

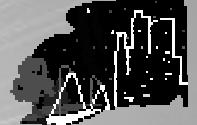


North Central Florida's
Amateur Astronomy Club
29°39' North, 82°21' West

December 2007
Issue 64.1



Member
Astronomical



Member
International

FirstLight

Newsletter of the Alachua Astronomy Club

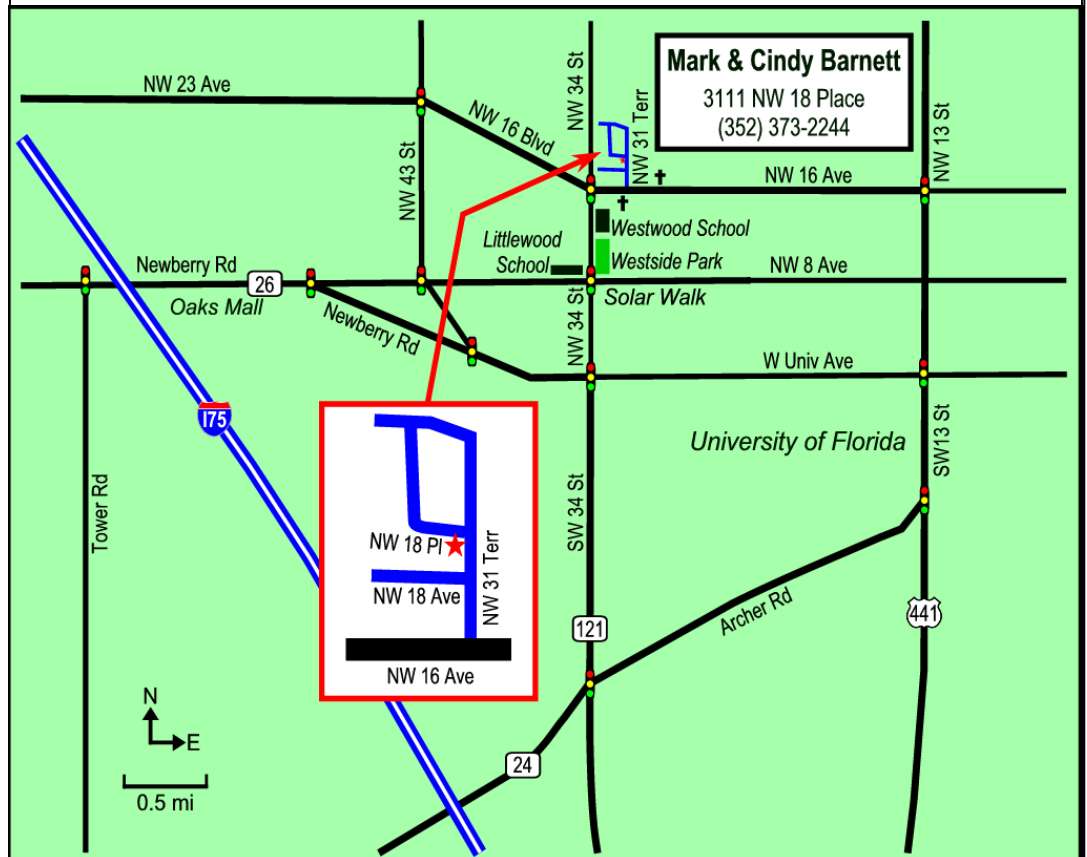
Celebrating AAC's 20th Anniversary!

AAC will hold its annual December holiday party - a potluck dinner - Saturday, December 8, 2007 at 6:00pm. at Mark and Cindy Barnett's house, 3111 N.W. 18th Place, Gainesville, Florida. See map below. There will be no regular Tuesday meeting in December.

The Club will buy drinks and paper products. To sign up, email the treasurer@floridastars.org and indicate what food dish you will bring and how many will be in your party. Also, indicate the number of adults and children (give ages) who will attend.

Learn about AAC's history, enjoy sci-fi space music, a spectacular Slide Show with videos and more! Followed by the infamous Astro Slide Quiz.

Dinner is served at 6:30pm so get there early to set up your side dish.





As you can see by this special issue, the Alachua Astronomy Club is celebrating its Twentieth Anniversary. The club has a proud history of achievements, and has built a reputation around the region and state for excellence. Members have done star parties for schools, scouts, church groups, and private parties locally, around the state, and even overseas. We have been instrumental in the implementation of civic projects such as the renowned Gainesville Solar Walk on NW 8th Avenue and the large mural hanging in the Royal Park 16 Theater lobby, based on constellations and local landmarks. The club has regularly participated in local outreach activities that drew over 600 people. We have monthly star parties at local dark sky locations, as well as nearby state parks. We present programs by professional astronomers, NASA engineers and managers, award-winning professors and authors, as well as our own club

members with unique expertise. We have telescopes available for members to check out and use from 4.5 to 17.5 inches of aperture. We have recently acquired a dedicated solar telescope and a highly accurate laser collimator. Several club members took part this year in an expedition to gather important scientific data by observing and timing the occultation of Iota Cancri by Asteroid 411 Xanthe. We have an excellent newsletter, FirstLight, an active Amateur Telescope Making group, and a fledgling Lunar Observing Group. We have a proud tradition to look back on, and a rewarding future to look forward to.

What can we expect in 2008? Will two excellent comets like McNaught and 17P Holmes grace us with their presence? Will a bright supernova erupt close enough to give us a great show? It isn't likely, but who knows. Some things we do know. The Paynes Prairie star party is coming up soon. The club has a joint activity planned with the UF Astronomy Department and the Florida Museum of Natural History in April. Scott McCartney has an excellent set of speakers lined up for 2008, including four UF astronomy professors, another fine speaker from NASA Kennedy Space Center, our own Hugo- and Nebula-award-winning science fiction writer, Joe Haldeman, and several others from our own club membership. I fully expect the ATM group and the Lunar Observing group to grow and prosper. But, more than anything, the future depends on you. You will gain from the Alachua Astronomy Club what you put in to it. Find someplace we can use your unique talents and skills, and dive in.

I would like to thank the many members whose contributions help make this club a success. Thanks to Jackie Owens, for a consistently fine job as publisher of FirstLight.

Thanks to Howard Cohen and Scott McCartney who plan and keep our

web site up to date. Another huge thank you to Scott, our Programs Coordinator, for this year's programs, and for volunteering for another year of service. Thanks to Marianne Gamble for the great refreshments this year. Thanks to Howard Cohen, our Vice President, Tandy Carter, our Secretary, and Larry Friedberg, our Treasurer, and to Board Members Bob O'Connell (who also leads our Lunar Observing Group), Pam Mydock (who coordinated our Twentieth Anniversary celebration), and Thomas Olmsted (who also serves as our Librarian). Thanks to Chuck Broward, our Astronomical League Coordinator and ATM Group Coordinator, and to Rich Russin, our Photographer. And thanks to all of you for entrusting the leadership of this distinguished organization to us for another year.

AAC Presidents

Charlie Tarjan	1988–89
Mark Cowan	1990
Andrea Van Jensen	1991
Gilbert Bernardo	1992–93
Gilbert Bernardo & Don Loftus	1994
Robert Jacobs	1995
John Brandorff	1996–97
Randy Palmer	1998–2001
Mike Toomey	2002
James ("Bud") Cridlin	2003
Chuck Broward	2004
Mike Toomey	2005
Bill Helms	2006–2008

AAC Meeting Location

AAC regular meetings are held on the second Tuesday of each month at **7:00 p.m.** at the Florida Museum of Natural History, **Powell Hall**, in the Lucille T. Maloney Classroom, on UF campus, unless otherwise announced. All meetings are free and open to the public. Join us for some great discussions and stargazing afterwards. Please visit our website for more information (floridastars.org). There will be no monthly meeting in December.

Alachua Astronomy Club, Inc.

