

Meeting and Event notes of May 16, 2009
Charlie Elliott Chapter of the AAC

May 16th was JAKES Day, Charlie Elliott's outdoor festival. Several of the CE chapter members set up at the conference room in the Visitor Center in anticipation of the participants of the Museum Scavenger Hunt. On the big screen, we showed the live broadcast of the SST 125 mission to repair the Hubble Telescope with the 3rd EVA in progress.

Jon Wood had set up his scope and connected it to his laptop. Images by CE chapter members images, which were used at the Covington library exhibition, were displayed on the wall and used in the one-on-one discussions with visitors to explain the solar system and the individual planets, while posters and other material of the Night Sky Network (NSN) was appreciated by all visitors. A table with books, maps, pictures completed the setup

Since it was cloudy outside, Stephen Ramsden could not show the Sun through his solar scopes, so we used the material from the NSN to explain the Sun, its relative size and distance to the planets as well as discussions about the individual planets. With Jon Wood's scope set up and controlled by his PC running Stellarium, the kids also loved "flying" through the solar system using Celestia. The material provided by NSN was great in our explanations and was appreciated by all.

At the end of the event, 110 visitors young and old had learned a lot about our solar system and astronomy in general. Thanks to Debbie and Clevis Jones, Stephen Ramsden, Jon Wood, and Theo Ramakers who made this event a great success.

At 5 p.m., our meeting began and after a welcome from CE chapter director Theo Ramakers to the 8 attendees, the floor was given over to Debbie Jones, who chaired the elections for the chapter's officers. The previous year's officers were running again for another term and Debbie did not receive any additional nominations, nor were any made from the floor. All previous year's officers were unanimously reelected to their respective positions. The officers were thanked for their efforts over the past 12 months and the program continued with the screening of "400 years of the Telescope", a Journey of Science, Technology and Thought - the NSN version of the PBS Documentary, created by Kris Koenig and Dan Koehler. Go to <http://www.400years.org> for more information. Following the screening, Theo did a short presentation of the "Current Events" in astronomy and space exploration, which included updates on our outreach program, updates from the NSN and the Hubble repair mission as well as some short movies of the eclipse of two Galilean moons by Anthony Wesley.

Jon Wood presented his Observing 101 talk for May. We began with a quick look at Mercury, Superior Conjunction on May 18, moving from evening to morning sky.

Then we looked at various free web site offerings for night sky charts, local rise, transit and set times for the months of May and June, lunar calendars for May and June, and a quick meteor shower update. Next, Jupiter, with the May 17 double shadow transit and the upcoming conjunction with Neptune on May 27, followed by a re-cap of the recent Globe at Night Sky Quality Survey. We saw 4 finder charts for several morning and evening comets and ended with a quick look at Canes Venatici and Jon's most recent attempts at imaging the spiral galaxies M63 and M64. Jon's images are improving and his auto guiding seems to be working better now than over his last several outings. This concluded the meeting.

Later, several members met on the observing field, ever optimistic for a few holes in the cloud cover, but alas, it was not meant to be, though we were able to give member Eric Bozeman some guidance with the proper setup of his new equatorial scope.

We also did entertain a local Girl Scout troop, who just happened to be staying at the Charlie Elliot lodge, and Jon was able to describe what we might have seen had the weather

cooperated. They enjoyed the explanation and am sure they will be back for more. All in all, a great day.

In absence of the secretary,
Submitted by
Theo Ramakers.