

# Rappahannock Astronomy Club

## Minutes, November 14, 2012, Meeting

In attendance:

- Benjamin Ashley
- Bart & Linda Billard
- Scott Busby
- Don Clark
- George Clarke
- Joe Fordham
- Joe & Sherry Francis
- Leigh Gettier
- Glenn Holliday
- Jerry Hubbell
- Tim Plunkett
- Javier & Ruby Valverde

President Jerry Hubbell began the meeting at 7:00 p.m. Fifteen members were present. Because this was the meeting for electing officers for the coming year, members present enjoyed pizza and soft drinks, picked up by Linda Billard and Jerry Hubbell, in lieu of a presentation.

## Old Business

- Election of Officers—The nominees named at the October meeting were Jerry Hubbell for President, Leigh Gettier and Benjamin Ashley for Vice President, Tim Plunkett for Treasurer, and Bart Billard for Secretary. Linda moved that we confirm the choices of Jerry, Tim, and Bart for President, Treasurer, and Secretary by voice vote and vote for Leigh or Ben for Vice President by secret ballot. The motion was seconded and passed with no objections. The Secretary counted the secret ballots for Vice President. The tally was 10 votes for Leigh and 5 for Ben.
- Treasurer's Report—Tim reported no dues payments or expenditures for October, leaving the balance unchanged. Membership stands at 38 for the current year, with dues already paid by 6 for next year and 1 for the following year as well. Tim brought the checkbook for reimbursements. He had already received the receipts for Scott's picnic expenses and some of Linda's printing expenses. Leigh moved, with second by Joe Francis to reimburse Jerry and Linda for the costs of tonight's drinks and pizzas. The motion passed on a voice vote. Tim wrote the necessary checks.
- Star Parties, Events, and Meetings—We had a string of 5 successful events starting in October with the Outreach star party at Stratford Hall on the 6th that was reported on at the last meeting. The following Saturday was a successful Caledon event, and the next Saturday, the 20th, was the date of the Lake Anna outreach star party and the outreach for the University of Mary Washington Philharmonic concert. Ben reported that there were lots of children at Lake Anna, and that some NOVAC members joined them. He said about seven telescopes were available for viewers. Glenn said he understood the attendance at the UMW concert was about 700. All went by our displays and dozens stopped to talk. Many picked up brochures, star party schedules, and samples of the *StarGazer*. The Saturday before the meeting was the outreach star party date for Northumberland Preservation, Inc. The event went very well. The drive was long but pleasant, and the site was very good for a star party. Glenn, Jerry, Rob Friedel, and Bart and Linda had five telescopes for the 40 attendees. Our hosts set up the Shiloh Schoolhouse with cider, heat, and red lighting for people to take breaks. Linda noted we could start to see the Milky Way overhead before the sunset glow disappeared. Glenn said some of us could see the Andromeda galaxy with the naked eye. Jane Towner gave us a thank-you note that included a donation of \$100 to the Club. Ben described Lake Gordonsville as location with a good open area, no lights, and public access making it a potential spot for Club members to do some observing.
- Status of Club Loaner Equipment—Scott has the Personal Solar Telescope and Jerry has the ETX. Jerry is trying to work on using it with a CCD for displaying live images for groups of visitors at star parties. He has not yet mastered getting the drive to work well enough. It seems to have problems with slipping. Glenn said he has talked with someone wanting to donate a 4-inch reflector. Leigh indicated a willingness to be the custodian. Glenn said Matt Roles is ready to return the two telescopes he had checked out. The plan was to return them at the Caledon star party November 17 if that is held. One would then be available there for checking out, but Glenn would want to do the

measurements on the other for modifying a slow-motion replacement knob to fit it before it could be checked out.

