

Cape Cod Astronomical Society

Minutes of the meeting March 6, 2014

Attendance total: 12

The meeting was held at the D-Y High School library. Treasurer Peter Kurtz introduced the speaker for the evening, Observatory Director Joel Burnett. Joel opened with a short slide presentation of his quest to photograph the aurora in Greenland, and then transitioned to the annual "State of the Observatory".

Joel gave a brief history of the Werner Schmidt Observatory. Conceived in 1990 and dedicated April 30, 2004, the Observatory resides on the grounds of D-Y High School. Instruments at the observatory include: a 16 inch Meade LX200 in the dome, 14 and 18 inch Dobsonians, Solar Max II and Lunt LS100t solar scopes, a Losmandy mounted Ritchey-Cretien dedicated to astrophotography, and Mallincam Xtreme color camera.

An important component of the observatory is outreach. Joel discussed various examples: contact with other observatories, star parties, local schools, girl scouts, and NEED (National Environmental Education Development) Academy.

Joel also discussed Observatory scientific study, including occultations, solar observations, and recording of the recent supernova.

Joel then transitioned into a presentation of "What is a Star". Defining components include brightness/magnitude, color and luminosity. Some measurements of interest include distance calculation, blackbody radiation, spectra, and mass. Other discussion points in the presentation included how a star generates energy (e.g., red giant, red dwarf), and the definition of nova, supernova and variable stars.

Joel concluded with upcoming Observatory events: 3/7 lunar graze; 3/8 first quarter moon star party; 3/13 HS showcase; and 3/17 Astronomy Club of Berkley School of Music.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:15.

Respectively submitted for Secretary Charles Burke,
Gus Romano