

Delmarva stargazers
Meeting May 3, 2011
13 attending.

Meeting started at 7:06

Nominations for officers:

- Chuck Jennings for President-Elect
- Treasurer – Kathy Sheldon
- Both are elected with no contest.

Jerry Truitt presented a chart of cost and profitability for each of our events over the last few years. It shows that all activities are fairly profitable even in dire times (e.g. rained out star party). Star parties are affected by weather as the chart pointed out. However no star party has lost money so far.

Much of the meeting was spent discussing aspects of the Star Parties:

- Some of the meeting concentrated on rates like the opening remarks on single night registrations and family rates. It ranged over a lot of topics.
 - Jerry – “Don’t come.”
 - One day payment doesn’t cover all expenses.
 - Not losing money so we should go for single night guests
 - Chuck Jennings: single person is ok, family rate is high.
 - How many families attend?
 - Michael Lecuyer: it requires a volunteer to check for violators
 - Don Surles: told 71 registered but there were 92 cars (Ed: it was determined after the meeting that over 100 registered)
 - Jerry: How much work do we want to do? Register at the gate?
 - Chuck Jennings suggested bracelets to identify registered people. (Ed: cost: \$11.99 per box of 500, \$18.99 per box of 1000)
 - Lyle: Allowance for the first star party for new members.
 - Jerry: Appoint a committee to study: Michael Lecuyer, Michael Masciantonio, and a third person who did not sign in.
 - Lyle: on Joe Cain’s registration difficulties: does not have enough info on raffles and door prizes; ran out of sign in sheets for cars; needs more change in the cash box, logistics must be made easier.

- Mike Masciantonio: We should compare our features vs other star parties, for example Mason-Dixon has worse skies.
- Don Surles: Cost of star parties – host your own, park, no food, no drinks, one potty - \$15. On Sunday morning getting ready to leave there was garbage on the counter, bag fell on stove which was on (check stove). No power on field, because there are no GFI's on circuits.
- Lyle: Need family activities – we need young members.
- Do we have an outreach committee? Jerry doesn't encourage outreaches, although he takes the lead on them
- Don: Facebook a waste of time – too much mail, don't need to beat the bushes for members. It was noted Don probably didn't set his account up to reduce junk.
- Jerry: we need members younger than us but probably not kids.
- Chuck: families just don't have time with children and jobs.
- Jerry: Not a single outreach has produced members. He doesn't use outreaches to recruit as a result. Need to attract by Facebook, twitter.
- Chuck: Facebook needs constant attention daily – DAS's stuff is stale since they don't update it.
- Jerry: People at star parties don't need scopes.
- Chuck: On attractions – it will be more fun – for peers to try other peoples equipment out.
- Mike: Position questions about astronomy but not forming club.
- PJ: People want instant gratification: Hubble pics are better.
- Mike: We want to see real damn thing like Saturn live.
- Jerry: Not the same as Hubble but different – difficult to compare.
- Lyle: we need consistent membership count to work at events
- Don: we used to a list, will not be enough volunteers and things didn't get done – like making coffee. Star Party starts on Thursday mornings and there are problems with the few people who show up to help.
- Lyle: Need a core of individuals willing to handle star party work.
- Don: 15 to 20 volunteers. Coffee is a problem – since going green – people are using bigger coffee cups. They don't know which carafe has the freshest coffee and take it from the last one in the line. Need instructions for making coffee.

Trouble is we can't communicate to others what to do.

- PJ: Can ask people to help, but you have to ask.
- Need a committee for Star Party: check stove turned off, coffee made, police the kitchen.
- Dennis: will be willing to take the garbage next time – has legal access to MD dump.
- Don: There are concrete block at doors – asked for a pad at the entrance instead. As the Equestrian Center expands its facilities we should contribute \$1,000 or so a year.
- Doug Towner volunteered to coordinate Star Party.
- Chuck: What about vendors? Our meteor vendor (Holden) seemed to make money.
- Lyle: Vendors have been spotty at our star parties and prefer larger parties running concurrently.

Observing:

- Lyle says we used to have observing sessions more often than once a month. Informal sessions. Summer hours are bad for observing.
- Chuck: Incorporate Blackbird Forest into this idea – start at 7PM and point out constellations as they appear.
- Dennis: Need good communication with members on weather and who will be attending at BlackBird and Equestrian Center.
- Lyle: A message should go out with a 'go' or 'no go' authoritative statement on Yahoo.

Meeting Place:

- Jerry: The Christiana Center wants to change our time from 7-9 to 6-8 and charge \$600 for twelve months. The time constraint is too small.
- Lyle: Wesley College and Del State have been called. waiting for answers. Last time prices were high and someone had to teach a course.
- Don: we get the idea that organizations don't want you there – Opera House wanted \$200 per night to lock and unlock. The Outpost was similar.
- Leonard White: On using a restaurant for meetings: – have to order food.
- Plan A: Negotiate a later time at Christiana, and look into a Plan B
- alternative site for 12 months.

- Don and Lyle looking into new venue.

Future Presentations:

- Lyle is preparing two presentations for us: one on Bats and another on Radio Astronomy – calling in other people to do them.

Summer viewing events:

- Need a place larger than Black Bird (parking is limited)
- Advertise in newspapers.
- Ball park setup at Tuckahoe still seems good.
- Arboretum may allow us to hang out with telescopes and perhaps camp.
- The events would be for members and others.
- Try to set something up for August.

At a future meeting Joe Morris will do a presentation over SKYPE on building observatories.