2007 Officers

President: Bill Helms
Phone: 352-542-8227
Email: president@floridastars.org

Vice-President: Howard L. Cohen
Phone: 352-495-1811
Email: vicepresident@floridastars.org

Treasurer: Larry Friedberg
Phone: 954-290-6872
Email: treasurer@floridastars.org

Secretary: Tandy Carter
Phone: 386-546-3387
Email: secretary@floridastars.org

Board of Directors

Bob O'Connell
Thomas Olmstead
Pamela Mydock

Chairs and Committees:

Star Parties: Mike Toomey
Phone: 352-219-0572
Email: starparty@floridastars.org

Programs: Scott McCartney
Phone: 352-495-1811
Email: programs@floridastars.org

Webmaster: Howard L. Cohen
Scott McCartney
Email: webmaster@floridastars.org

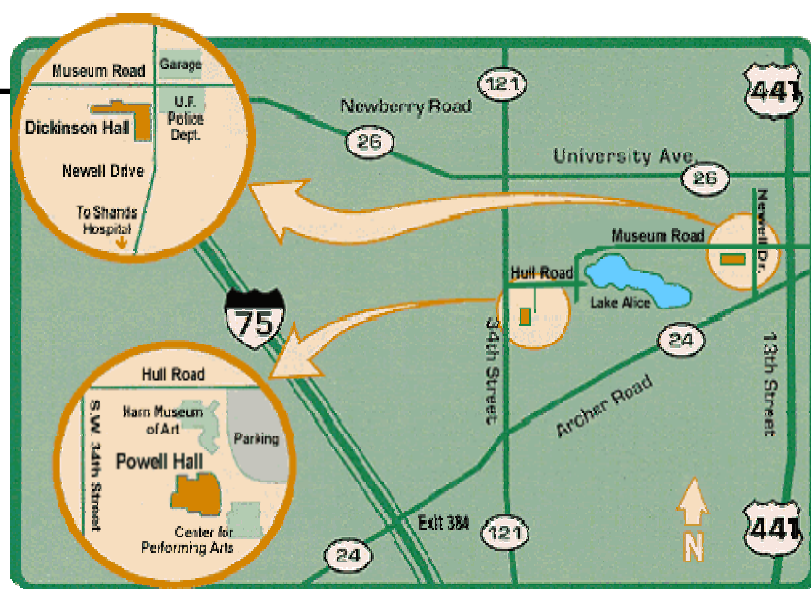
FirstLight Editor: Jackie Owens
Phone: 386-462-7366
Email: firstlight@floridastars.org

School Liaison: Chuck Broward
Email: outreach@floridastars.org

ATM SIG: Chuck Broward
Email: ATM@floridastars.org
ATM Observer List:
ATM-Observers-L@lists.ufl.edu
Astronomical League Correspondent
Charles S. Broward
Phone: 352-475-1014

FirstLight is the bi-monthly publication of the Alachua Astronomy Club, Inc., Gainesville, Florida.

© Copyright 2007,
Alachua Astronomy Club, Inc.



Submitting Articles to FirstLight

The AAC encourages readers to submit articles and letters for inclusion in *FirstLight*. The AAC reserves the right review and edit all articles and letters before publication. Send all materials directly to the *FirstLight* Editor.

Materials must reach the *FirstLight* Editor at least 30 days prior to the publication date.

Submission of articles are accepted **by e-mail or on a CD**. Submit as either a plain text or Microsoft Word file. (In addition, you can also send a copy as a pdf file but you also need to send your text or Word file too.) Send pictures, figures or diagrams as separate gif or jpg file.

Mailing Address for Hard Copies or CDs

Note: Since our mailbox is *not* checked daily, mail materials well before the deadline date. (Hence, submission by e-mail is much preferred!)

c/o FirstLight Editor
The Alachua Astronomy Club, Inc.
P.O. Box 13744
Gainesville, FL 32604-1744 USA

By E-Mail; Send e-mail with your attached files to
FirstLight@floridastars.org.

FirstLight is copyright by the AAC. No part of FirstLight may be reproduced by any means, nor stored in retrieval systems, transmitted or otherwise copied without written permission from the AAC

REMINISCING ABOUT AAC ORIGINS

Dr. Howard L. Cohen, Associate Professor Emeritus,
Department of Astronomy, University of Florida
December 2007

The Alachua Astronomy Club, Inc. (AAC) rose from the ashes of the Florida (Amateur) Astronomical Society (FAS). To understand the beginnings of the AAC, one must look back to this former organization. This narrative sketches the origins of both FAS and the AAC along with notes about the first ten years of AAC history

Early Beginnings

The Oaks Mall in Gainesville, Florida was a field of horses. The Texas Roadhouse on Archer Road was a small, private airfield (Stengel Field). Indeed, no Archer Road interchange existed for Interstate 75 and only a few trailer parks and homes dotted the road eastward from the Interstate toward NW 34th Street. A drive-in movie theater occupied land now filled by Sam's Club on NW 13th Street. And N.W. 8th Avenue from Littlewood School east toward NW 23rd Street, where the Gainesville Solar Walk stretches, was little more than a jeep trail. The University of Florida (UF) was a mere shadow compared with today where a young astronomy program was developing within the Department of Physics and Astronomy. The year was 1967 and the astronomy department's research optical observatory, Rosemary Hill, was seeing first light on an isolated, hilly region twenty-five miles southwest of the campus.

Having arrived at UF as a young assistant professor in early 1968, I often had to field questions from an inquisitive public that had an appetite for astronomy but found little local resources to feed their inquiring minds. A small planetarium had existed on campus in Benton Hall since the 1950s but was torn down about 1966 and later (1971) replaced by Grinter Hall, home of UF's Graduate School and International Studies. The Campus Teaching Observatory, built in 1956 to replace an old, small wooden structure erected in the 1930s (Fig. 1), housed an historic 8-inch Clark refractor and stood on the south side of the UF police station. Although moved to its present location south of the Reitz Union about 1971, this observatory was only open for public viewing on very special occasions.

Consequently, I often found myself inventing apologies to explain why no programs or facilities existed in our area to satisfy increasing numbers of people who yearned for information on astronomy and space science. Interest in space was especially keen since Apollo astronauts were traveling back and forth to the Moon since the first human landing on our neighboring world in 1969.



Fig. 1 The UF Teaching Observatory was a small, wooden building built during the 1930s behind the UF Police Station, rebuilt in 1956 and moved to its present location south of the Reitz Union in 1971.

Finally, in the fall of 1971, a young UF student, Emil Bonanno, came to my office and repeated an often asked question, "Does Gainesville have an amateur astronomy club?" Weary of making up excuses, I asked this young man if he was interested in helping me form such a club. He stepped back in surprise at my response and sheepishly answered "yes" in a hesitating voice! Thus, to my knowledge, began our area's first formal amateur astronomy group.

Shortly afterwards, we held an organ-

izational meeting, November 1, 1971, in the Seminar Room of the Florida State Museum, now called Dickinson Hall, which currently houses most of the collections and research activities of the Florida Museum of Natural History. This meeting established the structure, purpose, etc. of the club. A full, individual club membership was set at \$7.50 per year with a family membership costing \$10.00. I acted as faculty sponsor since this association was initially sponsored by the Museum and the Department of Physics and Astronomy. (Later, however, the club became an independent organization independent of UF to allow membership by anyone in our community.) We named the club the Florida Amateur Astronomical Society (FAAS) with a student, Charles J. Walther, serving as first president. Other initial officers were Frank King and Emil Bonanno as vice presidents of publicity and procurement respectively, and Pat Edwards, a UF astronomy graduate student as secretary-treasurer. Council members included Richard Flagg, a research associate in the astronomy department, Sally Hoffman, now a professor of astronomy at Santa Fe Community College (SFCC), and Max Petzold, who became a very active member throughout the history of FAAS.

