

BBAA Meeting Minutes 12/01/2011

The December, 2011 meeting was called to order at 7:36 p.m. in room JC-11 at TCC Virginia Beach Campus by club president Mark Gerlach. Those in attendance were Neill Alford, Kenny Broun, Courtney Flonta, Amy Koenig Gardner, Mark Gerlach, Dino Giangregorio, Mary Giangregorio, Curt Lambert, Matt McLaughlin, George Reynolds, Bernie Strohmeyer, and Kevin Weiner..

Treasurer's report: \$1,630.13 general fund, \$3,710.12 scholarship fund, \$5,340.25 total. The treasurer is to renew the Post Office box in January.

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

President Mark Gerlach announced that long-time BBAA member Ted Forte will be leaving in the spring of 2012. He will be retiring and moving to Arizona. He is already purchasing a house there . . . with a 30-inch telescope included. His club duties will be split among several BBAA members. RRRRT functions will be handled by Kevin Weiner and Lawrence "Bird" Taylor, with assistance from Matt McLaughlin. Backbayastro Yahoo group list ownership will go to George Reynolds. Liaison with Northwest River Park for Night Hikes and Skywatch has not yet been determined, but Jim Tallman and Garry Mitchell are under consideration.

Another announcement was that newsletter editor Erica Smith-Llera will be relinquishing that job after February 2012. She is due to deliver twins and will have her hands full. Any interested in taking over the newsletter, contact Mark or president-elect Courtney Flonta.

Calendar items for December: Saturday, December 3 "Shiver Fest" at Mount Trashmore; Skywatch Friday, December 16. The annual BBAA anniversary luncheon will be held Saturday, December 17 at Fire and Vine in the Hilltop area of Virginia Beach. Nightwatch at Chippokes Plantation State Park is scheduled for Saturday, December 24. The next BBAA meeting will be January 5, 2012. The meeting location is still to be determined, but will probably be at the Virginia Beach Planetarium at Plaza Middle School.

New members joining the club tonight are Dean ("Dino") and Mary Giangregorio. Dino has already been active on Backbayastro.

Observing Reports and Miscellany: Curt Lambert said he saw his first shadow transit of one of the moons of Jupiter at the last Skywatch, Nov. 18. Mark Gerlach recently got a new secondary mirror for his 10-inch Dob. Kevin Weiner spoke about Starry Night Pro "Help Desk webinars" to promote sciences and astronomy. He said they also have a newsletter. Someone in the club could do something in SNP to demonstrate basic use by "newbies", and thereby promote the club in the newsletter.

Mark Gerlach showed a couple of NASA DVD videos, demonstrating the United Launch Alliance (ULA) at the Canaveral launch complex, and some information concerning the construction and launch of the GLAST mission (G Large Area Space Telescope). GLAST will be important to locate and analyze Gamma Ray Bursts (GRBs). Gamma rays are the most energetic form on energy known in the universe. The mission will enable NASA to provide collaboration between particle physicists and astrophysicists worldwide. GLAST's instruments will convert each gamma ray into an electron and a positron on a grid to detect where the gamma ray burst came from.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:42 pm. Many members reconvened in the TCC observatory behind the science building, on Prof. Ken Broun's invitation. Prof. Broun had the telescopes running, and students and guests observed Jupiter and several star clusters.