

Central Arkansas Astronomical Society Minutes from the November 2012 Monthly Meeting

Supper Bowl

Boy did we have a lot of fun and interesting things going on tonight! The activities started off with a "Supper Bowl" fundraiser for the club at 6 PM. This featured Bruce McMath's special recipe chili.

Program

During the meeting, John Reed, one of CAAS' master astrophotographers, presented a fascinating program on the equipment and image processing software that he is using now. The camera was a CCD camera specially designed for astronomical photography. It cools the CCD in order to reduce the noise in images which result from heat in the CCD chip. This camera uses a solid state device which turns cold on the side touching the CCD chip, and hot on the other side in order to cool the CCD. A fan blows air across the hot side of the device in order to cool the camera. John uses a short focal length lens which allows him to capture a wide section of the sky in one photograph.

John also demonstrated a program which he uses to process the images. It is really like a generously supplied tool kit of programs for different purposes. There was a tool to remove the initial green bias of the image. There was a tool to find the level of the noise and subtract the noise value from pixels. There was a tool similar to Adobe Photoshop's curves tool which allows you to map pixel values in ways to adjust contrast, as well as making the image lighter or darker. There were many other tools. But, these are all I can attempt to explain.

Announcements

Bill Engberg explained the things which had happened in the board meeting before this regular club meeting. Please see the board meeting minutes for a detailed explanation.

One of the announcements is that the board voted to borrow the funds to pay for the new clubhouse from the Berrington Trust. The club will borrow \$6,000 from the trust. The loan will bear interest at the rate of 3.5% per year. It must be repaid in a maximum of fifteen years in equal installments of at least \$42.89 per month. A mortgage will be placed on CAAS' observatory property as security for the loan.

Bill announced that the Nominating Committee has made the following nominations for 2013 officers:

Darrell Heath, President, Coy Scott Vice President, Christina Lynn, Secretary

At the December meeting, club members can nominate other people if they wish. A vote will be taken at the December meeting to elect officers for 2013.

Rocky is preparing a program that members can go present at scout meetings. There is interest in helping scouts learn about astronomy.

Bruce asked for volunteers to cook for the Supper Bowls next year.

Friday, December 21 is the date of Bill's Myan Doomsday Presentation. The event is at noon. Ardent, Bill's 24 inch diameter telescope, will be set up with a sun filter so people can view the sun.

Observatory Tours

Three of the observatory building lessees opened their observatories and gave talks on their equipment and projects. Thank you Bruce McMath, Chris Lasley, and Danny Flippo for giving us tours of your observatory!

The December CAAS meeting will be at the River Ridge Observatory on Saturday, December 8. There will be no program that night. There will be a potluck dinner. If the weather permits, this will be followed by observing!

Twenty nine members and guests attended the October meeting.

CAAS Members and Guests In Attendance

- Christopher Block
- Steven Block
- T. J. Colvin
- Jack Dixon
- Jim Dixon
- Sam Dixon
- William Engberg
- Danny Flippo
- Carl Freyaldenhoven
- Roger Gudith
- Darrell Heath
- Andrew Hradesky
- Melanie Hradesky
- Nathan James
- Chris Lasley
- Bruce McMath
- Pat Morris
- Sandy Morris
- Jeff Paul
- John Reed
- Coy Scott
- Anna Swaim
- Edward Swaim
- James Swaim
- John Swaim
- Robert Togni
- Julie Tyhurst
- Luke Tyhurst
- Daniel Weatherly

Respectfully Submitted,

Coy Scott
CAAS Secretary