West Jersey Astronomical Society

Meeting Minutes for: May 4, 2018

Web Address: http://wasociety.us
Location: Virtua Moorestown
Members in attendance: 15
Officers present: 3
Pres: Roger Cowley
Vice Pres.: Steve Kutoroff
Sec.: Paul Bender

Our president **Roger C** opened the meeting at 7:44 PM. 4 members had been at the spring NEAF in Suffern, NY. All had left with more knowledge about equipment they were interested in, after both talking with vendor experts, and picking up technical specs; and some left with new equipment.

The next scheduled Public Star Watch will be May 12 at Batsto and a week later on May 19, a Member Star Watch is scheduled at Atsion (**Ray P** is organizing it while **Bernie H** is recovering). (Post meeting note: on May 8, **Dan M** called for a session at Atsion and about 10 members had a great time with observing and imaging.)

Joe S: Mars is currently -0.5 mag ands it will brighten significantly, to -2.8, by opposition at the end of July. Last week only a small sunspot group was sighted near sun's limb, **Steve K** put today's solar web image on screen, it showed 2 close spots, one darker than the second.

SHOW-AND-TELL: **Dave N** brought in Book by **Wolfgang Steineke**, 580 pgs, entitled "Observing and Cataloging Nebulae and Star Clusters," lots of charts, comprehensive but small print. Adds historical perspective on the deep sky object catalogues. Emulsions of the older photos were blue sensitive. Cambridge Univ Press 2010. Steineke used the bulk of this effort toward achieving his PhD. **Dave** also brought in the book "The Night Sky Observers Guide Vol 4 (Vol 3 only southern objects); The Glories of the Milky Way," both bright and dark nebulae, open and globular clusters, encyclopedic. **Ken** asked what was purpose in listing dark nebula, **Dave** explained that it highlights the contrast between the bright background and the dark opacity. **EE Barnard** discovered most of these dark ones photographically in the 1880's.

Joe S brought in his large (15x56), green Swarovski binocs. True beauties, but very expensive. Also got a dedicated bracket that snaps on for use on a carbon fiber monopod to steady it. **Joe** had it out to the pines and saw many galaxies with them. **Joe** also mentioned that he just got a 130mm Stellarvue refractor to improve the resolution of his observing.

Ken W. went on camping group and brought his new scope, a Celestron 8"SCT Nexstar go-to, to camp Haluwasa, near Hammonton, NJ. Go-to helped him find a

bunch of Messier objects quickly.

Al M brought a Crayford focuser by Moonlite to Show-and-Tell. Even with a DSLR in it, the focus is reported to be slip-free.
Arnie R bought a full frame Canon DSLR camera but left it home since he wasn't aware of the S-and-T theme.

Paul B brought in a Vixen 8x40, 8.2 degree field binocs he purchased at NEAF for $20 and was very satisfied with both quality and price. He also brought in technical specs on Starlight Express and ASI-ZWO imaging/guide cameras, as well as a Daystar Solar catalog he acquired from vendors at NEAF.

Roger C brought in a diffraction grating and compared green and red laser pointers passing through them, which produced a diffraction grid pattern with the green laser showing 4 diffraction grids in each direction, substantially more than the weaker red laser.

A friend of **Roger**'s was visiting (**Joe**, who had attended meetings many years ago). He has an 8" reflector, is a retired Math professor from Rutgers and has estimated the AU and the radius of the earth using very minimal equipment. He showed us a film photo taken years ago in Honolulu during a lunar eclipse: the photo showed Jupiter, Mars, Venus, the Moon and Mercury but there were many dust specks on it. He was interested in having it scanned again with modern equipment and digital processing to remove most of the specks.

Question was asked where the name "Pink Moon" originally came from; **Steve K** found it was named by American Indian tribes after the flower, creeping phlox, a.k.a., moss pink (according to several sources). A NASA site located by **Steve K** specified that coloration of the moon's surface is dominated by variations in the iron and titanium oxide content.

Roger C called meeting to an end at 9:26 PM.

Submitted by Sec. **Paul Bender** on May 14, 2018.