

BBAA Astronomy Club February 4, 2021 (Virtual Meeting via Zoom)

Shawn Loescher (President)

Called meeting to order at 7:30 PM.

Vice President Events Report (read by George Reynolds):

February 2021

- BBAA Club Meeting via Zoom 2/4
- Corn Watch @ Cornland Park, 2/5
- Skywatch @ Northwest River State Park, 2/6
- Corn Watch @ Cornland Park, 2/12
- Nightwatch @ Chippokes Plantation State Park, 2/13
- Mars Rover Perseverance Watch Party, 2/18 Noon on the Night Sky Network:
<https://mars.nasa.gov/mars2020/timeline/landing/>
- Saturday “SUN”day@ Elizabeth River Park 2/27

March 2021

- BBAA Club Meeting via Zoom 3/4
- Corn Watch @ Cornland Park, 3/5
- Skywatch @ Northwest River State Park, 3/6
- Corn Watch @ Cornland Park, 3/12
- Nightwatch @ Chippokes Plantation State Park, 3/13
- Saturday “SUN”day@ Elizabeth River Park 3/27

Stu Beaver has reported that the Staunton River Star Party for the spring of 2021 has been cancelled due to the pandemic. Hopefully the situation will improve by October and the Fall session will happen.

Secretary’s Report

A motion was made to dispense in the reading of the minutes, which was approved.

Treasurer’s Report (Richard Roberts):

- General Fund: \$5,965.27
- Primary Scholarship Fund: \$1,310.29
- GJ Scholarship Fund: \$1,604.00
- Total Funds: \$8,879.56
- 142 Dues paid in full members
- 5 Honorary Members
- 14 Associate Members w/AL
- 2 Associate Members
- 121 Regular Members

- 142 Total Members on Roster
- \$2,125.00 Paid dues
- \$687.00 Unpaid dues
- \$4,590 Estimated Expenses for 2021

Alcor Report (Bruce Powers):

The deadline for sumitting your paperwork for the great conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn award is February 21. Both George Reynolds and Eddie Parris are the first members of the club to receive this award.

RRRT Report:

The “Rapid Robotic Response Telescope” (RRRT) project is a joint collaboration between Norfolk State University and the University of Virginia to operate a robotic telescope at Fan Mountain Observatory near Charlottesville. The universities have allowed the BBAA to utilize the telescope for astrophotography. The 24-inch Ritchey-Chretien telescope is designed to operate remotely and studies gamma ray bursts, blazars, and other transient events. When not actively engaged in GRB work, students in the area and our members may use the scope for a variety of projects. The RRRT is a part of the Skynet Robotic Telescope Network. The Skynet Robotic Telescope Network or Skynet, is a global network of fully automated, or robotic telescopes serving professional astronomers and students over the Internet. Skynet telescopes are unique in that they are run by computers instead of by humans. Such telescopes are called robotic telescopes. Each evening, during good weather, the telescopes' domes open and the telescopes record data using request entered by members of the Skynet network. The RRRT Coordinator for the BBAA is Bird Taylor. For updates on the status of the RRRT, please check out their blog: <https://rrrt-fmo dot blogspot dot com/> To see the current conditions at the RRRT <https://skynet.unc.edu/sites/view?id=17>

Old Business:

The Summer Picnic will be held on July 17, 2021 at the Elizabeth River Park and we have secured the reservation for the Osprey Shelter.

Richard Roberts is looking for input for the newsletter, so if you have any stories on how you got involved in astronomy, please compose a paragraph and send it over to Rich Roberts at editor at backbayastro dot org.

George Reynolds was given a box of T-Shirts from Chuck Jagow that have been unclaimed but paid for. Also, there are a few extra that are up for sale.

New Business:

Jeff Goldstein announced that He and 68 other professors at TCC met with the academic president about returning to face-to-face instruction. They want to resume normal teaching in September 2021, so we may be back to normal meetings at that time.

Observing Reports:

Chuck Jagow reported that he was able to see Mars through his new Pentax 5 and 7mm eyepieces this morning. It was very cold but very clear.

Eddie Parris reported he was out until 3:30 this morning. A lot of galaxies, Messier 105 and the Siamese twins were out. It was an extremely clear morning.

Tom Flatley reported that he is having issues with his PST solar scope. Seems the viewfinder is black. He asked about a possible fix for this problem these scopes seem to develop. Chuck suggested going into the Groups.IO site and posting the problem on it. Chuck had repaired a scope like this some time ago and the small filter was around \$175 through Meade.

Program:

Richard Roberts gave a presentation on the strange behavior of the star Betelgeuse.

Meeting adjourned at 9:30 PM.

