

Rappahannock Astronomy Club

Minutes, October 15, 2014, Meeting

In attendance:

- Terry Barker
- Bart & Linda Billard
- George & Monica Fesq
- Ron Henke
- Glenn Holliday
- Scott Lansdale
- Dan Lien
- Lauren Nicholson

Acting Vice President Glenn Holliday called the meeting to order at 7 p.m. Eight members and two visitors were present.

Program

Instead of a program, we talked about recent events. Because of a misunderstanding, Scott Busby thought he was scheduled to present in November instead of October. Glenn described his experience attending a stop in King County by the “Mobile Observatory Project.” The club Facebook page received a message about the event that was passed along on our RAC_group email list. Glenn said he learned the Mobile Observatory is an RV touring the country supported by Kickstarter crowd funding. He found it was not the kind of astronomy outreach he expected. Ben Davidson began by talking about the formation of the solar system, including the idea that some of the planets’ orbits migrated early on. However, he claimed that this migration actually happened 10,000 years ago. His evidence was based on ancient diagrams found around the world that appear to depict astronomical phenomena. Glenn said his skepticism started ramping up more when another idea Ben presented involved correlations he believed indicate that the Sun has influence on earthquakes. He also claimed Hurricane Irene, which came soon after the Louisa earthquake, tracked right across the epicenter. Glenn recalled the eye passed well east of us. Glenn observed that most of the small group of people that attended appeared to be supporters, but when Ben talked about climate change and asked his audience whether they knew of any evidence of sea level rise, Glenn said he knew the Navy is making plans to take action in the Norfolk-Hampton Roads area to deal with the 8-inch rise affecting the docks.

Ron Henke reported on his outreach in support of the Wilderness Elementary Observe the Moon night. He said there were four others there with telescopes and one set of binoculars, and he thought most were teachers and some of the equipment belonged to the school. Terry Barker asked whether anyone tried taking pictures of the Moon through Ron’s telescope. Terry also said there is an Orion eyepiece camera available that can provide images in real time on a computer screen, enhancing the intensity of the light. He said the Richmond club has another such instrument made by StellaCam. Some members thought one might be a good possibility for a club equipment purchase.

A few other topics were mentioned. Glenn passed around a copy of the recent Northumberland Preservation newsletter that highlights our upcoming outreach event scheduled for November 15. He also talked about the imminent attempt to set down a lander probe from the Rosetta spacecraft on comet 67P/Churyumov–Gerasimenko. He and Scott Lansdale mentioned seeing a recent UV image of the Sun online that resembled a Halloween-appropriate face (one is on space.com’s website [here](#)).

Old Business

- Star Parties, Events, and Meetings—September’s star party at Caledon was successful. Glenn said he counted more than 12 guests and 7 members attending. He said he had made contact with an adjunct professor at UMW when there for a visit with his son. The professor let him know of a UMW astronomy club that is active again. Their club made plans to attend the September star party, but they were unable to get there because their president was at a Richmond event that day and could not get back in time. (Lauren suggested he might have been the only member allowed to drive a UMW vehicle they could have planned to use.)
- Loaner Equipment—Ron said he ran into Brenda Conway recently, and she talked about having a club camera she needs to return. Someone said we have not been seeing her much recently because

she is up to her ears in Ph.D. work for the next 3 years. He identified the camera from the equipment list as the Meade DSI digital astrocamera. Other equipment status from the list or member inputs at the meeting were: Ron Henke has the other camera from Linda; Scott has the Sky View; Ranny Heflin has the Sky Quest; Tim Plunkett has the Orion reflector on GEM and Vernonscope; Ron has the Comet Catcher; Jerry Hubbell has the Meade ETA; and Scott Busby has the PST.

New Business and Astronomy News

- Nominations and plans for the November officer election meeting—Glenn opened the nominations for November's officer elections. Ron nominated Tim Plunkett for Treasurer, with a second from Scott. Dan Lien nominated Bart Billard for Secretary and Ron seconded. Linda nominated Scott Lansdale for Vice President, seconded by Dan. Scott nominated Linda, but she said the newsletter editor job was all she could manage and declined; and Linda nominated Ron Henke for President with a second from Terry. No other nominations were offered. We noted that additional nominations could be accepted during the November meeting. Glenn requested Bart or Linda to make ballots for the meeting.
We discussed getting pizza from La Primavera again and estimated the cost would be about \$40–60 for 4–6 pizzas. Linda offered a motion to approve reimbursing expenditures of that amount for pizza and the additional cost of drinks. Lauren seconded, and the motion passed. Glenn said he would get the pizza. He noted we still need a volunteer to pick up drinks. Ron said he might be unable to attend the meeting. Glenn said he would ask Jerry to bring the drinks.
- 2015 Star Party Calendar—Glenn said a star party calendar proposal by the Vice President was needed before the end of the year and concluded he should do it as acting VP because the next VP position starts in January. Linda asked him to pick a tentative January date in time to be included in the *StarGazer* issue coming out this month.
- Other News—Scott Lansdale said he went to Williamsburg last weekend. He found the museum there has some 18th century telescopes. It was a quick visit, so he mainly just got a few pictures.

Next Meeting

The next meeting is the officer elections meeting on Wednesday, November 19, 2014, at the Central Rappahannock Heritage Center.