

BBAA Minutes (August 2026 Monthly Meeting)

Date: 08/06/2026 @TCC Virginia Beach

In attendance: Jeremy Mitchell, Jeff Goldstein, Shawn Loescher, George Reynolds, Sandy Paxson, Michael Hall, Sylvio Canu, Joseph Brown, David Fiore, Ben Loyola, Matt McLaughlin, Irene Schindler, Will Kiff, Bill Danella, Michael Chesson, Dennis Rowley, Barry Bryant, Eddie Parris, David Shouldice, David and Chuller David and Andrea Fontanyi. **On Zoom:** Gabriel Dandrade, Bruce Powers, Roland Downing, Sam Elrod, Kevin Brooks

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

Refreshments Committee (George Reynolds): 7:31 pm

Refreshments, including coffee and cookies, are up for grabs in the back of the room, as always.

REPORTS:

VP Report (Jeff Goldstein): 7:33 pm.

Calendar of events for August:

- Club Meeting (TCC Va Beach, August 6th @7:30 pm).
- Cornwatch (Cornland Park, August 7th, 14th, 21st, and 28th @8:00 pm).
- Skywatch (NW River Park, August 8th @8:00 pm).
- Partial Solar Eclipse (Location Pending, August 12th @1:00 pm).
- Perseid Meteor Shower (Heritage Park, August 12th @10:00 pm).
- Boardwalk Astronomy (VA Beach Oceanfront, August 18th and 25th @6:00 pm).
- Garden Stars (Norfolk Botanical Gardens, August 27th @6:00 pm).
- Partial Lunar Eclipse (Location Pending, August 27th @9:30 pm).
- Saturday Sun Day (Elizabeth River Park, August 29th @10:00 am).

Treasurer's Report (Rich Roberts): Waived.

-Rich was not able to attend, so he said he would email it to the club.

Secretary's Report (Gabriel Dandrade): 7:47 pm

-Mainly focused on the club picnic and the lousy observing weather last month (not that many observing reports!) Gabriel attended via Zoom since he was out on vacation at the time.

Scholarship Committee (Ben Loyola): 7:47 pm

-Our recipients have gotten the money that they earned, sent by check, since they didn't attend the club picnic in person. Ben took some time to help explain what the BBAA scholarships are for and how to help support them.

ALCOR Report and East Coast Star Party (Bruce Powers): 7:49 pm

-Bruce put out a friendly reminder that monthly sky charts and calendars are available for everyone that has access to the Astronomical League website. These include the locations of the upcoming partial lunar eclipse and the Perseid meteor shower radial point, as well as viewing Venus effectively. They're really useful to anyone who's attending public events and wants something to hand out, or to new astronomers looking for resources.

-Fall ECSP dates are in November, during the first weekend of the month. Registration should be opening very soon if it hasn't already.

Observing Reports: 7:57 pm.

-Clouds prevented the club from even attempting to see the SpaceX rocket crashing into the moon, even though the odds of it being seen in an amateur telescope were slim.

-The last Boardwalk Astronomy ended early due to lightning and a tornado sighting, which according to Jeremy made for a very exciting evening. Thankfully, Ignite at the Chrysler Museum was apparently much more successful, with sightings of Venus and the Moon.

-Ben Loyola mentioned a special camera that screws into the front of an SCT that maintains the large field of view of smaller focal length telescopes, by removing the corrector lens. It's called the HyperStar, and while he hasn't had a chance to use it because of the weather, he is very excited to try it out.

Old Business: 8:07 pm.

-A new web host has been officially locked in, but we just need to have their name mentioned in the website. The previous host, however, has charged us for another five years' of use of their services, which is leading to some strain between them and us. Jeremy is optimistic that we can get it resolved in a friendly manner, and hopefully it won't need to be escalated. The new provider will begin August 18th, so make sure that you backup any club emails.

-Sandy received an \$800 fund at the picnic to buy a demo telescope for the library telescope program. If any club member is interested in helping with the Library Telescope program, please reach out to Sandy (sandy.paxson@backbayastro.org). In addition if any of our members know of a business or individuals willing to help support this cause please reach out to them or pass their contact information onto Sandy.

-More discussion on the logistics of changing the annual club luncheon to a potluck at a member's house happened, on account of the difficulty of scheduling a restaurant for cheap to host us. Shawn made a motion to hold the luncheon at Jeff's house, and it was accepted as a test.

-There was some brief discussion to move the picnic later in the year to avoid the heat, but with extra swamp coolers, hurricane season to consider as well as East Coast Star Party, there were too many variables to consider, so we decided to continue the discussion in September at the meeting.

New Business: 8:24 pm.

-The club received a new donation, three SCT telescopes, including an 11-inch and a fork-mounted one. Jeff is looking for people to assist with these and in finding them new homes.

-There was discussion about adding long-sleeve shirts to the club's merch options, since most of the options there are tees. There are some new designs thanks to Shawn's screen printer, so we can do those and sweatshirts as well.

Library Telescope Program (Sandy Paxson): Nothing to report.

-She didn't have any updates to report.

Special Program: Galileo (Michael Hall): 8:30 pm.

-Galileo is obviously one of the most famous astronomers of all time, but he wasn't always that way. His father died when he was young, so he had to provide

for his family. He loved to tinker and had the necessary workshop and know-how to make a telescope once the invention became known to him. Despite early attempts, the first telescopes were small and had terrible lenses. These were designed to watch for ships and armies. Galileo, a mathematician, made a much better, bigger telescope. Though it was crude by today's standards, with lots of spherical aberrations, it allowed him to peer into the heavens. He observed and sketched the moon, Jupiter's four major satellites, Saturn's rings, the Pleiades, and put forth ideas that directly challenged orthodox Catholic doctrine at that time. He gave telescopes their name and allowed for their continued improvement through people like Hevelius and Newton. He became extremely famous for his discoveries and his status as a nobleman, but he also experienced trouble with the Catholic church. Ultimately, his friendship with the Pope saved him from the wrath of the Inquisition, when he wrote a scathing book calling the geocentric model of the universe a joke. This led to his arrest, but instead of execution, the pope sentenced him to house arrest, a relatively lenient result given what he had done.

Meeting was adjourned at **8:59 pm.**