

Rappahannock Astronomy Club

Minutes, April 15, 2020, Online Meeting

In attendance:

Jim Browder
Scott Busby
David Abbou
Bart & Linda Billard
Don Clark

Glenn Faini
Jerry Hubbell
Rolando Pancotti
Matt Scott

The meeting began 7:00 p.m. with introductions. Nine members and a guest were present. No presentation was planned. This was our first regular club meeting via Zoom. Jerry Hubbell introduced our guest, Jim Browder, as an acquaintance in the Richmond Astronomical Society (RAS).

Old Business

- Treasurer's Report—Matt Scott's report showed \$87.50 incoming funds for March, and 17 paid memberships for 2020. He said he had received another since March 31. Glenn Faini explained his list shows more individuals because of family members who are active (for example, Linda and Bart Billard) and the club's award of membership through 2030 to Scott Busby. Matt said he still had no communication from the Astronomical League (AL). We described the problem to Jim Browder, who said he was not aware of the RAS having a problem with AL. He said he would see if the former AL president he knows could tell him anything.
- Vice President's Event Report—Glenn F. noted the club's Vice President position is still vacant so he was filling in. He said the next star party that still remains scheduled is the June date.
- Secretary's report—Bart mentioned that he had not posted minutes for the March Executive Council meeting to the club website because of an ftp server problem. He said Don Clark had figured out it was a changed server address and sent him the information so he could post the minutes after this meeting.
- *StarGazer* Report—Linda said she had enough material in hand or promised for the next issue. She also hoped to get something like a diary on the Comet Atlas observations that Myron Wasiuta and Scott started as a demonstration of the new telescope station at MSRO early this month. Linda said she needed article submissions by the 24th.
- MSRO Status—Jerry reported that Myron had Station 3 working for the last 2–3 weeks. Jerry and Matt planned to motorize the screw drive for the roll-off roof automation. The telescope uses a Celestron CGE mount that Jerry, Myron, and Matt upgraded to PMC-Eight. Myron was taking Comet Atlas images with the 102-mm telescope and QHY174C camera. Jerry found out MSRO Science could get a free Office 365 license as a 501(c)3 company. Someone asked about Station 2, and Jerry said it is a 12-inch Meade LX300 with a narrow field of view.
- Communications Committee report—Don Clark said he had reconnected our website to Cloudflare. It caused the ftp server change that Bart had problems with.

Glenn F. said the Yahoo group was successfully shut down. He said only two club members had not yet joined the new Groups.io group. Some members had problems when sending a message from the wrong account. Jerry said he had had that problem but found it was because he replied to a message forwarded to another email account instead of replying to the copy in the email account he used to join our Raclub Groups.io group. Glenn F. said he found a way to see all the images without going through the individual emails (it uses the Photos link in the Groups.io website for our group).

- Club Equipment Inventory—Scott said lending was suspended pending a reduction in current restrictions for the Coronavirus pandemic. Glenn F. said he had a telescope he reserved for star parties that he was considering donating to the club for use by whoever is club president at the time. It is a NexStar with a GPS mount. The GPS is an older model that no longer gets the correct current date (which requires a manual correction). Glenn said it had an impressive auto alignment capability though. Jerry asked Jim how the RAS loaner program worked. Jim said it had varying success. Sometimes telescope donations were made apparently because the telescope was not so useful. Scott said we had about 12 telescopes, including an 8-inch equatorial in poor shape,

some 6-inch dobs, an 8-inch and a 10-inch dob, and an 8-inch Newtonian on an equatorial mount, along with some others. He said he was thinking of writing about the inventory in a club newsletter article.

New Business

- Other New Business—Since we had already covered the Astronomical League status, Glenn F. asked for other new business. He mentioned again our next star party would be in June based on the current information from Caledon. He also said we would continue offering access to our meetings with Zoom once back at the Library. David Abbou said he had had school events scheduled for April 23 and May 1 and 2, both of which were cancelled. He said he had been planning an event for a local brewery, and they were still in the discussion stage. He thought it might wind up being a Facebook Live event. Jerry said MSRO was planning something like that for April 24. Glenn F. asked about coordinating something with RAS. Jim liked the idea, saying Terry Barker would be a better contact. He was in favor of Glenn F. sending him and Terry Zoom invitations for future meetings. Jerry asked whether we might consider offering combined memberships. Scott asked about the virtual backgrounds Glenn and Jerry had on their webcam images. Glenn F. said the Zoom app settings offer virtual backgrounds.

Next Meeting

The next meeting is on Wednesday, May20, 2020. It is currently planned as an online Zoom meeting.