

Rappahannock Astronomy Club

Minutes, March 18, 2020, Online Executive Council Meeting

In attendance:

Bart & Linda Billard
Don Clark
Glenn Faini

Glenn Holliday
Jerry Hubbell
Matt Scott

The meeting began 7:05 p.m. Six Executive Council members were present, and Glenn Holliday joined at some point. No presentation was planned. This meeting was a substitute for the cancelled March club meeting and a test of using zoom.us for future club meetings.

Old Business

- **Treasurer's Report**—Glenn Faini went over Matt Scott's treasurer's report, which was included in the agenda. Incoming funds totaled \$75, with no expenditures. So far, we have 16 paid memberships for 2020. Glenn F. said the ending balance matched with the latest bank statement. He noted that few people were renewing Astronomical League membership. This information was shown, along with groups.io membership status, in two new columns on his club membership list. Bart Billard said it was just an oversight that he and Linda had omitted the AL dues, and he planned to get that extra payment to Matt. He and Linda also said the membership list should show they were able to set up individual groups.io accounts.
- **MSRO Status**—Jerry Hubbell said a new enclosure was built for the third station telescope. He and Matt were working on a system to remotely open and close it. The 102-mm refractor that was piggybacked on the main telescope became the third station telescope. Jerry also said the MSRO Science, Inc. Board held a meeting in February. It included a celebration of obtaining 501(c) 3 certification from the IRS. Bart suggested considering a remote star party using MSRO telescopes. Jerry said he thought we could use zoom. He mentioned NEAF this year was planning a virtual meeting.
- **Communications Committee report**—Don Clark gave the webmaster's report, saying he had updated cancellation notices that Glenn F. did not get to. He said he would like people doing posts to use the "continue reading" feature for longer posts. It would keep them from using so much space on the home page. Linda explained how she uses the feature, which she indicated defaults to on. Don also talked about adding events to the calendar and also updating it after the events with reports. That way, we could automatically provide outreach reports to the Night Sky Network. He said David Abbou had already started using it. Don discussed with Glenn F. the use of the website contacts email popup to send a message. Glenn F. said when he tried it, he did not get a sent mail copy of his email. Don thought he might be able to explain later how to get it to work.
Glenn F. gave a report on the Yahoo Group, saying there was not much activity, but he was continuing to send messages to both groups until March 31. When Jerry asked him whether Yahoo would go away, Glenn F. said he could not actually shut down the Yahoo group after that date, but he could delete all the members.

New Business

- **Astronomical League (AL) Memberships**—Speaking for Matt, who had trouble with his audio, Glenn F. said Matt tried to contact AL to confirm the list of members who should currently be getting the AL magazine. Matt was asked for a full membership list, perhaps to see whether the club satisfied some membership percentage threshold. Through the chat feature of Zoom, Matt said he had no response to his email to AL yet, only one telephone conversation with the AL treasurer who sent some forms. Tim Plunkett had mentioned Matt might have to join AL in order to be the club contact. AL provides insurance for star parties as a benefit for the \$10 club dues and the individual club member dues. Matt said AL wanted quarterly updates of the club roster, but he has not had any response from them other than what he got from the treasurer the one time he managed to talk with him.

- PayPal Dues Payment Option—We talked a bit more about PayPal to consider the comments Jerry made via email after the last meeting. Don ended up suggesting that he and Matt talk about it separately sometime after this meeting. We also concluded that since it was decided at a regular meeting not to use pay pal, that we wait for an open meeting to discuss and decide as a group.
- Groups.io Update—Glenn F. said our Rappahannock Astronomy Club group on groups.io started up on March 8 and appeared to be working well. He mentioned the problem of a topic that leads to unnecessary and repeated replies to all. He had tried deleting the message that started one of these topics. Jerry thought that individuals might still be able to reply to the copy that went to their email account. Someone brought up moderated discussion groups, leading to a discussion about whether moderation might be needed.
- Belle Isle Star Party—Glenn F. said he learned we could camp in the field where the star party would be held, except for those bringing RVs to camp in. The latter would need to set up in the campground. He said there had been no discussion of a date for the star party yet.
- Other Items—We discussed how the online meeting had worked and how to handle a full club meeting with a program using the free version of Zoom limited to 40-minute meetings. (Zoom allowed this first meeting to go past the 40-minute limit.) It was suggested we could have separate meetings for the program and for the business meeting. Another question was how to open the meeting to the public; participants in this meeting were sent email invitations. We concluded we might be able to put the link on the club website. At some point we saw Glenn Holliday had connected, but he was unable to talk to us.

Next Meeting

The next meeting is on Wednesday, April 15, 2020. Whether it is at the Headquarters Library is to be determined.