

Rappahannock End of Year Report for 2009
December 31, 2009

Hello RACers,

2009 was a pretty good year for the club. Membership and attendance at club meetings was up and the treasury ended the year at a healthy \$1673.84. Membership by December 2009 was at 27 members. The RAC made several purchases throughout the year including Galileoscopes, "The Universe" series DVD set and our Astronomical League membership dues. The RAC also received a telescope donation from Bob and Shayla Taylor. The telescope was a 6" Celestron Newtonian RFT.

Star parties were another matter. Mother Nature threw us several curve balls weather-wise and pre-empted several star party events. Primary star parties for January, May, October, November and December and several backup star parties were cancelled due to weather. Star parties planned for Westmoreland State Park were cancelled due to construction on our primary observing site there. I conducted a special star party in April in my neighborhood of Aquia Harbour for some resident scouts and their parents. We had two public outreach events. One at Border's Books in Fredericksburg in April with pretty good attendance and one at Dahlgren School in Dahlgren, VA., led by David Abbou. Myron Wasuita also represented the RAC at a couple of small star parties at Motts Run Park.

The club's annual picnic took place at Caledon as scheduled in August. However, turnout was pretty slim due to most members having other imperatives. Those Hot Dogs and Burgers were yummy. Heavy rain impinged somewhat on that event, but it was after the food had already been prepared and everyone had eaten. The funny thing was that Leigh Gettier showed up during the rain and by that time we had already packed up and were preparing to leave. Unfortunately, he was only able to wolf down a few left over cookies. Sorry Leigh.

We had some pretty good programs over the course of the year. Leigh Gettier started things off in January with a presentation on "the many paths up the mountain" of learning amateur astronomy. In February, Myron Wasuita presented a program on the twinkling of stars phenomena created by refraction and the turbulent atmosphere. The March and April programs were presented by me and were untitled "Meteorites, Asteroids, and the Last Great Extinction Event. In May, I again presented a previously given program on Basic Webcam Astrophotography. For the month of June, Myron Wasuita gave a wonderful program on ARP Galaxies and provided examples in some of his astrophotography. For the July and August programs, Mike Masters gave a two-part series on "How we see the Sky". This program defined human eye physiology and the characteristics associated with the various telescope eyepieces available to amateur astronomers including field of view and magnification. For September, I presented a DVD viewing that discussed the "Star of Bethlehem" and what astronomical events

occurred that may have resulted in this historical phenomenon. There were no programs for the months of October, November and December. Club officer nominations were made in October and 2010 elections took place in November. Newly elected 2010 officers were announced in December -- For President: Mike Masters. For Vice President: Joe Francis. For Treasurer: Tim Plunkett. For Secretary: Bart Billard.

For the first time, the RAC presented Distinguished Service Awards for 2009. The awards went to Glenn Holliday for his Scouting efforts and programs and James Bingham for his efforts as the RAC website Manager. A great job from the both of you, and many thanks from all of us at the RAC. They both received gifts along with their awards.

Major club events and recognitions occurring in 2009:

Free Lance Star Advertisement: Linda and Bart Billard

Scouting Programs and Clinic: Glenn Holiday

Move from CRRL to Pizza Hut and back again: Scott Busby and Mike Masters

Boy Scout Merit Badge Course: Glenn Holiday

Revamp of the RAC website: Mike Masters

Beginner Astronomy Coordinator: Leigh Gettier

I sincerely hope that all of you enjoyed 2009. I hope 2010 is equally enjoyable for all our star gazing interests. Many clear skies.

Sincerely,

Scott Busby

President, Rappahannock Astronomy Club