



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

August / September / October

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Member
Astronomical
League



Member
International
Dark-Sky Association

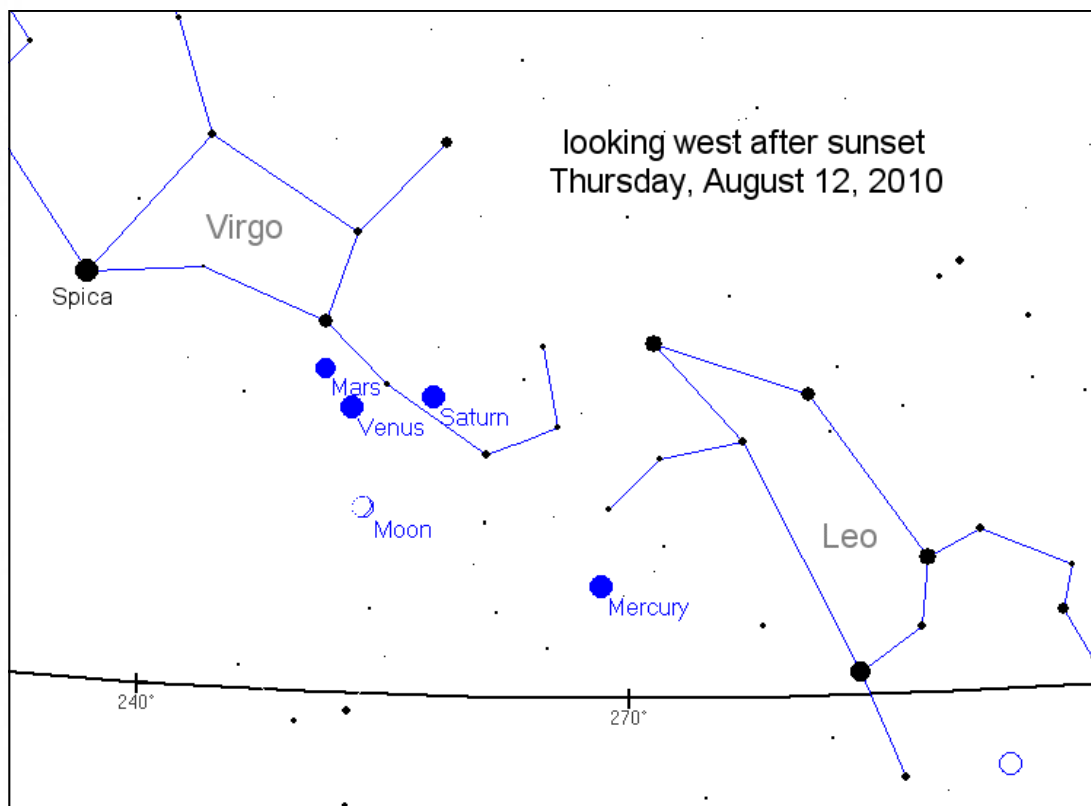
FirstLight
Newsletter of the Alachua Astronomy Club

Perseid Meteor Shower Aligns With The Planets

The 2010 Perseid meteor shower begins on Thursday, August 12th, with a beautiful alignment of planets in the sunset sky. Venus, Saturn, Mars and the crescent Moon will be visible shortly after sunset within 10 degrees of each other. The planets will appear low in the western sky until around 10:00pm, but don't go inside just yet! The Perseid meteor shower kicks in from 10:00pm until dawn.

The Perseid meteor shower is caused by debris from Comet Swift-Tuttle. Every 133 years the huge comet swings through the inner solar system and leaves behind a trail of dust and gravel. When Earth passes through the debris, specks of comet-stuff hit the atmosphere at 140,000 mph and disintegrate in flashes of light. These meteors are called Perseids because they fly out of the constellation Perseus (NASA Science News). The constellation Perseus will appear low on the horizon in the northeast sky around 10:00pm, rising towards the zenith until about 5:30am.

This year is expected to be a good show for the Perseids. A New Moon begins August 9th so dark skies are anticipated on the 12th. The peak of the shower will be during the darkest hours before dawn, the morning of August 13th when you'll be able to see dozens per hour. Below: Skymap by NASA





As far as I am concerned, the Dog Days of summer are officially here. Being one who likes to occasionally look *through* my scopes instead of *at* them, I am again reduced to reading about astronomy until such time as the God of Clear Skies looks favorably upon Gainesville again.

We are just past mid-year, which is excuse enough to do a mid-year review. My top priority for the year has been to review all of the club's operations to determine what we do well and what we can do to improve. Various groups have convened to look at different functions of the club. I feel like we are moving in the right direction and would like to share the results with you.