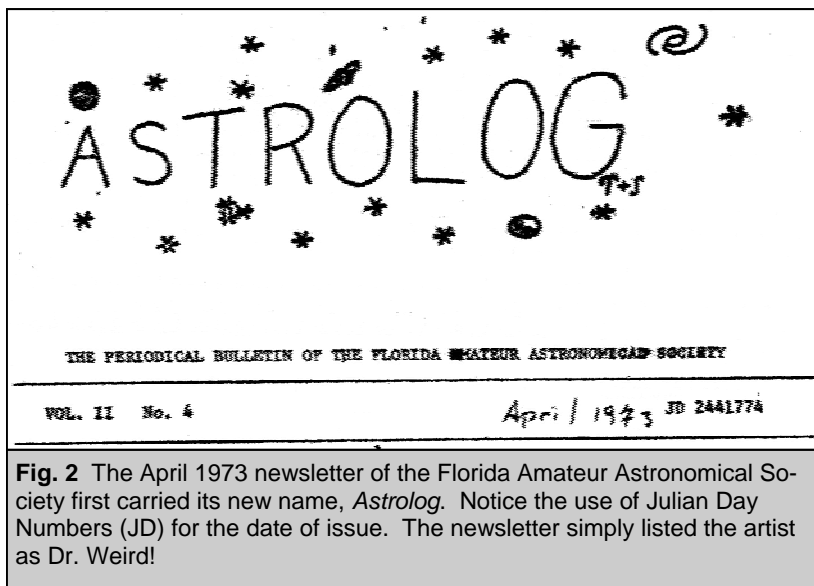


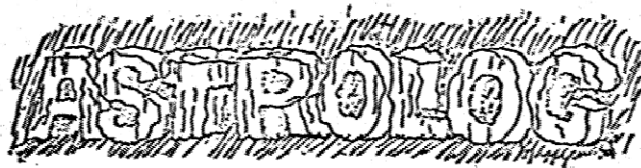
Fig. 2 The April 1973 newsletter of the Florida Amateur Astronomical Society first carried its new name, *Astrolog*. Notice the use of Julian Day Numbers (JD) for the date of issue. The newsletter simply listed the artist as Dr. Weird!

I gave the club's first talk at its second meeting on November 29 ("High on a Mountain Top You Can See Forever"), held in the Conference Room of the NASA Space Science Research Building or SSRB (now Bryant Space Science Center). By March 1972 we moved to the Doyle Conner Building, the same building that housed AAC meetings until October 2003 when the AAC began to meet in Powell Hall of the Florida Museum of Natural History. We also held monthly meetings on the first Monday of the month with its executive council meeting on the last Monday. However, unlike the AAC's executive council, which meets for monthly dinner meetings at a local restaurant, FAAS held its council meetings initially in SSRB.

By June 1972 membership had grown to forty. Star parties were being held monthly at various sites in and around Gainesville including the airport at Keystone Heights. A frequent local site was a soccer field at the new Santa Fe Community College (SFCC) campus near I75 and NW 39th Avenue, a passably dark area in the early 1970s! By January 1973 SFCC also agreed to help sponsor the new club and meetings were moved to their new campus for several months before returning to the Doyle Conner Building where they remained throughout the history of FAAS. The executive council also began to meet occasionally for "dessert and coffee" at various council members' homes, a tradition that lasted throughout the life of the club.

The society's first newsletter appeared March 1972 and was simply called "The Periodical Bulletin of the Florida Amateur Astronomical Society." A year later, the April 1973 newsletter carried a new name *AstroLog* (Fig. 2). (Later, after FAAS disbanded, *Astrolog* became the name of the Central Florida Astronomical Society's newsletter.) In March 1976 the Executive Council approved incorporation of the society as an independent, not-for-profit entity and changed the name of the club to the Florida Astronomical Society, Inc. (FAS), hoping the club would ultimately become a statewide, or at least a northeast-wide organization (Fig. 3).

FAS continued to enjoy a few more active years with many speakers and star parties including "ministar parties" at SFCC, and club picnics. The organization was aided by several very active members including some local people as Caroline Willingham, Bob DeHoff and Max Petzold. In addition, Chuck Broward, leader of AAC's ATM group and one of AAC's most valuable members, also joined the old club. Unlike, the AAC today, FAS also attracted various members of the astronomy department at UF. Astronomy department per-



THE PERIODICAL BULLETIN OF THE FLORIDA ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY

VOL. V NO. 4 P.O. BOX 12819 GAINESVILLE, FLORIDA 32604 APRIL 1976

THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL REPORTS

The Executive Council met on March 29 at the home of Max Petzold. The documents for the incorporation of the Society were signed by the members of the Council. FAAS has now officially become the Florida Astronomical Society, Inc.

Fig 3 FAAS became FAS in March 1976 by dropping the word amateur and incorporating as a not-for-profit organization to become the Florida Astronomical Society, Inc.

sonnel who joined (besides the author) included Professor John P. Oliver, graduate students Sally Hoffman, Terry Flesch, now a professor at Thomas More College, and Ron Parise, who received his Ph.D. from UF in 1979 and became a payload specialist on two shuttle launches (STS-35, 1990 and STS-67, 1995).

FAS also participated in several important public events including a major, three-day exhibit (October 20–22, 1977) at the defunct Gainesville Mall on the northwest corner of NW 23rd Avenue and NW 13th Street (Fig. 4). The old mall was anchored by Sears at its south end and by Maas Brothers (subsequently Burdines) at the mall's north side, the current location of the new Lowe's Home Center. Part of the exhibit included a Newtonian reflector pointed at a backlit 35-mm slide of Saturn hung above a store about a hundred feet away so people could "view a celestial object."

Unfortunately, by 1979 an ailment often suffered by many organizations began to take a firm grip on FAS, "apathy." In fact, as early as 1973, the March issue of the club newsletter already carried a warning by Terry Flesch, "Apathy kills as surely as the sword." His words rung true and the club failed to bring in new, active members while old members reluctantly tried to carry on. Sadly, FAS finally and quickly moved into a period of near inactivity during the summer of 1979. The last issue of "Astrolog," a pale one page image of its former, once proud self, was mailed in November of that year.

Intervening Years

In 1979 the Department of Astronomy at UF came into existence, having split from physics. Astronomy faculty at UF also more than doubled with the addition of professors from the University of South Florida and from UF's dissolved University College, once a college for entering UF first-year students. A space astronomy laboratory, formerly at SUNY, Albany, also joined as an autonomous research unit within the department. Furthermore, beginning in 1980, the Department of Astronomy began a pro-

