

The Focal Point

The Atlanta Astronomy Club
Established 1947
November 2021

Vol. 34 No. 3

Editor: Tom Faber

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November AAC Meeting Cancelled

There will be no November meeting of the Atlanta Astronomy Club due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, particularly the Delta Variant, and the requirements to limit group gatherings to prevent further spread of the disease. While we are not able to hold our monthly meetings right now, please continue to follow AAC on its web page and Facebook page for updates until we are able to have our regular meetings again. Hopefully we will be able to resume in person meetings soon.



Fernbank Science Center's Planetarium At Home Programs

While we have been unable to have in-person AAC meetings at the Fernbank Science Center for a while now, our host, Fernbank Science Center's planetary geologist Scott Harris, has been having a series of virtual programs about astronomy and planetary sciences on Fernbank's Facebook page. Recent programs have been about the 50th anniversary of the Apollo 14 mission and the upcoming launch of the James Webb Space Telescope. For more information about Scott's upcoming programs check out Fernbank's Facebook page here: <https://www.facebook.com/fernbankcenter>

The 2021 Peach State Star Gaze!

The 2021 Peach State Star Gaze was held from Sunday, October 31 through Sunday, November 7. While skies were clear for the first 3 nights, and partly cloudy for Wednesday night, Thursday night through Saturday night proved a disappointment with persistent clouds from a storm system that formed in the Gulf then swept across Florida. While we didn't get much rain, the clouds put a damper on observing those nights.

On Saturday we had three very interesting talks. First John O'Neal gave a talk about how he got into astronomy as a child and how his hobby developed over the years, and what he is doing now, which includes lots of public outreach as a NASA Solar System Ambassador.

Then Ed Albin gave an interesting talk about the installation and operation of a meteor patrol camera at his place at DAV, and Ed showed how it is used as part of a larger network of camera, and he showed some video clips of fireballs it has captured since being installed in the summer.

Finally, our keynote speaker, Wanda Harding, gave a fascinating talk titled "From Atlanta to Mars and Back" in which she detailed how she went from growing up in Atlanta, then going to college at Hampton University where she received a BS in Electrical Engineering, then back to Atlanta to receive a MSEE from Georgia Tech. She then later worked at the Kennedy Space Center where she was a manager of the Launch Services Program and she was involved with the launch of a number of NASA missions including the Mars Science Laboratory (aka Curiosity). After leaving NASA she returned to Atlanta and now teaches physical sciences at Young Middle School in southwest Atlanta.

After the talks the door prize drawing was held and many great prizes were won by the attendees present.

Turn to page 3 for photos from the event, and be sure to check back next month for more photos from the PSSG, including the speakers and some of the door prize winners. All photos by Tom Faber.

Be sure to mark your calendars for the 2022 PSSG, which will be held from Sunday, October 23 through Sunday, October 30!



Charlie Elliott December Meeting

Charlie Elliott Astronomy Meeting & Observing Session on December 4

(November 10, 2021) OK, so either lots of folks are buying astronomy equipment or the Rain Gods are really angry. So how else to explain the crappy weather, including October 30, so no observing session that night.

Join us on Saturday, December 4, 2021 at 3:30 p.m. at the Campbell Aquatics Building for our next in-person “bring your own sack meal”, followed by observing on Jon Wood Astronomy Field, weather permitting!

Sunset is at 5:26 p.m. and “dark dark” is at 6:54 p.m.

Directions: The Campbell Aquatics Building is located inside the Charlie Elliott Wildlife Center on Murder Creek Church Rd. The CEWC itself is just south of Mansfield, Georgia. Take Hwy 11, then turn onto Marben Farm Rd. (the entrance to the CEWC); continue past Elliott Trail (on the right) then turn right onto Murder Creek Church Rd. For more details, phone 770-784-3059 BEFORE 4:30 p.m. (when the office closes).

