

BBAA Meeting Minutes 9/1/2011

The September, 2011 meeting was called to order at 7:35 p.m. in room JC-13 at TCC Virginia Beach Campus by club secretary George Reynolds. President Mark Gerlach was ill and could not attend. Those in attendance were Neill Alford, Kenny Broun, Tom Flatley, Jeff Goldstein, Chuck Jagow, Amy Koenig Gardner, Matt McLaughlin, Bill McLean, Bill Powers, George Reynolds, Kevin Swann, Matt Swingle, Jim Tallman, and "Bird" Taylor.

Treasurer's report: General Fund, \$3065.17; Scholarship Fund, \$3710.12; total, \$6775.29.

Secretary's report: George Reynolds read the minutes of the August meeting. They were accepted as read.

This year's BBAA scholarship recipient was announced to be Emily Wiggins, teenage member of VPAS, who is very active and deserving of the scholarship award. Bird Taylor told us a little about her and what she has done for VPAS.

Old business:

Chuck Jagow reported on preparation for the VAAS conference, which is scheduled for Saturday, 1 October at TCC Virginia Beach in the planetarium. He has drafted an event schedule for the conference. Kenny Broun will present a planetarium feature. NASA speaker Donner Grigsby of the NASA Speakers' Bureau, will give a presentation. Dr. Carlos Salgado of Norfolk State University will speak on polarization studies with the RRRT. ODU doctoral candidate Kevin Mitchell will talk about Exoplanets, and our own Mark Ost will speak on Moon geology and meteorites. The planned observing site, York River State Park, has been closed due to damage from Hurricane Irene. Bill McLean and/or Bird Taylor will get in touch with Darrell, the VPAS point of contact for the park, and try to arrange a special dispensation for VAAS. Of course, by October 1, the park may be open again.

Ken Broun will ask his dean if VAAS can use the kitchen area and refrigerator to store food and beverages, and arrange for serving coffee. Kenny said the person(s) in charge of the refreshments can meet him at TCC the day before the conference to store the food and drinks in the refrigerator. George will send Kenny an email reminder. Lunch will not be provided, but attendees will be directed to local restaurants.

Future schedule items:

The Fall East Coast Star Party is scheduled for the weekend of 21 October. On Friday, 23 September there will be a retreat at Fan Mountain, the site of the RRRT. Several club members are planning to attend. Also on Friday, 23 October, according to Bird Taylor, the American Institute for Aeronautics and Astronautics (AIAA) will conduct a full day of STEM training (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) at Corporate Landing Middle School in Virginia Beach from 10 am to 4 pm. Bird solicited volunteers from BBAA to participate. Students from all over the Virginia Beach City Public School system will be there for talks, and views through solar-filtered telescopes.

Jim Tallman made a motion that he be authorized to purchase 2012 calendars from *Astronomy* magazine for all the current members of the club. The motion was seconded, discussed and carried. The cost will be less than \$400, and will benefit the dues-paying members.

Matt Swingle told club members about the upcoming GRAIL mission to the moon. On 8 September NASA will launch GRAIL (Gravity Recovery and Interior Laboratory), which will consist of twin spacecraft orbiting the moon in

tandem. Matt also passed around detailed photos of some features on the surface of Mars, taken by satellites currently orbiting the Red Planet.

Kenny Broun reported that he was at Cape Canaveral for the launch of the final Space Shuttle mission. He went back to the Cape to see the Juno launch on 5 August.

Jim Tallman, Jeff Goldstein, Bill McLean, and others reported that they have seen comet Garradd from their homes. The comet is in "prime time" now, with a 10:00 pm transit.

At 8:17 pm the meeting was moved from the classroom to the planetarium theater, where Kenny Broun put on a fantastic laser light show. The feature event was a mind-bending, three-dimensional, visually stunning presentation, "Natural Selection" by Robin Sip. The graphics were astounding. Though it was not strictly an astronomy presentation, all were awed by the detail and the amazing visual effects which reminded one of an IMAX movie.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:17 pm.

New business:

The Virginia-Pilot printed an article about the Perseid meteor shower (12-13 August), quoting Dr. Bob Hitt and George Reynolds.

There was some discussion that the amount of the scholarship be increased. Others suggested that we offer more than one scholarship. In the absence of the scholarship chairman Ben Loyola, further discussion was tabled.

Ted Forte gave an update on the RRRT: A number of things need to be taken care of; routine chores, mechanical problems with the dome, etc. A new polarimeter is in, and needs to be attached. Activity is "on hold" for now, waiting for Dr. Salgado in the fall. After that, the site will be open for proposals for use. Those who have spent time working on it will have precedence.

VP Courtney Flonta was recognized for receiving the 2011 Horkheimer Award for young astronomers. She is the fourth BBAA member to receive this prestigious award. Previous BBAA recipients were Adam Forte, C.J. Wood, and Jordan Bramble.

The meeting feature was a presentation by VB Planetarium Director Chuck Dibbs on "Space Fest", held at Starizona, in the foothills of Tucson, Arizona. Chuck was there in June of his year, and showed many pictures of the event. An exciting element of the event was the ability of attendees to meet and talk to real astronauts, including some from the Apollo program who went to the moon. Chuck highly recommends this event. The next one will be held in June of 2012.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:05 p.m. by President Mark Gerlach.