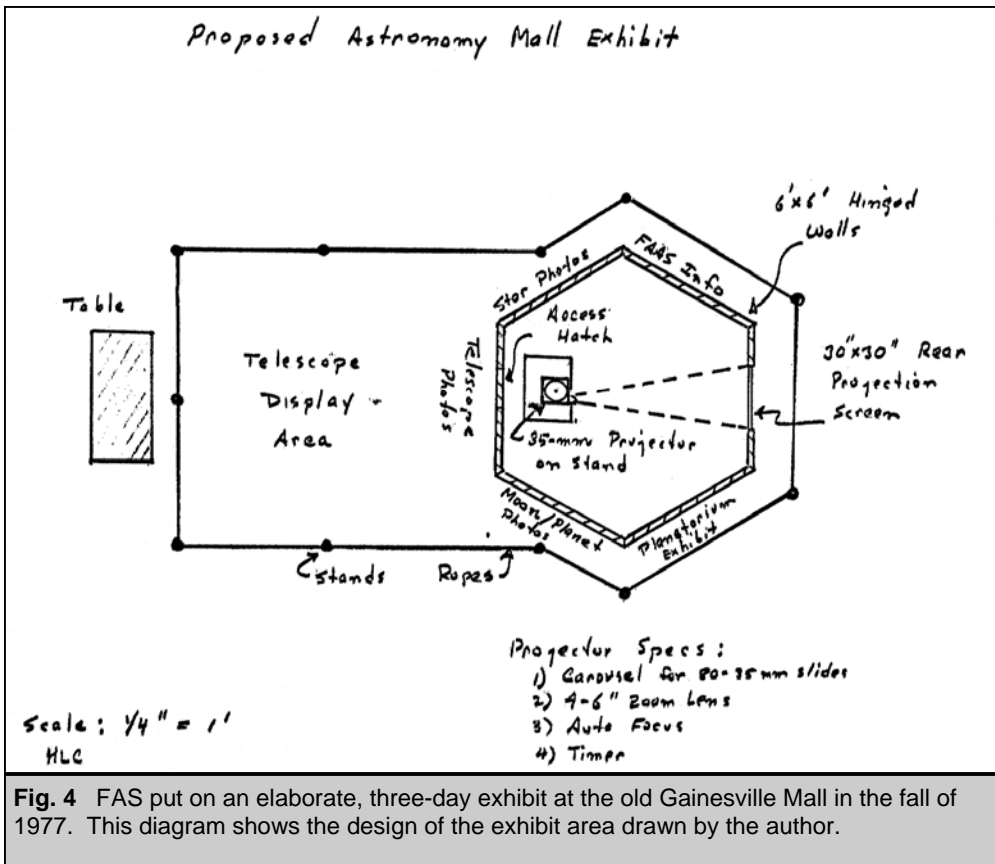


Fig. 4 FAS put on an elaborate, three-day exhibit at the old Gainesville Mall in the fall of 1977. This diagram shows the design of the exhibit area drawn by the author.

gram to renovate the Teaching Observatory. The observatory suffered from neglect and lack of modernization making it poorly suited for student or public use. In fact, public nights were difficult and embarrassing given the poor state of the building and 8-inch telescope. After years of hard work by graduates students, the UF physics/astronomy shop, and myself, a renovated observatory, which now also included a rebuilt 12.5-inch Cassegrain reflector, held its first public showing in the fall of 1985. Public viewing sessions began Friday nights beginning that November, and have continued ever since. (A more detailed history of the Teaching Observatory is on the Department of Astronomy's web site, astro.ufl.edu.)

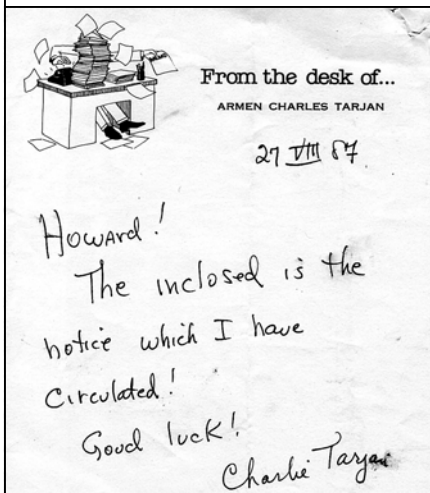


Fig 5 Dr. Charlie Tarjan, AAC's first president, sent this memo noting he has sent an announcement for the first formal meeting.

Meanwhile, I again sat in my office trying to answer inquires about whether Gainesville had an amateur astronomy club. By 1987, painful memories of the hard work I had put into the former, once prosperous astronomy club were waning. In addition, I had again become weary of making vain excuses about the lack of an astronomy club. Although I could now point to the renovated Teaching Observatory, public nights were not a substitute for the offerings of an active group of amateurs. In the fall of that year, I once more answered a phone call with the same question, "Does Gainesville have an amateur astronomy club?" This time the caller was a university professor of entomology, Dr. Charlie Tarjan. As I had done more than fifteen years before, I responded "No, but would you like to help start one?"

Professor Tarjan, not hesitating for a moment, excitedly said, yes! And so, our area's second astronomy club arose, sustained by my memories of the once successful and active Florida Astronomical Society.

The AAC Arises

Again an organizational meeting was held, this time not in the Museum but in the Doyle Conner Building on September 8, 1987, the second Tuesday of the month as we still do now. Here we would meet for more than sixteen years before moving to our present location in the Florida Museum of Natural History (October 2003). Charlie Tarjan agreed to be our first president, a position he held for two years. (For a list of all those who have held this position, see the side bar.) Actual activities commenced with the second meeting, October 13, 1987 (Fig. 5). Once more I again gave the opening presentation ("The Telescope Trap") along with graduate student Billy Cooke ("The Stars and Planets in the Winter Sky"). Billy eventually went on to become a meteor expert at Marshall Space Flight Center.

Surprisingly, except myself and a few others, including Chuck Broward, who had been a prior member of FAS, no one else from the old club helped form or became a member of the new



The Alachua Astronomy Club meets the second Tuesday of each month at the Doyle Conner Building, S.W. 34th Street and 20th Avenue at 7PM. EVERYONE interested in astronomy is welcome to attend. CALL Chuck at 475-1014 or 392-1051 for more information.

EDITOR'S NOTE:

First, my name is Chuck, and I feel we need a newsletter for several reasons. One is to spread word about us and our avocation. Another reason is to educate both ourselves and others, and to build interest and friendship in the club. And, if I can, the newsletter will be mailed out before meetings to remind us that indeed we should be here. Also, and this may be one of the more important reasons, I hope to exchange newsletters with other clubs in the state and perhaps Georgia--to broaden our base of ideas and activities.

I envision YOU providing the material in the newsletter. Right now it must be handed me--preferably typed, or printed. Later, I can get my computer modem fired up, and we can electronically transfer articles.

Some subject ideas....
 Book reviews. Up-coming activities, sky events and calendar. Who's Who in the club. Photography Hints. Computer Programs and Information. Observing Tips. Astro-electronics. Equipment reviews. Homebrew scope making column. Tutorials. First hand reports of activities. Maps to star parties. And, YOUR ideas. And advertizing.

At present, the major cost will be postage (22¢). Paper and printing will be little if none unless we get lots of members.

If you want this, submit articles, cartoons, sketches, ideas, ads, etc to....
 C.S. BROWARD
 Rt. 2, Box 2915
 Melrose, Fl., 32666 Phone 475-1014/392-1051

CAMPUS ADDRESS: Coastal Engineering Lab
 PS. We can even format it to be three-holed punched for keeping in a note book.

NOTE If we elect to do this, banner will be done right, and it'll look more like a newsletter!

Fig 6 The first issue of AAC's newsletter, *FirstLight*, published by its editor, Chuck Broward, December 1987. However, Chuck declared the next issue as the "premier issue" of *FirstLight*. Selected articles from the first ten years of issue are on the club's web site due primarily to the efforts of Pam Mydock.

club. Chuck would ultimately become one of AAC's most active and supportive members, serving in countless capacities. Indeed, Chuck published a preliminary issue of our newsletter, *FirstLight*, in December 1987 (Fig. 6), giving it the name we now know so well. Chuck, opened the initial issue with the words, "First my name is Chuck, and I feel we need a newsletter . . ." We did and Chuck thus became its first editor. Subsequently, Chuck published what he called the "premier issue" of *FirstLight* in January 1988, declaring the newsletter was "the printed voice of the Alachua Astronomy Club." Chuck then held the thankless position of editor for seven years, until 1995 when I began to help him in this arduous task.

The AAC Logo

Chuck included a crude drawing of what would become the official AAC logo in the preliminary issue of *FirstLight*, printed December 1987 (Fig 7, left). The logo displayed an outline of the state of Florida with a telescope situated at Gainesville. I do not know where Chuck got the idea for this logo. Interestingly this logo is strikingly similar to one used by an organization, The North Florida Planetarium Board, that I helped form during the 1970s to promote the acquisition of a planetarium for our area. This logo also used the state's outline but the figure of a planetarium projector, rather than a telescope, pointed at Gainesville (Fig. 8).

