

Rappahannock Astronomy Club

Minutes, February 19, 2020, Meeting

In attendance:

Dale Adams
Jean Benson
Bart & Linda Billard
David Bentz
Scott Busby

Don Clark
Glenn Faini
Rolando Pancotti
Tim Plunkett
Matt Scott

The meeting began a few minutes after 7 p.m. Eleven members were present, including a visitor who joined at the meeting.

Program

Instead of a program, the club had a session to determine the disposition of the club library. Tim Plunkett brought several boxes to the meeting. He said one of the boxes contained historical stuff about the club that would go to Myron Wasiuta, who has been keeping such documents. Members were allowed to browse the other items, mostly books and old issues of astronomy magazines. There were a number of copies of the book, *The Backyard Astronomer's Guide*, by Terrance Dickerson and Alan Dyer. There were also some yellow T shirts and hats from earlier years of the club. A number of books were claimed by members. Glenn Faini decided to take home some unclaimed items and email members offering a chance to take some. He planned to recycle the unwanted magazines.

Old Business

- Treasurer's Report—Glenn F. read Matthew Scott's treasurer's report included in the agenda. There were payments of \$80 and no expenditures in January. We have 12 paid memberships for 2020 as of January 31, and a new member joined at this meeting. The RAC library was dissolved.
- Reports—There was no Vice President's report. Secretary Bart Billard only had posting of minutes to report. Linda Billard reported she had just posted the latest newsletter. She explained how to find it on the club website for the benefit of the new member. There was no MSRO report because Jerry Hubbell could not make it to the meeting. On the topic of communications, Glenn F. and Linda discussed who was updating various items on the website. Glenn F. said he was calling the star parties and was willing to attempt the related updates. He came to an agreement with Linda that he would do the email and post about the star party status and she could take care of the "What's up next" items for both star parties and meetings.
- Yahoo Group—Glenn F. said he had sent a Yahoo invitation to Jill Duval (a new member) and would see how it goes pending a decision to move to an alternative.
- Club Equipment Inventory—Scott Busby explained to our new member, Dale Adams, the availability and procedure for checking out club loaner equipment. After contacting Scott about his interest, he would "Come to my house, and I give you a lesson," and then get to take the equipment for a month with option for extensions up to 3 months. Scott mentioned a need to verify the inventory and the possibility of graduating to a more sophisticated item. Not long ago, Curtis Martin started out borrowing a smaller Dobsonian telescope, then tried the larger one, and graduated to a telescope on an equatorial mount. Scott also mentioned star parties and MSRO provide opportunities for learning about telescopes and observing. Glenn F. gave Dale an embroidered club patch as a new member benefit.

New Business

- Copyright Trolls—Glenn F. added a discussion of last July's email from copyright trolls because Dale had told us he was a retired lawyer. Dale recalled there was a deputy in the Spotsylvania who worked on such things a while back.
- Bylaws Revision—Glenn F. said the main substantial change in the proposed Bylaws revision sent out for comment last month was to drop prorating of dues, changing to crediting dues payed in the last quarter (October through December) to go through the next year. He asked whether

there were comments, and there were none. However, he had a few in the form of some copy edits he added to the revised Bylaws after the last meeting. They included a question about whether the proper wording was “complementary Newsletter.” He and Linda discussed it and began to suspect his reference wrongly suggests it should be “complimentary.” They also concluded it was unnecessary to describe the Newsletter as a complementary item. Glenn F. also had found a redundant use of “member” and questioned whether “shall” should be used in the sentence, “The Executive Council shall propose an annual budget,” because we seem to skip that. After going over the typos, he moved that we approve the Bylaws as marked up and provided to Linda to update. Bart seconded, and the motion carried.

- Brochure Revision—Glenn F. discussed the status of work on revising the brochure. He concluded it would remain as a draft until we decide whether we need to provide an address for sending in membership applications and dues.
- PayPal Fees—Matt reported that the fee for PayPal transactions would take \$0.89 of each \$20 transaction. It consists of a flat \$0.30 plus about 2.9 percent of the payment. Matt said a \$27.50 payment for club plus Astronomical League dues would thus reduce the net club dues further by the 2.9 percent charge on the extra \$7.50 for the Astronomical League. This led to a discussion of whether to stay with the current practice with no PayPal option. Linda suggested MSRO had more need to use PayPal than RAC. Don Clark noted having PayPal capability on the club website could attract hackers and affect security. The consensus was not to use PayPal.
- Email List Server—Don talked about MailChimp, saying it can have lists and sub-lists. Dave Bentz said his church used MailChimp. Glenn F. said he wanted to know whether he could send a message to an address that would go to club members. Don said he did not think Glenn F. could send to one address that would go to all members of the group. He thought groups.io would be a better fit for that.
- Twitter Account—Glenn F. said he thought Tom Watson had deactivated the Twitter Account, but maybe he should try to verify that.
- Belle Isle Star Party—Glenn F. said Glenn Holliday forwarded a request for a star party at Belle Isle State Park, near Kilmarnock. Glenn F. said the park is a nice location with a good campground, and he thought he would need to check whether we could camp in the same field afterward. Linda mentioned that we had managed to do some star parties at Kilmarnock without staying overnight. Glenn F. said he would get in touch with the park to find out what dates they were interested in.
- Other Items—Scott told a story about receiving an email when he was preoccupied with some errands he needed to go out to do. The email was purportedly from Glenn F. saying he wanted Scott to pick up some gift cards to donate to a veterans’ group for palliative care. The message said Glenn F. wanted him to pick up four at \$100 each. Scott went to do his errands and purchased the gift cards but then realized Glenn F. had not told him what to do with them. He called Glenn F., who didn’t know anything about the cards. That was when Scott realized it was a scam email. When Scott got back home, he was able to hover his cursor over the sender in the email and see it was not really from Glenn F. The story explains why Glenn F. subsequently sent out a reminder to be alert and question any suspicious emails no matter who they appear to be from.

Next Meeting

The next meeting is on Wednesday, March 18, 2020, at the Headquarters Library on Caroline Street, downtown Fredericksburg. We will be in room L2, downstairs near the elevator.