

Minutes of the December 4, 2010 Meeting of the Charlie Elliott Chapter of the AAC

The quarterly potluck dinner meeting of the Charlie Elliott Chapter of the Atlanta Astronomy Club was held at 3 PM on Saturday, December 4, 2010 at the CE Wildlife Visitor Center. Twenty five members were present. After socializing and dining, the meeting was officially brought to order at 4:20 PM.

Chapter Director Theo Ramakers began with a moment of silence to honor the memory of Keith Burns. Many members present at the meeting had also attended the morning's memorial service for Keith in Cartersville. Theo announced that the chapter logged 57 outreach events in 2010. He urged everyone to update their volunteer hours online before January 3, 2011 in order to earn a Night Sky Network pin. Theo also announced that the space shuttle launch scheduled for 2/3/11 at 8 PM should be visible from the Charlie Elliott observing field. Chapter members are invited to come out for that event. Ken Poshedly donated discarded Styrofoam boxes & soft foam liners from his work to anyone who could use them. He said he has access to more if others would like some.

Rich Jakiel and Pixie Bruner co-presented the evening's program, "AINT" Ancient INovation and Technology. Members were treated to information about the technical prowess of Mediterranean civilizations prior to 415 AD. Beginning with Eratosthenes in 240 BCE, we were enlightened about such advancements as the Roman concrete revolution and its importance to ancient architecture; aqueduct and bridge systems; mass production of glass; Roman coins; rotten fish sauce (garam); Archimedes Death Ray (recently tested on Myth Busters); the Claw of Archimedes and its defense of the city walls of Syracuse; the onager siege engine and the polybolos repeating crossbow; ancient analog computers, armillary spheres, astrolabes and the antikythera; and finally the impact of the ancient geniuses Archimedes, Heron of Alexandria, Ptolemy, Hipparchus and Hypatia. As you can see, if you missed the talk, you missed a lot of fascinating information!

Steven Philips, Observing Supervisor, wound up the meeting with "Observing 101", a highlight of current sun, moon and planet rise & set times, observing targets and challenges. Jupiter is now setting after midnight; Saturn rises at around 3 AM and Venus rises before dawn. Between Dec 20th and Jan 1st there will be a nice grouping of the crescent moon near Venus at dawn. During the first two weeks of January 2011 the asteroid 17 Fides passes though the Pleiades. The Quadrantid meteor shower peaks Jan 3rd-4th.

Beginner/Small Telescope/Binocular Target List for December: M31 (Andromeda Galaxy), M33 (Pinwheel Galaxy), NGC 253 (Sculptor Galaxy); Globular Clusters M2, M15; Open Clusters M34, M39, M45 (the Pleiades) and the Perseus Double Cluster (NGC 869/884); Supernova remnant M1 (the Crab Nebula); and M27 (Dumbbell Nebula).

Intermediate/Advanced Target List for December: Spiral Galaxies M74 & M77, NGC 891; Globular cluster NGC 288; Open Clusters NGC 129, 457 (the ET/Owl Cluster), 663, 1027; M76 (the Little Dumbbell); NGC 246 (Pac Man Nebula).

The meeting was adjourned at 6 PM followed. Due to rainy weather, no observing session was held.

The next meeting of the Charlie Elliott chapter will be January 8, 2011 at 3 PM. The featured speaker will be Anita Westlake, president and co-founder of the Meteorite Association of Georgia and frequent contributor to Meteorite Magazine. She will bring meteorite samples as well as a few pieces that will be available for purchase.

Respectfully submitted,

Marie Lott
Recording Secretary