

## BBAA Meeting Minutes 3/01/2012

The March, 2012 meeting was called to order at 7:43 p.m. in room JC-13 at TCC Virginia Beach Campus by club president Courtney Flonta. Those in attendance were Neill Alford, Kenny Broun, Courtney Flonta, Dean Giangregorio, Mary Giangregorio, Robyn Korn, Curt Lambert, Matt McLaughlin, Bill McLean, Erica Mitchell, Kate Mitchell, Joshua Monroe, Bill Newman, Bill Powers, George Reynolds, Bernie Strohmeier, Paul Tartabini, "Bird" Taylor, and Kevin Weiner. The start of the meeting was delayed while members worked on an astronomy crossword puzzle from *Sky At Night Magazine*, brought in by Bill McLean.

Treasurer's report: General Fund \$3156.08, Scholarship Fund \$3717.12, for a total of \$6873.20

Secretary's report: The reading of the minutes of the February meeting was waived. Secretary Kevin Swann was not there.

ALCOR Report: Astronomical League Correspondent (ALCOR) Bill McLean encouraged the membership to pursue some of the Astronomical League observing programs, as an incentive to get out and observe.

Outgoing newsletter editor Erica was in attendance, and was applauded for her stalwart and professional work on *The Observer* newsletter for the past two and a half years. Paul Tartabini thanked her for her help, and said he is willing to continue as the newsletter editor.

President Courtney Flonta remarked that some of our members are not present at the meeting because they volunteered to support the event at Greenbrier Intermediate School. Those we know of who were to participate are Ted Forte, Georgie June, Chuck Jagow, and Jim Tallman.

Observers' Corner: Paul Tartabini reported that he had just observed the occultation of a star by the Moon, outside the TCC science building before the meeting.

Some calendar items for March and beyond: Outreach events are scheduled for 21 March at Cape Henry Collegiate and 29 March for Nansemond-Suffolk Academy. No one could remember the date for Deep Creek Elementary School outreach night. [EDITOR'S NOTE: The date for Deep Creek ES 4<sup>th</sup> Grade Science Night is 12 March.] Virginia Living Museum will be showing the film, "The City Dark", by the International Dark Sky Association this Saturday, March 3 at 6:00 P.M. The cost will be \$8 for non-members, \$6 for VLM members. More info can be obtained at [www.TheVLM.org](http://www.TheVLM.org). Daylight Savings Time begins Sunday, 11 March. Skywatch will be Friday, March 16, and Nightwatch will be Saturday, March 24. Garden Stars is scheduled for Friday, March 30. The next BBAA meeting will be April 5 at TCC. Mount Trashmore Star Party will be Friday, 6 April. Yuri's Night at the Virginia Air and Space Center will be Saturday, 14 April. The star party at Green Bank will be 20-23 June.

Kenny Broun said that TCC will be having an event June 5<sup>th</sup> for the transit of Venus. Some discussion followed as to whether any other activities are planned. No consensus.

Old business: Garden Stars Ad Hoc Committee chairman Bill McLean reported that Betty Ann Galway and Gil Elhart at Norfolk Botanical Garden have been contacted regarding the promotion of Garden Stars. Bill left the samples of posters that Dino Giangregorio had made, and left it up to them to decide what to do with them. When Bill suggested a poster be set up in the lobby of the NBG main building, he was told there was "no room" for one. It was suggested that we make our own posters and put them in the public libraries and a few other public places. The question was, "does NBG actually want Garden Stars?" Bill reported that they did say they were going to lower the admission fee. A discussion followed concerning the 50% that NBG gives BBAA for each Garden Stars. It was suggested that we ask them to open it back up to families, and that we would be willing to do it for free. Historically, it was NBG who originally came to us and offered payment; we never asked for it. Former GS participants Kevin Weiner and Matt McLaughlin remembered that Steve Hamilton was the original BBAA point of contact for Garden Stars. Kevin suggested Steve might be contacted for background information. A suggestion was made that if NBG really is not interested, that BBAA cease participation in Garden Stars. The Ad Hoc Committee will meet and decide on a plan of action.

New Business: None.

Kevin Weiner gave an excellent presentation on the basic appearance and use of SkyTools 3, the observing and logging program. He explained that the program is so full of features that he could only scratch the surface in his introduction to it; that it could take a month-long course to learn all that the program can do. Kevin showed how to set up an observing list, based on parameters of telescope, eyepiece(s), date and time, location, viewing conditions, and observer's experience level. He accessed the Web site to show that there are a Starter Edition, with a free trial available, a Standard Edition, and a "Pro" edition. Volume discounts are available, in case several club members would like to get together and order copies of the program. The basic price is \$99.95, with a 25% discount if 2 to 9 copies are ordered. Upgrades from SkyTools 2 to version 3 are available at 50% of the new price. For more information, the link is <http://skyhound.com>.

The meeting was adjourned by president Courtney Flonta at 9:00 pm.