



# ASTROFILES

## Auburn Astronomical Society Newsletter

May 2018

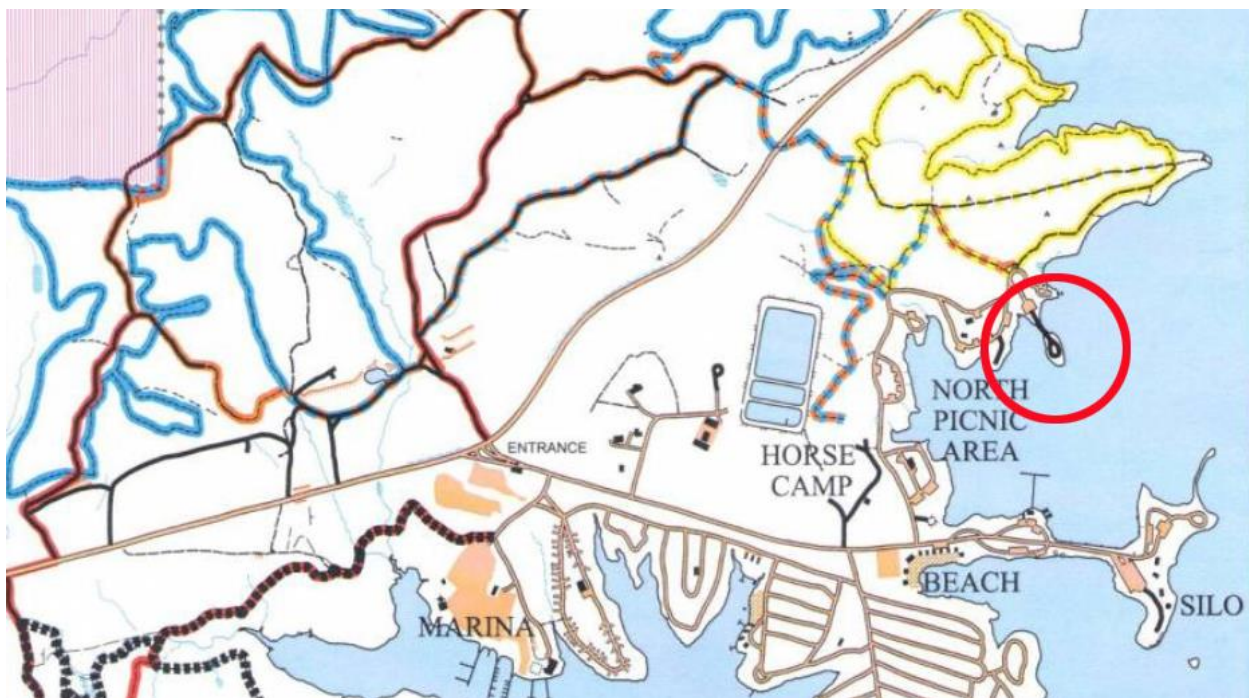
\*\*\*\*\*

John Wingard - Secretary/Treasurer - Auburn Astronomical Society - [jwin1048@gmail.com](mailto:jwin1048@gmail.com)

\*\*\*\*\*

### Next AAS Event

The next scheduled event for us will be to assist with a star gaze at Wind Creek State Park near Alexander City, AL on Saturday, June 2, 2018. This event was planned by the park for a 4-H group. The AAS has decided to assist the park with this event. The observing site for the star gaze will be a small peninsula near the North Picnic Area. This is a different spot than we used for the events last year. A few years ago, the AAS held a star gaze for a group of home-schooled students from this peninsula and it afforded somewhat better views of the sky. A map of the park is included here with the observing site circled in red. As usual, members plan to arrive before dark to set up scopes. If you tell someone at the entrance that you are with the astronomy club, they can direct you to the site.



\*\*\*\*\*

\*\*\*\*\*

## Additional Proposed Events

- Saturday, July 14, 2018 – Star Gaze/Club Meeting – Wind Creek State Park
- Saturday, August 18, 2018 – Star Gaze/Club Meeting – Wind Creek State Park
- Saturday, September 15, 2018 – Star Gaze/Club Meeting – Wind Creek State Park

These dates have been submitted to the park staff for consideration. Thanks to AAS member Mike Lewis for working with the park staff to arrange these events. As details are firmed up, additional information will be provided in upcoming newsletters.

\*\*\*\*\*

## What is a planisphere?

It's great that we have astronomy applications for our computers and smart phones, but there is still something to be said for an easy-to-use device that can be used anytime without any electronic support. It's called a planisphere. They've been around for decades and I still have several and in fact, I use one all the time when I want to quickly check to see what is visible in the sky on any particular night. They are not very expensive and can be purchased from many online vendors. I've even seen them in some bookstores that have a well-stocked astronomy section. Although the designs vary, they all operate on the same principle. You rotate the circular star chart so that the current date lines up with your local observing time and it will show you what constellations are visible at that specific time. Just make sure that the planisphere that you are using covers the latitude of your particular location. Most of the ones that I have cover a range of 30-40 degrees N latitude. Here's a photo of some of the commonly-available planispheres.



