

West Jersey Astronomical Society

Meeting Minutes for August 15, 2019

Location: Virtua Moorestown

Attendees: 8

Officers Present...

President: Steve Kutoroff

Informal Meeting

Steve calls the meeting to order at 7:55 pm.

Here again at the Virtua center in Moorestown. Some small talk before the meeting is called to order as people come in.

Wade has the second Friday of the month set up w/Virtua for informal meetings next year (2020). Also, the Barnegat Road site is set up, but not yet for unlimited use, more to follow. First use for members is scheduled on Thursday night August 29th. Also, Friday August 30th is the Rancocas Nature Center event. Words from Joe as to what to expect when we get there followed by illustration and verbal directions of how to get there. A first-time attendee, Bill from Leisuretowne, NJ, is here. Steve mentions a smartphone app that uses three unique words to pinpoint your location anywhere on the globe when you have an emergency.

Joe reviews his Mercury elongation observing history. A photo of Mercury during the current elongation is on screen. The upcoming transit of Mercury across the sun on November 11 was reviewed. We touched on DSLR camera clocks and the need to check them periodically, so the resultant timestamp has some value. Then a question from Roger about the last Mercury transit and the circumstances. Discussion moves to Venus shown in SOHO image at Spaceweather.com as it is near the sun around superior conjunction. Discussed meaning of elongation with regard to the interior planets (Mercury and Venus) and their variation in brightness through the orbital cycle. Joe mentioned some "UFOs" seen crossing the moon in a scope on Sunday night, August 11. Can't be sure, but they were probably escaped festive balloons. Now to recent sharp Moon images from Dave, which sparked considerable discussion about them.

Alan discussed whether Jupiter and Uranus would have been visible to the Apollo 11 astronauts from their landing site. Illustration on screen with the Virtual Moon Atlas program. Back to Joe and his new 88mm Kowa apo spotting scope with dual-speed focus, mounted on a special ball head that provides gimbal-like alt-azimuth movement (similar to a Dob), sitting on a substantial carbon fiber tripod. The scope also has an adapter for conventional 1.25" eyepieces.

Alan mentioned a few Perseid meteors he saw from Philadelphia last weekend. Joe saw a dozen meteors during a one-and-a-half-hour moonless span at Atsion on Sunday morning, August 11, nine of which were Perseids. Finally, Alan commented on Lane Davis' challenge, observing the magnitude 15+ galaxy IC-1296 near M57.

Steve adjourns the meeting at 9:31 pm.