

Rappahannock Astronomy Club

Minutes, June 13, 2012, Meeting

In attendance:

- Bart & Linda Billard
- David Buckwalter*
- Scott Busby
- Don Clark
- George Clarke
- Joe Fordham
- Leigh Gettier
- Glenn Holliday
- Amber Hubbell
- Jerry Hubbell
- Mike Masters
- Tim Plunkett
- Javier & Ruby Valverde

*New member

President Jerry Hubbell began the meeting at 7:10 p.m. after introductions. Fifteen members were present, including 1 new member who paid dues during the break after the program.

Program

Mike Masters presented an updated “Outfitting the Compleat Astronomer,” the program inspired by Isaac Walton’s *The Compleat Angler* that he presented at the April meeting 2 years ago. The April 2010 minutes include a summary of that presentation, and Mike has posted the updated [program](#) on the Club website. A few additional notes can be added to the earlier summary. On using laser pointers and finders Mike noted the concern about avoiding illuminating aircraft which has been publicized recently. He covered tools for collimating Newtonian telescopes, including autocollimators with a mirrored inside surface that produces an endless reflection effect like the mirrors on opposite walls in barber shops. He added an “astronomy apps” topic on programs for tablets, iPhones, etc. Sky Safari was a favorite for iPhones and iPads.

Old Business

- Treasurer’s Report—The report for May showed receipt of dues from three members, one of whom paid dues for 2 years. Another member paid Astronomical League dues. Paid membership for 2012 has reached 29, with 5 members having paid dues for next year or beyond. The Club had no expenditures for May.
- Star Parties, Events, and Meetings—Weather was favorable for the primary star party on May 19. Scott and Glenn reported on the event, which had a good visitor turnout. The Lake Anna Outreach planned for the next Saturday had to be cancelled by the Park for administrative reasons. Although the conditions for the Transit of Venus outreach on June 5 were marginal, the event was still quite successful. About 200 people attended, and many were able to get a glimpse through telescopes during times the Sun peaked through the clouds. The Club was unable to support the June 8 Space Day at Conway Elementary School. The time period scheduled this year was too late for solar viewing and too early for nighttime objects. We discussed the need to communicate with the organizers earlier next year to try to make them aware of the need to adjust the schedule to facilitate viewing either the Sun or the night sky.
- Status of Club Loaner Equipment—Matt has two telescopes out, Jerry has the PST, and Mike has the camera. Joe Fordham returned the NexStar 5 before the meeting in time for Bart to practice filtered solar viewing and support the Transit of Venus outreach. Glenn said the missing tripod tray that was replaced has turned up again. Mike discussed the problem of unavailability of replacement knobs to fit the GEM slow motion control and concluded he needs to look up the diameter that Xavier would need to know for drilling out another knob to fit.
- Star Party and Outreach Requests—David Buckwalter said he lives close to the locations of Myron Wasiuta’s Fauquier County outreach star parties and could help out depending on the dates. Jerry said he would send out the schedule. Mike talked about the plans for Northumberland Preservation,

Inc., which he is coordinating with their POC, Jane Towner. The date set is November 10. Scott Busby said he may be able to go in support.

- RAClub.org Website and Rac_group Status—The only news of note is the addition of two rac_group members.

News/New Business

- Star Party Status—No new requests were received since the last meeting. The next Caledon star party date is June 16.
- Astronomy Presentation Requests and Invitations—Glenn reported an invitation to set up a booth for an event at Pratt Park on Saturday, June 23. He discussed an invitation for a vendor to do a clinic at the Marriott Ranch in Hume, Virginia in September. The contact was Margo Kerns, and it was not clear yet what is wanted and whether it would be a good fit for the Club. It seemed that it might be a more commercial arrangement. Terry Hufstetler, who had a school program in South Carolina, asked for Boy Scout Astronomy Merit Badge information. A lesson plan was sent to him, and it appeared no further action was needed. Jerry Hubbell discussed a request from Kevin Bartram representing the University of Mary Washington Philharmonic, which is performing “The Planets” on October 20. The date conflicts with a scheduled Lake Anna star party, and we would need to have enough volunteers to cover both events to add this one. Jerry would give a talk and members could provide a promotional exhibit outside the auditorium. There was also the possibility of providing a visual program to play during the performance.

Next Meeting

The next meeting is Wednesday, July 11, 2012, 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