One of the early projects was to assess the fleet of loaner scopes. It was noted last year that club members had for all practical purposes, quit borrowing the loaners. I charged the ATM group with reviewing our scopes and making recommendations. The group reported back on 4/20/2010 with a to-do list itemizing which scopes to keep, which to repair, one to sell, and one to buy. I am not sure about the timing of this newsletter, but there is a good chance that by the time you read this, the Parks 8 inch reflector will already have been auctioned off at the August general meeting. The proceeds from the auction will be added to the club's general operating fund. There has been an increase in scopes being borrowed, but I do not have final numbers on this. We will continue to watch and improve.

In response to the member survey last year, I have been working on the general meeting schedule. You have seen stricter adherence to the schedule, and increased social time. Ivo has injected new life into our guest introductions and follows up with a personal email to each one that provides a contact. The comments returned have been quite complimentary. We are also starting to finally see some new faces and I have to believe it is a result of grass roots efforts such as this.

Something we tried new was using the main atrium last month in anticipation of an overflow crowd at our general meeting. As most of our old-timers know, each summer we have to go to the small room down the hall from our regular meeting room where it can get quite cozy. The atrium proved quite comfortable and generated many positive comments. We may be using it more in the future.

Other areas of improvement may not be as noticeable. The board dropped from monthly to every-other-month meetings. We believe this will help attract new leaders to our team that otherwise cannot commit to a monthly obligation. We have also strengthened our outreach organization by appointing Mike Toomey as Outreach Coordinator. The goal is to have a single point of contact for our outreach and special events at the onset. All special events will have an official event coordinator appointed who will then be fully responsible for the success of the event.

You have probably noticed that your officers are new and hopefully serving you well. In fact, your President, Vice President and Secretary are all new to their role. I was quite happy when Bob Lightner offered to tackle the V.P. role. He was superb as secretary and will bring that same performance to his new role. Replacing him at Secretary is Paula McLain. Paula's excellent word skills, enthusiasm, and sense of humor will serve her well.

Much has happened with the Newberry Sports Center AND Observatory (NSCO). This project started in January after Doug Engh did a short proposal at the general meeting. The idea of having a permanent site for the club grew on a group of our members who came together as the NSC committee. Prominent members included Joe and Gaye Haldeman, Mike Toomey, Tandy Carter, Ivo Rabell, Marianne Gamble, Bob Lightner, Chuck Broward, and myself. If I have left someone off, I apologize and will make sure it

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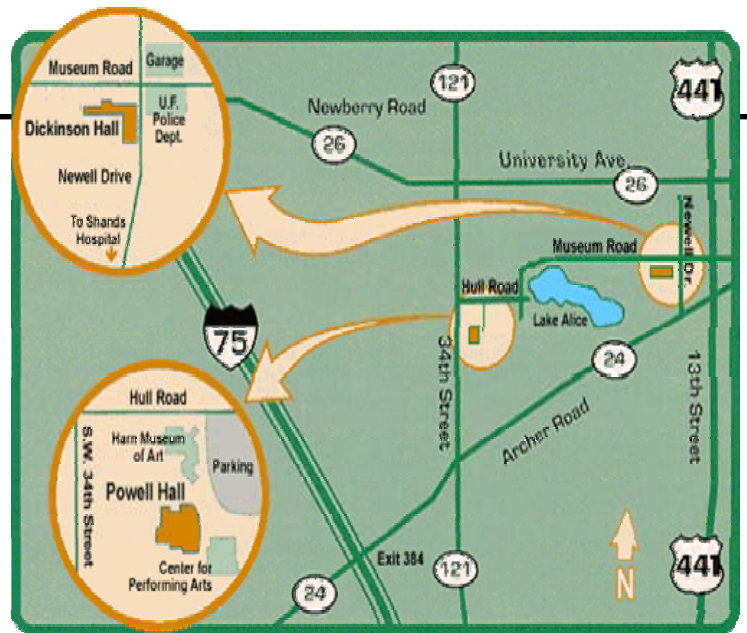
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AAC Meeting Location - AAC regular meetings are held on the second Tuesday of each month at 7:00 p.m. at the Florida Museum of Natural History, **Powell Hall**, in the Lucille T. Maloney Classroom, on UF campus, unless otherwise announced. All meetings 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 is no monthly meeting in December.



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!)

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

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Dog Days Of Summer—continued

Rich Russin

gets in the next newsletter. Bob was the lucky member that got to present our case to the Newberry Commissioners. The commission appointed a project manager and a few weeks later we were approved. I would like to recognize all the members of the committee for their contributions. In advance of the start of construction, members of the committee have been meeting with representatives from the city and the Sports Complex to work out the final details of the site. I plan to run an extensive story on this in the November FirstLight.

I hope this gives you some insight on all the hard work the officers, board, chairs, and special committees are doing to make this the best club possible. More projects are underway and I will report on them in the next issue.

