



EPHEMERALS - MAY 2007

DATE	WHEN	WHAT & WHERE
3	7:30p	May Meeting @ TCC
5	10:00a	Pungo-Blackwater Community Day @ Pungo Library
11/12	6:00p	ECSP @ Coinjock NC
19	Dusk	Nightwatch @ Chippokes Plantation
20	12:00p	Girl Scout Fest @ The Ted Constant Center
22	8:00p	Lunar Fest @ Greenbrier Middle School
25	7:00p	Nighthike @ NWRP
26	8:00p	Garden Stars @ Norfolk Botanical Gardens

LOOKING UP

Hello fellow astronomers,

Was April a nice month or what? I spent several nights out with NO dew, pleasant temperatures and no BUGS!!! What more could you ask for, maybe a few less lights in my neighborhood? April also hosted one of our main events of the year, Astronomy Day. We had several members set up at 3 locations, and as usual, the sun was out, the day was nice, and a ton of people got to look through our solar scopes. But May is here and we celebrate another huge event, the much anticipated, Kent Blackwell's East Coast Star Party on the 11th and 12. It's a "you have to be there" event.

At our regular meeting on the 3rd, we will look ahead at the summer schedule, talk picnic, and how many ways we can spend the nights out under the sky. The Pungo-Blackwater Community Day will be Sat the 5th, 10AM to 2PM, followed by Earth Day at Mt Trashmore Sun. the 6th, 11AM - 5PM, which always draws 1000 + people to this event. Another large event is on Sun. the 20th, Ted Constant Center. It's the Girl Scout Fest, and it brings scouts from all over to this event. We

CONTENTS

Ephemerals	1
Looking Up	1
April Meeting Minutes	2
NASA Space Place	3
BBAA INFO	4
Astronomy Day 2007	5
Observer's Corner	6
East Coast Star Party	7
April Calendar	8

That's All Folks!

have Skywatch, Cloverwatch, Nightwatch, Lunar Fest, Nighthike, and the nights you just go outside and look up, who has time to work? Ah, but don't forget, Mothers Day is the 13th. I have to race home from the ECSP and try to redeem myself for not making Connie breakfast, (a tradition), but she said, "Wine and dinner will be just fine, slave!" It's going to be one heck of a month.

See everyone soon .

Dale Carey

IMPORTANT NOTICE!

A proposition for amending the club constitution to allow a free associate membership to be offered to youngsters shall be discussed at the May meeting. Attending members will be asked to form a consensus on the language of the amendment which will then be offered to the general membership for approval or rejection by popular vote at a later date to be announced.

THE BACK BAY AMATEUR ASTRONOMER'S OBSERVER

MARCH'S MEETING MINUTES

The April meeting of the Back Bay Amateur Astronomers was called to order by President Dale Carey on Thursday April 5th, 2007 at 7:30 PM at TCC in Virginia Beach.

Members in Attendance: There were twenty three people in attendance at the meeting, Five guests David Vietch, David Wright, James Kresky, Michael Stafford and Dale Leonard. Michael and Dale paid dues and joined during the meeting which earns them a big welcome aboard! Members in attendance included: Neill Alford, Bruce Bodner, Kenny Broun, Dale Carey, Larry Channel, Jeff Dunn, Ted Forte, Jay Garrard, Steve Hamilton, Chuck Jagow, Karen Jagow, Ben Loyola, Matt McLaughin, Mike Pereira, Bill Powers, George Reynolds, Larry Wade, Kevin and Barb Weiner.

Treasurer's Report: Barbara Weiner was absent, however Kevin reported that the club has \$5,065.59 in the treasury, with \$1,475.30 in the scholarship fund leaving \$3,590.29 remaining for club operations.

Secretary's Report: It was moved and seconded to forgo the reading of the previous month's minutes because they are available 24/7 on the Internet. Chuck Jagow reported membership was currently down to 91 members with 11 members needing to pay their dues.

Astronomical League Correspondent's Report: Georgie June was absent so there was no official ALCOR Report for the month of April.

Old Business: Bruce Bodner reported that the Treasurer had provided all of the required documentation for a complete audit of the BBAA books to him and after careful scrutiny Mr. Bodner declared the requested audit SATISFACTORY.

A question was raised if any applications had been received for the current cycle of the BBAA scholarship fund yet. The answer was no, and Dale announced that when the current cycle is over, as President he is going to "stand-down" the Scholarship Committee while a new committee is formed. The new committee will review the bylaws of the Scholarship Committee and make recommendations of how to bring the Scholarship Committee's bylaws more in line with those of the club's organizing documents. No other old business was discussed.

