

The Focal Point

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The Atlanta Astronomy Club
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Editor: Tom Faber

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The November AAC Meeting

By Ken Poshedly

Friday, November 16 at 8 PM.

Star Light, Star Bright. Where You Get Your Start?

So, where do stars come from in the first place? Certainly they don't just pop into existence, do they? Or DO they? Let's find out at 8 p.m., on Friday, November 16, when Alissa Bans, a lecturer in the Emory University Dept. of Physics, explains her own work as a team member in the NASA-funded program "Disk Detective". Dr. Bans' primary passion is education and outreach; she's committed to bringing authentic science experiences into the classroom and enjoys working with undergraduate students on research.

Dr. Bans completed her PhD in Astronomy and Astrophysics at the University of Chicago (2013). Prior to joining the faculty at Emory in the fall of 2017, Dr. Bans was a postdoctoral fellow at the Adler Planetarium and a visiting professor at Valparaiso University. Her research interests are focused on how solar systems form and evolve.

The meeting will be held in the Fernbank Science Center Resource Room (formerly the library room) beginning at 8 p.m. with announcements of upcoming events, to be followed by Dr. Bans appearance. Finally, and weather-permitting, all will be invited upstairs to Ralph Buice Observatory to view through the 0.9 meter (36-inch) Cassegrain reflecting telescope inside the 10 meter (30 ft.) dome.

The Fernbank Science Center is located at 156 Heaton Park Dr. NE, Atlanta, GA 30303. (Phone: 678-874-7102).



Credit: Google Maps

Upcoming Charlie Elliott Meetings

Upcoming Charlie Elliott meetings will be held on: November 10 and December 8, 2018, and January 5, February 2, March 9, April 6, May 4, and June 1, 2019. Meetings start approximately 2 hours before sunset. Meeting rooms and start times vary, so please check back for updates or changes at: <http://ceastronomy.org/blog/home> Public stargazing on Jon Wood Astronomy Field follows the meeting, weather permitting.

Holiday Potluck & Meeting

The December Holiday Potluck dinner and meeting will be held on Saturday, December 15 at Emory University in the Math & Science Building. The dinner will begin at about 6:00PM. More details will be provided in the December *Focal Point*.

How to Buy A Telescope

The AAC will present a “How to Buy A Telescope” program at the Fernbank Science Center on Saturday, December 1 from 3:00-4:30PM. If you are looking to buy a telescope as a gift or one for yourself you should attend this informative program about how to select the right telescope.

The Astronomical League

As a member of the **Atlanta Astronomy Club** you are automatically also a member of the **Astronomical League**, a nation wide affiliation of astronomy clubs. Membership in the AL provides a number of benefits for you. They include:

- * You will receive *The Reflector*, the AL’s quarterly newsletter.
- * You can use the Book Service, through which you can buy astronomy-related books at a 10% discount.
- * You can participate in the Astronomical League’s Observing Clubs. The Observing Clubs offer encouragement and certificates of accomplishment for demonstrating observing skills with a variety of instruments and objects. These include the Messier Club, Binocular Messier Club, the Herschel 400 Club, the Deep Sky Binocular Club, and many others.

To learn more about the Astronomical League and its benefits for you, visit <http://www.astroleague.org>

Parker Solar Probe Reports Good Status After Close Solar Approach

NASA/JHUAPL News Release 11/07/2018

Parker Solar Probe is alive and well after skimming by the Sun at just 15 million miles from our star’s surface. This is far closer than any spacecraft has ever gone — the previous record was set by Helios B in 1976 and broken by Parker on Oct. 29 — and this maneuver has exposed the spacecraft to intense heat and solar radiation in a complex solar wind environment.

“Parker Solar Probe was designed to take care of itself and its precious payload during this close approach, with no control from us on Earth — and now we know it succeeded,” said Thomas Zurbuchen, associate administrator of NASA’s Science Mission Directorate at the agency headquarters in Washington. “Parker is the culmination of six decades of scientific progress. Now, we have realized humanity’s first close visit to our star, which will have implications not just here on Earth, but for a deeper understanding of our universe.”

Mission controllers at the Johns Hopkins University Applied Physics Lab received the status beacon from the spacecraft at 4:46 p.m. EST on Nov. 7, 2018. The beacon indicates status “A” — the best of all four possible

status signals, meaning that Parker Solar Probe is operating well with all instruments running and collecting science data and, if there were any minor issues, they were resolved autonomously by the spacecraft.

At its closest approach on Nov. 5, called perihelion, Parker Solar Probe reached a top speed of 213,200 miles per hour, setting a new record for spacecraft speed. Along with new records for the closest approach to the Sun, Parker Solar Probe will repeatedly break its own speed record as its orbit draws closer to the star and the spacecraft travels faster and faster at perihelion.

At this distance, the intense sunlight heated the Sun-facing side of Parker Solar Probe’s heat shield, called the Thermal Protection System, to about 820 degrees Fahrenheit. This temperature will climb up to 2,500 F as the spacecraft makes closer approaches to the Sun — but all the while, the spacecraft instruments and systems that are protected by the heat shield are generally kept in the mid-80s F.

Parker Solar Probe’s first solar encounter phase began on Oct. 31, and the spacecraft will continue collecting science data through the end of the solar encounter phase on Nov. 11. It will be several weeks after the end of the solar encounter phase before the science data begins downlinking to Earth.



