

19:12 - meeting started (Randy Hemann)

Meeting Attendees

22 present: Josef Chlachula, Jeff Newland, Bob Fealey, David Meyer, Ron Purdue, Waldemar Gies, Ben Joslin, Larry Mascotti, Parker Kunkle, Luka Bajzer, John Martin, Robert Ayerhart, Bill Davidson, Jay McLaren, Noel Taylor, Jordan Huisman, John Attewell, Julie Gawarecki, Jack Wiltsie, Mike Quirk, Randy Hemann, and Brandon Wyman.

Treasurer's Report

- 35 paid members.
- Calendars gone.
- \$1400 is our share from NCRAL 2017. Julie will be closing the account and transferring the funds to the regular checking account.
- New balance: \$7016.11

Observing Notes

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News

- No update on the library telescope. Work on it continues.
- Josef gave an outreach report. Last month's event was not looking good on account of the weather. Josef could not attend, but John Martin and Jeff Newland were there. People did show up, two families, six people. The next monthly group meeting for outreach planning is this Thursday, May 10 at 6:30 PM at Collider. The next outreach event is planned for next Friday, 9:30 to 11:30 PM. Bob asked if there was a designated presentation. Josef indicated that it is not so easy to do one at the soccer field. Mike suggested that it could be easier if someone has an RV. John Martin was thinking that an Easy-up would maybe work. Josef pointed out that there is a building for soccer players, a kind of shed without walls, which maybe could be used to set up something. A possible presentation, billboards, posters, or something else can be discussed at our next outreach group meeting.
- Randy shared some pictures from a late Children's Museum request to do an Astronomy Day presentation, Saturday April 21st. He tried to pull off something with kids he did not know. An NSN video on how to make comets out of dry ice. He got some junior lab coats, safety glasses, etc. There was a talk on where comets come from. Lynn was also there. Kids under 5 made asteroids out of playdough. The older kids got to make comets. Randy bought 10 pounds of dry ice from a local fire extinguisher outlet on 4th Ave, \$1.60/lb. Julie mentioned that one can also get dry ice from Hy-Vee. Some dirt is thrown in, some window cleaner for ammonia, syrup for hydrocarbons, water, crushed up dry ice, pour that in (the exciting part). The mixture is pressed hard, then an old lamp is used to light it up to see steam coming out, while held in some foil. Instructions were sent home with parents to vent the ziploc bag, but eventually the comets will turn to mush. There were 25 to 30 kids making asteroids, 3 to 4 tables of 5 making comets. Randy said 10 pounds

of dry ice made 15 to 20 comets that were about softball size. It was a great cloudy day activity.