To wrap it up this month I want to share a short story with you but first a little background. There is little question that NASA is in a struggle for survival. President Obama's speech at the cape in April did little to make anyone happy as it provided few dollars to continue the mission while simultaneously not retiring NASA either. The speech was a classic straddle that neither ruled in or out a return to greatness in space exploration.

It has always been my view that sometimes you just have to do something to see what comes of it. Recall I mentioned I have been doing some extra reading. My current book is Rocket Men by Craig Nelson. It is a fascinating behind-the-scenes look at the story of the Apollo 11 moon landing. The following quote is from this very excellent book:

In 1969, a few months after Apollo 11 landed on the Moon, Rhode Island's Senator John Pastore was interrogating Fermilab physicist Robert Wilson at a Senate hearing on whether the federal government should spend \$250 million to build a new collider. The senator wanted to know, would this collider add to the "security of the country?"

"No sir, I don't believe so," Wilson answered.

Senator Pastore: "Nothing at all?"

Mr. Wilson: "Nothing at all."

Senator Pastore: "It has no value in that respect?"

Mr. Wilson: "It only has to do with the respect with which we regard one another, the dignity of men, our love of culture....It has to do with, are we good painters, good sculptors, great poets? I mean all the things we really venerate in our country and are patriotic about....It has nothing to do directly with defending our country, except to make it worth defending."

Rich Russin,
President,
Alachua Astronomy Club
president
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August Club Meeting

Tuesday, August 10, 2010, 7:00 p.m. ET

Speaker: Joe Haldeman

Title: *Space Travel—The Near Future and Far Future*

Location: Powell Hall, Florida Museum of Natural History
(*Lucille T. Maloney Classroom*),
UF Campus, Gainesville FL



Author, Joe Haldeman

Preview: Joe will take a look at what the United States and other countries have planned for the post-Space Shuttle era of space exploration and industrialization. Then he will skip ahead and take a look at where we could be headed decades and even centuries hence. What are the limits imposed on space travel by relativity and other aspects of the nature of time and space? What is realistic—or do we have to be realistic?

About the Speaker: Joe Haldeman is an award winning writer of science fiction. He has written about two dozen novels appearing in about twenty languages. Joe has also won every major award for his science fiction, including five Hugo and Nebula awards, and three times the Rhysling Award for science fiction poetry.

Joe was recently honored and given the title of Damon Knight Memorial Grand Master of Science Fiction for 2010 (awarded to a living author for lifetime achievement in science fiction and/or fantasy).

Joe is a member of the Author's Guild, Writer's Guild, Science Fiction Writers of America, National Space Society (on Board of Advisors), Space Studies Institute. Served as SFWA Treasurer for 2-1/2 years; Chairman of their Grievance Committee for 18 months; President of Science Fiction and Fantasy Writers of America, 1992-1994.

Joe has been teaching at MIT for over twenty-five years where he is an adjunct professor and teaches writing every fall semester. Joe and his wife of nearly forty-five years, Mary Gay, travel extensively and he usually keeps a travel diary for major trips. They bicycled across America (3,050 miles or 4,900 kilometers) from Florida to California a few years back. Other activities include amateur astronomy, drawing and painting, guitar playing and cooking and a little fishing, canoeing, swimming, and snorkeling.

Joe has considered himself a full-time writer since 1970 and tries to write a little every day even while teaching at MIT. However, Joe also has other pastimes including painting and drawing. He has had several exhibits of his paintings in Gainesville in the last few years where he spends part of the rest of the year.

Joe has been an amateur astronomer since the Mars opposition in the mid-1950s. When he can, he seeks out dark skies for his 12" telescope. In addition, he is a long-time member of the AAC and has spoken to the club on many past occasions including *The International Space Station* (1999 May), *Astronomy in Science Fiction* (2001 July), *Mars and Martians in Science and Science Fiction* (2003 August), and Review of the 2008 Winter Star Party with Chuck Broward, Fred Heinrich & Tim Malles (2008 May).

Joe has a B. S. in astronomy, University of Maryland, 1967 and did graduate work there in math/computer science, 1969-70 so his books have a high degree of scientific accuracy. He was drafted 1967 and fought in the Central Highlands of Viet Nam as a combat engineer with the 4th Division (1/22nd Airmobile Bn.). He is a wounded veteran of this combat in Vietnam. He has a Purple Heart and other standard medals so many of his books intimately reflect his war experiences.

Reminder for AAC 4th Annual Gold Head Branch State Park Star Party. Dates are October 8th (Friday) and 9th (Saturday).

If you're spending the weekend this is the time to reserve a Camp Site or Cabin.

Please go to our link <http://floridastars.org/goldhead.2010.html> it has all information you need on star party. Campsites are \$20 plus tax per night and cabins start at \$65 plus tax.

