

# Rappahannock Astronomy Club

Minutes, November 16, 2022, Online Meeting

In attendance:

Scott Busby, Equipment Manager  
Bart Billard, Secretary  
Glenn Faini, President  
Claire Gardener

Glenn Holliday  
Mark McDonagh  
Mike Parker  
Myron Wasiuta, Vice President

The meeting began a few minutes after 8:00. Eight members attended.

## Old Business

- President's Report—Glenn Faini said nominations for club officers were opened last month. To provide an opportunity for someone new to be nominated, he said they were opening again for this meeting prior to the elections to be held during New Business.
- Treasurer's Report— Matt Scott said \$40 came in from one membership renewal and one new member during October. Expenditures for the month totaled \$5.62. Matt said we might be able to use Zelle with our Charter Bank account to accept dues payments. People who could pay with Zelle would avoid the fee added to dues paid by PayPal. Both Mike Parker and Claire Gardiner said they had used Zelle. Glenn F. thought it would be okay. One thing Matt said would have to be changed was the email address of record with the bank because it was currently [president@raclub.org](mailto:president@raclub.org). Also, John would have to add the option to our web page. Mike thought users would have to have Zelle through their bank account in order to use it. We thought it would be better to keep the PayPal option available for those who don't.
- Vice President's Report—Glenn F. said the October 22 star party was cancelled because of weather, and he was not sure who participated at the November 2 Moon Night. He thought Corey Dallmeyer was interested in the outreach event at Dixon Park or Old Mill Park on December 13.
- Secretary's Report—Bart Billard said he had just got the draft minutes out for comments earlier in the week and would wait for comments a few more days before posting the final.
- Communications Report—Glenn F. said he did not have anything from the webmaster. He said he started sending meeting invitations via groups.io with the ones for this meeting.
- Equipment Inventory Report—Scott Busby said he had nothing new. He said he was still waiting for Rolando Pancotti to report on his evaluation of the recently acquired NexStar telescope. Scott also said he had been getting the benefit of trying various pieces of club inventory out in his observatory. He thought other club members who have their own equipment should keep that possibility in mind. We discussed possibly weeding some unused items from the inventory, and Scott said a reason for keeping the current inventory was the variety it offered for members who might like to see what was right for them.

## New Business

- Last Month's Presentation—Glenn F. said he had processed the video of Greg Szlyk's presentation on *Astronomical Image Processing* and it was available to be posted on the club website.
- Upcoming Events and 2023 Star Party Dates —Glenn F. said Boris Starosta had sent an email about an outreach on November 22 at Louisa High School, and members could contact him if interested. Glenn said he was still waiting for a reply from Caledon about the proposed star party dates for 2023. He wanted to go ahead and add them to our website as proposed for now. Glenn F. suggested recent Caledon attendance had been minimal and thought we might want to start a discussion about continuing to use that venue. He mentioned one possible factor was the increased traffic on the road by Caledon that led to frequent loss of night vision from headlight glare. Scott Busby offered Belmont as a site for the club picnic. He said we had had successful picnics there, but COVID and possibly the driving distance for some members had made it seem less desirable in the last few years.

- Election of Club Officers—Bart moved to accept the current officers for another term, and Scott and Glenn F. seconded. The motion was approved on a voice vote. Glenn F. said he would send out his reappointment of the current at large Executive Council members. Shortly afterward, Myron Wasiuta joined the meeting. He agreed with Glenn F.'s thought that he could be the first club president elected five times. Glenn F. concluded he had to say he was not willing to accept another term next year in order to get someone else to step up.
- (Old Business) MSRO Report—Myron offered to give the MSRO report that we skipped over in old business. He said there were positives and negatives to report this time. The negatives were that two stations were down. Station 1 had a failure of the internet switch so that the only way to turn on and off the camera and the high-precision encoder was for Myron to go out and do it manually. He admitted it was not completely offline but a little less convenient to use right now. He said StationTWO was truly offline because of a failure of the WIFI card that also affected the landline connectivity. He and Shannon Morgan were troubleshooting to see whether the computer needed an operating system reinstall or a replacement card. Myron thought it might be offline for a week or two. The positives were that StationTHREE was fully operational and that work on making the StationFOUR roof fully automated was proceeding well and should be done in a few more weeks. Then StationFOUR would be available with fully remote operation, including getting calibration frames remotely. Myron also reported a contact from Val Finell, the president of the York County Astronomical Society (YCAS) in Pennsylvania. They had a new 4.5-meter radio telescope and wanted to automate it to operate remotely. The idea was to learn from the experience at MSRO on making their telescope remotely operable and to make plans for working together on simultaneous optical and radio observations. Myron said we could target stars that might be sources of radio emission as well as optical (he mentioned cataclysmic variables and pulsars as possibilities) and said MSRO could get light curves and spectroscopy while their radio telescope observed radio emission. Afterward, the teams could look at the combined data to see whether there were any radio observations that had optical counterparts, or vice versa. Myron said he would forward the email from YCAS so members interested could learn more about the opportunity. (He actually sent it out as he was wrapping up his report.) The hope was for the YCAS radio telescope to get online in spring 2023.
- Additional Items—Glenn F. mentioned seeing the notice on Groups.io that David Abbou had left the group. He said he guessed it meant David made the planned move to New Mexico. He suggested we would need to find a new volunteer as a school outreach liaison. There was a discussion of the Artemis launch in the early morning and some members' attempts to stay awake and watch it. There was also a recap of the discussion from earlier in the meeting about moving the star party location. This led to discussion of diminished support for outreach, and Myron observed that RAC was not alone in that. His experience was that it was similar for the Charlottesville group he was in touch with, and he thought Covid was a factor. Glenn Holliday said he had just received a request for outreach support on December 2 at the American Legion on Brock Road. He said it was a Scout event from 4:30 to 10 p.m. Myron said he lived close to that location and could support them, but he would have to let them know he could not be there until 6:30 to 7 p.m. because of work. A few other topics discussed earlier were touched on again. Claire had looked up the pronunciation of Zelle and found the second "e" was silent. Matt said we used PayPal to pay for our Zoom subscription and for our web hosting service. He said in addition, not all banks offer Zelle, so we would need PayPal for members unable to use it. Glenn H. mentioned hearing from a couple of Scout groups wanting to attend a star party and were waiting to see our calendar for next year get published. Glenn F. told him to go with the proposed schedule he had sent out in October. Glenn H. said he was not sure he had forwarded that schedule to Caledon and said he would follow up with them. We discussed whether we could find a better location to facilitate outreach and had some agreement Corey might have some good ideas we should discuss with him.

## Next Meeting

The next meeting is on Wednesday, December 21, 2022, at 8:00 p.m. It is planned as an online meeting.