

West Jersey Astronomical Society

Meeting Minutes for: February 2, 2018

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

Location: Virtua Moorestown

Members in attendance 16

Officers present...

Pres.: Roger Cowley

VPres: Steve Kuturoff

Treasurer: Wade Evans

Sec.: Paul Bender

Roger called meeting to order at 7:55PM.

He announced the new "**Member Star Watches**" list for 2018 at **Atsion Field**, which **Bernie Hosko** provided and had Joe S. place on the wasociety website accessible as a hyperlink on the Home Page as well as the bottom of the 2018 Public Star Watch Schedule. Once/month beginning with this Feb 10th. Bud put the MSW list on the screen from the website. The dates are a week away from the Public SWs, and while the public is invited to these Member SWs, as well as the Public SWs, the focus for this new list is on greater opportunity for member astronomy and astrophotography.

The 2018 Winter Star Party will be on Feb 11th in Chiefland, Fla, not in the Keys.

Roger is scheduling the "show and tell" night for equipment after the April 21/22 NEAF meeting.

Wade E. gave the **Treasurer's Report** and added that while we budgeted the year for 40 members, we actually had an increase to 47. Slowly (yr by yr) we are building our treasury. So far, member online purchase of shirts and caps has been weak.

Wade continued with **Progress on Coyle Field** discussions. While the use of the air field and helicopter strip are now strictly prohibited, and are a training grounds, the state police has offered us access to a smaller area on the north side of Rt72 from the air field which must be restricted to our member use only, and will not be for public use. While it is expected that members can camp there, no: fires, open flame, or alcohol will be permitted. In 2 months Wade expects to receive the paperwork. It is expected to be ca a 3-5 yr lease deal. From our home page, clicking on "directions" will open the section on Coyle Field, then clicking on "satellite view of the field" will show a photo of its location (it's the small rectangle north of Coyle Field on Rt 72). Bud accessed the aerial photo. At C-F, a "Smokey the Bear sign (protect our forests)" is visible on south side of Rt72 and the gate for our new area is about 2 car lengths further east on the opposite (north) side of the Rd. We will have the combination of the lock on the gate to this smaller area. A road of compacted asphalt pieces leads to a small back area asphalt rectangle 100'x200') to which we will have 24/7 access. Wade will request a trial viewing for members at the end of March (when it is warmer). It is about 350 ft off 72, and surrounded by Scrub pine, but no maintenance is required. 1052 NJ20, Chatsworth NJ, 08019.

Roger led the membership in giving Wade a hand of applause in thanks for his significant efforts toward this progress.

Roger mentioned the variable star Mira, discussed at the last meeting, has been at mag 3 for last 30 days, rather than its typical waning from that max intensity. Joe had Bud put up his shot of Cetus with Mira. AAVSO sightings over last month are very close to Roger's finding, all within 3rd mag.

None of our members managed to see the partial lunar eclipse this past week. Joe has been observing Venus, and has seen some lowest-numbered asteroids. (4) Vesta will be in opposition this summer and should be a good target for the unaided eye.

Allen D.: Anomalistic cycle (perigee to perigee). Several members bought calendar/book/ pamphlet of 2018 astronomical information.

Paul related the statement by astrophysicist Dr. Janna Levin from the recent Nova TV program "Black Hole Apocalypse," that measurements of star and gas motion near the event horizon of the super massive black holes (smbh) have permitted calculation of the masses of a number of near galaxies including our Milkyway and M31, providing the surprising result that our smbh is only 1/20 the mass of our sister Andromeda's smbh.

Gary W. reminded members of the acappella science tunes web site he mentioned last session and Bud brought it up to demonstrate it.

Roger concluded meeting at 9:43pm.

Submitted by: Sec. Paul Bender on Feb 5, 2018.