The latitude and longitude of our club's location ($29^{\circ}38'N$, $82^{\circ}21'W$) first appeared in the September 1992 issue of *FirstLight* but strangely disappeared several months later in March 1993 only to reappear the following May! Chuck redesigned the logo for the January 1994 newsletter (Fig. 7, center) but the logo remained a coarse picture. When I became the primary editor of *FirstLight* beginning with the February 1995 copy, I redrew the logo in the form we now know it with a more precise outline of our state. A simple outline of a Dobsonian reflector sits off-center pointing at Gainesville, now represented by a "star symbol." In addition, I adopted "**TRICORNE DISPLAY**" as our "official font" since its angular design complemented the image of the telescope

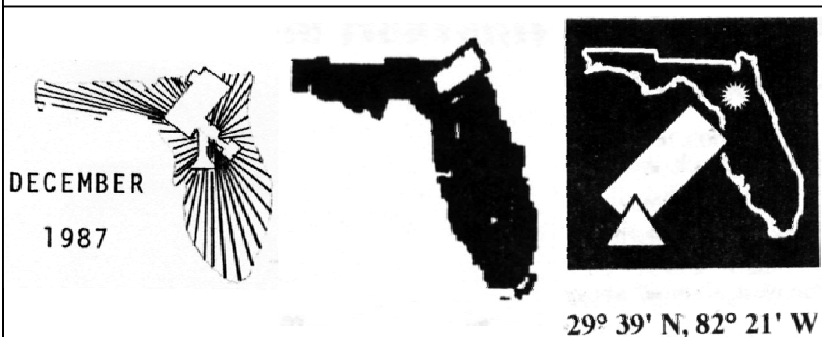


Fig 7 Evolution of the AAC logo since its first appearance (left) in the preliminary issue of *FirstLight* (Dec. 1987). Redrawn in March 1993 (center), the logo took on its present design in February 1995 (right).

represented simply by a rectangle for a tube and an equilateral triangle for its base. I also slightly refined our latitude to $29^{\circ}39'N$ but mistakenly wrote it as $29^{\circ}29'N$! I corrected this error for the March issue (Fig. 7, right) and the logo and coordinates have remained unchanged since then.

Below the AAC logo appears our latitude and longitude. Yet, where exactly was this? We ran a contest in June 1998 to see who could determine just where the logo coordinates placed us in Gainesville. I judged our then president, Randy Palmer, as winner, who correctly identified the location as the UF O'Connell parking lot, about 75 feet west of North-South Drive and 700 feet south of West University Avenue. (North-South Drive, now renamed Gale Lemerand Drive, was relocated slightly westward a few years ago to allow for the expansion of Florida Field completed in 2003.) See Figure 9. Randy subsequently served as AAC President longer than any other, from 1998 through 2001. (I don't know why but perhaps his winning entry went to his head!) Chuck Broward was a close runner up with a location 100 feet northwest of the UF stadium. For details on the history of the AAC logo, this contest, and a view of the logo's standard color rendition in orange and blue with a yellow sunburst star, go to the AAC home page (floridastars.org) and click on the AAC logo!

The First Ten

By September 1997, the AAC had surpassed the short seven-year life of the previous astronomy club by three years and was going strong. Monthly executive council meetings at local restaurants, monthly meeting and star parties, all

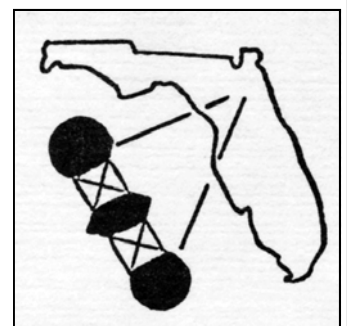


Fig. 8 The AAC logo is similar to one used by the North Central Florida Planetarium Board during the 1970s.

kept members busy. A telescope loaner program was also started which continues to this day. (A frequent appearing plea from Chuck in the newsletter should sound familiar to current club members, "Has anyone seen the club telescope?") On May 13, 1995, the AAC began a major cooperative effort with Kanapaha Botanical Gardens to supply telescopes for viewing at their (then) semiannual "Moonlight Walks." The AAC eventually became a major attraction at these events bringing a dozen or more telescopes, setting up automated slide shows and gift tables. These public star parties lasted nearly ten years until April 2004 when the botanical gardens suspended these affairs. At its peak a "Moonlight Walk" would often bring more than one thousand visitors per event to peer and gasp with amazement as they viewed the heavens through club scopes.

The same year of the first Kanapaha Moonlight Walk (1995) saw the unfortunate passing of George H. Russell, one of the first seven members of the club (Fig. 10) and one of its most prolific *FirstLight* authors. The club later established the Russell prize given occasionally to the best astronomy science projects at the Alachua County regional science fair. (Details are on the AAC web site under Club Info—Misc.) Primarily due to AAC member and previous *FirstLight* editor, Pam Mydock, more than fifty articles from the first ten years of *FirstLight* written by George and others are available on-line through the AAC web site (floridastars.org).

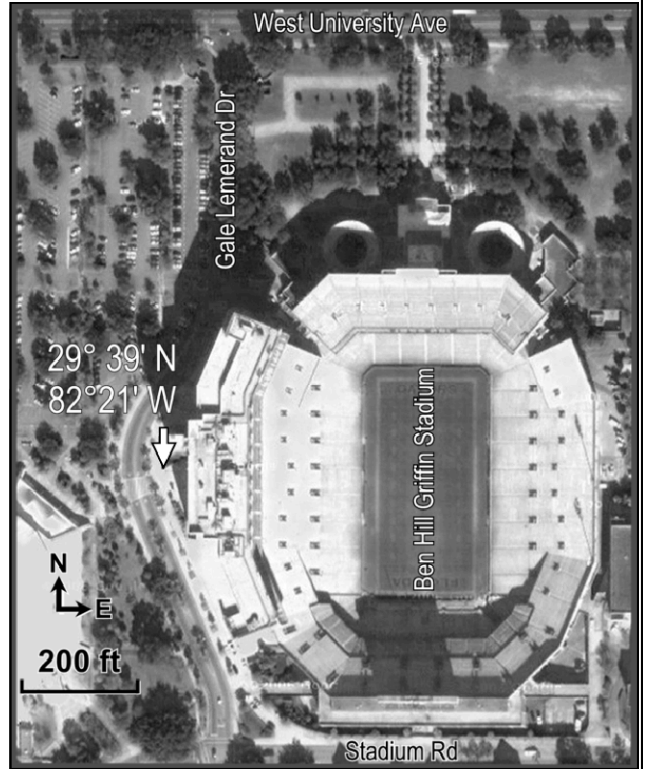


Fig 9 The latitude and longitude appearing with the AAC logo refers to a point just west of UF's Ben Hill Griffin Stadium. See text. (Picture adapted from Google Maps).

As the AAC's

LIST OF MEMBERS ALACHUA ASTRONOMY CLUB			
HOWARD L. COHEN			
GAINESVILLE FL 32605	ph		
BILLY DODD			
CHIEFLAND FL 32626	ph		
PHILIP GIGLIO			
LAKE CITY FL 32055	ph		
MAX PETZOLD	/		
GAINESVILLE FL 32605	ph		
DOUG RICHARDS			
GAINESVILLE FL 32607	ph		
GEORGE RUSSELL			
GAINESVILLE FL 32608	ph		
CHARLIE TARJAN			
GAINESVILLE FL 32607	ph		

Fig. 10 First known membership list of the AAC. Original members included Charlie Tarjan, first president, Max Petzold from the old club, Bill Dodd, founder of the Chiefland Astronomy Village, George Russell, one of AAC's most dedicated early members, and the author. (Addresses and phone numbers blocked out for privacy.)

first ten years ended, one of the brightest comets of the century heralded the club's first successful decade, Comet Hale-Bopp. In fact, the AAC cooperated with the Department of Astronomy to help make the "Great Comet of 1997" the most widely observed comet of the 20th Century. The university's research observatory near Bronson is not normally opened to the public. However, "An Evening of Discovery at Rosemary Hill Observatory" allowed 90 privileged members of the public to view exhibits, hear talks and observe the heavens and the comet under dark skies through the observatory and AAC member telescopes. (Tickets for this event, at just \$7.50 each, sold out within about an hour after tickets sales opened!) Guests applauded the AAC for the opportunity to view the heavens through a variety of good telescopes.

