



Events

Space Camp

Hightower Trail 4th Grade Class, Conyers, Georgia

March 7, 2008

4th Annual SPACE CAMP at Hightower Trail Elementary (HTE), Conyers, GA.

For the fourth year in a row, the 4th grade students and faculty of HTE asked the Charlie Elliott astronomers to be part of their very successful SPACE CAMP. Mother Nature was not cooperative this year. She presented us with a solid overcast and some rain. Sharing the views through our telescopes of the night sky night sky was out of the question. So, it was time to execute PLAN B - Theo Ramakers (his 1st Space Camp), Steven Phillips (2nd Space Camp), Jonathan Wood (3rd Space Camp), Clevis & Debbie Jones (4th Space Camp) spent a delightful evening sharing astronomy information, images, short movies, and equipment with more than one hundred 4th grade students, the 4th grade faculty, and school volunteers.

Jonathan (Jon) Wood setup his equipment in the cafeteria. He used his 6-inch refractor telescope for show and tell. He also setup his notebook computer and used the school provided projector and very large screen to present his "Our Solar System" PowerPoint presentation including images of the relationship of the planet sizes. Of course you can't do this without answering a lot of questions that the equipment and

presentation evoke.

Theo Ramakers (Tay-Oh, who is from the Netherlands) was given a classroom for his use. Theo set up his 9.25-inch Celestron with imaging camera, notebook and speakers. As each group of 4th graders rotated through, he showed movies with sound he had created from images he and other members of our club had taken. One was of the exploding comet, 17P/Holmes, who's debris field at this time was more than 4 times the size of our Sun. Theo explained about our Moon phases, how he takes images, how he processes the images to make pictures and movies, and answered many questions.

Steven Phillips, Clevis & Debbie Jones were also given a classroom. Steven had set up his very large binoculars, Clevis & Debbie their 4.5-inch refractor, telescope as show and tell equipment. Some of the students voted to get some hands-on time instead of watch a short movie. Steven and Clevis talked with the students about NASA missions, discussed the speed of light and how it lets you see back in time due to the distances in our solar system, Milky Way Galaxy, and Universe being so large. They talked about constellations, how they differ from asterisms, and how very long ago people started making up the stories we call myths so they could more easily teach the knowledge learned about the stars in the sky.

In another classroom, 4th grade teacher, Steven Roach, was demonstrating the basics of rocket propulsion with Alka-Seltzer ... talk about getting your audience 'engaged', Captain Jean-Luc Picard of the Starship Enterprise would be proud!

The school had numerous other demonstrations and hands on activities for the students, but we had no opportunity to experience them – too busy having fun sharing astronomy with the 2008 Space Campers!

Thank you Ms. Bates (Principal), Gretchen Gault (our host), hard working Mary Corum, Steven Roach, Linda Rollins, fellow 4th grade faculty, school volunteers, and all the GREAT 4th grade students for inviting the Charlie Elliot astronomers to your 4th annual Space Camp. We had a wonderful time! It was our pleasure to share our knowledge of astronomy with you all. We look forward to next year and hope you'll ask us to SPACE CAMP again!

See images and a movie of SPACE CAMP 2008 here: http://ceastronomy.org/gallery/main.php?g2_itemId=948

"Keep Looking Up!"

-- Clevis Jones, with thanks to

Debbie Jones, Steven Phillips, Theo Ramakers, and Jonathan Wood

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