

Minutes of the June 12, 2010 Meeting of the Charlie Elliot Chapter of the AAC

The meeting was held at the Charlie Elliott Wildlife Visitor Center and preceded by a Pot luck dinner. The dinner began approximately 5:20 and continued through meeting time. The meeting was called to order at 6:05 p.m. by CE Chapter Director Theo Ramakers. The final meeting attendance was approximately 33 members and guests.

The program began with the guest speaker, Dr. Richard Schmude, executive director of ALPO and coordinator of the Jupiter section. The title of his presentation was "Jupiter - Recent Events (2007 - 2010)". Dr Schmude gave an enlightened talk on three phenomenon on Jupiter that provide interesting clues to the makeup of the planet's gas clouds and structure. He explained the difference between the zones and bands of clouds of Jupiter and how they are notated in the literature. Dr Schmude then talked about how features migrate across these regions and also described how the northern temperate zone has recently disappeared in visible light but has also done this before. He went on to show historically how these kinds of events appear to be cyclical. Next, Dr Schmude talked about two recent events on Jupiter that were apparent impacts, however, he brought forth some ideas that may also explain the evidence recently caught by amateur astronomers through digital images. The two events of 2009 and earlier this month have been documented by vigilant astronomers with provocative images. Dr Schmude encouraged everyone to continue with their imaging work and to help build the knowledge base. His work on these recent events is being compiled into a report that he will complete later this year for ALPO.

The meeting continued with the follow up to the May elections since the offices of Director and Recording Secretary had not yet been filled. No nominations were received before or during the June meeting for director. Dan Schmidt offered to help as secretary and nominated himself; Debbie Jones seconded. Theo Ramakers advised that he would be able to continue as director if some of the load could be shared amongst the group; he would like to continue his focus on outreach. Annett Michel offered to take on the creation of a program committee; Marie Lott offered to assist in this area and they will follow up on this activity. Steve Bieger offered to assist with the chapter's web publishing. With this, Marie Lott nominated Theo to continue as director, Clevis Jones seconded. Both Dan and Theo were unanimously voted in.

Theo continued with the program and presented the Astronomical League's Master Outreach Program certificate and pin to Stephen Ramsden. Stephen has been a tireless promoter of astronomy outreach through his Charlie Bates Solar Observing program. He has reached out to dozens of schools and private gatherings, touching the lives of many young people. His work also provides a valuable promotional element in the outreach done by the Chapter.

Theo then went on to present a short review of recent events at the Charlie Elliot and at Jon Wood field.

Stephen Ramsden explained that he has received some hardware from Lunn that has been donated. Stephen is the agent who will insure that these scope kits get distributed to a school or individual who can construct them and be a part of the promotional activity.

Steven Phillips gave his monthly Observing 101 presentation. Steve walked us through the main events to be witnessed in the coming month and gave suggestions on how to best enjoy them with or without a telescope. Venus, Castor, Pollux, Jupiter and Uranus were among his key targets for the evening. His object of the Month was Neptune since it has been approximately one Neptunian year since its discovery in 1846. He explained how the planet was discovered using mathematical prediction based on the orbital changes effecting Uranus. Steve listed several groups of targets for June and this time of year - double stars, galaxies, globular clusters and planetary nebulae. The group at large had an interesting discussion of Dawes limit and other issues related to splitting double stars.

The meeting wrapped at 8:30 PM, in time for those interested to head out to the viewing field.

Minutes compiled and written by Steve Bieger