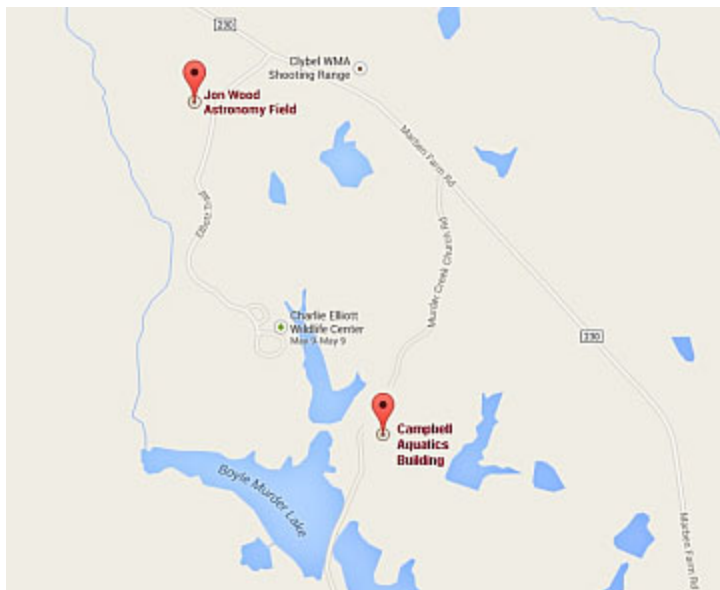
“Heavens Above”

During the meal portion of the gathering, Observing Supervisor David Whalen will be on hand to enlighten and inform us on what you can see and image in the night sky this month. David is an exciting and engaging speaker and always delivers an informative and light-hearted presentation that everyone will enjoy!

After the meeting, weather permitting, we will make our way down to Jon Wood Astronomy Field for observing.

Observing on the Jon Wood Astronomy Field

From the meeting site –Take Murder Creek Church Rd to Marben Farm Rd, then turn left. Turn left once more onto Elliott Trail and the Jon Wood Astronomy Field dirt driveway will be on the right. No headlights or white flashlights allowed. Only flashlights or similar with red-light covers.



Credit: Google Maps

From Hwy 11 — Turn onto Marben Farm Rd., then turn right onto Elliott Trail and the Jon Wood Astronomy Field dirt driveway will be on the right. No headlights or white flashlights allowed. Only flashlights or similar with red-light covers.

A Few Items to Note...

Plan to treat this outing like you would a camping trip and be prepared. Dress appropriately for the weather and the environment, bring snacks and drinks if needed, and plan to take your garbage with you. There is a regularly serviced Porta-Potty on Jon Wood Astronomy Field available for use during the observing session.

The main gate on Elliott Trail closes to new entry at 7 p.m. and will automatically open at any time for exiting traffic. If you plan to observe on Jon Wood Astronomy Field, please arrive before 7 p.m. or make arrangements with a club member for access.

Covid Requirements

IMPORTANT! Masks are optional for those that are vaccinated. If you are not vaccinated, please wear a mask and kindly observe the latest CDC guidelines regarding social distancing.

More About the Charlie Elliott Astronomy Club

Check out the Charlie Elliott Astronomy Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/ceastronomy>. There you'll find a welcoming group of people sharing ideas and tips as well as organizing ad-hoc observing and imaging sessions on the Jon Wood Astronomy Field.

For those not familiar with the Charlie Elliott Wildlife Center, go to <https://georgiawildlife.com/charlie-elliott-wildlife-center>

The CEWC phone is 770-784-3059, Monday through Saturday 9 a.m.–4:30 p.m.

Workshops

If you have an idea for a 15 to 20-minute pre-meeting presentation about something you've learned or a project you're working on, contact Steve Siedentop or Ken Poshedly.

Our Monthly Meetings and Public Observing Nights

The status of in-person meetings will be announced monthly as the COVID situation changes. Visit the “Our Calendar” tab at the top of the page for our 2021-2022 meeting, observing, and outreach schedule. Start times vary throughout the year so please check back for details.

All Charlie Elliott Astronomy events are free and open to the public and you don't have to be a member to attend our meetings or join us on Jon Wood Astronomy Field. However, we would encourage you to consider a yearly paid membership for less than the cost of a couple of pizzas. Your membership dues allow us to continue our science outreach programs in area schools and youth organizations, merit badge programs with area Scout Troops, and allow us to maintain the facilities on Jon Wood Astronomy Field. To become a member, you can fill out our Membership Form or contact an officer.

