

# Rappahannock Astronomy Club

Minutes, April 21, 2021, Online Meeting

In attendance:

Scott Busby  
Bart & Linda Billard  
Don Clark  
Glenn Faini  
Eric Goforth

Glenn Holliday  
Mark McDonagh  
John Maynard  
Rolando Pancotti  
Matt Scott

The business meeting began at about 7:05 p.m. Eleven members were present.

## Old Business

- Treasurer's Report—Matt Scott reported several dues payments in March. Three were regular dues, and one included Astronomical League dues. He had no expenditures to report in March.
- Vice President's Event Report—Glenn Faini said he cancelled the April star party because of the forecast. He noted the Friends of the Rappahannock event was April 9, but he was not aware of any RAC members who went to support it.
- Secretary's Report—Bart Billard had nothing to report.
- *StarGazer* Report—Linda Billard said the next newsletter was due at the beginning of May, and she was about to start putting it together. She was planning to have an article from Myron Wasiuta on the supernova work at MSRO, involving a pair of students he was working with. She was writing an update about the Ingenuity helicopter on Mars, which made its first flight last week. Glenn F. remarked that he saw a report that it was not the first *flight* on another planet. A Russian balloon flew on Venus, so Ingenuity's was the first *powered* flight (as Linda pointed out). He also mentioned some concern about showing logos for astronomy apps in the article he was writing and not providing copyright information. He thought he might have to just provide links.
- MSRO Report—Jerry Hubbell had not yet got home, and the report was deferred.
- Communications Report, Website—Don Clark said he had done more cleanup of the website, and he had created a Dropbox account to use for backups. Glenn F. said he had seen some bad links in the photo gallery, but he thought they were fixed now. Glenn mentioned putting a post of a news article on telescopes not to buy and making it stay on top to help beginners interesting in amateur astronomy. He was hoping it could stay like that and not interfere with other posts too much.
- Communications Report, Groups.io List—Glenn said 11 members who had not renewed by the end of March had been dropped from the group as of April 1.
- Equipment Inventory—Scott Busby said there were no new equipment acquisitions or dispositions, so the inventory remained the same.

## New Business

- Membership Renewals—Glenn F. noted we were up to 41 paid memberships compared with the total of 43 reached in 2020, 11 of whom have not renewed.
- Presentations and Speakers—Glenn F. said he thought Myron would be willing to do a presentation. He asked club members for suggestions for outside speakers. Linda mentioned what Zoom had done for the two quilting groups she was in, allowing them to get remote presentations from people they would be unable to pay to travel and speak in person. She wondered whether astronomy might have a resource with information on people available as speakers. Glenn Holliday said he had done some arrangements with contacts he had at University of Arizona for his work with Scouts, and he could ask them about possibilities. Scott brought up his on-again-off-again talk on light pollution for the Belmont Club of Women, now scheduled for June 3. One of the main topics was a planned RV park within 5 miles of Belmont Observatory, and efforts to get the contractor to provide for minimizing light pollution. Glenn F. asked about neighbors having requested utility poles with lights by the street in front of their houses. Scott believed the utilities end up adjusting charges to the community to cover the cost of

operating such lights. The discussion continued with problems caused by full-spectrum LED lighting and how to get someone to provide shielding to prevent lighting the upper atmosphere.

- NexStar Donation—Glenn F. showed us an original version, about 20-year-old NexStar SCT donation he accepted for the benefit of some club member. He said he had explained it was not suitable for the club equipment inventory, but the person making the donation still wanted him to find someone in the club who could actually use it. Glenn F. said it had a sturdy tripod and a good diagonal. The original eyepiece was not very good, but it had five Celestron Plossl eyepieces and a Barlow. He had cleaned it up and replaced some felt in the cover, but he did not feel experienced enough to fix the collimation without risking turning an adjustment screw too much and damaging the corrector plate. He planned to offer it to club members without requesting a donation. Linda suggested after giving interested members some time to sign up he could have a drawing of names to choose the one who gets it. Eric Goforth suggested contacting the person at King George High School who runs an astronomy club for the students to ask for the name of someone deserving in the club. Glenn H. managed to find the club sponsor's name was Mark Burns, and Linda was able to find his address and forward it to Glenn F. before the end of the meeting.
- Other News—Glenn F. asked whether anyone had done any observing lately. Scott said he was changing out telescopes in his observatory. The mount for his astrograph was out for repairs, and he was using a 6-inch refractor in place of the astrograph. Glenn F. mentioned the availability of embroidered club logos on polo shirts, etc. Linda suggested she could put a box in the newsletter if he sent her the information.

## Next Meeting

The next meeting is on Wednesday, May 19, 2021. It is planned as an online Zoom meeting.