New Business: There were several points of new business brought up and discussed including:

1. Dale Carey suggested setting up some kind of a Youth group within the BBAA where folks 18 and under could join for free as long as they received their copy of the newsletter via the Internet.
2. Chuck Jagow suggested taking the BBAA newsletter out of "free" circulation on the Internet as it is now and make it only available to paid members. After a bit of open discussion, Chuck tabled his motion to take the newsletter private.
3. Chuck also brought up the possibility of acquiring a lease, at some kind of possible tax benefit perhaps for the owner, for some acreage down south of the North Carolina border heading towards Gates county and Petti-grew state park. After discussion, Chuck said he would look into the matter more seriously with local property owners and report back at a later time.
4. Chuck also asked if a online repository of outreach presentations could be set up that if someone needed a presentation for a group of kids they could download one and use it. Most everyone was in agreement that it was a good idea.

There was also some general discussion about cleaning up the Yahoo scheduling tools such as the calendar and outreach database and such.

David Wright, one of the guests, asked the club to help provide ideas on what equipment would best be suited for their new observatory that was being built at TCC. He explained that they would have two 8" diameter piers to mount telescopes on and they wanted suggestions for the best ways to spend their budget. He gave his email out for people to send him their suggestions: dwright@tcc.edu Keep in mind how much light pollution they are dealing with there at TCC.

Rapid Response Robotic Telescope Project Report: Ted Forte was not asked for an update on the RRRT.

Presentation: David Veitch of STAR F/X² provided a short presentation of the special treatment they can do for your ceilings. They can make your ceilings match the night sky to any time of any year you select. With the correct star and constellation placement. Once the lights go out the treatment glows brightly for many hours. They explained that their process is very unique and their techniques to recreate the night sky are proprietary. We were all surprised to learn that the treatment costs only \$4 per square foot. David concluded his presentation by providing cards and flyers for anyone interested.

In Conclusion: The meeting was adjourned at 9:04 PM.

Chuck Jagow



Clouds from Top to Bottom

By Patrick L. Barry

During the summer and fall of 2006, U.S. Coast Guard planes flew over the North Pacific in search of illegal, unlicensed, and unregulated fishing boats. It was a tricky operation-in part because low clouds often block the pilots' view of anything floating on the ocean surface below.

To assist in these efforts, they got a little help from the stars.

Actually, it was a satellite-CloudSat, an experimental NASA mission to study Earth's clouds in an entirely new way. While ordinary weather satellites see only the tops of clouds, CloudSat's radar penetrates clouds from top to bottom, measuring their vertical structure and extent. By tapping into CloudSat data processed at the Naval Research Laboratory (NRL) in Monterey, CA, Coast Guard pilots were better able to contend with low-lying clouds that