- “Silent Sky” play at Commonweal Theatre. Larry and Robert made it. Randy, Lynn, Dean, and Barb all went together. Jay did not make it yet. It starts out a little slow, the second part is dynamic. Randy and the group talked to the actors, they are really excited to do the play, some sat down with someone from Eagle Bluff to get pronunciations right. The play runs through June. The science is at a common level with a love story thrown in. Larry said the science was communicated well.
- NCRAL 2018 (<https://www.doorastronomy.org/ncral-2018>) was in Door County, Wisconsin last weekend. They pulled off a nice program. Pictures from Randy, John Attewell, and Josef were shared. One event was held at a site 9-½ miles out of town, there was a good horizon despite the trees seen in the picture, only losing about 2 degrees of the horizon. The observatory in the picture is co-funded by the county and the board of education. Another picture had a spiral galaxy solar panel sculpture thing. A 50 MPH wind got snow in the telescope, so they could not use it during the conference. UNIVERSAL ASTRONOMICS binocular parallelogram, which Jeff mentioned went out of business, but Randy said another company took over and you can get a solid one from them. There is an operator room for remote control of the telescope. Newport State Park, one of two in the midwest with a dark sky designation. The park ranger was one of the speakers, they talked about how the park was certified. Randy had a picture of a sky watching bench where you lay back on some grass to look out at the stars, a clever idea. Randy also had pictures of the binocular mounts and a human gnomon. John said there is a total of 20 acres with only 5 acres used. Bob said there were plans for telescope pads. The dark sky was measured Friday night, 21 points, one could see 6 magnitude stars. Randy thought we should get some of those meters. Josef said that he was able to observe M42 easily in binoculars. Josef also had a fancy star bottle, wine, which he thought Dustin (Salem Glen Winery) should get. Josef also mentioned a welcome for the NCRAL president, a Yerkes transition presentation, braille and raised images, pictures to sound, showed a RAC group photo, and some northern lights photos (colors in the photos were not seen with the naked eye). Jay asked what kind of public outreach schedule they have, Randy did not know the schedule, however Bob said the ranger has an event once a month. A story about the warm asphalt was also shared. The ranger lays down on it, can hear cars coming, but if falls asleep asked that visitors please avoid the speed bump with the brown hair.
- Upcoming activities were discussed. Jay has renamed his presentation he plans on doing at the next club meeting and at ALCON. Jack mentioned the science of Hedy Lamarr.
- John sent some request from Eagle Bluff to Randy about doing something around June 20th for an event June 20th, 21st, and 22nd, just need to do one night.
- John Martin went over the website redesign proposal. An anonymous survey will be sent out when the mailing list is working again. It will continue to use the existing Lunar Pages, but with WordPress 4.9.5. Preview at <http://site2.rochesterskies.org>.
 - Goals: unique URLs, central hub for club and members, help with public outreach events.
 - Ideas on keeping it alive: small team to help manage the site (not just one person), collaboration/peer review, security, automated backups (daily, weekly, web team access to backups).
 - Functional goals: event sign-ups, event registration, articles, photos, help, instructions, collaboration, organization.
 - Each member can have there own blog, there own URL.
 - Phase 1 -- developed prototype, published, seek feedback.
 - Phase 2 -- incorporate feedback, new site becomes primary, current site becomes backup, forum remains the same, open blogs to members.

- Phase 3 -- current page made read-only, migrate/replace forum (Simple Machine Forum to bbPress?), keep adding functionality. What is needed: critiques/feedback/suggestions, new header (stock photo right now), content/activity (for search engines to find), useful & relevant content, and photos.
- Randy to e-mail a link out regarding newsletters John mentioned.

RAC Meetings/Calendar

- May 11/12 Dark Sky Weekend
- May 17 Rochester at Night, May Planetarium, 6:30 - 8 PM.
- May 18/19 Dark Sky Weekend
- June 8/9 Dark Sky Weekend
- June 12 RAC meeting - Jay McLaren: The EYE
- June 15/6 Dark Sky Weekend
- July 10 RAC meeting - Jack Wiltsie: Part II: Experiments Done During the Great Solar Eclipse of 2017.
- July 11-14 ALCON in Minneapolis

Other News/Notes/Announcements

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

Featured Presentation

“What’s Up with the new Bell Museum and planetarium?” - Peter Kunkle

- Larry Mascotti gave an introductory presentation for Peter Kunkle, famous for pointing out that the astrological signs were out of whack.
- Bell Museum of Natural History & Whitney and Elizabeth MacMillan Planetarium.
- Some history on the natural history museum and the old planetarium torn down in 2003.
- Opening July 13 - 15, 2018.
- Cleveland and Larpenteur Avenue.
- Big Sundial.
- Planetarium in the middle of the building. 16 meter dome, 120 seats, tow 4K laser phosphor projectors. Good color resolution. The largest planetarium between Chicago and the west coast.
- Flying around the heart, one of the programs pretty close to being done. Not a movie (interactive).
- Nervous System - another program, not sure on the status.
- The building incorporates:
 - Minnesota iron,
 - specially treated northern Minnesota white pine, and
 - bird friendly glass.
- There is an observing deck with telescopes.
- Dioramas from the previous museum.
- Second floor will be the permanent exhibit.
- On time and under budget.
- sassyastronomer@gmail.com

- How to help:
 - support Paul Larson and the Mayo High School planetarium
 - Become a member of the Bell Museum
 - Newsletter
 - Name a seat in the planetarium
- Jay asked about regular planetarium shows. They will primarily be 9 to 5, seven days a week. There are also some ideas/plans on having it open Monday evenings. Reserve seats via the website.
- Larry asked how long it has been since the old Bell Museum was around. The old one closed in 2002, torn down in 2003.

21:02 – meeting adjourned.

Submitted by Brandon Wyman - Rochester Astronomy Club secretary