If you are like I am and just coming for the day, the entrance fee is \$5.00 per car. You need to tell the ranger at the entrance that you're with the A.A.C. astronomy club and give time you will leave. They do lock the gates at night.

The recreational area next to picnic area (look at map) is the only place to set up telescope.

Lets show up in force. Gold Head has truly dark skies

Ivo Rabell
Star Party Coordinator
Alachua Astronomy Club

Photo Right: 2009 Gold Head Star Partiers enjoy an evening around the fire with music.



STAR PARTY / OBSERVATION SCHEDULE: Upcoming Events - 2010

<u>Star Party Event</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Location</u> Check the website for directions	<u>Start/End Time</u>
AAC August Star Party	August 7th, Saturday	Loftus Family Farm	Sunset approx. 8:20 pm ET
AAC September Star Party	Sept. 11th, Saturday	Stargate Observatory	Sunset approx. 7:40 pm
Gold Head Branch State Park Star Party	October 8 & 9, Fri. & Sat.	Gold Head Branch State Park—camping available by reservation only	Sunset approx. 7:05 pm ET
AAC November Star Party	November 6th, Saturday	Rosemary Hill Observatory	Sunset approx. 6:40 pm ET

SPECIAL EVENTS - 2010

See the AAC website for details

<u>Event</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Location</u> Check the website for directions	<u>Start/End Time</u>
Other Worlds: A Science Fiction & Fantasy Show Art, food, drink and telescopes	October 16, Saturday	Bellamy Road Melrose, Florida	Sunset : 6:59pm
Starry Night	November 12, Friday	Florida Museum of Natural History	Sunset approx. 5:35 pm ET
Starry Starry Night	November 13, Saturday	The Villages	Sunset: 5:34pm

Meet New AAC Officer—Secretary Paula McLain

Paula McLain has stepped up to the position of Secretary of the Alachua Astronomy Club. Bob Lightner, our former Secretary, took on the position of AAC Vice President following Bob Duval's relocation to the west coast in May. Paula has been doing a wonderful job and we appreciate her participation. She has a positive outlook and a contagious personality.

We asked her to tell us how she got started in astronomy and would like to share her story with you—as told by Paula:

"Honey I want a telescope" says Clint. Paula raises one eyebrow and continues reading.
"No really, I want one, lets get one and start looking at the stars we would have fun." says Clint.
Looking up and with a slightly exasperated sigh Paula says
"We? you got a mouse in your pocket?"

And so it began. Yes it's true— I was dragged kicking and screaming all the way into the astronomy hobby. That was until I looked through our telescope for the first time. I was spellbound. I'm still spellbound, so much so that we have named our small farm in Morriston (Levy County) "Dark Skies Farm." I am especially interested in lunar observation, and have dubbed our site Moonstruck Observatory.

Both Clint (my husband) and I have learned by leaps and bounds in the few months since we have joined the good folks at AAC and now I am pleased to serve this fine astro community as secretary. What I lack in knowledge I make up for in tenacity and dedication.

Clear Skies!!

Paula McLain



The SCIE is the Limit

Mike Toomey

From my perspective, astronomy outreach is not just showing up and plopping out a telescope. The time I invest begins well before the star party does, mentally and logistically. Encountering difficulties at outreach events is common but most issues can easily be resolved through preparation (i.e. checklists), being patient and staying focused on the audience. When I go the extra mile, visitors *do* share their appreciation.

As I work toward my Astronomical League Outreach award, I am tasked to share some lessons learned. Since the list will inevitably grow, I thought it would be merciful to share the current draft; an outline I call *SCIE* (pronounced “Sky”): Support, Control, Inform and Enable.

Support: The club does not function without you.

1. When the sign-up sheet or email comes your way, please let the organizers know if you plan to attend (or need to drop out). Outreach activities are often planned around the specific members and equipment recruited. Please be on time – tardy volunteers frustrate event organizers.
2. If you can't bring a telescope, you can still be a tremendous help – line control, giving a telescope operator a break and answering questions about the club are important outreach roles. *Every* member should have a bundle of club brochures on hand. Don't count on a central repository to get the word out.

Control: Guests crave structure in unfamiliar environments.

1. Step back: if you've always operated a telescope at outreach functions, try attending one in some other capacity, such as greeter, docent or emcee. You may discover that visitors are looking for something different than what you've been offering.
 2. You're not just managing a telescope but everything in your vicinity. Give your fellow telescope operators plenty of real estate if you can. When you're done setting up, move your car and declutter your site. Guests came to explore stars, planets and telescopes, not a yard sale.
 3. Stanchions (parking cones if you must) will do wonders for controlling a line and helps to establish decorum among youngsters. These stanchions reduce crowding at the telescope, which will be appreciated by you *and* the present viewer.
- Recruit a helper from the club so that they can answer straggler questions while you focus your attention on the next audience member.

Inform: Feed the imagination.

