

MINUTES OF THE JUNE 7, 2008 MEETING OF THE CHARLIE ELLIOTT CHAPTER
OF THE ATLANTA ASTRONOMY CLUB

The June 7, 2008 meeting of the Charlie Elliott Chapter of the Atlanta Astronomy Club was called to order at 5:20 p.m. by chapter director Theo Ramakers. Present were 28 members and guests, with an additional 5 persons arriving at the observing field afterwards.

This being a pot-luck dinner / meeting, business was suspended until mealtime was completed.

Official proceedings resumed at 6:15 p.m. with the following CE chapter announcements:

- * Larry Owens said that there has been no new progress on the Byers Truss Tube scope project.
- * Jon Wood stated that the 12.5 in. Optical Craftsman Newtonian reflector may be outfitted with a new drive corrector soon (details to follow as they develop).
- * The CE chapter may help with an upcoming summer camp event at the CEWMA.
- * The CE chapter may host a group of Mansfield fourth graders at the January 2009 meeting, with observing on the field afterwards.
- * CEWMA rep Alesia Rast announced that CEWMA management is keeping tabs on and welcomes the apparently increased activity by the CE chapter with CEWMA and other events; of all the various groups currently meeting at CEWMA, the CE chapter is the most active; the sign-in mailbox station may be reinstalled at the observing field to get more accurate counts. The increased activity also bodes well for CEWMA management being open to the possibility of a permanent storage structure for the CE chapter's 12.5 in. Optical Craftsman Newtonian reflector; we were reminded, however, that the observing field is not a safety zone and the possibility of bullet or other damage to the structure and its contents during hunting activities should be considered; more discussion will follow between the CEWMA management and the CE astronomy group before any plans are finalized.
- * The next session in "Top Gun Imaging" by Larry Owens will concentrate on acquiring and keeping the object on the CCD chip; the previous session dwelt on collimation, and resulted in futile efforts by Theo to collimate his own scope before learning it required factory repairs. The "Top Gun Imaging" series of on-field workshops deals with becoming a top-notch ("top gun" imager); for more info on this activity, either contact Larry at larry@ceastronomy.org or visit and join the Charlie Elliott astronomy e-mail list at http://tech.groups.yahoo.com/group/charlie_elliott_chapter/ for details.
- * The CE chapter meeting schedule for the rest of 2008 is July 26 (topic: "Solar System Probes" by Fred Buls), August 30, September 27, October 25, November 29 and December 27.
- * Theo and several others discussed improvements to the chapter's website operated by Larry Owens, including personal blogs (online web logs).

The remainder of the evening included the following presentations:

* Observing the Moon, Part II, Theo's follow-up presentation on Moon observation. Some of the features covered this time were "libration" (the slight rocking motion of the Moon during its orbit around Earth that permits us to see up to 59% of the lunar surface over time), the Straight Wall under various lighting conditions and the challenges of observing Banded Craters (the subject of a special observing program fostered by the Assn of Lunar & Planetary Observers).

* A review about the free software program "Virtual Moon Atlas", available at www.ap-i.net/avl/en/start

* Observing 101 by Jon Wood, which began with a quick review of basic scope configurations and a few comments on different scope designs. Next was "A Quick and Dirty Polar Alignment (for setting up an equatorial mount without the benefit of a view of Polaris), then an illustrated discussion of polar drift alignment followed with plenty of "twists and turns". Jon also proposed and asked for comments on a new CE Observing Challenge to enhance the enjoyment of members' observing over the next year. New Challenge Object lists and an overview of the Challenge Objective will be posted on the CE chapter's web site soon (Jon will let us know as soon as these items have been uploaded). Also, we'll have some great prizes to be awarded for each Challenge category, thanks to our friends at Camera Bug (404-873-4513, or www.camerabug.com).

The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 p.m. for observing and departures.

(Submitted by Ken Poshedly, CE recording secretary)