

19:05 - meeting started (Randy Hemann)

Meeting Attendees

36 present: Jeff Newland, Waldemar Gies, Ron Purdue, Josef Chlachula, Jay McLaren, John Attewell, Jerome Taubel, Kelly Peterson, Leslie Redinger, Rick Murray, Dustin Ebert, Karl Shidler, Noel Taylor, Ben Gorman, Bob Fealey, Jack Wiltsie, John Martin, Mike Carlin, Mike Quirk, Ben Joslin, Luka Bajzer, Nick (Cindy) Wiest, Michael Currie, Dean M. Johnson, Jessy Hofbauer, Chris Gawarecki, Julie Gawarecki, Joe Gawarecki, Roger Southwick, Bill Davidson, Rick Flynn, Robert Ayerhart, Jonathan Kyle, Earle Kyle, Randy Hemann, and Brandon Wyman.

Treasurer's Report

- Four members renewed or joined (YTD=23).
- Income: dues \$80, donations \$100, 2018 calendars \$15, Amazon Smile \$28.76, Starblast reimbursement \$4.91. Total \$228.67.
- Expenses: 5 x telescope phone adapters \$99.95.
- Balance \$5552.36.
- Two calendars left, Randy said \$12.

Observing Notes

- John Attewell observed 2 more Messier objects as of 3 weeks ago. Dean asked which ones, John said M42 and M43. John also got a good start on M79, which he said is a tough one, as Rochester is to the south of him, and the clouds closed in, so he will have to try some other night. John also had a sad story about leaving his binoculars on top of his car at a gas station on the way to Kitt Peak, distracted by some state trooper pointing about the largest truck in the United States, hauling some kind of mining equipment. He drove back to look for them, did not find them, but on the plus side he now has some Kitt Peak binoculars.
- Dean has been watching the interplay of the Moon, Jupiter, and Saturn. This morning it was Antares, Jupiter, Mars, and Saturn, in the east, west of the Moon. It was just naked eye observation, but a good 5 minutes of entertainment.
- Jeff Newland and Bob Fealey were out at Keller. They looked at a few Messier objects, 20 or so. A few open star clusters that Bob had not seen before.
- Josef saw Mercury yesterday, an easy target in binoculars. He also tried to find a satellite that a New Zealand company launched. The predicted maximum was around 4. It was going south to north. He did not quite see the satellite in binoculars, as it was moving too fast, but he was able to see a flash. It is shaped like a mirror ball.
- Luka was down in Florida over Presidents' Day. Out to the west one night, he saw a green flash. He was able to get some pictures, of the sun, where you can see a little purple on top as well. Dean said that he has only seen the green flash one time, March 8th, 2003, when an eclipse was happening, it was very cold. The reason for the green flash is due to the refraction of light through the atmosphere. You have to have a very clear view of the horizon, easiest over open water.