- **Scheduled Star Parties and Outreach Events**—Stephen Demoratz requested an outreach for Post Oak Middle School in connection with students' preparations for the SOLs. Steve had asked if we could hold it on December 14, but agreed to December 15 when Jerry suggested it would be easier to get volunteers on a Saturday. The latter date and time would allow members to support the outreach at the school and then continue on to the nearby Belmont star party that evening. A show of hands indicated a good number of members interested in supporting the event, and Jerry said he would reply to Steve in the affirmative. Elizabeth Fitzgerald has asked us to support a space-inspired program for visiting children at the Central Rappahannock Regional Library Headquarters on January 11, 2013, from 4:30 to 5:15 p.m. She would like a talk about the constellations for kids in grades K–6. She plans a 20-minute presentation then a 20–25 minute craft/activity for the kids. Linda volunteered to find out more about what Elizabeth has in mind for the latter. Don Clark talked about the Night Sky Network (NSN) toolkits available for astronomy presentations and activities. He noted that he submits reports of our outreach activities in an effort to qualify us for an award of a more advanced toolkit. However, part of the qualification is use of some or all of one of the free toolkits for at least two of the outreach activities submitted to NSN. He said he will send out a link for us to look over the toolkits available to all for possible materials to employ in our outreach events. Jerry described his presentation on the planets at the October 20 UMW concert. He reported nervousness before the talk about speaking to such a large audience. The Club also provided slides relating to the planets for showing during the performance, and Jerry was given the remote to sequence the slides. He said there were some glitches getting the slides to change, and he wound up moving to a seat at the front in order to get it to work better. Joe said he heard from somewhere that our outreach had a good impact on the performance and that the conclusion was it is the way “The Planets” should be performed in the future.
- **Web Site Maintenance**—The Club still needs a person to take over maintaining the raclub.org website. Jerry said his daughter, Rachel, could help convert it to a new system that is more user-friendly. Don looked into what is allowed by the Library and said that direct manipulation on the server is not allowed. The html content needs to be edited off line and uploaded to the server instead. He said that the Club could have a website with capability of direct manipulation with an application like Dreamhost that requires a monthly fee but is available at no cost for 501(3)(C) nonprofits. The question is whether it is worth the paperwork, registration requirements, and fees to become one. Glenn indicated he would have a little more time to help with the website when his Vice President term ends. Jerry appointed a subcommittee of Linda, Glenn, and Don to work on the website (with help from Rachel) and report on the status each month. Leigh suggested making videos on YouTube on subjects like star party etiquette to which our website could link. Tim suggested another topic, a telescope how-to. Another member suggested looking for videos already available.
- **Rac\_group Status**—Scott said in December he will be populating the 2013 Calendar with star party dates, etc. for reminders that automatically go out to members at the appropriate times. If someone has entries to suggest, please send them to Scott.
- **Programs for 2013 Club Meetings**—Jerry solicited Club meeting program topics. Leigh and Bart thought they could provide one or two each. Jerry also wanted to have a couple of beginner Q&A sessions, with the first in February. He said he would provide a program for January.
- **RACLUB *StarGazer* Newsletter**—The new issue (October) is now available. Linda said it includes a contribution from David Abbou, tips pieces from Scott and Myron, and an article on the ETX from Ben with her ghostwriting help. Ben expressed surprise at how what he provided became a full article. Linda said she is always looking for contributions, and the ETX article shows a contribution can be almost anything someone can get down on paper and talk to her about. For the next issue, Linda has done a piece on the Kilmarnock outreach, and Scott is going to write an article on his observatory experiences and a telescope math box item on magnification for quick reference. Joe is going to provide a review of his new equipment. Linda is going to write a new “Did You Know” column. She is looking for ideas if someone sees something interesting.

## News/New Business

- **Hobby Town USA**—Glenn and Scott have visited a new hobby shop that has opened in the shopping center with the Tractor Supply store near Salem Church Road. The hobby shop carries Celestron beginner telescopes, and Glenn offered to supply some Club brochures for handouts to telescope

purchasers. Bart and Glenn arranged to meet so Glenn could pick up some of the new brochures Linda had printed.

- Coming Star Party Dates—The next two Caledon dates are November 17 and December 8. The Post Oak Middle School outreach and the next Belmont date is December 15.
- Adjournment—Glenn moved to adjourn, seconded by Leigh. The motion passed with no objection.

## **Next Meeting**

The next meeting is on Wednesday, December 12, 2012, at the Central Rappahannock Regional Library Headquarters, 1201 Caroline St., in Fredericksburg.