

# Rappahannock Astronomy Club

Minutes, March 15, 2023, Online Meeting

In attendance:

Scott Busby, Equipment Manager  
Bart Billard, Secretary  
Glenn Faini, President  
Glenn Holliday

Andy Hulon  
Eileen Kragie  
Mark McDonagh  
Troy Major

The meeting began at 8:06 p.m. Eight members attended.

## Old Business

- **President's Report**—Glenn Faini said the Bylaws edits voted on by the EC at the last meeting were up for approval by the club at this meeting. He described how the reference to a 3-month grace period for membership renewals was removed and replaced with a statement that dues should be paid by January 31 to prevent being dropped from the Groups.io email list. Glenn pointed out that a member who is late and gets dropped from the rolls gets reinstated once his dues are paid. He also said there was a typo Linda Billard found: "roles" was corrected to "rolls." Glenn asked for discussion and then a vote, mentioning that Matt Scott could not be at the meeting but said he would vote in favor of the revision. All six members present voted in favor by a show of hands, passing the amendment with six (plus Matt) in favor and none opposed. He said Linda would add the date of this meeting as the approval date and send him a PDF of the amended bylaws. He said he would send it out to the membership and someone would post it on the club website.
- **Treasurer's Report**— Glenn F. gave the report for Matt, saying there were payments of \$140 for renewals or new memberships last month and no outgoing funds.
- **Vice President's Report**—Glenn F. gave the report for Myron. He said there was a star party at Bowling Green, and he thought Corey Dallmeyer had sent out a report that it was successful. He did not have any update on the YCAS radio telescope project other than the news that two YCAS members had joined the club. Glenn said Corey was going to be out of town and had to cancel the March 18 outreach scheduled for Bowling Green. He said no one had asked for a Caledon star party, so the only one on the 18th would be at Belmont.
- **Secretary's Report**—Bart Billard said he had difficulty posting the February minutes. He said he had discovered a mistake in the version posted and replaced the file with a corrected version, but the link on the website still found the deleted version with the error. He remembered a similar problem he had to ask Don Clark about and thought Don had told him it had something to do with CloudFlare creating a copy.
- **StarGazer and MSRO Reports**—Bart confirmed that Linda said she would not have a *StarGazer* report this time. Glenn said Myron Wasiuta was not able to attend and give an MSRO report.
- **Communications Report**—Glenn said that John Maynard had given him information for the agenda: John backed up the website, updated Perl (Glenn did not know what Perl was), reported star parties recently held to the Night Sky Network, and corrected some broken links. For Groups.io, Glenn said he had nothing new to report other than the members who had not paid 2023 dues yet would be dropped from the list on April 1 if they still had not paid their dues by then. He added he was thinking about providing guidelines for email etiquette. He was not sure there was a way to have some sort of reminder banner on the Groups.io website and said he might have to continue sending email reminders from time to time. He had already sent one requesting members to use the "reply to sender" link at the bottom of an email when you have a message meant for just one person in response to a group message that person sent. He also mentioned confusion that resulted when threads "go off on a tangent" because a poster starts a conversation about something different from the initial poster's subject without starting a new subject line. He said for example that if someone has posted an item for sale and another person wants to mention something else for sale, that second person should start a new thread instead of replying to the other person's thread.

## New Business

- Upcoming Events—Glenn F. said he did not yet have dates from Corey for the James River State Park events he was planning. The park's staff were asking us to support two events in the summer. He was not aware of a report from Glenn Holliday on the Mattaponi District Roundtable event that was scheduled for February 16. He thought they might be looking for us to support some events for them. Glenn F. had hoped Eileen Kragie could join this meeting to talk to us about the International Dark Sky Association (IDA). He had an email from her with a letter to the Northern Virginia Astronomy Association she wrote about IDA and said he would forward it to club members. He said International Dark Sky Week was coming up April 15th to 22nd, and we might want to see if we can do something in support of that.
- Other Items—Glenn F. reported our membership was up to 52 plus 2 complementary memberships for Jim Browder and Lauren Lennon so far, compared with 65 and 61 at the end of the last 2 years.

He then said he had covered everything he had for the meeting and asked whether anyone else had something to contribute. Scott Busby said he wanted to talk about planning for the solar eclipse next year. He said now was the time to start planning and getting reservations for anyone wanting to travel to the path of totality and have a place to stay nearby. Scott said he and his wife prefer to stay at bed and breakfast places. He warned that hotels might be likely to change their prices or cancel a reservation when they find out about the eclipse. He said all the major hotels were doing that in 2017. He said he was considering Bloomington, Indiana, because of its location right on the path and for historical interest and other things to do there, but he had not found a place to stay yet. He recommended finding one of the maps showing the path of the eclipse to look at the possibilities. Glenn F. said he was considering Potsdam, NY, which was remote and favorable for astronomy. It was also the location of his alma mater, so he could work in a reunion while there. Glenn and Scott each mentioned a backup possibility they had before concluding by urging anyone who had never seen a total eclipse to try to go because it would be well worth it.

Glenn F. next showed two books for beginners plus another he was offering to “re-home.” Two were *Seeing the Deep Sky* and *Seeing the Solar System* by Fred Schaaf. The other was *First Man*, for anyone who liked the movie. Glenn Holliday joined Zoom just as Glenn F. was ready to stop recording and adjourn the meeting. Eileen joined moments later. Glenn H. said he was too sick to go to the Mattaponi Roundtable meeting, but he had been able to provide some club brochures and business cards through a Scout group that was going. He had not yet heard about what happened at the meeting. Glenn F. showed him the Fred Schaaf books, and he was interested in looking at them for supporting Scouts.

Glenn F. then gave Eileen a chance to talk about her efforts in northern Virginia. She said she had requested 22 proclamations for International Dark Sky Week, and that they had also started a northern Virginia chapter for IDA. She was not sure how far it reached. She said last year, there were 26 proclamations across the whole country and that 6 came from Virginia. She was trying to go further this year and was representing the Virginia IDA chapter as well. She and Glenn F. talked a bit about lighting ordinances and problems with exemptions and loopholes. Eileen said Fairfax County had an exemption for front porch lighting, and there was little she could do about a neighbor who had a large number of porch lights that were not shielded. When he asked her, she indicated she might be able to give a presentation at one of our meetings or help find someone at IDA to do it. She also told us Virginia has the largest number of dark sky parks of any state east of the Mississippi, and mentioned some possible additions, including the Blue Ridge Environmental Center out toward West Virginia, which she said was being turned into Sweetwater State Park and was going to go for a dark sky park status.

At the end of the meeting, Glenn H. asked whether others were getting emails asking us to allow them to advertise on our website. Glenn F. said he got them and was not responding to them, usually just putting them in Spam. He added that some members had found out putting one of our Groups.io messages in Spam was a mistake leading to being immediately removed from the list.

## Next Meeting

The next meeting is on Wednesday, April 19, 2023, at 7:00 p.m. It is planned as an online meeting.