The AAC was thus poised to make the next ten years even more memorable. Nevertheless, I leave reminiscing about AAC's second ten year period to others. The AAC is truthfully indebted to many active and concerned members who helped bring this organization into the 21st Century, too many to mention in this brief historical synopsis of its earliest beginnings. Meanwhile, continuing activity by both old and *especially new members* is vital to prevent apathy from again spoiling our local astronomy club's growing heritage and reputation as a significant and vital part of both our local and worldwide astronomical communities.

Studying the stars leads people to a deeper understanding of the passage of time and how we use our own lives as measuring sticks. Dr. Cohen has captured the people and the events of 1987-1996 in the companion article about AAC and I will try to capture the most recent decade in this article. Our club motto is about you all and how you choose to spend your free time: "People looking at stars and planets"

It is serendipitous that the most recent issue of this newsletter (October-November 2007) Dr. Cohen published an article titled: "To Eta Cas and Back." It's about sending a radio signal from Gainesville to a star in

the constellation Cassiopeia the Queen (the lovely "W" that circles the northern sky). The radio signal was sent when AAC had just begun; it is estimated to have reached Eta Cas (sixth brightest star) about two weeks ago. In another twenty years perhaps we will receive a reply or maybe the Eta Cassians will think it is junk mail and hit their version of the delete key. Meanwhile on our fair planet, my hope is that AAC will be going strong with a new crew at the helm, ready for anything astro-related.

The strength of this club has come from its crew of many, many members. Please see the sidebars listed in this issue for the names of those I gleaned from past newsletters, including officers, committee chairs, and

board members. Over the years, this crew has made a significant impact on astronomical awareness and education in North Central Florida. But let us not rest on our laurels as there is more to be done with our outreach programs with schools, scouts, and the general public.

Here are a few of the highlight of the past ten years.

1998:

President Randy Palmer began the first of his four years at the helm. Randy is a great advocate of public outreach and sets up sidewalk star parties everywhere he goes; Randy shares news of these events in a special newsletter feature titled "From the Sidewalk." Also in 1998, Dr. Cohen began his own newsletter series, "A to ZZ." This title should have a capital A with a tiny circle on top but I can't type that, so suffice it to say that by November 2007 the series is midway through its second pass through the alphabet.

1998 was a banner year for getting our name on the front page of the Gainesville Sun four times, 2/26, 8/10, 11/26, and 11/18. AAC collaborated with the Gainesville Art in Public Places Trust (APPT) for re-constructing the 4,000,000,000-to-1 scale Solar Walk monuments along NW 8th Avenue; AAC began its first major attempt at fundraising to support this public astronomical art installation. AAC members designed and built a Dobsonian telescope with a donated 17-inch mirror; we called it the "RLT" for Rather Large Telescope. This 'scope and others are available for checkout by AAC members.

AAC BOARD MEMBERS

Barnett, Mark
Brandt, Ken
Broward, Chuck
Carter, Tandy
Cohen, Howard L.
Cohen, Marian
Cook, Gary
Cridlin, James Bud
Edwards, David
Friedberg, Larry
Helms, Bill
Howell, Andy
Jensen, Karen
Kemper, Alicia
Loftus, Brittany
Loftus, Don
Malles, Tim
McCartney, Scott
McCosar, Bruce
Mydock, Pam
Olmstead, Thomas
Owens, Jackie
Palmer, Randy
Sims, Jeff
Toomey, Mike
Trujillo, Remigio

Also this year AAC laid groundwork for associations and/or collaborations with astronomy-related groups: Astronomical League (AL); International Dark Sky Association (IDA); occultation of Regulus and the Moon with Northeast Florida Astronomical Society (NEFAS, Jacksonville club) and International Occultation Timing Association (IOTA); Sensational Science at the Florida Museum of Natural History educational activities; and various star parties around the county, including the spring and fall Moonlight Walk events at Kanapaha Gardens. Monthly AAC-only star parties continue to be hosted by Bob and Fran Jacobs, just south of the City of Alachua, unless otherwise arranged. 1998 December Holiday Party at the Jacobs residence in Alachua.

1999:

Randy Palmer is in his second year as President. Probably the most important thing accomplished in 1999 was doing the paperwork to officially incorporate the Alachua Astronomy Club, Inc. as a 501(c)3 entity. --
Please see Bruce McCosar's minutes from July 1999 opposite page.

Tarpon Springs artist Elizabeth Indianos was chosen to design the new Solar Walk for APPT and also was commissioned to paint a huge astro mural in the lobby of the new movie theater. Between 1999 and 2001 the club fundraised \$25,000 to support the new monuments for the Solar Walk, with a lot of help from members, friends, and the general public. AAC hosted an Astronomy Day event at Marlboro Farms and for the first time ever, AAC sold tickets to an event; there was a profit after expenses but only because so many of us spent hours of time organizing, building, and publicizing. RLT was on display; there was an art contest for kids, a "solar system" hayride in the pasture; hands-on science stations and lots of other stuff.

The first annual June Star-B-Q was hosted by Mike and Heidi Toomey at the Back In Time Ranch in Marion County. Other observing sessions for 1999 included the Moonlight Walks at Kanapaha, Refuge at Ocklawaha "eco-resort" site in Ocala National Forest, school star parties, plus a daytime event at Santa Fe Community College for a rare transit of Mercury across the solar disk, and of course the fabulous Leonid meteor shower in November.
December Holiday Party at Howard and Marion Cohen residence in Gainesville.

AAC Meeting Minutes, July 1999

By Bruce McCosar

There once was a club secretary
Who found Form 1023 just too hairy.
With my little pen,
I've done the work of three men:
Moe Howard, and Curly, and Larry.

Michael Branciforte and good old Sam Bailer
Were our visitors last, and our mailer
Should have furnished you two
Free newsletters, woo hoo!
If not, we must speak to her jailer.

A theatre project in planning:
A mural, proposed by us, spanning
Royal Park's new lobby
Became somewhat of a hobby
But as for payment . . . this picture, we're panning.

A model destroyed, so it pains us,
Because vandals kept stealing Uranus.
But the Solar System shall stand
If we can lend a hand,
And quite a good rep it will gain us.

Hidden Oaks call Alicia Kemper,
Saying, Could you possibly lend a member?
Randy Palmer stepped in
With a wink and a grin.
. . . Please vote for him again this November.

The newsletter staff scored a win:
For now they are assisted by Gwen!
When the need is urgent
She steps in as drill sergeant
And if needed, she calls up her twin.

Should you to the next meeting come calling
At Doyle Conner, be warned, it's appalling:
On campus we're meeting,
And your time is fleeting,
If you're going, you'd better start hauling.

2000:

Randy Palmer is President for the third time. AAC's second Astronomy Day event is held at Marlboro Farms Morningside Ranch. Continuing public outreach with: Reserves at Oklawaha, Kanapaha Gardens Moonlight Walks in Spring and Fall, and star parties with schools. A new contact for yearly events begins for The Villages in Marion and Sumter counties for "Starry, Starry Night." Sky Commander system installed for easy location of sky objects with the RLT. Second annual June Star-B-Q hosted by the Toomey's at the Back In Time Ranch. In November paperwork finalized with the City of Gainesville for construction of the Solar Walk. December Holiday Party at Howard and Marion Cohen residence in Gainesville.

2001:

Randy Palmer begins his fourth year as President. AAC revised the By-Laws in 2001 with a restriction of three consecutive years limitation for re-election to each individual office, so Randy will be the only person to serve four consecutive terms, FDR-like.

In February, Pluto's status as a planet becomes a public controversy after the New York Times reports that Hayden Planetarium omits Pluto from its displays; AAC decides to keep Pluto as a planet for the new Solar Walk. Astronomy Day in 2001 was held at the campus of Oak Hall and Martha Manson schools; Astronomical League awarded AAC the prize for Best New Idea for "Planet Putt-Putt" and "Solar System Hayride."