News

- January minutes posted, look in the forum.
- After the treasurer's report, Julie mentioned that there are telescope reservations going out for the next 8 months. We may need to think about getting another telescope. Randy was thinking maybe something different, but Julie said that the library would probably prefer something the same. Randy said he would be up for that, that would exceed \$150. Dean made a motion to purchase another telescope, ??? second. Julie said that she could part it out to an itemized list that can be brought to the next meeting. Randy made a motion to table the proposal, Jay seconded, all ayes to table the discussion.
- Orion SteadyPix Quick SmartPhone Telescope Photo Adapter. Randy mentioned that we have some of these to lend out. Jay asked about what size it would fit, Randy confirmed they would work with 2-inch and 1-1/4-inch.
- Julie pointed out that the NCRAL conference money was settled, \$1400. It will be reflected on the next treasurer's/financial report.
- Randy mentioned that the Messier Marathon is coming up this weekend. This is an attempt by amateur astronomers to see all 110 Messier objects, but it is nearly impossible to see all 110. The optimal latitude to be at is between 23 and 25. The club has gotten pretty close, Dean said that our record is 105, but apparently some cheating on a few (used GoTo telescope). Dean said that 75 is the non-GoTo record. Saturday is probably the best night to try this. Randy said that we should post about it on the forum. Dean will call Eagle Bluff. Randy recommended to set our expectations low, it could end up cloudy, check the forum for updates. Overdressing cannot be stressed enough, but there will be some heated campers. Julie said the forecast is for 26 degrees with a west wind of 3 to 5 MPH. About 6 to 8 people plan on going, Randy was optimistic that 20 people are going to show up.
- Josef gave a report from the outreach group. We do a monthly outreach, started September 12th, 2016, at Peace Plaza. Josef did a search for a place to warm up and found that at 125LIVE, but, there is a but with that. The plan is to do these on Fridays when people have more time, after sunset, to look at the moon and some planets. There is a NASA website where they render the moon for every hour, a nice resource for moon observing: <https://svs.gsfc.nasa.gov/4604>. He shared some pictures from the last event, December 2017, it was really cold, too much light. Josef talked to Dustin, the next event, March 23rd, will be tried at Salem Glen Winery, a dark place, 8 to 10 PM. The planning group will have a meeting this coming Thursday at 6:30 PM at Collider. In the summer, Josef thinks we will probably go back to Watson Soccer field, a reasonably dark place in the city. We have learned that the general public has interest in astronomy. People are coming to the events. John is working on a prototype website that will be shown at an upcoming meeting. Jeff Newland said that we need to make sure that Facebook and our website calendar have the correct information, the last time he looked the club website still had 125LIVE. We need to make sure we have the correct place and time, as he has seen the time be wrong as well. Randy had Dustin, proprietor of Salem Glen Winery, introduce himself and tell everyone about the place and the events.
- Earl Kyle pointed out that he is the local NASA solar system ambassador. He has some recently acquired materials to share for outreach events/activities. It is stuff like calendars, activities for young people, big fold out maps, photographs of the planets, websites that were recently developed. He will e-mail it to Randy.
- Dean had some flyers for the Nebraska Star Party to share.
- Randy mentioned upcoming dates and times for the upcoming community education events at the planetarium with Paul Larson at the Mayo High School.

- Ben Gorp from the Commonweal Theater (<https://www.commonwealtheatre.org/>) down in Lanesboro. They are going to be presenting a play that may interest us. It is about Henrietta Lebitz. Laura Gunderson play called "Silent Sky" that opens in early April and runs into June. It is a story based on the life and work of Henrietta Lebitz, at once intersecting astronomy and women's rights and suffrage, and her own personal challenges. Her work on Cepheid variables and standard candles allowed us to determine if there was just one galaxy, or if the universe was much bigger than that. He brought a stack of \$5 off coupons for anyone interested in seeing it. There was some discussion about sidewalk astronomy, observing the moon, possibly some solar observing. The show is 2 hours long, starting at 7:30 and going to about 9:30 PM. Adrian Sweeney is the contact to arrange such observing activities.
- Randy indicated that the outdoor meeting at his place next month might slide a date or so, depending on observing conditions.
- The May meeting might have an outside presenter.
- NCRAL regional meeting is coming up. Rooms for reservations are being held until the 15th.
- ALCON is in the Twin Cities this year. They just put out a welcome video, Randy will put the link up in the forum. Jay will be presenting. This is being put on by the Minnesota Astronomical Society.

RAC Meetings/Calendar

- March 16/17 Dark Sky Weekend / Messier Marathon
- March 22 Mayo Planetarium - Cosmic Origins
- March 23 Public Sky Observing at Salem Glen Winery.
- March 24 Earth Hour (<https://www.earthhour.org>)
- March 29 Mayo Planetarium - Center of the Milky Way
- April 5 - June 23 "Silent Sky" - Commonweal Theater, Lanesboro.
- April 10 RAC meeting - Outdoor meeting
- April 13/14 Dark Sky Weekend
- April 20/21 Dark Sky Weekend
- April 22 Lyrid meteor shower
- April 21 National Astronomy Day
- May 8 RAC meeting - presentation tbd
- June 12 RAC meeting - Jack Wiltsie: Part II: Experiments Done During the Great Solar Eclipse of 2017.

Other News/Notes/Announcements

- Texas Star Party May 6th-13th.
- Nebraska Star Party August 5th-10th.
- Okie-Tex Star Party October 6th-14th.
- Enchanted Star Party October 16th-20th.

Featured Presentation

"Great Experiments During Past Total Solar Eclipses" - Jack Wiltsie

- One of the original club members. Retired in 1966. Took three astronomy classes at RCTC. Formed the club in 1997.

- Another topic with nothing to do with solar eclipses. Hedy Lamarr and George Antheil, "Spread Spectrum Frequency Hopping", 1942, patent #2,292,387. "Frequency Hopper" play in 2008.

20:45 – meeting adjourned.

Submitted by Brandon Wyman - Rochester Astronomy Club secretary