The Charlie Elliott Chapter is a member of the Night Sky Network.



The 2021 Peach State Star Gaze Gallery

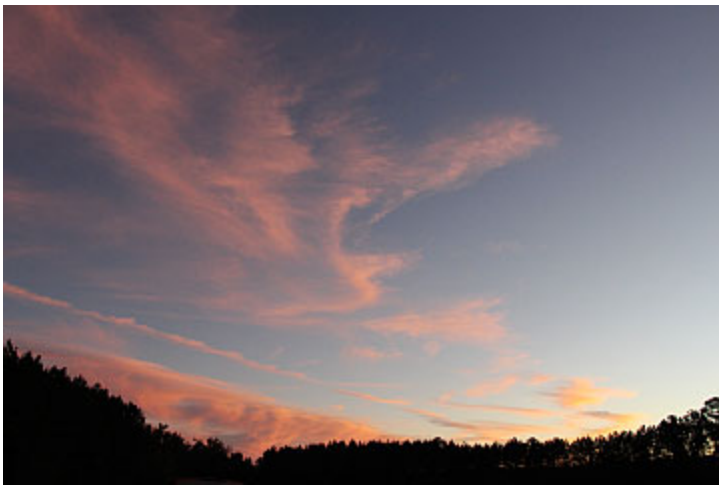
All photos by Tom Faber unless noted.



Photo right: Halloween evening a ghostly apparition was seen moving across the observing field near the pavilion. In the skies above are an aircraft (near the center) and the Chinese space station Tiangong going toward the southeast (left edge), while Venus is nearing the treeline.



The photo above, taken just after the previous one, shows Tiangong continuing to the southeast passing through Microscopium heading toward Grus. This is a 30 second exposure using a Canon T5i on a fixed tripod at ISO 1600. The lens was an 18-135mm lens set to 18mm and at f/5.6.



Some passing cirrus provided a colorful sunset Monday evening. It soon moved out giving us another clear night for observing.





More people arrive on Tuesday.

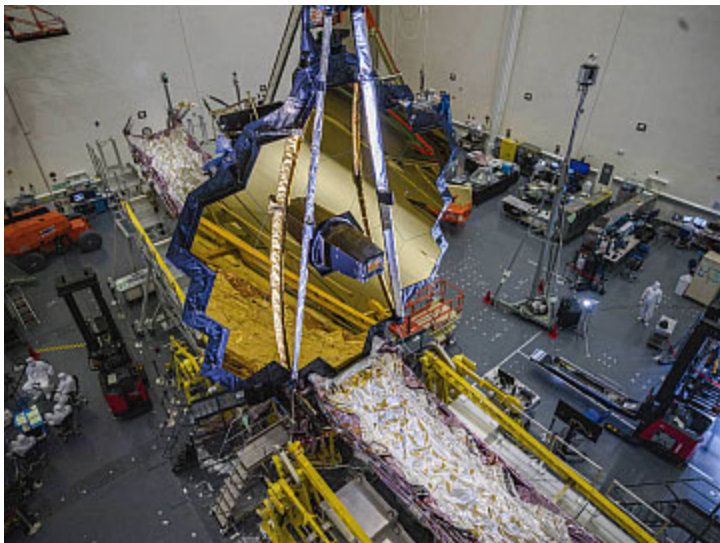
The December Focal Point will have more photos from the 2021 PSSG, including the speakers and some of the door prize winners.

Galaxy NGC 6946 and Open Cluster NGC 6939 by Richard Jakiel

Rich made this image that shows the “fireworks” galaxy NGC 6946 and the open star cluster NGC 6939 using a 120 mm APO refractor at f/7. The camera he used was a Canon 7i set to ISO 1600. The image is a stack of 12 x 5 min sub-frames.

For more information on NGC 6946 and why it is called the “Fireworks Galaxy” see this article: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/NGC_6946 and open cluster NGC 6939 see here: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/NGC_6939





The James Webb Space Telescope inside Northrop Grumman's test facility in Redondo Beach, California, last year. Credit: NASA/Chris Gunn

The James Webb Space Telescope is at the European Space Agency launch site in French Guiana being processed for launch on an ESA Ariane V launch vehicle. The launch is currently set for December 18, 2021.