Continuing public outreach events at Kanapaha Gardens, The Villages, and schools. New locations for AAC in 2001 include Kitty Hawke Aviation Flying 10 Airport in Archer and Atlantis Resort, Nassau, Bahamas. Randy Palmer and Chuck Broward had all expenses paid trip to host a private star party for EMC Storage Software Conference in April. Tough duty! Third annual June Star-B-Q party hosted by the Toomey's. Other notable events were a special invitation for AAC members to UF's Rosemary Hill Observatory in Bronson in September and in December

a sunset solar eclipse party in Cedar Key. December Holiday Party held at Gainesville Garden Club.

2002:

New President is Mike Toomey. Also new FirstLight editors were Patti McCartney, January to August, and Heidi Toomey, September to January 2003. The concrete monuments of the Solar Walk are all installed and official dedication is on Saturday, May 18, 2002; City of Gainesville proclaims Solar Walk Day. AAC committee tasked with designing 13 inch diameter bronze plaques for planet monuments; Tim Malles drafts the final version of plaques. Public outreach at Kanapaha Gardens for Moonlight Walks in Spring and Fall, Kitty Hawke in Spring and Fall, Cedar Key and The Villages both in February. Fourth annual June Star-B-Q, maybe this was the year it did not rain in June? December Holiday Party hosted by Mark and Cindy Barnett in Gainesville.

SERVICE AWARD RECIPIENTS

2006	Marian Cohen
2005	Jackie Owens and Don Loftus
2004	Remigio Trujillo
2003	Chuck Broward, Howard Cohen and Randy Palmer
2002	Mark Barnett and Dr. Armen "Charlie" Tarjan
2001	Pamela Mydock
2000	Mike Toomey

2003:

James "Bud" Cridlin takes the helm as President. Mike Toomey becomes the newsletter editor in February until January 2004. Fifth annual June Star-B-Q for all ACC members. December Holiday Party hosted by Mark and Cindy Barnett in Gainesville.

2004:

Charles "Chuck" Broward is the new President. Jackie Owens becomes the newsletter editor in February. Sixth annual June Star-B-Q for all ACC members. December Holiday Party hosted by Mark and Cindy Barnett in Gainesville.

2005:

Mike Toomey elected President again, ala Grover Cleveland, the only president to serve two non-consecutive terms. Seventh annual June Star-B-Q for all ACC members. December Holiday Party hosted by Mark and Cindy Barnett in Gainesville.

2006:

Bill Helms elected President. Eight and final annual June Star-B-Q because Mike and Heidi Toomey moved. Stargate Observatory, Live Oak, hosted by Fred and Lucille Heinrich, Loftus Family Farm, north of Gainesville. Private Tour of UF's Rosemary Hill Observatory in April, Transit of Mercury in November; December Holiday Party hosted by Mark and Cindy Barnett in Gainesville.

2007:

Bill Helms re-elected as President. Hickory Ranch, hosted by Friends of Paynes Prairie in January; Little Orange Lake, hosted by Gary Cook's residence in Hawthorne; Moondance Hill at Randy Palmer's residence in Williston; Loftus Family Farm in Gainesville; Occultation of Iota Cancri by 411 Xanthe in April; Starry Night at the Museum of Natural History in April; Occultation of Regulus by the Moon in June; Mike Roess Gold Head Branch State Park in Keystone Heights; Stargate Observatory, Live Oak, hosted by Fred and Lucille Heinrich in November; December Holiday Party hosted by Mark and Cindy Barnett in Gainesville.

AAC OFFICERS/CHAIRPEOPLE

Barnett, Mark programs, treasurer
 Brandt, Ken vice-pres, education-coordinator
 Broward, Chuck FirstLight, publicity, treasurer, ALCOR, ATM-coordinator
 Carter, Tandy secretary
 Cohen, Howard L. vice-pres, webmaster, programs, FirstLight
 Cohen, Marian secretary
 Cridlin, James Bud secretary, Star Party, mentor
 Edwards, David Star Party
 Friedberg, Larry treasurer
 Helms, Bill programs
 Howell, Andy secretary
 Irby, Ron publicity
 Jensen, Karen vice-pres
 Kemper, Alicia education-coordinator
 Loftus, Don vice-pres, treasurer, ATM-coordinator
 Loftus, Ryan treasurer
 Malles, Tim publicity, star party, aac board
 McCartney, Patti FirstLight
 McCartney, Scott secretary, webmaster, publisher
 McCosar, Bruce secretary
 Mydock, Pamela FirstLight, publicity
 Olmstead, Thomas treasurer
 Owens, Jackie FirstLight
 Palmer, Randy star party
 Richards, Doug treasurer
 Sandene, Duane FirstLight
 Then, Janice star party
 Thomas, Stephen G. mentor, star party
 Toomey, Heidi FirstLight
 Toomey, Mike FirstLight, publicity, secretary, specials
 Trujillo, Remigio secretary, ATM-coordinator, aac board
 Welch, Annie education-coordinator

1. Presence of a Quorum: a. TC reported the presence of a quorum; i. There were six (6) members present
2. Call to order: a. BH called the meeting to order at 6:42 P.M. on September 4, 2007
3. Roll Call: a. TC recorded the presence of the following members: Thomas Olmsted (TO), Mike Toomey (MT), Scott McCartney (SM), Bob O'Connell (BOC), Larry Friedberg (LF), Bill Helms (BH), Tandy Carter (TC)
4. Reading and approval of the minutes of last meeting: a. There were no corrections noted; b. TO moved and LF seconded to accept the minutes as read; i. The motion passed on a voice vote; ii. The minutes were accepted
5. Officer, board and standing committee reports: a. LF distributed the Treasurer's Report; b. TC reported on the status of the club telescopes; i. SkyQuest XT-8 - Larry Friedberg (C); 1. returned to Custodian; 2. Transferred to MT for maintenance; ii. Museum telescope (6" Newtonian) - Don Loftus (C); 1. with custodian; iii. Celestron C8 - Garry Cook (C) 1. with custodian; iv. 4 1/2" Reflector - Marianne Gamble (C); 1. with custodian; v. 8" Parks Dobsonian - Don Loftus (C); 1. with custodian; vi. RLT - Chuck Broward (C); 1. with custodian
- c. MT reported on the club star parties: i. MT reported that the star parties for the rest of the year were as posted on the club web page; d. SM reported on the club's speaker schedule; i. SM reported that the speaker schedule for the rest of the year was as posted on the club web page; ii. SM reported that the speaker schedule was filled through April 2008
6. Special committee reports
 - a. There was no report on the plaque and murals at Royal Park Stadium 16 Theater; i. Deferred
 - b. There was no report on the 20th anniversary FirstLight issue; i. Deferred
7. Special orders; a. There were no Special Orders
8. Old Business; a. TC reported on the repair or modification of the club banner; i. It was decided to proceed with the banner as shown; ii. OPEN
 - b. BH reported the thank you letter to Mike Reynolds was still in work; i. OPEN
 - c. BH reported that the posting of the club policies on the club web page was still in work; i. BH hopes to post at least one (1) month's policies to the web page a month; ii. OPEN
 - d. BOC reported on the policies for the Lunar Observing Group; i. It was decided to start the Lunar Observing Group at the November ATM meeting; ii. OPEN
 - e. BH reported on the purchase of a dedicated solar telescope; i. BH reported that the dedicated solar telescope is on order; ii. OPEN
 - f. LF reported on the status of the AAC tax exempt certificate renewal; i. LF reported that the final determination letter is missing; ii. LF will write a letter to Atlanta for a replacement final determination letter; iii. LF will submit the renewal forms upon receipt of the final determination letter; iv. OPEN
9. General orders: a. There were no general orders
10. New Business: a. SM requested a discussion on paid advertising on the club web page; i. LF reported that paid advertising on the club web page might violate our tax exempt status; ii. It was determined that there would be no paid advertising on the web page; iii. CLOSED
 - b. MT reported on the status of the club warehouse; i. MT reported that the Florida Museum of Natural History will be taking over the majority of the of the suite; ii. MT reported that the club will still be able to use the one (1) room we currently occupy; iii. MT reported that Roger Portell will be the museum point of contact; iv. CLOSED
 - c. MT requested a discussion of Project Astro: a re-introduction; i. It was determined to proceed; ii. OPEN
 - d. MT requested a discussion of the location of the October meeting; i. It was decided to meet at Napolatano's ii. CLOSED
 - e. MT reported on the 2008 Hickory Ranch star party; i. MT reported that the Friends of Paynes Prairie needs help with advertising; ii. OPEN
11. Good of the Order: a. BH requested a discussion of sending out the FirstLight by electronic methods only
 - i. TO suggested that people who desired to receive a hard copy pay for the mailing in their dues
 - ii. MT suggested that the club dues be increased to cover the increase in cost of mailing out the FirstLight; iii. OPENb. LF suggested that the club postcard reminders to all present and former members that it is time to renew their membership; i. TO suggested that in the March time frame the club send out reminders to members that are delinquent in renewing their dues; ii. OPEN
 - c. BH requested a discussion of the student dues structure; i. OPEN
12. Announcements: a. There were no announcements
13. Time and location of next meeting: a. BH reported that the next meeting at Napolatano's restaurant at 6:30 P.M. on October 2, 2007
14. Adjournment
 - a. TC moved and BOC seconded to adjourn
 - b. The motion passed on a voice vote
 - c. The meeting was adjourned at 8:48 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted
Tandy W Carter Jr.
AAC Secretary