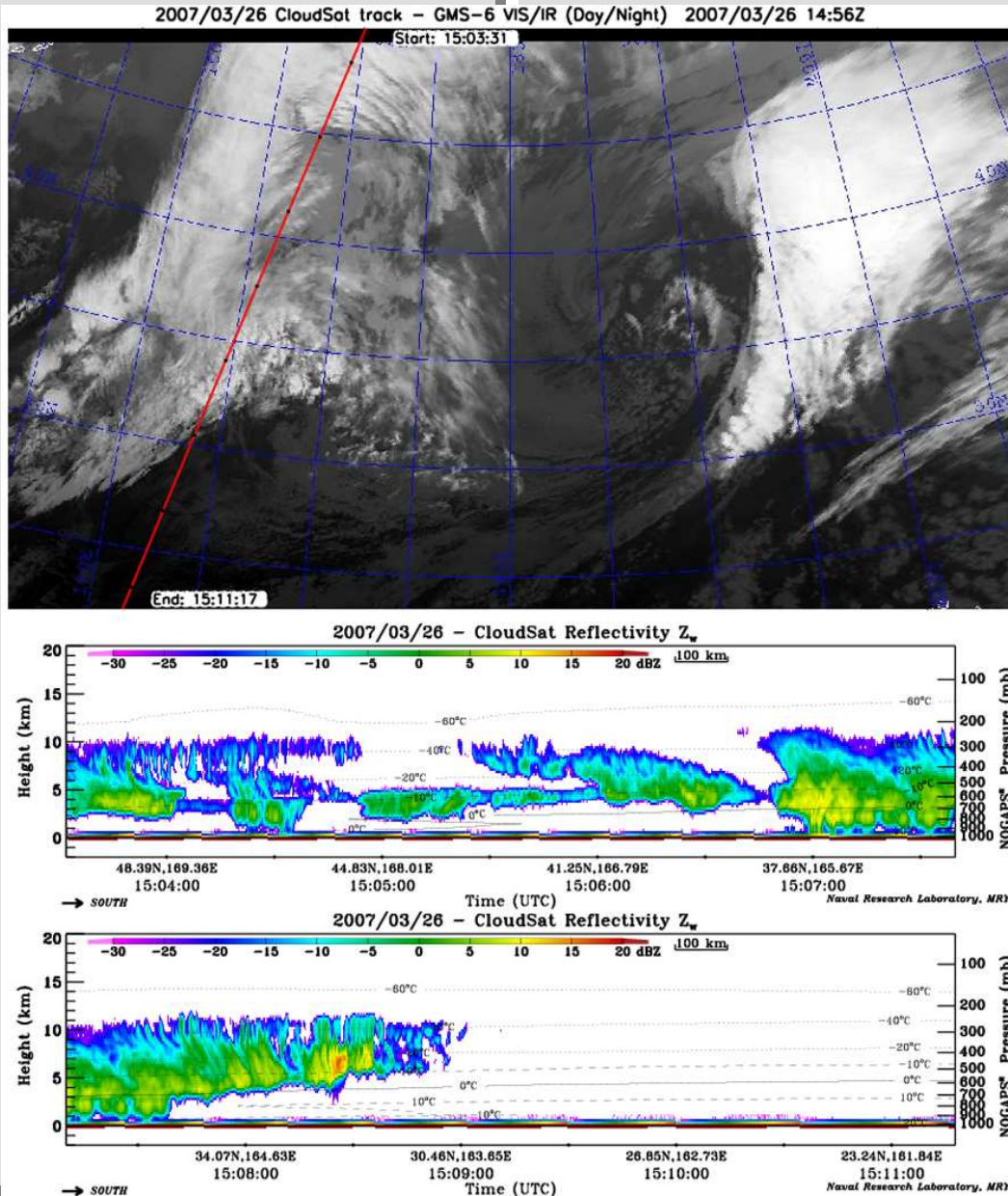
might have otherwise hindered their search for illegal fishing activity.

In the past, Coast Guard pilots would fly out over the ocean not knowing what visibility to expect. Now they can find out quickly. Data from research satellites usually takes days to weeks to process into a usable form, but NASA makes CloudSat's data publicly available on its QuickLook website and to users such as NRL in only a matter of hours-making the data useful for practical applications.

"Before CloudSat, there was no way to measure cloud base from space worldwide," says Deborah Vane, project manager for CloudSat at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory.

CloudSat's primary purpose is to better understand the critical role that clouds play in Earth's climate. But knowledge about the structure of clouds is useful not only for scientific research, but also to operational users such as Coast Guard patrol aircraft and Navy and commercial ships at sea.

"Especially when it's dark, there's limited information about storms at sea," says Vane. "With CloudSat, we can sort out towering thunderclouds
(Continued on page 7)



A CloudSat ground track appears as a red line overlaid upon a GMS-6 (a Japanese weather satellite) infrared image. CloudSat is crossing the north-central Pacific Ocean on a descending orbit (from upper-right to lower-left) near a storm front. The radar data corresponding to this ground track (beginning in the center panel and continuing into the lower panel) shows a vertical cloud profile far more complex than the two-dimensional GMS-6 imagery would suggest. Thicker clouds and larger droplets are shown in yellow/red tones, while thinner clouds are shown in blue.

THE BACK BAY AMATEUR ASTRONOMER'S OBSERVER

BBAA INFO

The BBAA meet the first Thursday of every month. While school is in session we meet at the VA Beach TCC campus in the Pungo building. Summer meetings are usually held at the Chesapeake COX campus. The May meeting will be on Thursday May 3rd at 7:30 PM at the TCC campus in Virginia Beach.

BBAA INTERNET LINKS

BBAA WEB SITE

<http://groups.hamptonroads.com/bbaa/>

YAHOO GROUP

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

BBAA OBSERVER NEWSLETTER

<http://www.backbayastro.org/newsletters/newsletter.shtml>

WHERE IS THE MEETING?

TIDEWATER COMMUNITY COLLEGE CAMPUS

The TCC Campus is located in Virginia Beach off of Princess Anne road. The following should help you locate the campus.

