

BBAA Minutes (June 2026 Monthly Meeting)

Date: 06/04/2026 @TCC Virginia Beach

In attendance: Gabriel Dandrade, Eddie Parris, Michael Hall, David Fiore, Nick Siewers, Sam Bartholomew, Will Kiff, Chris Ward, Jeff Goldstein, Barry Bryant, Sandy Paxson, Dennis Rowley, Kent Blackwell, Robert Hitt, David Fontanyl, Andrew Fontanyl, Shawn Loescher, Dave Foster, Kelly Foster, Richard Thiemann, Ben Loyola.

On Zoom: Rich Roberts, Roland Downing, Kevin Brooks, Mark Wilson, Joseph Brown, D. McDonald, Jeff Thornton, Runyon*

7:31 pm: The BBAA June 2026 meeting was called to order by Jeremy Mitchell.

Refreshments Committee (George Reynolds): 7:39 pm

Refreshments, including coffee and cookies, are up for grabs in the back of the room. He brought extra in case the meeting runs long like last time.

REPORTS:

VP Report (Jeff Goldstein): 7:35 pm.

Calendar of events for May:

- Club Meeting (TCC Va Beach, June 4th @7:30 pm).
- Cornwatch (Cornland Park, June 5th, 12th, 19nd, and 26th @8:00 pm).
- Skywatch (NW River Park, June 6th @8:00 pm).
- Nightwatch (Chippokes State Park, June 13th @5:00 pm).
- Boardwalk Astronomy (VA Beach Oceanfront, June 23th @6:00 pm).
- Garden Stars (Norfolk Botanical Gardens, June 25th @6:00 pm).
- Saturday Sun Day (Elizabeth River Park, June 27th @10:00 am).

Treasurer's Report (Rich Roberts): 7:38 pm.

-We had a decrease of a little over a thousand dollars, thanks to AL dues coming in last month. Some last ECSP expenses were also cleared last month. Two new members joined, bringing us to 170 total. A light month for the treasury. The scholarships are going to drain a lot of finances next month.

Treasurer's Report was accepted at 7:40 pm.

Secretary's Report (Gabriel Dandrade): 7:40 pm

-Last meeting ended up having no special program, since there were so many items of new business that we ended up delaying it to the June meeting. Otherwise a pretty standard meeting.

Minutes were accepted at 7:41 pm.

Scholarship Committee (Ben Loyola): 7:41 pm

Waiting on our recipient to respond. One of them arrived at the meeting tonight, to accept their scholarship award. The other will be arriving later next month.

ALCOR Report and East Coast Star Party (Bruce Powers): 7:42 pm, Bruce was not here, Jeremy summarized it.

-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. You automatically become a member when you join the club. There's always something to do for you even if you're not sure where to start.

-Fall ECSP dates are in November, during the first weekend of the month.

Observing Reports: 7:43 pm.

-Kent talked about globular cluster season, and how special it is to observe them in any telescope. He talked about NGC 5053, a very challenging globular near M53. Even in the 25-inch from VA Beach, he could not see it.

Old Business: 7:48 pm.

-The website needs to be addressed still, Shawn is working on that currently, and we found a website provider that is free to use by 501c organizations.

-Potluck and tie dye happened, we have the T-shirts ready, and we have some extra that we are planning to sell at events like Pride in the Peake.

-Door prize business from last month was tabled further until more conversation could be held between Jeff G. and Rich.

-Jeff G. is still planning on giving out handouts at events containing information from the Night Sky Network. It would allow people to bring home something from these events instead of just going home normally. Jeff printed a bunch out and is planning to test them out at upcoming events.

New Business: 8:03 pm.

-A Chinese smart telescope company, Dwarf Labs, contacted us and sent us one of their products to see how it would work. It will likely be passing around between club members to see how it can be used. It's something for all club members to think about.

-Picnic is July 18th, and Jeremy wishes for door prizes to be part of it like always. He made a motion for the club to buy the meat for the picnic and \$300 for the door prizes.

-Ben discussed the eyepiece/camera hybrid called the Pegasus smarteye, a means by which you can see faint targets in color. It is very expensive, and heavy, but the outreach potential that it offers is very high. We did not make a movement on it tonight, but it was put out there.

-Randy Reagan, a BBAA member and rocket scientist, has contacts at NASA to bring in a local astronaut to be interviewed at the club, as a joint venture between the club and the principal of Western Branch.

-The club is exploring moving to Discord for certain practices, such as Zoom meetings and observing reports. There was a motion to trial it for the August club meeting, just to see if there's merit to its use. Gabriel and Sam were put in charge of setting it up for use.

Library Telescope Program (Sandy Paxson): 8:18 pm.

This program was started with the goal of putting a telescope in every library in the Hampton Roads region. The program first launched in 2008 where people could rent a telescope just like a book from a library and observe for a set period of time. There needs to be enough interest so that we can buy the telescopes and put them in the libraries. The problem is that nonprofit donations are highly competitive thanks to the economic environment, so choosing the right sponsors and businesses is very important. Currently, each telescope has a budget of \$500: \$300 for the telescope and \$200 for extra buffer room and repairs if necessary. The main thing that we need currently are organizations that are

interested, and we need members who can stay in contact with each library and keep track of the telescope condition and provide training. The ultimate objective is to inspire people into the hobby and introduce more people to astronomy.

Special Program: Our Dynamic Sun (Presented by Jeremy Mitchell): 8:37 pm.

Jeremy did his sun and solar observing program after it was postponed from last meeting. This was an expanded version of one of the Night Sky Network's presentations, modified by Jeremy himself. The presentation touched on the internal workings of the Sun and why it generates heat. It mentioned that the Sun is still in its prime and still has a long way to go before becoming a red giant. The Sun can be viewed with either visible (white) light and hydrogen alpha light, and it must always be viewed with filters to avoid blindness. He discussed the layers of the sun and what each portion and layer does/what it is theorized to do, and which ones we see depending on what filter is used. He talked about visible features of the sun like sunspots and granules, as well as H-alpha features like prominences and filaments. He also briefly covered the Solar Dynamics Observatory and the different wavelengths that it views the sun in. It was a good presentation, definitely technical compared to a lot of other BBAA presentations.

Next meeting is on July 18th, 2026, at the annual BBAA picnic at Elizabeth River Park.

Meeting was adjourned at **9:17 pm.**