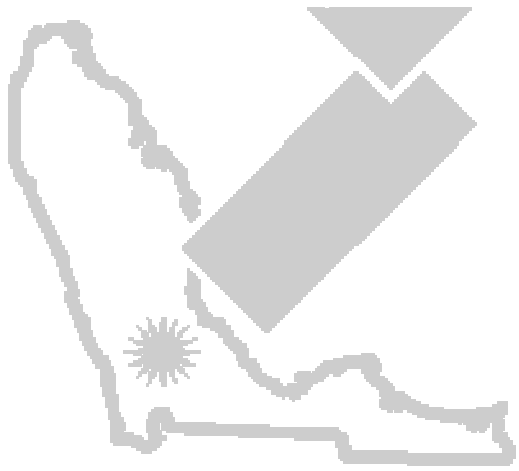
Executive Council Meeting Minutes

October 2, 2007, Napolatano's Restaurant

1. Presence of a Quorum: a. TC reported the presence of a quorum; i. There were six (6) board members present
2. Call to order: a. BH called the meeting to order at 6:39 P. M. October 2, 2007
3. Roll Call: a. TC reported the following board members were present:
 - i. Thomas Olmsted (TO), Bill Helms (BH), Scott McCartney (SM), Larry Friedberg (LF), Bob O'Connell (BOC), Tandy Carter (TC), Howard Cohen (HC), Marian Cohen (MC), Mike Toomey (MT), Pam Mydock (PM)
4. Reading and approval of the minutes of last meeting: a. Corrections; i. TO reports the name of Napolatano's Restaurant was improperly spelled.; b. Approval; i. TO moved and LF seconded to approve the minutes as amended
 - ii. The motion passed on a voice vote; iii. The minutes were approved
5. Officer, board and standing committee reports; a. LF distributed the Treasurer's report;
 - b. TC reported on the status of club Telescopes: i. SkyQuest XT-8 - Larry Friedberg (C); 1. with MT for routine maintenance; ii. Museum telescope (6" equatorial Newtonian) - Don Loftus (C); 1. with custodian; iii. Celestron C8 - Garry Cook (C); 1. with custodian; iv. 4 1/2" Reflector - Marianne Gamble (C); 1. with custodian; v. 8" Parks Dobsonian - Don Loftus (C); 1. with custodian; vi. RLT - Chuck Broward (C); 1. with custodian; vii. PST - Scott McCartney (C); 1. with custodian
 - c. MT reported on Star Parties: i. MT reported that the club star parties were as published on the club web site ii. MT reported that the Gold Head Branch star party was a big success; iii. MT reported that the Friends of Paynes Prairie (FOPP) Star would be January 26, 2008; iv. MT reported on the meeting with the FOPP committee.; v. MT suggested that the AAC help with the cost of promotion of the FOPP star party; 1. TC moved and BO'C seconded to pay \$150.00 for the cost of promoting the star party; 2. the motion passed on a voice vote
 - d. SM reported on the speaker schedule: i. SM reported that there were no changes for the 2007 speaker schedule ii. SM reported that NASA has given the name for their speaker; 1. BH volunteered to expedite NASA's response iii. SM reported that the 2008 speaker schedule is almost full;
6. Special committee reports: a. PM reported that there was no report on the plaque and murals at the Royal Park Stadium 16 Theater; b. PM reported that there was nothing new on the 20th anniversary FirstLight issue; c. LF volunteered to head up the committee for the club holiday party
7. Special orders: a. None
8. Old Business: a. TC reported on the repair or modification of the club banner; i. TC reported that the new banner is on hand; ii. TC presented the new banner to the board; iii. TC presented the bill for the new banner to LF for reimbursement; iv. CLOSED
 - b. BH reported on the thank you letter to Mike Reynolds; i. BH reported that the letter is complete; ii. CLOSED
 - c. BH reported on posting the club policies on the club web site; i. BH reported that the posting is in work; ii. OPEN
 - d. BOC reported on the policies for the Lunar Observing Group (LOG); i. BOC reported that the first meeting of the LOG will be November 20, 2007; ii. BOC reported that the LOG will be prominently displayed in the FirstLight; iii. CLOSED
 - e. BH et al reported on the status of the purchase of a dedicated solar telescope; i. BH reported that the solar telescope is in hand; ii. BH presented the bill for the dedicated solar telescope to LF for reimbursement; iii. CLOSED
 - f. LF reported on the status of the AAC tax exempt certificate renewal; i. LF reported that he is still waiting for the final status report from the IRS; ii. OPEN
 - g. BH reported on sending the FirstLight by electronic methods; i. BH reported that sending the FirstLight by electronic methods is in work; ii. OPEN
 - h. LF reported on sending postcard reminders to delinquent members; i. It was decided to send the reminders by Email instead; ii. OPEN
 - i. BH report on dues structure; i. BH reported that the dues structure is in work; ii. OPEN
9. General orders: a. None
10. New Business: a. BH reported on the 2008 slate of club officers
 - i. President: Bill Helms; ii. Vice President: David; iii. Secretary: Tandy Carter; iv. Treasurer: Larry Friedberg
 - v. At Large: Howard Cohen, Pam Mydock, Bob O'Connell
 - b. HC requested a discussion on sharing newsletter articles; i. OPEN; 11. Good of the Order: a. None
12. Announcements: a. BOC reported that AAC member Peter Wlasuk passed away September 8, 2007 at North Florida Regional Medical Center; b. HC announced that JH will be holding a book signing in December at Goering's c. HC reported that the Art in Public Places would meet on October 3, 2007 to possibly discuss the Solar Walk d. HC announced that he was taking the annual orders for the Observer's Handbook; e. BH announced that he was taking orders for Sky Tools software; 13. BH Time and location of next meeting; a. BH reported that the location and time would be; i. Napolatano's Restaurant ; ii. 6:30 P. M. November 6, 2007
14. BH Adjournment

Respectfully Submitted
Tandy W Carter Jr.
AAC Secretary

Photo Credits: Stephen D. Peacock at the AAC Goldhead Star Party. Stars, music, camping and fun!



FirstLight
Newsletter of the Alachua Astronomy Club, Inc.
P.O. Box 13744
Gainesville, Florida 32604-1744
Web: www.floridastars.org
Email: firstlight@floridastars.org