

BBA Meeting Minutes 10/6/2011

The October, 2011 meeting was called to order at 7:33 p.m. in room JC-13 at TCC Virginia Beach Campus by club president Mark Gerlach. Those in attendance were Bob Beuerlein, Kenny Broun, Courtney Flonta, Ted Forte, Amy Koenig Gardner, Mark Gerlach, Allen Goldstein, Erich Hoffer, Curt Lambert, Matt McLaughlin, George Reynolds, Kevin Swann, Matt Swingle, Jim Tallman, and "Bird" Taylor.

Treasurer's report: General Fund, \$1528.13; Scholarship Fund, \$3710.12; total, \$5238.25. The expenses for the VAAS Conference were \$1284.59 and receipts were \$200.00, for a net cost of \$1084.59. Other expenses included paying the A.L. dues, renewing IDA membership, and sending the proceeds from the sale of the Cecil Nichols equipment to the members of the family.

Secretary's report: The minutes of the September meeting are posted on the BBA Web site..

President Mark Gerlach gave a brief account of the VAAS conference that took place over the past weekend, on Saturday, 1 October. From the feedback that he and others received, it was very successful. A vote of thanks was offered to Chuck Jagow, who coordinated the event. (Chuck was not at the meeting, however.)

Calendar items:

"Moonwatch" events scheduled for Saturday, October 8 at Princess Anne Area Library in Virginia Beach and at the Virginia Air & Space Center in Hampton. Bird announced observing at the GAP Friday, Oct. 7. The Fall East Coast Star Party, hosted by Kent Blackwell, will be held 21-23 October. The last Boardwalk Astronomy night of this year is scheduled for Tuesday, 11 October, though the forecast is calling for rain. Thursday, 13 Oct. is the rain date.

There will be a Venus transit in June of 2012, in the afternoon. East coast will be able to see part of it. The whole transit may be seen from the far west. Alaska and Hawaii will be able to see the whole thing, which will be several hours long. Bird Taylor recommends #14 welders' glass as a solar filter. He suggests supplies be ordered now, to avoid a late rush.

Observing Reports: Several members said they have seen Comet Garradd, which is getting brighter. Ted reported on the "No Frills" Star Party at Tuckahoe, MD.

George Reynolds mentioned the free Stellarium planetarium program for the computer. It is handy for outreach, to show people the constellations, and can be used at the telescope. It can even be used to control a computerized scope. Bob Beuerlein suggested Microsoft's WorldWide Telescope application.

Old business: None.

New Business: Ted Forte said that this school year is the 50th anniversary of the opening of the Chesapeake Public Schools Planetarium. Dr. Bob Hitt has been there 30 years or more. The planetarium was built with money allocated to the school districts after the Russians launched Sputnik and other space probes in the late 1950s and early '60s. There will be a special event commemorating the 50th anniversary sometime this year, at a date to be determined. The Virginia Beach City Public Schools Planetarium is several years newer than Chesapeake's. Ted moved that Dr. Bob Hitt be made an honorary lifetime member of the BBA. The motion was seconded, discussed, and carried.

Bird Taylor showed a brief DVD showing the Mars Science Laboratory under construction in the clean room at Cape Canaveral. After that, the meeting was moved to the TCC planetarium, where Ken Broun presented a new show he recently received.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:05 pm.