1. Learn something about your astronomical target. You don't need to be an expert or memorize a lot of trivial data. So long as you can generalize what type of object is being featured in the eyepiece, you will foster an enthusiastic audience. Don't force feed data (measurements and classifications) without putting those terms in context.
 2. Warm up your audience in small batches. Tell them what they are about to see before they approach the telescope – you will likely hear a more “oohs” and “aahs” as a result, even with less dramatic targets such as Uranus, binary stars or “faint fuzzies”. Set yourself apart from other telescope operators and don't be afraid to challenge your visitors a little.
- You don't have to tell your viewers everything they will see at the eyepiece – allow some room for personal discovery. You can also facilitate those discoveries by asking them questions: “How many moons can you see around Saturn?” “What colors do you see when viewing a binary star such as Albireo?” You might learn something in the exchange.

Enable: Do it right.

1. *Always* bring a step stool (not an *observer's* stool). The same step stool that assists the verti-

cally challenged can also support the beanstalks and those with back problems. Just as important, the barrier may prevent someone from dangling on the eyepiece or moving your telescope unexpectedly (Dobsonians in particular). As a visitor approaches my telescope, the first words out of my mouth are, "Two hands on the step stool, please." (I embellish that their view will be better as a result of improved balance.)

2. Consider setting up your tripod-mounted telescope so that it is wheelchair accessible. It may be the only view a chair-bound guest will have to enjoy.

If a viewer reports that they see nothing, one of two solutions usually works without checking the field of view:

Ask the viewer to bend their knees slightly – a lot of novices address an eyepiece from a top-down angle. (This works a lot! Try it!)

The viewer might be farsighted (and not even know it). Many of these first time observers seem to benefit from soda straw eye-relief instead of super wide fields of view. If your eyepiece has an adjustable eye cup, adjust it to the most *outward* position to help mimic a narrower FOV. Otherwise, suggest they back up a few inches and read-dress the eyepiece (again, with knees slightly bent).

Block stray light from entering the eyepiece and the viewer's vision. This improves the contrast which is important for virtually every astronomical target. You can often accomplish this simply by standing between the light source and the eyepiece. In extreme situations (such as setting up beneath a street light), you may need to hold up a star chart or a piece of cardboard to shield the observer's eyes.

The more satisfied my viewers are the more gratification I receive. This charges my positive feedback loop – more star parties, more viewers, more gratification, more enthusiasm for astronomy, repeat.

Don't forget to record your hours and submit your log to the Astronomical League Coordinator for outreach awards!

Mike Toomey has served the AAC in many capacities since 1998, including President, Secretary, FirstLight Editor and Star Party Coordinator. Mike resides in Gainesville with his wife Heidi.

Adjacent photo: Mike Toomey at Gold Head Branch Star Party—2009



A total solar eclipse is not to be missed, even if it means flying from Gainesville to LA, LA to Tahiti and then to Easter Island! Chuck and Judy did this trip to observe a total solar eclipse from one of the most remote places on earth---Easter Island.

We were part of a tour put together for Sky and Telescope magazine. Many of the Sky and Tele notables were along for the trip, as were Mike



Reynolds from north Florida, and his wife Debbie. Other members of the tour included persons from Europe, Japan and Korea.

We flew from Tahiti aboard a chartered Air Tahiti jumbo jet to Easter Island--probably the world's longest day trip. Easter Island is a small island--the location of the Moai; giant carved heads. Population was doubled when eclipse observers landed on the island.

The photographs are two non-processed images taken with a Nikon DSLR and 300 mm tele-

photo zoom. The third image is one of the carved heads dotting Easter Island. The fourth picture is a Easter Island teen dressed out to perform native dances for the tourists.

We also carried a pair of Nikon image stabilized binoculars (14 X 40 mm) for stargazing. We snagged many southern sky objects. The area around Crux is a treasure chest of binocular objects, and the Nikon binoculars proved to be a potent observing tool.



Chuck Broward is a long time member of AAC, a builder of astro-gadgets and scopes. He also will help you fabricate hardware and parts to customize your 'scope. He likes lunar and planetary observing from the heart of Gainesville, the GSO (Ghastly Skies Observatory).



