

## **Minutes of the March 27, 2009 Meeting of the Charlie Elliott Chapter of the AAC**

The meeting was held at the Charlie Elliott Wildlife Visitor Center and called to order at 4 p.m. by CE Chapter Director Theo Ramakers. The final attendance was 29 members and guests.

Following welcoming remarks by Theo, Fred Buls presented his talk on radiometric dating. Fred explained how scientists determine the age of rocks in general and specifically in rocks coming from the solar system and beyond. Because of initial Internet problems, Fred started his explanation on the whiteboard but soon we were able to switch over to his standard internet based presentation. The discussion ended with some graphs showing the results of some real rock samples analyzed.

Following Fred's presentation, the food was warmed enough and everyone got in line to fill their plates. As always, the food brought to the meeting was delicious and more than we could eat. Thanks to all the cooks!!

The potluck dinner portion of the meeting was followed by member Jim Honeycutt, who explained the background of the Moonrock exhibit. Jim has been certified by NASA since the late 1980s to conduct these Moon rock presentations and exhibits, and was able to bring them here in time for Fred's presentation on how the samples brought back from the Apollo missions helped in determining the age of the Solar System and the universe. After his presentation, everyone was able to take a very close look at the Moon rock samples using special bino viewers; youngsters especially waited eagerly to see the samples so very close-up.

### **Jon Wood's "Observing 101" segment included:**

- \* Upcoming rise/transit/set times for celestial objects in the coming weeks ( [www.stellarium.org/](http://www.stellarium.org/))  
[skyandtelescope.com](http://skyandtelescope.com) (almanac)
- \* A lunar calendar (from a subscriber-only area of [www.astronomy.com](http://www.astronomy.com))
- \* A list of upcoming meteor showers (our next one is the Lyrids on April 22)
- \* Several images showing the apparent path of Venus in the morning sky over the next several weeks
- \* Several images and graphics depicting upcoming conjunctions, and a general overview of specific terminology regarding planet observation
- \* Various images of Saturn, Mars and ISS from various sources
- \* A reminder and review of current observing resources on the chapter website to assist fellow members in finding lots of interesting nighttime targets, along with the addition of a real time sky chart on the chapter observing page.
- \* A number of images from the Hubble Space Telescope
- \* Images and sky maps of Comet Lulin (C/2007 N3)

- \* An account of his recent hunt for and imaging of Comet Lulin, quite a "Tale" indeed
- \* A general overview of the constellations of the spring sky and basic star hopping to identify prominent stars and specific locations of interesting objects (with the aid of excerpts from Philip S. Harrington's book "Star Watch" (ISBN 0-471-41804-8, copyright 2003, John Wiley & Sons, Inc., Hoboken, NJ).
- \* Several detailed spring charts, target lists, star-hopping descriptions, and historical information, including images of targets from personal and other sources, identifying and describing 28 spring observing targets including galaxies, clusters, double stars and nebula.

Because of two major presentations and the pot luck dinner, we exceeded our time and Theo did not show his Current Events presentation this time, but will integrate it in next month's program.

Theo explained that CE Chapter members will participate in next week's 100 Hours of Astronomy with four sessions being scheduled; Thursday evening at the Covington Library, Friday evening at George Walton Academy in Monroe (the GWA event being limited to students, family and friends of GWA), Saturday afternoon a solar observing session at the Newton Shopping Center in Covington compliments of Stephen Ramsden and other members, and Saturday evening a star party at Charlie Elliott Wildlife Center itself.

The next CE chapter meeting will be 5 p.m., Saturday, April 18, when the feature presentation will be the movie "Eyes on the Skies", 400 Years of Telescopic Discoveries.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 7:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Theo Ramakers  
(filling in for Ken Poshedly)