

Moonstruck Astronomy Club

Jim Di Paolo



The Moonstruck Astronomy Club held its monthly meeting on Thursday, April 10, in the Hobby Building Event Room.

Jim Di Paolo, club president, kicked off the meeting by informing everyone that the club had added six new members since the last meeting, bringing membership up to 67. Jim reviewed the agenda for the day's meeting, which included three presentations that club members would give. He reminded everyone that the club is always looking for members to share their experiences related to astronomy.

Beverly Bergmann read the financial report, informing members of the money added to the club due to new membership and raffles and recent club expenses.

Member Lane Rudiger started the presentations portion of the meeting, sharing the wonderful deep-sky objects he captured with the Vespera II Observation Station telescope. His telescope is fully automated and controlled by a mobile app, with imagery viewed on a tablet or phone rather than through an optical eyepiece. The Vespera II automatically locates and then tracks the object you select to image and compensates for the Earth's rotation during exposure. Other members of the club have similar imaging telescopes.

"Pedaling Through the Solar System" was the title of the next presentation by

members Scott and Jill Phillips. They shared photos and details of their trip to Pere Marquette State Trail. The trail featured a 1/600,000,000 scaled-down model of our Solar System. The Sun was 90 inches in diameter, and Pluto was located 5.6 miles from the Sun! Stainless steel pedestals held each planet, which were scaled appropriately.

John Bridges, club secretary, gave the April night sky presentation. He pointed out all the locations of our planets for the month of April and provided a schedule of the ISS flyovers for the month. He pointed out the constellations that would be visible. He showed members how to locate the Winter Hexagon, a prominent asterism formed by connecting the bright stars Sirius, Rigel, Aldebaran, Capella, Pollux, and Procyon.

Brian Lomasky, a club member, presented highlights of his trip to Mauna Kea, the highest point in Hawaii. It serves a vital role in the scientific community as a hub of astronomical observation. The dry, cloudless atmosphere makes observing galaxies at the farthest edges of the observable universe possible.

The Moonstruck Astronomy Club meetings are on the second Thursday of every month from 1:30 to 3 p.m. in the Hobby Building Event Room. Residents with a valid resident ID or Gateway of Services pass are welcome to join. New members are welcome! Yearly club dues are only \$20 per year, including a subscription to the quarterly Reflector Magazine. For information or club registration, please contact President Jim Di Paolo at moonastroclub@gmail.com. More information is always available at moonstruckastronomyclub.org.



Photo by Brian Lomasky