

July 2011



Charlotte Amateur Astronomers Club

<http://www.charlotteastronomers.org>

Next Meeting: Friday July 15, 2011

Time: 7:00 PM

Place: Masonic Temple

Address: 500 N. Sharon Amity Rd.

The Amateur's Perfect Machine:

State-of-The Art Design & Outfitting of Dobsonian Telescopes

The largest telescopes in use by Amateur Astronomers are mirror-based reflectors with a Dobsonian mounting. Called simply, "Big Dobs", these telescope systems always garner the longest lines at star parties, and in most cases, bring the best views to the observer.



Join us in July to learn about this design and how to incorporate important accessories into your Dob. If you've ever thought about "going bigger" with your telescope, or have considered adding this type of telescope to your arsenal in the future, don't miss this program.

Our speaker, Charlie Starks, is a member of the CAAC, and founder of Markless Astronomics, an astronomy Internet business serving the Dobsonian community worldwide. He has designed tools, products, and services to outfit more than 550 high-end Dobs over the last nine years. He is primarily involved in outfitting and improving the setup and use of these systems for visual observers.

This is a great opportunity to learn how you can create the amateur's perfect observing machine. Join us!

COME EAT WITH US: Several members will gather at the International House of Pancakes at Cotswold Friday evening at 5:30 PM before the meeting. We would love to have you come and join us.

Visitors at the June Meeting: Chris Stockton

New Members: --

THE PRESIDENTS CORNER

Observing Safety

I believe an expectation of all of our club members is that CAAC provides, to the best of its ability, a safe observing environment and that our operations are in compliance with local, state, and federal regulations. One growing area of concern is the use of green laser pointers which are an incredible astronomical tool for being able to point out night sky objects. Used carelessly or without awareness of others around them, green laser pointers can be dangerous. Malicious users can “flashblind” airplane pilots creating immediate peril for everyone onboard the aircraft.

Laser pointers should NEVER be pointed toward any aircraft, vehicles, or people. Permanent retinal eye damage can be done with just a brief exposure. It is against federal FAA regulations to aim a laser at aircraft. In the USA, individuals have been arrested, gone to trial, and sentenced to jail for aiming laser pointers at aircraft.

Some astronomy clubs have prohibited the use of laser pointers and others have prohibited use at major observing events (e.g. Winter Star Party). Two US cities have already restricted or banned their use. Two countries have banned them and others are considering bans. Your help is needed to preserve the legitimate use of green laser pointers. The CAAC officer team recently met and among other issues, approved the following rule as part of our Observatory Safety document:

Green Laser Pointers: These laser pointers are a great astronomy instructional tool. **WARNING:** Be aware, it is extremely dangerous and against federal FAA regulations to aim a laser at aircraft. Permanent retinal eye damage can be done with just a brief exposure. Improper use of lasers is grounds for immediate dismissal from the club with no recourse or refunds. Your acceptance of this rule is part of your CAAC membership.

Thank you for your help.

Clear, dark skies....

...Mark

FROM THE OBSERVATORY DIRECTOR

The club has several loaner telescopes for use by members. Contact the Observatory Director, Ken Steiner for details on the telescopes and how to check out one of them.

CAAC Upcoming Monthly Star Parties:

Saturday July 30, 2011

Saturday August 27, 2011

These star parties are held at the club's **Gayle H. Riggsbee Observatory** in Taxahaw, SC, weather permitting. Contact the Observatory Director, Ken Steiner, for directions to the observatory. All members and their guests are welcome.

Training Session

There will be an operator training session at 6:00 pm on July 30 prior to the next scheduled star party at the observatory. Anyone interested in attending should contact Ken Steiner.

Cosmic Camporee

The COSMIC CAMPOREE will NOT take place over Labor Day weekend as originally planned. A new date has not been established but we are currently considering moving the event to a weekend in October. We hope to have a specific date and more details about the event at the next meeting.

CAAC Yahoo Group

Consider signing on to the Charlotte Astronomers Yahoo Group site:

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/charlotteastronomers>

This site is used to share information about local astronomical events, star parties, informal gatherings, and general information related to club activities among members. The group is open to all CAAC members.

FROM THE SECRETARY

Newsletter questions or announcements? Please contact Skip Copp via email at gcopp@carolina.rr.com or at (704) 568-3732 about newsletter-related matters. Also, if your email address changes, please notify Skip.

FOR SALE ITEMS

Bring your items for sale to regular club meetings and display them if you wish. To include sale items in the newsletter, please contact Skip Copp at gcopp@carolina.rr.com or call (704) 568-3732 no later than the second Friday of each month. Ads will run for three months or until the item(s) is sold and may be renewed as desired.

CLUB CONTACTS

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