

BBAA Meeting Minutes 4/7/2011

The April, 2011 meeting was called to order at 7:31 p.m. by President Mark Gerlach in Room JC13 of TCC, VB campus. Those in attendance were Scott Bough, Kenny Broun, Bryan Condrey, Elizabeth and Kevin Dougherty, Tom Flatley, Amy Koenig Gardner, Mark Gerlach, Curt Lambert, Ben Loyola, Matt McLaughlin, Bill Powers, George Reynolds, Bernie Strohmeier, Kevin Swann, Jim Tallman, and Matt Swingle.

Treasurer's report: General Fund, \$3216.20; Scholarship Fund, \$3700.12; total, \$6916.32.

Secretary's report: Reading of the minutes was waived as usual. The minutes of the last meeting are published on the BBAA Web site and in the April newsletter.

Old Business:

Dark Sky Site: The *ad hoc* Dark Sky Site Search Committee (DSSSC) has met twice, and a contingent plans to take a "field trip" down to Tyrell County, North Carolina on Saturday, April 9 to get the lay of the land at the site on Grapevine Landing Road. The family Kenny Broun has spoken to is amenable to leasing about five acres of property. The committee wants to see the land in the daylight and after dark to evaluate its potential before any further action is taken. They will also take a look at the Georgia Road site suggested by Rob Schonk.

BBAA apparel: Ben Loyola is trying to locate some members who ordered BBAA shirts, but have since "disappeared".

New Business:

New members and guests: Bernie Strohmeier, Scott Bough, and Tom Flatley.

Observing Reports:

Curt Lambert reported his observation of the last mission of the Space Shuttle Discovery and the International Space Station. Others commented on seeing them, too.

Schedule:

Garden Stars Friday, April 8

Mount Trashmore Star Party Friday, April 15

Yuri's Night Saturday, April 16 at Virginia Air and Space Center, Hampton 6 pm (if bringing scope)

Skywatch Friday, April 22

National Astronomy Day will be Saturday, May 7. Set up scopes at VB Central Library 9am-5pm.

Star Party at Tuckahoe, April 28-May 1.

Next BBAA meeting will be May 6.

Two events are on tap for June, Field Day at Indian Lakes ES, and Career Day at Tallwood ES. More details will be forthcoming.

Meeting Feature:

After the business meeting, the group adjourned to the TCC Planetarium, where Kenny Broun put on a spectacular show. As one of the two experts on the complex planetarium system at TCC, he had developed an excellent sky show about the Pleiades, incorporating the mythology and the astronomy into it. We even took a trip out into space and sailed "around" the open star cluster known as M45, and saw it from every imaginable angle.

Professor Broun gave us a quiz on identifying the constellations as he pointed to them in the sky, projected on the planetarium dome. I think we passed the test.

Then we saw a presentation of dark matter and dark energy, and how something unseen and unknown makes up 95% of the known universe. We saw views of the sun, stars, and galaxies in different wavelengths, from radio waves to infrared to X-rays, as well as the visible portion of the spectrum.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:57 p.m. by President Mark Gerlach.