Synopsis of the July 13 General Monthly Meeting

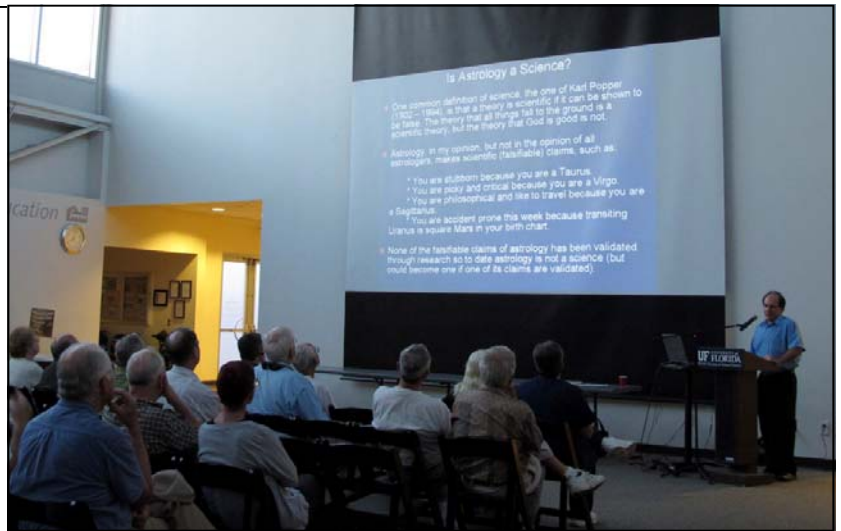
Feature Guest Speaker:

Mr. David Cochrane

Subject:

Astrology: Science or Superstition

July, the month known for being hot. It seemed like the perfect pairing for the subject that our guest speaker David Cochrane heated up the crowd of 64 people with. We had assembled in the main "Mammoth room" of the museum, in anticipation of the larger than normal summer-time gathering.

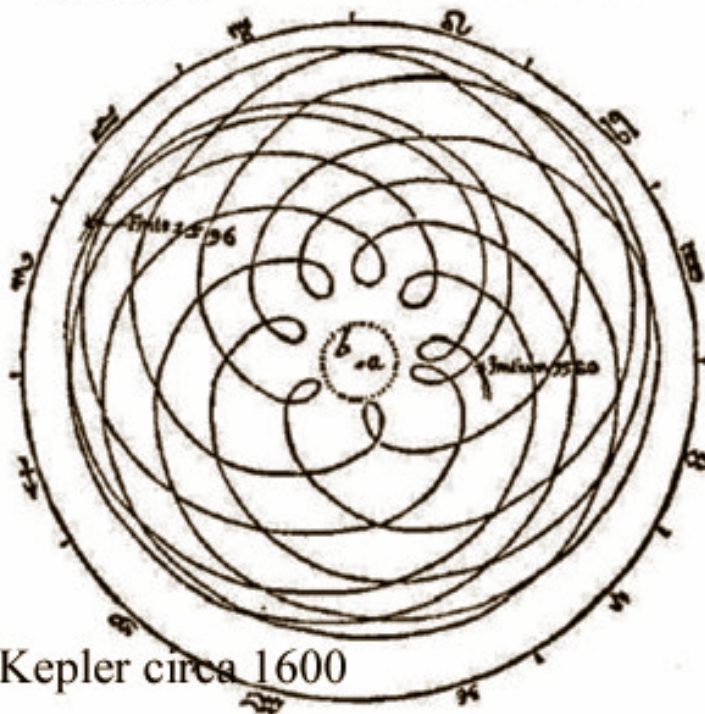


I have to say whether your reaction to the lecture was Bravo!, or Hog Wash!, there was no denying the incredible expertise and knowledge base held by Mr. Cochrane. This was not the frivolous ramblings of a "fringe science astrologist" but the academic and professional assessment of astrology by a scholar who's lifetime has been devoted to the scientific study of this subject.

Clearly and concisely, Mr. Cochrane led us through the scientific process of whether astrology could be considered a science or if it was simply a superstition based in myths and omens. Deciding that science was defined by something that could be proven true or false, he led us to the conclusion that, when looking at the picture as a whole, astrology could not be confirmed definitively as a science at this time.

Although clearly not a science, Mr. Cochrane states that one can not dismiss astrology as simple superstition. Originally astrology was based on signs and omens. The astrology we know today was formed around 300 to 500 B.C., right about the time of the birth of the "pure thought scholars" like Plato and Euclid. It is believed that the entire immense system of interwoven mathematical and astrological complexities that we are familiar with today was created within a 150 year period.