FROM Interstate I-64:

Proceed to the I64 / I264 junction and take I264 East .
Take the S. Independence Exit, 17A, right hand lane
(.000000048134 AU).

Turn LEFT onto Princess Anne road
(.000000010322 AU).

Turn LEFT onto Community College Place
(.000000002131 AU).

At the Stop Sign turn right and follow the road around to the left and park in one of the parking lots.

The meeting is held in the Pungo Building which is on the right hand side of the pathway that splits the two major parking lots. The Astronomy classroom is in the far back right hand corner of the building.

COX COMMUNICATIONS CAMPUS

The COX Communications Campus is located in Chesapeake's Greenbrier section. The following should help you locate the facility.

FROM Interstate I-64:

Take exit 289B (between the Indian River & Battlefield exits).
South on Greenbrier Parkway (.7382 miles).
Turn RIGHT onto Eden Way West (.9231 miles).
Turn RIGHT on Crossways Blvd (.88901 miles).
Turn Right into the Cox Campus

The meeting is usually held in the Silver room located on the North side of the facility. Enter and tell the guard that you are with the BBAA and they will issue a badge and direct you to the room.

President
Dale Carey
757-431-8556
vbstargazer@verizon.net

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757.548.4936
Kevin.weiner@cox.net

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**Web Master /
RRRT Coordinator**
Ted Forte
twforte@cox.net

Scholarship Coordinator
Ben Loyola
benito@loyola.com

What do you want to do?

OBSERVER INFO

The BBAA Observer is published monthly, the monochrome version is mailed to members who do not have Internet access. Members who do have Internet access can acquire the full color version on the Internet at:

<http://www.backbayastro.org/newsletters/newsletter.shtml>

Please submit articles and items of interest no later than the 20th of April for the May issue. Please submit all items to:

ObserverBBAA@cox.net / chuck@jagowds.com

OR

BBAA Observer
P.O. Box 9877
Virginia Beach, VA 23450-9877

THE BACK BAY AMATEUR ASTRONOMER'S OBSERVER

ASTRONOMY DAY 2007

Central Library - Bruce Bodner arrived at the Central Library about 9:00 and Dale followed up at 9:30. I showed up at about



noon with my 10" and Baader film filter. Although the weather got fairly warm, all in all it was a lovely day to sit out by the scopes and talk to folks about astronomy.

Dale had his William Optics 110, complete with Coronado filter, trained on the sun and Bruce brought his 8" but left his filter at home. Luckily, Dale had one that he loaned to his fellow club member.

Soon as I got there, I set up and sat down in my lawn chair and pulled out a very hefty turkey and provolone sandwich with banana pep-



pers and lettuce. I thought nothing of eating in front of them, but soon learned that Dale and Bruce hadn't planned ahead-their stomachs were grumbling. As soon as I finished my sandwich,



Bruce began telling me about the many ways he could torture me.

Dale had his camper and trailer pulled up in front of the build-

ing and Bruce had his vehicle parked just behind him. Dale had a nice fold out table with patio umbrella set up in front of the camper. He had club brochures set out for passers by. Many people picked them up-most everyone who looked in our scopes picked up a club brochure as we told them about the public observing sessions at Northwest River Park. Bruce and Dale trained their scopes on the sun throughout the day, while my scope remained pointed at the moon. Mare Crisium was quite noticeable and I showed a few people the craters Hercules and Atlas.

It was a great day. I had a good conversation with a woman about why the moon is all pock-marked like it is and why the earth remains in as good shape as it does. Many folks were amazed with views of both objects-especially the view of the one or two prominences off of the limb of the sun. Bruce left about 1:00, so Dale and I stayed and talked to folks until slightly after 5:00.

Rick Bish

Kempville Library - It was a pretty day for it. A little too warm if anything. The Kempville Library Astronomy Day 2007 group included Georgie June, Kevin and Barb Weiner, Matt McLaughlin, Kent Blackwell, and Ted and Hali Forte. Bob Hitt stopped by for a bit as did Chuck and Karen Jagow.

For the most part we had two scopes set up, both SCT's with PST's on a ride-along. Kent's William Optics



refractor made a brief appearance as well. Besides the sun our targets included the moon and Venus. We all tried our hand at finding Venus with binoculars and seeing it with the unaided eye to various degrees of success. The moon never seemed to come alive and was mostly ignored.

