

Rappahannock Astronomy Club

Minutes, September 9, 2009, Meeting

In attendance:

- Barton Billard
- Scott Busby
- Scott Byrd
- Don Clark
- Glenn Faini
- Victor Fischer
- Joe and Sherry Francis
- Leigh Gettier
- Dan Lien
- Michael Masters
- Tim Plunkett
- Javier & Ruby Valverde

President Scott Busby opened the meeting shortly before 7:30 p.m. with introductions around the room. Thirteen members and a visitor were present.

Program

We viewed a DVD video on the science of the “Star of Bethlehem.” It is an account of the narrator’s research into the Biblical references to phenomena in the sky around the time of the birth of Jesus, and his interpretation of what astronomical events they describe. The events he found can be calculated with Starry Night or other planetarium software, thanks to modern advances in astronomy and starting with Kepler’s laws.

Business Meeting

Tim Plunkett gave the report for August 31, 2009. The Club has 24 paid members as of the end of August.

Star party and picnic report—The Club picnic was held on August 22. Six members attended the picnic at Caledon, and Scott managed to get the cooking done before the sky opened up. We had a very congenial meal together under the shelter. Dan Lien was kind enough to stop by before the picnic with the Club Personal Solar Telescope, but the sky was not cooperative. The star party scheduled for that evening was a wash out. The next star party dates are the 12th at Caledon and September 18-19 at Big Meadows/Mylam Gap. Given the Club consensus that the Big Meadows event should be informal and not advertised to other clubs, Mike suggested making it just one night (Saturday, September 19). Scott said he was unable to make it. We also have an event planned for Virginia State Parks at Westmoreland on Friday the 25th.

Old Business

Galileoscope purchase—Tim received the rest of the telescopes and brought them to the meeting to distribute to those who ordered them.

“How we see the sky”—Mike made some CD copies of the presentation he gave as the last two meeting programs. They are available for loan to interested members who want to make a copy for themselves. Mike also plans to put it on the Club website, but it is 10 megabytes. He is also putting a file with information on collimating Newtonians on the website.

Status of Club loaner assets—Brenda has the Club Dob. Tim has the Club equatorial telescope. He noted that the knobs given to the Club to replace the missing slow-motion control knobs do not appear to fit. Bart brought in the Club PST and passed it on to Javier Valverde.

New Business

The Club voted on expenditure of funds for Club resources.

We discussed the draft schedule for 2010 star party dates that Mike prepared recently. On three occasions, a choice of three consecutive Saturday dates arises because the New Moon date falls close to the middle Saturday. The consensus of the members present favored making that middle Saturday the primary star party date, with the third Saturday the backup.

Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for October 14, 2009, 7:30 p.m., at the Pizza Hut, 1224 Powhatan St., Fredericksburg.

Submitted by Bart Billard, Secretary