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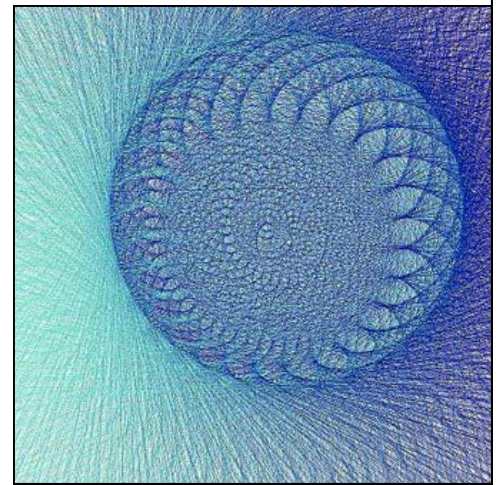
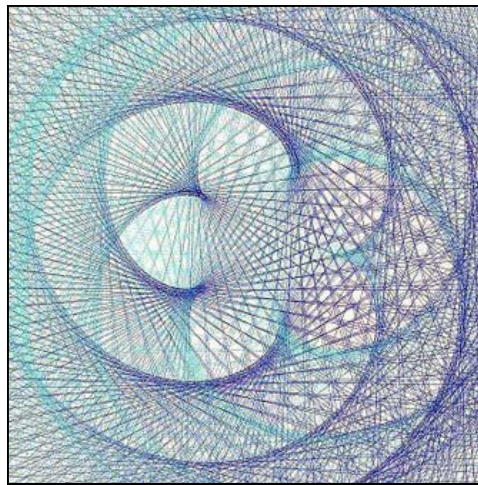
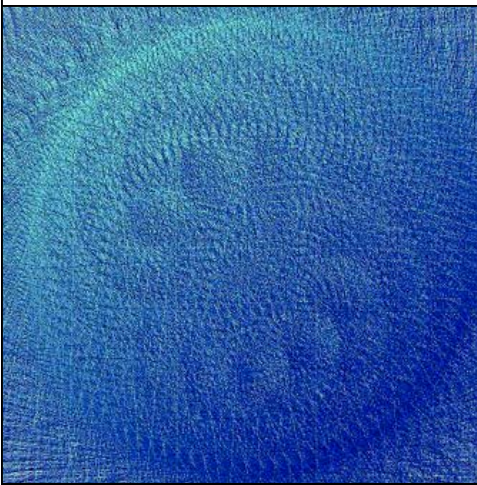
Mr. Cochrane also touched on something I had not personally heard of before which was fascinating, planet mandalas. I of course was familiar with the normal elliptical orbits of the planets around the sun. In fact I'm fairly sure it was one of my first science projects. Planet mandalas, however, are representations of the orbital motions of planets from an entirely different perspective. The new perspective could be, for instance, the orbit of the planet Mars from the Earth's geocentric point of view.

Now that almost lost me until he explained that geocentric simply means how Mars would be moving if the Earth were stationary. Now back in the game, I got delightfully immersed in the incredibly beautiful computer drawn images of the path of Mars as it moved back and forth in distance from Earth on its path through the sky. I have included, with Mr. Cochrane's permission, some of the photographs he used and one I felt especially amazed about. The original planet Mars mandala that Kepler drew by hand in the 1600's next to a computer generated one from today (bottom page 12). It is truly astounding that centuries later they are almost identical. Also does anyone besides myself, find it slightly disconcerting that the Earth-Venus (remembering that Venus is associated with love in mythology) is roughly in the shape of a series of heart shapes laying on their sides?

Earth - Mars

Earth - Venus

Earth - Saturn



Mr. Cochrane points out that astrology, whether a science or not, is the basis of many cultures and should not be dismissed solely as superstition. It is a useful sociological tool, giving us insight into the many diverse cultures that have used it in the past as deciding factors in their government and society.

In closing, David Cochrane said that astrology uses intensely mathematical sequencing and astrological tracking, and although it may or may not affect people and the planets, it surely has enough scientific process to merit further study. He recommends that all future efforts in research be kept to high standards of "academic rigor."

If anyone is interested in more information on astrology by David Cochrane he has a web page with links to many of the papers he has written. Here is the aforementioned web address.

<http://astrosoftware.com/AstrologyArticle.htm>

Kepler, speaking about astrology and "paraphrased by me" once wrote: "One can glean perhaps out of the glorified dung heap of worm casings and mud, a grain of truth or a nugget of gold. "

Paula McLain,
Alachua Astronomy Club

In Memoriam: Maria B. Silva Pla



Maria Bertha "Kika" Silva Pla, 89, passed away Monday June 28, 2010. A native of Curico Chile, she moved to Gainesville in 1997. She was a member of Queen of Peace Catholic Church.

Generous funding from the Pla family made the Kika Silva Pla Planetarium at Santa Fe College a reality. Kika Silva Pla has contributed to this community in many ways over the years, and will be dearly missed. We extend our condolences to the family.

She is survived by her children; Richard Pla, (Kyle Strohmman) John Pla (Amy Howard) Gainesville, FL., Belinda Pla Willis, (Virgil Willis) Hatteras, NC Anthony Pla, (Terri Pla) Ashburn, VA Maria "Birdie" Murnane, (Patrick Murnane) Gainesville, FL. Nine Grandchildren, Two sisters Alicia de Cardenas, Gladys Silva de Davila (Alfonso Davila) of Bogota.

AAC WEB SITE

The AAC Web site is one of the club's most important assets. I began the AAC Web site about 1995 as a small number of easily navigable and quickly loading pages. Since then the club's Web site has grown to over 400 pages, likely more than found on any other astronomy club's site.

