

Cape Cod Astronomical Society

Minutes of the June 6, 2013, meeting

Attendance: Total: 33 Members: 28 Guests: 5

President Mike Hunter opened the meeting at 7:42 P.M. and welcomed members and guests. Mike informed members that membership dues should be sent in or brought to the next meeting. Mike next brought everyone up to date regarding upcoming speakers for our monthly meetings. Next month, on July 11, 2013, Dr. Larry Marschall will give a presentation entitled '**Wrong Way Planets and Other Strange Solar Systems**'.

The speaker for the evening was Dr. Hans Moritz Günther, a Post-Doctoral Researcher at the Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics. See link for more information <http://www.cfa.harvard.edu/> He received his PhD in Physics from the Hamburger Sternwarte (Hamburg Observatory) located at the University of Hamburg in northern Germany.

The presentation was entitled “**Star and Planet Formation and How We Found Out What We Know Today**”. Dr. Günther is an observational astronomer and concentrated his efforts on the formation of stars. He described the stellar life cycle from the birth of stars from gas clouds to their eventual, often spectacular death. Star formation can be observed relatively close to home in the Orion Nebula. (M42). The nebula is approximately 1,500 light years from Earth. It is often called a stellar nursery as it is the birthplace of thousands of new stars. The material to form these new stars consists of the remnants of materials shed into space during the death of earlier stars. When a sufficient quantity of dust and other materials are present, gravity takes over and starts to condense the materials. As gravity works, the materials heat up over a period of a few thousand years. This stage has proto stars forming and they eventually are surrounded by disks made of cool dust. These disks can be the size of our solar system. The formation of stars is examined by monitoring light curves, and their spectra. Scientists have been aided by organizations such as the American Association of Variable Stars Observers in gathering data.

Observatory Report

Observatory director Joel Burnett showed a video of recent events captured by the observatory staff. He also brought us up to date regarding upcoming events.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:40 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Charles Burke