The **Atlanta Astronomy Club, Inc.**, one of the South's largest and oldest astronomical society, meets at **3:00 P.M.** on the 3rd 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: Dave Lumpkin 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: Lilli Lindbeck,
Secretary@AtlantaAstronomy.org

Board Chair: Sharon Carruthers Treasurer@AtlantaAstronomy.org

Board: Brigitte Fessele, bhfessele1@gmail.com

Board: Open

Board: Steve Phillips sandsphillips@att.net

ALCor: Ken Olson, keneolson@yahoo.com

Elliott Chapter Director: Mike Shaw director@ceastronomy.org

Elliott Observing Supervisor: Steve Siedentop
observing@ceastronomy.org

Elliott Recording Secretary: Daniel de la Reza
secretary@ceastronomy.org

Elliott Program Coordinator: Steve Siedentop
program@ceastronomy.org

Elliott Outreach Coordinator: Marie Lott
outreach@ceastronomy.org

Elliott Astrophotography Coordinator: Mike Mardis

Elliott Chapter AL Liaison: David Whalen

Elliott Facilities Coordinator: Matt Harvey
facilities@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: Open
sidewalkastronomy@AtlantaAstronomy.org

Light Tresspass: 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

- Nov 10th, Wednesday: Mercury near Mars morning.
- Nov 11th, Thursday: Moon First Quarter.
- Nov 17th, Wednesday: Leonids Meteor Shower peaks.
- Nov 19th, Friday: Full Moon. Lunar eclipse 97% Total: Penumbral begins at 1:00AM, Partial begins at 2:18AM, Mid-eclipse at 4:03AM, Partial ends at 5:47AM, Penumbral ends at 7:06AM.
- Nov 22nd, Monday: Mars very close to Zubenelgenubi morning.
- Nov 27th, Saturday: Moon Last Quarter.
- Dec 2nd, Thursday: Moon near Mars morning.
- Dec 4th, Saturday: New Moon.
- Dec 6th, Monday: Moon near Venus evening.
- Dec 7th, Tuesday: Moon near Saturn evening.
- Dec 8th, Wednesday: Moon near Jupiter evening.
- Dec 10th, Friday: Moon First Quarter.
- Dec 13th, Monday: Geminid Meteor Shower peaks.
- Dec 18th, Saturday: Full Moon. Comet Leonard near Venus evening.
- Dec 26th, Sunday: Moon Last Quarter.
- Dec 29th, Wednesday: Mercury near Venus evening. Conjunction Mercury & Pluto.
- Dec 31st, Friday: Moon near Mars and Antares morning.
- Jan 2nd, Sunday: New Moon.
- Jan 3rd, Monday: Moon near Mercury evening.
- Jan 4th, Tuesday: Moon near Saturn evening.
- Jan 5th, Wednesday: Moon near Jupiter evening.
- Jan 8th, Saturday: Venus at Inferior Conjunction.
- Jan 11th, Tuesday: Mercury near Saturn.

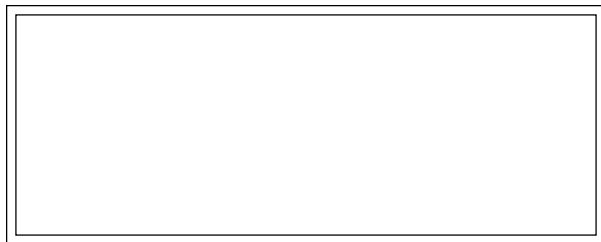
For more event listings and updates see the calendar at www.atlantaastronomy.org

Atlanta Astronomy Club Listserv

Because of the shutdown of Yahoo Groups, the Atlanta Astronomy Club Mailing List has been moved to IO Groups. You can visit the group, start reading messages and posting them here: <https://groups.io/g/AtlantaAstronomyClub>.

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 28. Submissions received after the deadline will go in the following issue.**



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P.O. Box 76155
Atlanta, GA 30358-1155
www.atlantaastronomy.org
On Twitter at <http://twitter.com/atlastro>

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

Newsletter of The Atlanta Astronomy Club, Inc.

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