Of course some pages are now outmoded or rarely used, need updating or are no longer linked to other pages. Although filled with useful information, the AAC Web site has thus grown into a complex network of linked and unlinked pages.

The AAC Web site has therefore become somewhat unwieldy and more difficult to navigate although the simplicity of most pages still allows most of the site's Web pages to load quickly. Updating and modernizing the site requires much work that is now beyond the time, energy and expertise of the present Webmaster.

WEB SITE INDEX

Meanwhile, to help find Web site content, I have added a WEB SITE PAGE INDEX that lists most relevant and important pages (like the phases of the Moon). This link is conspicuous at the top of the AAC home page: floridastars.org

I welcome additions and corrections.

WEB SITE HELP NEEDED

More important, the AAC is looking for others either to take over or contribute to the management and modernization of the club's Web site as Webmaster or associate Webmasters. (I plan to step down from this position in the near future.) If interested in working on the club's Web site, please contact our president, Rich Russin at president@floridastars.org.

Thanks in advance.

Howard L. Cohen
AAC Webmaster
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A Not For Profit Public Corporation
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AAC Home Page: <http://www.floridastars.org>

September Club Meeting

Tuesday, September 14, 2010, 7:00 p.m. ET

Speaker: Scott Fleming

Title: *The MARVELS Survey: Searching Ten Thousand Stars for Extrasolar Planets*

Location: Powell Hall, Florida Museum of Natural History
(*Lucille T. Maloney Classroom*),
UF Campus, Gainesville FL



Scott Fleming—University of Florida

Preview: MARVELS is a survey being led by the University of Florida and in collaboration with dozens of scientists across a dozen universities and institutions. Making use of the Doppler technique to detect extrasolar planets, MARVELS will offer the largest, homogeneous sample of stars surveyed for planets to-date. MARVELS has begun in the Fall of 2008 and our first discoveries and candidates are currently being published. In this discussion, I will explain the basic design of MARVELS, showcase the telescope, observatory, and operation of the survey, and present some of our first discoveries and science projects, including discoveries of extrasolar planets, brown dwarf companions and interesting binary star systems.

About the Speaker: Scott Fleming is in the final year of his PhD work. Born in Feeding Hills, MA he attended Vassar College in Poughkeepsie, NY where he obtained a B.A. in Astronomy, a B.A. in Physics and a Minor in Computer Science. He spent two summers as a research student at the Space Telescope Science Institute in Baltimore, MD, where he worked on a project called XO designed to detect transiting extrasolar planets (it has since found five new planets). He started PhD work at the University of Florida in the Fall of 2005 and obtained an M.Sc. in Astronomy in the Spring of 2007. His scientific interests include extrasolar planets, brown dwarfs and binary stars. He has served as a judge in the various Alachua County Science Fairs on three separate occasions, volunteers for Gainesville Pet Rescue on a weekly basis and is a member of the UF student group Gators for Gainesville Pet Rescue.

October Club Meeting

Tuesday, October 12, 2010, 7:00 p.m. ET

Speaker: NASA Speaker

Title: *TBA*

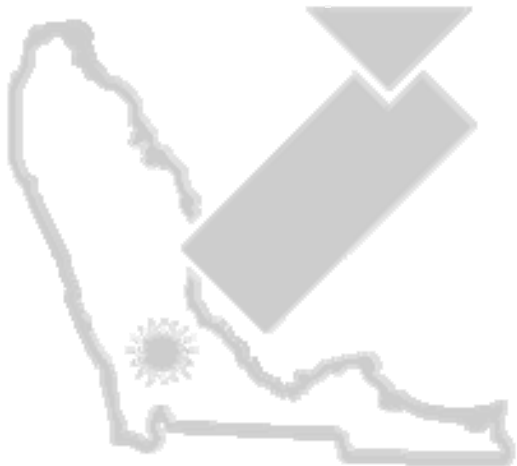
Location: Powell Hall, Florida Museum of Natural History
(*Lucille T. Maloney Classroom*), UF Campus, Gainesville FL

FirstLight

Aug / Sept / Oct
2010



Comet Swift-Tuttle (formally designated as **109P/Swift-Tuttle**) is a comet that was independently discovered by Lewis Swift on July 16, 1862 and by Horace Parnell Tuttle on July 19, 1862. Its solid nucleus is about 27 kilometers (16.8 miles) across, considerably larger than the 10-km object hypothesized to have wiped out the dinosaurs in the Cretaceous–Paleogene extinction event. It is the parent body of the Perseid meteor shower, perhaps the best known shower and among the most reliable in performance. (Wikipedia) The above is a fireball from the Perseid meteor shower. *Photo Credit & Copyright: Katsuhiro Mouri & Shuji Kobayashi (Nagoya City Science Museum / Planetarium)*



FirstLight
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