West Jersey Astronomical Society

Meeting Minutes for: September 21, 2018

Web Address: http://wasociety.us

Location: Virtua Moorestown

Members in attendance: 11

Visitors: 0

Officers present:

Pres.: Roger Cowley

Vice Pres.: Steve Kutoroff

Sec.: Paul Bender

Informal Meeting

7:48 PM

Since **Steve K's** computer hookup was not taking instructions from his Bluetooth keyboard, so **Dave N** offered to use his computer to operate the projector and input USB sticks. **Steve** offered two 105mm scope rings and a laser dispersion device to club members.

Several question re donations in memory of **Bernie K** were asked; **Roger** responded that **Wade** was not present and he would be consulted to define procedure and instructions for the group.

Roger officially opened the meeting at 7:51PM.

Discussed NJAA open house and flea market Sept 29th, **Dave** estimated it is about a 2hr drive to get to the NJAA location at Voorhees State Park, High Bridge, NJ.

Roger asked if anyone wanted to report recent star gazing. **Joe S** reported his observations of Mars that he recently sent to the WAS Google e-group; Mars was then about 17.5 arc sec diameter, and south polar cap is now smaller, but still distinct. Syrtis Major and Hellas were visible.

Ray P was at the recent Batsto Public Star Watch and saw Neptune as a blue disc with his 11-inch SCT.

Joe S described the advantages of his new Stellarvue Optimus 100/110 deg eyepieces; at low power, not just a wide field, but a dramatic, large and well magnified apparent view. At high power, good sharpness from edge to edge and the wide field provides longer viewing period between movements with an undriven mount. Did not perceive the head movement supposedly required to see the entire field.

Questions arose as to the weather forecasts on web based Clear Outside vs. the Clear Sky Chart (formerly the Clear Sky Clock, both "csc" for short).

9-1/2" Clark refractor originally given by Dave Garroway to **Howard S** son's college in Clark Summit, Pa. **Dave N** recounted that the Naval observatory had a large 26" Clark refractor, with which the moons of Mars were discovered in 1877.

Al M showed videos of his recent visit to the Corning Museum; on display was a failed 200" honeycombed glass blank for the Palomar Observatory mirror, and D Stookey's experiments with crystalline glass. Others recalled their visits to the Corning Museum.

Roger had **Dave** put his orbital study of Vesta onscreen. He tracked Vesta for 250 days, and plotted ecliptic long vs Julian day. **Roger** concluded it followed an orbit similar to the planets and was not greatly perturbed by its planetary neighbors. The Sun's gravity is the dominant force rather than its neighbors. It's not the weight of the planet but the sun's mass that determines its orbit. (4) Vesta is the brightest asteroid.

Howard S used his ZWO 120mm camera on his 8" HD edge scope with 2x Barlow to capture Mars on Aug 16 using a 30 sec video frame strip and AutoStakkert program. Nice image projected showing post-storm features. Also imaged Saturn under similar conditions. Very nice image, saw good ring separation and nice planetary cloud bands! **Paul** remarked it would be even more beautiful in color, but **Dave** noted that the use of filters would require more equipment and take ca 40k frames. Discussion of importance of scope location (for good seeing) on definition of planetary imaging.

Paul noted this week's recent S&T news reported that the absence of sun spots seems to be coming to an end; while **Dave N** showed us an image of several spots 2 weeks ago. **Roger** and **Dave** both reported that since then, activity is back to zero. **Dave** put onscreen a NASA video from "ScienceCast YouTube" 2019-202?: showing that even in a sunspot minimum you can get coronal holes that give rise to solar wind and potentially auroras.

Pres **Roger** called meeting to a close at 9:29PM.

Submitted by Sec **Paul Bender** on Sep 22, 2018.