

Minutes of the July 2, 2011 Meeting of the Charlie Elliott Chapter of the AAC

The July meeting of the Charlie Elliott Chapter of the Atlanta Astronomy Club was held on Saturday, July 2, 2011 in the Visitor Center at 5 PM with twenty five adults, four teens and one child in attendance.

Outreach coordinator Theo Ramakers asked member to please update their volunteer hours on the Night Sky Network, by July 5th if possible, for their quarterly report. Frank Garner & Theo Ramakers were awarded a certificate of appreciation from Conyers Middle School for their three day solar outreach program for sixth graders in April.

Chapter director Ken Poshedly presented “The Moon, What You Won’t See Tonight” reviewing the features and phases of the moon. Larry Owens followed with a brief but informative talk about the basics of lunar astrophotography.

Observing supervisor Steven Philips presented “Observing 101”, a highlight of current sun, moon and planet rise & set times, observing targets and challenges. In July, Saturn will be visible until just after midnight. Jupiter, Mars, and Venus will rise between 2:30 and 5:30 AM. Steven reported that on the evening of July 7th the Purbach Cross, a.k.a. the ‘Lunar X’, would be visible briefly on the lunar terminator near the craters Aliacensis, Werner and Purbach. [Note added after the meeting: thanks to Steven’s alert, Sharon Carruthers, Art Zorka & Marie Lott were able to watch this transient lunar event unfold with the Boy Scouts at Woodruff on July 7th. Very cool! See <http://bit.ly/mS4Usi> for photos and more details about this phenomenon.]

Small Telescope/Binocular Target List for July:

Galaxies M51 (Whirlpool), M63 (Sunflower), M94 (Starburst), M101 (Pinwheel) and NGC 6946 (Fireworks); globular clusters M3, M5, M12 & M13; planetary nebula M57 (Ring); and double stars Porrima (γ Virginis), Rasalgethi (α Herculis) & Izar (ϵ Boötis).

In keeping with the spirit of the Fourth of July holiday, the featured object for the month is NGC 6946 – The Fireworks Galaxy. This is an intermediate barred spiral galaxy located on the border between the constellations Cepheus and Cygnus, approximately 22 million light years away. It was discovered by William Herschel in 1798. Numerous supernova and star forming events have been discovered in this ancient but bar-driven nuclear starburst galaxy.



The Fireworks Galaxy

from Wikipedia Commons

After the meeting several scopes were set up on the observing field while fourteen club members waited for clouds to clear.

The next meeting of the chapter will be Saturday, July 30, 2011 at 5 PM in the Charlie Elliott Visitor Center. Rich Jakiel will present a talk entitled “Astro-Imaging on a Budget”. Immediately following the close of the meeting will be the dedication of a new sign at our observing field, designating it as the “Jon Wood Astronomy Field”. Weather-permitting, all are invited to stay afterwards for an evening of observing.

Respectfully submitted,

Marie Lott

Recording Secretary