The sun provided one decent prominence, that while faint, was



visible to most attendees. We had a steady trickle of patrons with only a few lulls and a few rushes. Probably 150 folks viewed through the scopes or

THE BACK BAY AMATEUR ASTRONOMER'S OBSERVER

Observer's Corner

Apr-7-07 I had a great time at Cloverwatch. I wished I could have left the house earlier, and learned of the fast way down to Franklin - well, there's always next month. I pulled in about 9 and was confounded with a totally dead 12V system in the camper. Hum, well, I'll deal with that later, there are DSOs to see for the first time! And I couldn't waste too much time, as the Moon would be up about 12:40. But.....needed to make coffee first. My excellent host, Mr. Hedgepeth appeared and I handed him a dish of freshly-baked brownies (hey, it's a BBAA tradition) and got to work.

The ground was firm and level - just perfect for the Dob's base. Seeing was just OK, about 2/5. Transparency never got super. There was a light breeze that appeared now and again. The horizon is better than Chippokes, the only bad skyglow was from the Fairground lights, and I simply worked in the shadow of the camper. Chippokes has somewhat better amenities (assuming I don't bring the camper). All in all, it's nice to have a new observing site! I got a great alignment, and went to work on Messier's I'd never seen before. I was treated to 97/108, then 84,86,87. I could see hints of the other, fainter NGC objects for the latter Messiers, but I just couldn't tease any detail out of them with the conditions and aperture I had. I spent a long time on each, especially M97 & M108, then retreated into the camper to write up a log entry on them. I also went back to look at 104, as my entry from 3/6/06 was "can barely make out the shape!". I did only a little better last night - the use of a skyglow filter and Barlowing my 10mm ep (for 240x) helped. Almost all of these DSOs will get treated to imaging in the upcoming months I hope. By then, I was pooped. I was too tired to fiddle with the 12V system, so opened a window and turned on the burners. That kept things tolerable. Cliff banged on my door about 6 and I made us coffee. Frost was everywhere. My PT's thermometer confirmed it was below freezing, 5.2458129 deg F. (That accurate enough for you, C5?)

Time to get packed up and home. On the way back I had to figure out what was wrong with the 12V system, as my vent cover wasn't quite closed and I needed power to get it completely shut. Turned out to be a blown inline fuse off the battery. An easy fix (groan).

Thanks to Cliff for hosting this, and for Dave, Wendy, and Anne's company.

Michelle Shinn

(Continued from page 5)

browsed our materials. Kids got balloons. Kevin and Barb brought a bag of balloons and a flask of helium to inflate them. They also



brought display balloons weighted down with star-shaped weights. An inflated Earth also adorned our display. Georgie and Barb looked great in their star sun

glasses.

After abandoning an attempt to display a video image of the h-alpha sun, Kevin set his computer up to play astronomy presentations on a table near the entrance. Another table contained club info and the usual give-aways from the Chesapeake Planetarium, the IDA and our Space Place partner. Inside the library had a table with astronomy books and a large Astronomy Day poster.

I think we inspired a few of the guests, both young and old, and achieved our goal of raising awareness a bit. Maybe there will be a new convert or two, time will tell. At least WE had a good time!

Ted Forte

Princess Anne Library - Karen and I arrived at Princess Anne after a nice breakfast out about 9:30. George Reynolds had already been there and dropped off the brochures and a few of his items. He had to go in to his office for a bit that morning. I set up my bride's Solarmax scope piggyback on the SN6 LXD75 mount. The SN6 was fitted with a Thousand Oaks solar filter. This way

we could give folks both a natural looking orange view of the sun looking



through the SN6 and a HA view through the Coronado Solarmax. By 10:00 we were setup and ready to go. Alone again at Princess Anne, just like last year. The flow of visitors was pretty steady and we managed to get quite a few who were driving up to just

(Continued on page 7)

THE BACK BAY AMATEUR ASTRONOMER'S OBSERVER

East Coast Star Party

MAY 11 & 12

Star Party Admittance \$12.00 per person. Please register and pay Kent Blackwell at the telescopes site, not at the campground store. Pay at the door, no need to pay or register in advance. Non-registered guests are welcomed, but must leave before midnight. Admittance includes camping, if you wish to do so.

Hampton Lodge Camping Resort - Coinjock, NC (252-453-2732)
Approximately 45 miles south of Norfolk/Virginia Beach, VA area.

Driving north on US 158, take Waterlilly exit before crossing the Joseph Palmer Knapp Bridge at Coinjock. Follow signs.

