



Penobscot Valley Star Gazers

An Astronomical Society of Central Maine

<http://www.gazers.org>

November 2009

Maybe Galileo

The PVSg begins Standard Time at the November meeting on Monday the 9th at 6:30 pm at John Bapst Memorial High School. We are not sure what the program will be this month. Bill may review the Galileo collection held by the University of Oklahoma, or someone else may do something else.

Thanks for last month's program go to Bill for reporting on his trip to the Okie-Tex Star Party.

Okie-Tex Tales

October 12, 2009



October 2009

The meeting was brought to order at 6:41 pm, with 17 members present, and immediately turned over to Bill, this evening's speaker. This evening Bill presented the club members with a slide show and talk of the flora, local history, as well as his experiences at one of the largest Star Parties in the country. This year Bill had a companion, his new telescope. So he had some time to get to know the instrument while he was there. I have to give him credit; I wouldn't have been able to leave the telescope behind in Oklahoma after using it. The Star Party at Camp Billie Joe, hosted by the Oklahoma Astronomy Club, has some of the darkest skies. Past slide shows by Bill have shown some marvelous sites of red glowing lights of amateur astronomers near their scopes and massive star fields spreading out in the heavens. This year the weather didn't assist and viewing was limited, but as in the past there were many speakers and vendors available. With the beautiful vistas of the Southwest and the history of the area there is always something to do. Our thanks to Bill for bringing the Okie-Tex 2009 star party to life for us.

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Our club President

started the business portion of the evening with a request for a reading of the minutes from the last meeting. There were no minutes from September. There was also a reminder that Club Dues were owed by the end of October. The Treasurer's report was accepted by members.

The Acadia Nights Star Party was reported as being a resounding success. The weather

helped out and clear viewing on all nights was available. Reports of between 200 and 250 people participating at the Sidewalk, Cadillac Mountain and Seawall viewing areas reinforce the success of the event.

The President asked if anyone had received any Star Party requests for the Club. There was an unconfirmed request from the Town of Corinth for a weekend event. More information would be forthcoming on the particulars. Hampden Academy requested that some scopes be made available in November. After some discussion, Saturday the 14th starting with a 5:30 pm set up time, was decided on. Anyone interested in showing up to assist would contact Mike or Wade. There was some discussion concerning insurance issues that might have to be worked out.

OLD BUSINESS: A reminder that you can pay your dues to Bill for the coming year. There was discussion about forming a Study Committee to look into our club hosting the Maine State Star Party. Usually hosted by the Downeast Astronomical Club, this Star Party has been held at the Cobscook Bay State Park. There has been a wish to rotate it annually throughout

On the Schedule

(Items Subject to Change)

PROGRAMS

?

STAR PARTIES

November 14(co): Hampden Academy

?November 21: Club star party, Scott's

First date is primary, second is rain date; ? Tentative; (rs) rain or shine; (co) clear only

Dues Were Due October 1st



Regular \$18.00
Family \$27.00
Junior \$9.00

Yes, they have been raised.
Pay at the meeting or send to
Bill

the State of Maine. There will be more discussion at later meetings.

NEW BUSINESS: Bill reports that the new *Astronomy* Magazine 2010 Calendars are in for \$6.50 each. Contact Bill to purchase your copy of this beautiful calendar. Renewals of *Astronomy* magazine are now done directly through the magazine subscription office. New subscriptions of *Sky and Telescope* can be coordinated through Bill while renewals are, again, handled with the magazines subscription department. November's speaker will be our very own Bill.

Viewing reports: Shirley reports that the Victoria Grant Library location in Winterport offers a very nice "shielded" dark sky viewing opportunity. She also brought to our attention an article in *Physics Today* about the Legends of the Sky: an Asian perspective.

At 8:20 pm there was a motion to end discussion and the meeting. It was seconded and voted on.

These minutes are respectfully submitted this date, 5 November 2009 by David, Secretary.

Do You Know the Shape of the Solar System?



Sometimes an instrument used on one spacecraft can serve a purpose it was not necessarily intended. Such is the case of the Magnetospheric Imaging Instrument onboard the Cassini spacecraft currently in orbit around Saturn. Since arriving in orbit at Saturn the Ion and Neutral Camera carried by this instrument has been mapping energetic neutral atoms near Saturn and consequently also across the entire sky. By combining these results with findings from NASA's Interstellar Boundary Explorer, also known as IBEX, it has enabled scientists to build a map of the location of our solar system within our galaxy.

By using these results the area of the influence of the sun in the interstellar medium known as the heliosphere has been redefined. It has been assumed the heliosphere traveling into the interstellar medium would form a foreshortened "nose" in the solar system's direction of travel and a "tail" in the other direction. Now it appears more likely the heliosphere moves through the interstellar medium more like a round bubble than a comet. As the principal investigator of the Magnetospheric Imaging Instrument on Cassini, Stamatios Krimigis of the Applied Physics Lab, in Laurel, Md., has said, "It's amazing how a single new observation can change an entire concept that most scientists had taken as true for nearly fifty years."

For more information check these websites: <http://saturn.jpl.nasa.gov>, <http://www.nasa.gov/ibex>.

Mr. Astronomy