

Minutes of the December 17, 2011 Meeting of the Charlie Elliott Chapter of the AAC

The December meeting of the Charlie Elliott Chapter of the Atlanta Astronomy Club was held on Saturday, 12/17/11 in the Visitor center at 3 PM. This was the quarterly potluck meeting, with twenty six people in attendance. While dining, members were treated to a slideshow of the 2011 APODs (Astronomy Picture of the Day) downloaded from <http://apod.nasa.gov/apod/astropix.html>.

The Charlie Elliott chapter meeting schedule for 2012 was reviewed and the members present decided to keep the meeting start times at approximately three hours before sunset. Because of this floating schedule, members were advised to be sure to check ceastronomy.org for start time each month. All 2012 meeting dates are listed on the chapter's home page.

Steve Philips, Observing Supervisor, presented "Observing 101", a highlight of current sun, moon and planet rise & set times, observing targets and challenges. This month all eight planets will be visible. – Venus, Jupiter, Uranus & Neptune in the early evening and Mercury, Mars and Saturn before sunrise. Two interesting flybys should be visible from the CE field after the December meeting – the ISS passes overhead from 6:42-6:47 pm and the "secret" spy satellite X37b will be visible for less than a minute at 7:26 pm.

Upcoming Astro Calendar:

- Dec 2011 – Asteroid Eunomia glides through southern Perseus
- Dec 2011 – Comet Garradd nears naked eye visibility in constellation Hercules
- Jan 2011 – Mars returns to the evening sky
- Jan 2011 – Comet P2006 / T1 (Levy) cruises out of Pegasus and crosses Pisces and Cetus
- Jan 1 – 1st Quarter moon
- Jan 2 – Moon 5 \circ north of Jupiter at 10:00 AM
- Jan 3 – Io shadow transit of Jupiter 11:07 PM
- Jan 4 – Quadrantid meteor shower peaks
- Jan 7/8 – Explore the shoreline of Oceanus Procellarum on the moon
- Jan 9 – Full Moon
- Jan 12 – Neptune 1.2 \circ north of Venus
- Jan 13 – Io shadow transit of Jupiter 7:32 PM
- Jan 14 – Moon 9 \circ south of Mars 2:00 AM
- Jan 16 – Last quarter moon

Selected small Telescope/Binocular Target List for December & January:

- Double Stars in Andromeda: Almach, Alpheratz, Δ Andromeda, Mirach,
- Galaxies: M31 in Andromeda, M33 in Triangulum, NGC 253 in Sculptor
- Open Clusters: M34 in Perseus, M45 in Taurus, M103 in Cassiopeia
- Planetary Nebulas: NGC 246 in Cetus, NGC 7662 in Andromeda, M76 in Perseus
- Carbon Star: U Camelopardalis

Steve Philips also presented a review of "Eyepiece Basics", covering the different types of eyepieces commonly available. He also explained considerations regarding magnification, image brightness & contrast, field of view, light dispersion, and eye relief. Steve gave some helpful suggestions for selecting eyepieces, with one of the more important take-home lessons being "a small number of good eyepieces is better than a large selection of bad eyepieces."

To conclude the meeting, Theo Ramakers made a surprise presentation of a telescope which had been donated to the club to avid stargazers & frequent chapter visitors Deborah and Katie Haslow. Theo then shared some photos of his recent trips to California to visit the Night Sky Network team and to Florida to witness the launch of the Mars Science Laboratory Curiosity rover. After the meeting, members and guests adjourned to the Jon Wood Astronomy Field for observing.

The next meeting of the chapter will be Saturday, January 21, 2012 at 3 PM in the Charlie Elliott Visitor Center. Steve Siedentop will present a talk entitled "Building a Push-to Dob". Weather-permitting, all are invited to stay afterwards for observing.

Respectfully submitted,

Marie Lott

Recording Secretary