Driving south on US 158, cross the Joseph Palmer Knapp Bridge at Coinjock. Turn left at foot of bridge. Waterlilly exit Campground is approximately 7 miles down Waterlilly Road.

NOTE: THE SKY IS 6TH- MAGNITUDE BUT CEDAR TREES OBSTRUCT THE HORIZON APPROXIMATELY 20% OBSERVING SITE: THE CEDAR TREES @100' TO THE LEFT AFTER CAMPGROUND ENTRANCE GATE JUST FOLLOW THE SIGNS PLEASE OBEY CAMPGROUND 10 MPH SPEED LIMIT!

Portable restroom conveniently located near observing area. Showers and campground store located ¼- mile from the observing area You may camp near your telescope No AC is available in the observing field.

ITINERARY FRIDAY: Registration begins at 2:00 PM, Casual Stargazing at 8:00PM, coffee & snacks all night.

ITINERARY SATURDAY: Registration begins at 10:00 AM, Cookout at 6:00 PM at main observing site, Kent is supplying hamburgers & hotdogs & soft drinks. You may bring a covered dish if you wish. Door prizes awarded at 7:30 PM and observing begins afterwards. Coffee & snacks served all night.

Door Prizes: To Be Announced

Kent Blackwell, Organizer,
e-mail: kent@exis.net (757) 495-4663
1169 Old Kempsville Road
Virginia Beach, VA 23464

(Continued from page 3)

from blankets of calmer clouds. And we have the ability to distinguish between light rain and rain that is falling from severe storms." CloudSat's radar is much more sensitive to cloud structure than are radar systems operating at airports, and from its vantage point in space, Cloudsat builds up a view of almost the entire planet, not just one local area. "That gives you weather information that you don't have in any other way."

There is an archive of all data collected since the start of the mission in May 2006 on the CloudSat QuickLook website at cloudsat.atmos.colostate.edu. And to introduce kids to the fun of observing the clouds, go to spaceplace.nasa.gov/en/kids/cloudsat_puz.shtml.

(Continued from page 6)

drop off their books to go ahead go park after a first peek and then come on back for extended views. Around 10:45 or so George Reynolds made his way back and began setting up his ten inch Orion with his Baeae solar film filter along with a smaller refractor displaying solar projection on a white board.

The library folks were very helpful and inquisitive, coming out many times to peek and see how we were doing. George also set up a laptop presentation running continuously inside the library.

Later in the afternoon Brian Murphy showed up with his 8" Dobsonian with solar filter. I believe he became bored with showing just another view of the rather boring sun that day, did we mention how utterly BORING the sun was this day? No sunspots and the solar



prominences were very small. Anyway, Brian trained his scope on the Moon which delighted many people as the afternoon wore on.

George and I are pretty sure we coerced at least 200 people look



through our scopes. We gave away all of our brochures and despite one little boy wandering a little too close for comfort to the projection display, it was a very successful day.

Karen and I had to pack up early around 2:ish to make it to a wedding reception that evening. Lets see, stay and play with telescopes or squeeze Chuck into a suit & tie, which do you think I would rather do. George and Brian stayed until 5:00 rounding out the event, helping to close out another great Astronomy Day for the Back Bay Amateur Astronomers.

Chuck Jagow

MAY 2007

BBAA	OUTREACH	ASTRONOMICAL
03 = BBAA Meeting @ TCC, 7:30 PM	05 = Pungo-Blackwater Community Day @ Pungo Library, 10:00 AM - 5:00 PM, George Renolds POC	02 = FULL MOON
11 = SKYWATCH @ NWRP, Dusk CANCELLED	11 = ECSP @ Coinjock, NC. 8:00 PM - ? See article for more info!	10 = LAST QUARTER
12 = CLOVERWATCH @ Franklin Fairgrounds, Dusk CANCELLED	12 = ECSP @ Coinjock, NC. 6:00 PM - ? See article for more info!	
		16 = NEW MOON
19 = NIGHTWATCH @ Chippokes State Park, Dusk	20 = Girl Scout Fest, @ Ted Cosntant Center, Norfolk, 12:00 2M - 5:00 PM, Ted Forte POC	
	22 = Lunar Fest @ Greenbrier Middle School, 1016 Greenbrier Pkwy, Chesapeake, VA, POC George Reynolds	23 = FIRST QUARTER
25 = NIGHTHIKE @ NWRP, 7:00 PM		
26 = GARDENSTARS @ The Norfolk Botanical Gardens, 7:00 PM		
		31 = FULL MOON