

Rappahannock Astronomy Club

Minutes, July 21, 2021, Online Meeting

In attendance:

Scott Busby
Bart & Linda Billard
Don Clark
Glenn Faini
Glenn Holliday

Jerry Hubbell
Justin Long
Troy Major
Mark McDonagh
Matt Scott

The business meeting began at about 7:08 p.m., with introductions for new member Justin Long. Eleven members were present.

Old Business

- **Treasurer's Report**—Matt Scott reported collecting \$82.50 in member and Astronomical League (AL) dues. There were several new members. He said he paid \$130 to AL for the club and members who signed up for that option. Matt also reported that PayPal fees would increase on August 1, which would necessitate an update of our website to inform those who want to use PayPal and adjust the amount charged to cover the fee increase. We concluded Don Clark would need to do the latter adjustment, and Matt would provide him the new amount to charge. Don arrived a few minutes later and was informed about the adjustment needed. Also, Linda asked him to add a link to our website for the Richmond Astronomical Society's website. They settled on putting it on the right side of the home page where it could show as the RAS logo. Glenn F. suggested an additional location to add the link was the resources page ("About Astronomy"), where it could just be a text link.
- **Vice President's Report**—Glenn Faini said the annual picnic would be August 14. He was unable to get the September date he would have preferred. He said his Caledon contact, Nina, scheduled the pavilion for the Club free of charge. Glenn said he needed to know what people could bring, and after a discussion about how soon to request replies decided to ask for them by one week before the picnic.
Glenn F. brought up the Dominion work involving holes along the road near Caledon. He said he had been by more recently and saw more holes. He no longer thought it looked like they might be for street lights and suggested they might be for buried cable.
- **Secretary's Report**—Bart said he had nothing to report, but confirmed that he had been using the meeting recordings to check over his first draft of the minutes and add things he missed. He said he probably did not need the recordings once he had the minutes sent out and received comments. Glenn F. said he planned to leave recordings up for 2 months in case someone wanted to go back and see them.
- **StarGazer Report**—Linda said she had received an article from Scott Busby and wrote one herself. She was also expecting a contribution from Jerry Hubbell, and that she was going to try to write another article herself. She encouraged Troy Major to try writing something about his astrophotography. Linda and Jerry talked about the index he did some time ago and how it might be time to update it. Jerry suggested those back issues might provide some good ideas for follow-up articles. Mark McDonagh brought up some topics he would be interested in, including whether a red-dot finder (like the Telrad finder) might be better on a Dobsonian telescope than a finder scope. He was finding it hard to relate what he saw in the finder scope with the stars he was trying to use visually to zero in on his target. Glenn F. said he was not sure about a Telrad finder on a Dobsonian. Mark said John Maynard was using one and had it mounted 4 inches out from the tube. He also mentioned interest in how useful Barlow lenses and filters were. Glenn F. asked Scott's opinion, and Scott said filters do work and especially recommended OIII filters for nebulae. He noted he preferred having the right eyepiece rather than using the extra optics a Barlow introduces. Glenn F. suggested a Barlow does help with eye relief. Mark agreed he did see a larger field of view when focused without glasses on.
- **MSRO Report**—Jerry said the MSRO Board of Directors' meeting would take place the evening after this club meeting. He said they were working on new equipment Myron Wasiuta was putting

into service. He said that actually included a fourth station Myron was working on after getting the RC telescope into service. He also said they had done a little maintenance and cleaning up on the 6-inch refractor. Jerry said Mike Klosterman had been inactive for a while but had come back interested in exoplanet work. He had recently taken the AAVSO course on exoplanet observing and was helping us do some refresher sessions to try to get back into that work. Jerry noted he had become the exoplanet coordinator for ALPO. He said MSRO was planning to start more TESS follow-up work, and anyone interested could send him an email. He noted RAC members were eligible for time on MSRO telescopes. Glenn F. asked if any members had used time credited to the club. Jerry could not think of any but also said Explore Scientific sells introductory sessions on MSRO that provide MSRO with donations. He planned to talk more about it at the next club business meeting.

- Club Website—Don Clark had nothing to report beyond what came up earlier in the meeting.
- Groups.io List—Glenn F. said the Groups.io list was still running smoothly, and he had nothing in particular to report.
- Equipment Inventory—Scott Busby said he recently had two members interested in borrowing equipment. Alan Polsky had had a telescope out for about a month, and more recently, Eric Goforth was interested in getting started with astrophotography, and they were communicating back and forth about techniques. Scott noted he had equipment available to club members for loans of 30 to 60 days.

New Business

- Presentations and Speakers and Other New Business—Glenn F. said he had been in contact with Ashley W. Stroupe of JPL, and they had a tentative plan for her to make a presentation on Mars rovers at the September club meeting. There was a possibility she could need to push it back to a later date. He was also working with Sue Ann Heatherly, of the Green Bank Observatory, on the choice of a date for a presentation on the observatory. It might be for the August picnic in lieu of a business meeting.
- Annual Picnic—Glenn F. wanted opinions on what the starting time should be. Scott recommended 1:30, saying he would emphasize socializing and was pessimistic about observing in August. Glenn F. noted the Moon, Saturn, and Jupiter would be up and might allow earlier observing.
- Public Meeting Possibilities —Don said he forgot to check into changes in scheduling at the library. Linda said she had heard a rumor about being able to schedule more than one month ahead. She said her quilting guild was trying to meet in person at the library every other month and was having more success with scheduling that way. Glenn F. said the King George Library was allowing reservations up to 3 months ahead but noted it closes at 8 p.m, which was too early for RAC. He mentioned they had no fees for a room or Internet access but did charge for using their projector. Jerry and Bart said the club has a projector.
- Star Parties—The July 17 star party was cancelled because of weather. The August star party would include Saturn and Jupiter. September would include Neptune.
- Other Items—Glenn F. said the October meeting would include nominations for club officer positions. He recommended that the club could use some “new blood.” Glenn said membership this year was up to 48 people, near the high of 51 members at the end of the year before last. Jerry suggested we should try to get more members to join our meetings. Scott Busby suggested it was worthwhile to invite some members via telephone rather than email. Several thought more presentations would help draw participation at meetings.

Next Meeting

The next meeting is on Saturday, August 14, 2021. It is the Club picnic and may include a program or business meeting.