Artist's Illustration of NASA's Parker Solar Probe. Credit: NASA/JHUAPL/ Steve Gribben



The ISS viewed from the departing Soyuz MS-08 spacecraft on Oct 4. Credit: NASA/Roscosmos

The 2018 Peach State Star Gaze - Pt 2

Photos by Tom Faber unless noted otherwise

The 2018 Peach State Star Gaze was held from Sunday, September 30th to Sunday, October 7th.

The 2018 PSSG will be remembered for how hot it was in the day time. Temperatures were in the mid to upper 80's each day, but the air was dry which allowed for temperatures to cool off nicely in the evening. Night time lows were usually in the low to mid 60's, and got as low as 57F Tuesday morning. Skies were mostly clear each night, with only occasional passing clouds. Vendor *Pentax* was at the Peach State for the later part of the week.

Friday's featured speakers were Tim Geib who presented a talk titled "Remote Imaging at Deep Sky West", Frank Schorr, whose talk was about using imaging to do science, and the day's final speaker was Dan Llewellyn who presented a talk about how to get started doing astro-imaging.

Friday evening the AAC hosted a brownie and ice cream social on the DAV pavilion.

Saturday featured more talks with Mark Banks, who presented a talk about the Drake Equation, which is used to estimate the number of active, communicative extraterrestrial civilizations in the Milky Way. Next Ed Albin presented a talk about the Georgia Tektites - what they are, how they were formed, and how to find them.

Our final speaker Saturday, David Wenner, gave a talk about Saturn, its moons and rings, and some of the findings of the recently ended Cassini mission.

After David Wenner's talk the door prize drawing was held. A number of attendees won various prizes. The grand prize, a Meade Infinity 80 refractor, was donated by AAC members Ken and Rose Olson.

GC was back with Micki's Kitchen (Micki herself wasn't able to be there this year) serving breakfasts, sandwiches, snacks, and dinners during the day and plenty of coffee, tea, hot chocolate, and brownies at night to keep us observers awake! We all had a great time and look forward to seeing everyone at the 2019 PSSG, which will be held October 20-27.

On the next several pages are images from the 2018 Peach State Star Gaze. Check back next month for more photos from the PSSG 2018, including some of the door prize winners.



The Check-in Building at the PSSG



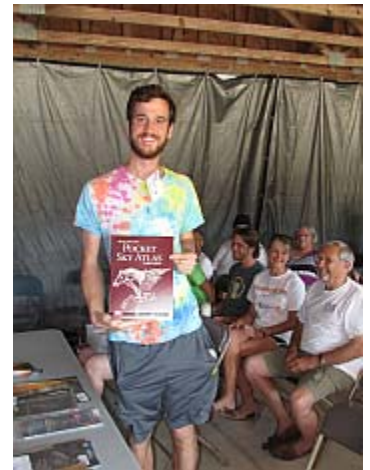
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The door prize drawing and a few of the winners.





The grand prize winner! The Meade Infinity 80 refractor was donated by AAC members Ken and Rose Olson.

Mark your calendars! The 2019 Peach State Star Gaze is scheduled for October 20-27, 2019. See you there!

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

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

AAC Events are listed in BOLD

- Nov 6th, Tuesday: Mercury Greatest Elongation East.
- Nov 7th, Wednesday: New Moon.
- Nov 10th, Saturday: **CEA Chapter Meeting.**
- Nov 11th, Sunday: Moon near Saturn.
- Nov 15th, Thursday: Moon First Quarter. Moon near Mars.
- Nov 16th, Friday: **AAC Meeting at the Fernbank Science Center at 8PM.**
- Nov 17th, Saturday: Leonid Meteor Shower Peak.
- Nov 23rd, Friday: Full Moon.
- Nov 26th, Monday: Jupiter in Conjunction with the Sun.
- Nov 27th, Tuesday: Mercury at Inferior Conjunction
- Nov 29th, Thursday: Moon Last Quarter.
- Dec 1st, Saturday: **How to Buy A Telescope, 3 PM - 4:30 PM, Fernbank Science Center**
- Dec 7th, Friday: New Moon.
- Dec 8th, Saturday: **CEA Chapter Meeting.** Earliest Sunset in Atlanta: ~5:27PM EST. Moon near Saturn evening.
- Dec 14th, Friday: Geminid Meteor Shower Peak Morning. Moon near Mars evening.
- Dec 15th, Saturday: **AAC Holiday Potluck & Meeting, Emory University Math & Science Building, 6:00-9:30PM.** Moon First Quarter. Geminids Meteor Shower Peak.
- Dec 21st, Friday: Winter Solstice 5:23PM.
- Dec 22nd, Saturday: Full Moon. Ursid Meteor Shower Peak.
- Dec 29th, Saturday: Moon Last Quarter.
- Jan 3rd, Wednesday: Earth at Perihelion.
- Jan 4th, Friday: Latest Sunrise in Atlanta: ~7:42 AM. Quadrantid Meteor Shower Peak.
- Jan 5th, Saturday: New Moon.

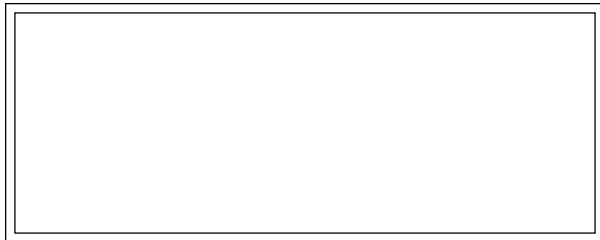
For more event listings and updates see the calendar at www.atlantaastronomy.org

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 December is Sunday, November 25. Submissions received after the deadline will go in the following issue.**



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We're here to help! Here's how to reach us:
Newsletter of The Atlanta Astronomy Club, Inc.



The Focal Point

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