

BBA Meeting Minutes 2/3/2011

The February, 2011 meeting was called to order at 7:35 p.m. by President Mark Gerlach in Room JC13 of TCC, VB campus. Those in attendance were Neill Alford, Kenny Broun, Bryan Condrey,, Elizabeth Dougherty, Kevin Dougherty, Ted Forte, Mark Gerlach, Georgie June, Ben Loyola, Matt McLaughlin, Bill McLean, Bill Newman, Bill Powers, Kevin Rasso, George Reynolds, Jim Tallman, "Bird" Taylor, C. Travis, and Larry Wade.

Treasurer's report: General Fund, \$3443.80; Scholarship Fund, \$3694.12; total, \$7137.92.

Secretary's report: 78 paid-up members. Many others overdue.

Scholarship committee report: Ben Loyola said the deadline for scholarship application submission is May 1st. He stated that the Virginia Beach school system has a good scholarship Web site, in contrast to Chesapeake and Norfolk public schools. "Bird" Taylor suggested we advertise the scholarship to Hampton schools as well.

Old Business:

The librarian job is available, as Gerry Carver is ready to turn it over to someone new. Bill Newman is interested. Since Gerry wasn't in attendance, it was recommended that Bill contact Gerry.

Discussion of a dark sky site was renewed. Ken Broun knows of a place with 15 acres in North Carolina. He'll check into the details. Some suggestions were that we could possibly lease it for the yearly property tax payment; or, possibly find some property with property tax in arrears and purchase it. An *ad hoc* committee is needed to delve into this matter. Some possible members could be Dale Carey and Bruce Bodner (both of whom were not in attendance). The Secretary should contact them.

Ted mentioned that a database in Backbayastro has been established for members to volunteer to present a monthly meeting feature. Please sign up on the database with the date and subject you would like to present.

Schedule:

Nightwatch Saturday, Feb. 5

Skywatch Friday, Feb. 25

Mount Trashmore Star Party Friday, April 15. Members can come in the early afternoon and set up solar-filtered telescopes, then transition into night observing.

Yuri's Night Saturday, April 16 at Virginia Air and Space Center, Hampton. An adult party, 7 pm to midnight. Members will set up telescopes on the upper-floor porch as in the past. The moon will be 97% full, rising at 6:20 pm and transiting just after midnight. Sunset is 7:40 pm, with civil twilight ending at 8:07 pm. Members may come early and browse through the VASC for free.

New business:

Schedule continued:

Presentation to a Girl Scout troop tomorrow, Friday, Feb. 4.

Garden Stars Friday Feb. 11, 7 to 9 pm.

Green Bank star party June 29 thru July 2.

Almost Heaven Star Party August 26-30, Spruce Knob, West Virginia.

Our new ALCOR Bill McLean put in a “plug” for the Astronomical League’s observing “clubs”, whereby members can earn a pin and a certificate by observing such things as the Moon, double stars, planetary nebulae, etc.

IN FACT, our own “Master Observer” Ted Forte will be presenting the topic of A.L. observing “clubs” at the March meeting. This is one not to miss!

This month’s meeting feature was presented by Ken Broun, Astronomy Professor at Tidewater Community College, Virginia Beach Campus. His presentation was in two parts: First, a discussion and illustration of the scale of the solar system and ultimately the universe, using a spreadsheet and numbers. Then we adjourned to the planetarium downstairs, where he illustrated the relative sizes of the planets, their distances, and the comparison to the sizes of other stars in our galaxy. It was a mind-blowing whirlwind “tour” of outer space.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:15 p.m. by President Mark Gerlach.