Uranus at Opposition.

Oct 21st, Saturday: Orionids Meteor Shower.

Oct 22nd, Sunday: **Peach State Star Gaze Closes at 12:00PM.**

Oct 26th, Thursday: Jupiter in conjunction with Sun.

Oct 27th, Friday: Moon First Quarter.

Oct 29th, Sunday: **AAC BoD Meeting 3:00PM - See page 3 for details.**

Nov 4th, Saturday: Full Moon.

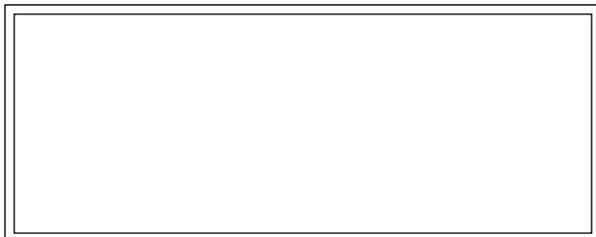
For more event listings see the calendar at www.atlantaastronomy.org

Atlanta Astronomy Club Listserv

Subscribe to the Atlanta Astronomy Club Mailing List: The name of the list is: AstroAtlanta. The address for messages is: AstroAtlanta@yahoogroups.com . To add a subscription, send a message to: AstroAtlanta-subscribe@yahoogroups.com .

Focal Point Deadline and Submission Information

Please send articles, pictures, and drawings in electronic format on anything astronomy, space, or sky related to Tom Faber at focalpoint@atlantaastronomy.org. Please send images separate from articles, not embedded in them. Articles are preferred as plain text files with images separate but Word documents or PDFs are okay. **The deadline for October is Saturday, September 23. Submissions received after the deadline will go in the following issue.**



FIRST CLASS



www.bctagg.com



We're here to help! Here's how to reach us:

Newsletter of The Atlanta Astronomy Club, Inc.



FROM: Tom Faber
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Atlanta, GA 30358-1155

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On Twitter at <http://twitter.com/atlaastro>