BBAA Minutes (January 2026 Monthly Meeting)

Date: 01/08/2026 @Kempsville Recreation Center

In attendance: Gabriel Dandrade, Kent Blackwell, Will Kiff, John Almater, Disheika Hawkins, Dennis Rowley, Barry Bryant, Bruce Powers, Matt McLaughlin, Jeff Edmondson, Jim Cruise, Eddie Parris, Joseph Brown, Jenny Davis, George Reynolds, Montel Chiles, Bill Rust, Jeff Goldstein, Jeremy Mitchell, Mike Russo, David Fontany, Andrea Fontany, Soham Pattnaik, David Shouldice, Caroline Hendrick, Mark Wilson, Andrew Sammond, Michael Chesson, Bryan Johnson, Geoffrey Runyon, Shawn Loescher, Mitaker Clandenin, Mark OST, Irene Schindler. **On Zoom:** Rich Roberts, Jonathan Scheetz, Kirt Kerr, Audrey Reynolds.

7:30 pm: The BBAA January 2026 meeting was called to order by Jeremy Mitchell.

Coffee and refreshments were sadly not available during this meeting because of the meeting location.

REPORTS:

Secretary's Report (Gabriel Dandrade): 7:36 pm

-Gabriel did the special talk at the last meeting on star hopping. We also got to go over the club elections in November and discuss plans for 2026 for the Back Bay Astronomers.

-Minutes were accepted at 7:37 pm.

ALCOR Report and East Coast Star Party (Bruce Powers): 7:37 pm.

-It's highly rewarding to become a member of the Astronomical League, as you get access to observing programs, Reflector magazine, and astronomy-related news.

-We had several club members receive awards from ALCOR, including Ben Loyola for his Near-Earth asteroids program and Jonathan Scheetz with a globular cluster program completion.

-The East Coast Star Party is coming April 16-19, and the following star party will be held November 5-8. It's automatically deconflicted with the Staunton River Star Party.

VP Report (Jeff Goldstein): 7:43 pm.

Calendar of events for January:

Club Meeting (Jan 8th @7:30 pm).

Cornwatch (Jan 2nd, Jan 9th, Jan 16th, Jan 23rd, Jan 30th @6:00 pm).

Skywatch (Jan 10th @5:00 pm).

Nightwatch (Jan 17th @5:00 pm).

Crestwood Elementary Science Night (Jan 22nd @5:00 pm).

Garden Stars (Jan 27th @7:00 pm).

Astronomy 101 KVRC (Jan 28th @7:00 pm).

Saturday Sun Day (Jan 31st @10:00 am).

Planetarium Shows (still pending approval, but will be happening Friday Jan 16th @7:00 pm and Jan 31st @2:00 pm and 7:00 pm).

Observing Reports: 7:50 pm.

-Kent saw Ganymede ingress across Jupiter, along with Io regressing out from behind Jupiter. He also saw the shadow of Ganymede right next to the Great Red Spot. The next morning, he tried to spot Comet 24P3 Schumasch, and couldn't see it, despite it being a binocular-viewable comet.

-Gabriel tested his new Explore Scientific 24mm 82-degree eyepiece on several bright star clusters, including the Double Cluster.

-Bruce sold his Meade 10-inch LX-200 on Facebook and is now using a Celestron Origin that is considerably lighter than the old telescope.

-Jeff got Jupiter in his 8-inch Celestron and was able to broadcast Jupiter and Europa on the news at 10:00 pm and 11:00 pm.

-David got his 12.5-inch out last night and saw a Jupiter-Io crossing in the morning. It was a beautiful night.

-George and Jeff saw the 3I Atlas comet after Skywatch in December.

Treasurer's Report (Rich Roberts): Rich was busy tonight, so we did not have a treasurer's report.

Old Business: 7:58 pm.

-No real old business tonight.

New Business: 8:08 pm.

-Bruce needed a budget for the East Coast Star Party. We ended up voting to give him a budget of about $800.

Scholarship Committee (Ben Loyola): Was not here tonight.

Nominating Committee (Jeremy Mitchell): Was waived for time concerns.

Special Program: The SeeStar S50's capabilities (Jeff Goldstein): 8:26 pm.

-Tonight's presentation was on star hopping, told by known planetarian Gabriel Dandrade. Gabriel discussed the ins and outs of star hopping, including why it is important, and the benefits it gives you as an astronomer. He discussed tips and tricks that one can use to better learn how to utilize star patterns, items that are essential for star hopping, and some of the many ways one uses it to find fainter celestial targets in the night sky. Jeff discussed its zoom feature, the SeeStar app/website and how it allows you to remotely control the telescope, how to store and stack images using the auto stacker and the built-in AI processing, and how to share them online. He also compared prices and gave tips for what to do with one should you buy it. Given that the raffle prize for Georgie June Scholarship is a SeeStar S50, this meeting will likely help sell some more raffle tickets.

Next meeting is on February 3rd, 2025.

Meeting was adjourned at **9:00 pm.**