

West Jersey Astronomical Society

Meeting Minutes for: May 18, 2018

Web Address: <http://wasociety.us>

Location: Virtua Moorestown

Members in attendance: 18

Officers present: 4

Pres: Roger Cowley

Vice Pres.: Steve Kutoroff

Sec.: Paul Bender

Treas.: Wade Evans

Roger C opened the meeting at ca 7:45PM.

Bernie K, who was in great voice, showed pic of the 12" Dob emailed to him by **Jim M** in Fla. **Jimmy** is offering it for the bargain price of \$300; f/7.6 Newtonian, pros: **Bernie K** finished the mirror, and **Jimmy** will deliver it in September; however, due to long focal length, it requires a stepladder for viewing.

Joe S mentioned the Antares rocket launch from the NASA Wallops Flight Facility, and the upcoming multiple ISS passes for the next week, **Steve K** put the schedule on screen.

One member asked a rhetorical question about the video we all witnessed of the Falcon heavy rocket launching **Elon Musk's** red Tesla roadster, namely, if the car radio was on, would it be audible on its trip to Mars? Answer: no air in space so there can be no sound.

Pete, who asked several questions, was a guest of **Val K**; his work has involved space both at Lockheed and with the Air Force.

Roger asked for recent observations or pictures, but noted the poor observing conditions of late (several star sessions had to be called off). **Joe S** mentioned the informal combination imaging and observing session at Atsion called last Tue PM 5/8 by **Dan M** with about 10 in attendance. **Dan M**, **Jim F** and **Howard S** were imaging deep sky objects, the rest were focusing on Jupiter, Venus etc. Many saw the Jovian moon Io egressing from Jupiter's disc (a first for **Paul B**). About a day earlier, **Joe S** was observing with his new Stellarvue 5" apo refractor and saw Io as a clear disc and it's shadow transit Jupiter. **Joe** also saw Jupiter's GRS, now truly a red color. **Steve K** displayed a corresponding WinJUPOS-generated synthetic image on screen (from Joe's web site, SJAstro.org) compared to an actual photo taken at the same time by an observer in the Dominican Republic (via ALPO Japan).

Dave N looked at the Sun in H-alpha and saw one small prominence, but no sunspots; **Steve** put up SDO HMI current picture on screen (linked from the Sun icon on the WAS home page); showed only a white spot labeled 2709.

Asteroid viewing: (4) Vesta is about magnitude 6 now and will be visible with unaided eyes in mid-June around opposition. **Steve** put pictures of the ellipsoidal Vesta on screen, compared to (1) Ceres, which is nearly spherical.

Questions (**Bernie K** and **Alan D**): How many moons can you see transit Jupiter now? Ans: 3, Callisto's orbit is far enough from Jupiter that it does not cross Jupiter's disc at the current apparent inclination as viewed from earth. Is Jupiter currently in prograde (direct) or retrograde motion? **Roger** (he is photographically documenting the planets' motions) answered that it is now in retrograde motion until ca 10th of July (moving close to the Zenubin's in Libra).

Bernie K.: Mars is approaching opposition (July 27) and will reach 24.3 arc seconds diameter. Tip for observing Mars' moons: block the bright planet with an occulting bar to spot faint Deimos and Phobos (ca magnitude 11 at Mars' opposition). They were discovered by Asaph Hall with the USNO's 26-inch Alvan Clark refractor in 1877.

Doogie Howser's "Genius Junior" TV program mentioned by **Alan D** was put on screen at **Gary W's** request to hear these youngsters demonstrate an amazing knowledge of astronomy.

Roger closed meeting at 9:19PM.

Submitted by Sec. **Paul Bender** on June 1, 2018.