

Rappahannock Astronomy Club

Minutes, March 9, 2011, Meeting

In attendance:

- Benjamin Ashley
- Jim Baker
- Barton & Linda Billard
- Scott Busby
- Don Clark
- Brenda Conway
- George Clarke
- Rob Friedel
- Leigh Gettier
- Ranny Heflin
- Glenn Holliday
- Jerry Hubbell
- Mike Masters
- David Williams

President Mike Masters began the meeting at 7 p.m. Fifteen members were present (one of whom joined at the meeting).

Program

The program was “How to Use RAC’s Loaner Telescopes,” demonstrated by the equipment custodians. The telescopes included were the Celestron NexStar 5, the 6-inch Orion Dobsonian, the Coronado Personal Solar Telescope, the Celestron Comet Catcher, and the Orion German equatorial mount (GEM) reflector. Mike said he had suggested that Scott did not need to demonstrate the 8-inch Dobsonian because of the similarity to the 6-inch and the difficulty of transporting the larger telescope. As part of his presentation, Ranny Heflin showed a sign-out sheet he created with an inventory showing what is being checked out and returned. He offered to make the form available or create one for other custodians who send him an inventory.

Mike brought up the topic of holding a telescope help session for the community (shown on the agenda under new business). He asked about members’ experience with different telescope types to help determine whether we are prepared to cover what might be brought to such a session. From the responses, he put together a list with six telescope types against names of those members who had experience using them.

Old Business

- Treasurer’s report—Mike presented the Treasurer’s report Tim had provided for February 28, 2011. Twenty-one members had paid dues for 2011 by the end of February. Mike said he has received the reimbursement from Tim for the additions to the accessory folders for the loaner equipment less the amount Mike collected in dues at the February meeting.
- Status of Club loaner equipment—Mike said Orion does not carry an exact replacement slow-motion knob for the GEM reflector. However, the Club could modify one available on back order to fit the shaft. It was done with the other axis knob that the Club received earlier as a donation. The cost would be about \$10 for the knob plus the \$10 minimum shipping charge. Leigh made a motion to authorize up to \$25 for purchase of the slow-motion knob replacement. Scott seconded the motion, which carried on a voice vote.
- Events—Weather spoiled plans for the March 5 Messier Marathon. Mike noted April 2 would be the backup date for the Messier Marathon at Caledon. We had two outreach events on the schedule: a Girl Scout clinic on April 8–9 at Camp Kittamaqund, near Burgess on the Northern Neck and an outreach on April 9 at Lake Anna State Park. Glenn said he also received an inquiry about arranging another event for later in the year. Bart and Linda reported looking over the site for the Lake Anna Outreach while on a recent weekend outing. The site appeared to provide reasonable access for setup and packing away telescopes, without too many nearby lights or obstructions. Mike noted lights would be less of a concern on the date of the outreach because the Moon would be near first quarter anyway. The next Club meeting date is April 13, and Brenda Conway is going to present a

program on the Sun. Another primary star party is on the calendar for April 30. A Girl Scout group is planning to attend.

- Raclub.org domain name—Don Clark reported the transfer of the Raclub.org domain name to the Club was completed, and he had set up some generic email addresses to allow all Club points of contact (POC) to have one. The information address needed for registering the Club with the Jet Propulsion Laboratory Night Sky Network was raclub@raclub.org. Mike said he would send out a list of proposed addresses for other Club POCs. With the raclub.org ownership resolved and the email addresses set up, Don was ready to send in the Night Sky Network registration.
- Outreach talk on light pollution—Scott reported on his talk at the Falls Run Community Center for the Falls Run Environmental Enthusiasts. He had prepared the talk from a paper he wrote a couple of years ago on light pollution. About 20 attended, and the talk was well received. He included an assessment of the costs of a 100-Watt light bulb over a year of use at night. In addition to light pollution, he listed costs of replacing the bulb four times and of generating 417 kilowatt-hours to light it. He also listed the quantity of coal used for the power generation and the amount of carbon dioxide and other emissions that result. Scott said he would email the presentation to Mike for the Club website.
- Alternate meeting location—Benjamin Ashley reported prospects for a University of Mary Washington (UMW) location were problematical. Unless someone on the faculty was willing to take the lead, the Club might need to deal with several people to get a location. UMW would charge a nominal amount, but it would be high for the Club budget.

New Business/News Items

- Brenda told us the Messenger insertion into an orbit around Mercury was scheduled to start in the next week. Jerry recommended checking the education resource, "[Citizen Sky](#)," which can be found from the [AAVSO](#) website under education. The 50/50 raffle drawing was won by Scott, who donated the winnings to the pot for picnic prizes.

Next Meeting

The next meeting is April 13, 2011, 7:00 p.m., at the Central Rappahannock Regional Library Headquarters, 1201 Caroline St., in Fredericksburg. Introductions will begin at 6:45 p.m.

Submitted by Bart Billard, Secretary