

Minutes of the August 27, 2008 Meeting of the Charlie Elliott Chapter of the AAC

CE Chapter Director Theo Ramakers called the August 27, 2008 meeting to order at 5:05 p.m. and reviewed the agenda for the night. There were 13 members and guests in attendance. Theo explained that the Chapter does indeed value the time and effort of the presenter of the featured presentation for the night, and therefore, it will precede presentations on observing, current events and club news.

Theo then provided a brief introduction of the featured speaker for the evening, Dr. Richard Schmude, who is professor of Chemistry and Astronomy at Gordon College in Barnesville, as well as the ALPO observing coordinator of the Jupiter Section of the Assn of Lunar & Planetary Observers.

In his presentation, "Jupiter's Oscillating Storms", Dr. Schmude explained that Jupiter has no solid surface and that it is basically a body of gases of different densities held together by gravity. While the planet itself rotates on its axis in just under 10 Earth hours, different bands or belts move around the planet at different speeds -- all moving from east to west. In addition, clumps, ovals or spots which form in the gas belts move not only across the face of the planet as seen from Earth, but also slightly north and south, as well. Some examples of planetary spots -- besides the well-known Great Red Spot -- were the Great Dark Spot (Voyager 2 images of Neptune, 1989) and Hurricane Fay (satellite images of Earth, 2008).

Dr. Schmude distributed images and plastic measuring overlays for all to try their hands at determining the movement of several ovals on Jupiter. Some of features studied were Jupiter's Oval BA (which oscillated most when nearby Jupiter's Great Red Spot), Oval A1 (near the planet's south polar cap), and several white ovals, especially "N2" and "N3" (oscillated in latitude).

Dr. Schmude recommends methane band filters for those who wish to further study these Jovian features.

At this time, there was a short break for refreshments.

CE chapter Observing Supervisor Jonathan Wood: In his slightly abbreviated "Observing 101" segment of the meeting, Jon reviewed a number of upcoming rise/transit/set times for celestial objects in the coming month, using his program of choice "Calsky" (available at <http://www.calsky.com>).

CE Chapter Director Theo Ramakers: In his "Current Events" segment of the meeting, Theo used PowerPoint to display some absolutely stunning images of the August 1 solar eclipse with prominences (including a beautiful image from the TERRA satellite of the lunar shadow as it fell on the Earth near the Arctic Ocean; go to <http://www.redorbit.com/images/images-of-the-day>), images of the August 16 partial lunar eclipse as seen from Europe, plus a 65-image movie of a transit of one of the Galilean satellites across the face of Jupiter. Theo also presented a number of images from other CE chapter members, including Carlos Flores, Jim Honeycutt and Steve Ramsden. The remainder of Theo's presentation included images taken at the recent Imaging Workshop by Larry Owens at Oxford College; images taken by Cassini as it flew by the south pole of the Saturnian moon Enceladus on August 11 only

30 miles from the surface of the moon; and images from the Phoenix Mars Lander near the planet's north polar cap.

CEWMA staff rep Alesia Rast informed us of the various and many cutbacks being implemented by the Georgia Dept. of Natural Resources as it affects the CEWMA. Alesia added that none of the cutbacks will impact the CE chapter of the AAC. But she also asked everyone in attendance to let others know that the CEWMA lodge is available for families or groups, that its costs are comparable with similar facilities and that food service is included.

Steve Bieger gave an update about his 12.5-inch Dob Project, including visuals of the design he is using as a basis for his final product and images of the scope assemblies as they exist right now. The design Steve is modeling is the High Dobsonian Design, which includes only three aluminum truss tubes and provides better balance. Plettstone Telescopes has been marketing this design and one was shown at the 2007 Peach State Star Gaze. The High Dobsonian was featured in a writeup by Gary Seronik in the April 2008 issue of Sky & Telescope magazine.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 8 p.m.

The next meeting is 5 p.m., Saturday, September 27, and is a Pot Luck Dinner meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Ken Poshedly
CEWMA Chapter Recording Secretary