\*\*\*\*\*

\*\*\*\*\*

## An Interesting Newsletter



AMATEUR ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY OF RHODE ISLAND • 47 PEEPTOAD ROAD • NORTH SCITUATE, RHODE ISLAND 02867 • WWW.THESKYSRAPERS.ORG

**In This Issue:**

- 2 President's Message
- 3 The Sun, Moon & Planets in May
- 4 Astronomical

**Friday, May 11, 7pm  
at Seagrave Observatory**

**The Wild West of Star Formation**  
We explore the extreme center of our Galaxy, a chaotic region containing dense

**Upcoming Meetings**

It's always interesting to me to see what other astronomy clubs are doing so I subscribe to several club newsletters that are from various parts of the country. Most are free and do not require that you be a member in order to receive the newsletter. One that I have been receiving for several years is put out by the Amateur Astronomical Society of Rhode Island. This is a fairly large club with many very active members. They even have an observatory and clubhouse. Their monthly newsletter is called *The Skyscraper* and is typically full of interesting observing reports and other activities. If you would like to be put on their e-mail list you can go to <http://www.theskyscrapers.org>

\*\*\*\*\*

## Planets at opposition – Jupiter and Mars

Now is a good time to set aside some observing time for these two planets as they are or will be ideally placed for observing. Jupiter reached opposition this month, meaning that it will appear at it's largest from our vantage point here on Earth. Jupiter now rises in the early evening and it is up all night, so there has never been a better time to observe our largest planet and all of its moons. Later in July, the planet Mars will also be at its largest and although it is still a fairly small planet, a telescope of moderate aperture should show some faint surface markings under good viewing conditions.

\*\*\*\*\*

For additional information about the club and our activities, check out the following links:

The Auburn Astronomical Society web page: <http://www.auburnastro.org>

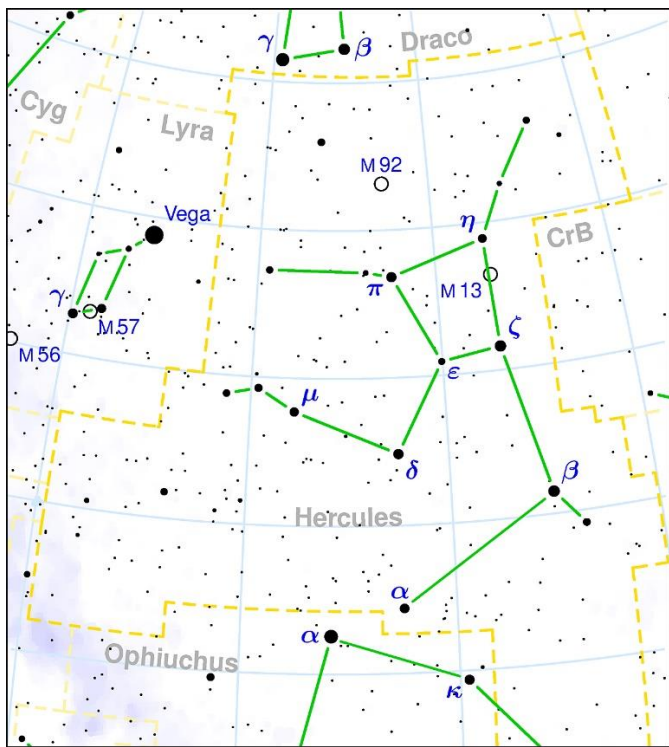
The AAS Facebook page: <http://www.facebook.com/groups/79864233515/>

\*\*\*\*\*

\*\*\*\*\*

## And finally...

Beginning with this issue of the newsletter I would like to begin a series of brief articles featuring relatively easy objects that can be seen by those that are just getting into the astronomy hobby or perhaps only have small scopes. We start with a globular cluster of stars in the constellation of Hercules designated as M13. It was discovered originally by Edmund Halley in 1714 and later cataloged by Charles Messier in 1764, meaning that it was the 13<sup>th</sup> non-comet object logged by Messier. M13 is one of the larger and brighter star clusters and at magnitude 5.8, it is right at the naked eye visual limit in a very dark sky. A small telescope will show it as a fuzzy blob. Larger scopes will begin to resolve some of the individual stars that make up the cluster. It's estimated that it contains several hundred thousand stars and is about 145 light-years distant. Hercules is already up in the east in the evenings and will be well-placed for viewing just about all summer. Below is a star chart of the constellation to aid in locating M13 along with a photo showing how densely packed the individual stars are that make up the cluster.



\*\*\*\*\*



## Auburn Astronomical Society Membership Application Form

Name:

---

Address:

---

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Application\* \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

E-mail:

---

Telescope(s):

---

---

Area(s) of special interest:

---

---

Enclose: \$20.00 for regular membership, payable in January. *Full-Time* student membership is half the Regular rate.

If you are a **NEW** member joining after the first of the year, refer to the prorated table below

Jan \$20.00	Feb \$18.33	Mar \$16.66	Apr \$14.99	May \$13.33	Jun \$11.66
Jul \$10.00	Aug \$8.33	Sep \$6.66	Oct \$4.99	Nov \$2.33	Dec \$1.66

Make checks payable to: Auburn Astronomical Society and return this application to:

Auburn Astronomical Society  
c/o John Wingard, Secretary/Treasurer  
#5 Wexton Court  
Columbus, GA 31907

For questions about your dues or membership status, contact: [jwin1048@gmail.com](mailto:jwin1048@gmail.com)

**Thank you for supporting the Auburn Astronomical Society!**