



2019 Annual Report to the Club

Delivered at Annual Meeting 6/4/20

2019 was a mostly full year for the club. “Mostly” because while we had a full complement of great meetings we were increasingly stymied by weather that prevented or curtailed a number of planned star parties. Such is life under the Jet Stream.

Here’s a review of our speakers in 2019 (and beyond into 2020):

Jan 2019	Telescope Workshop
Feb	BluShift Aerospace – Sasha Deri – Maine-based small satellite delivery aerospace company
Mar	Dr. Elizabeth McGrath – Colby – evolution of large scale structures/ galactic evolution
Apr	Dwight Lanpher – the Leviathan of Parsontown – 6’ reflecting telescope at Birr Castle, Ireland
May	Jon Wallace – Radio Astronomy
June	No formal program
July	Open Mic on Apollo reminiscences; Richard Battin biography (Mathematician – Apollo guidance systems)
Aug	No meeting
Sep	Ron Thompson – tutorial on NSN and web page
Oct	Dr. Morgan MacLeod – Stellar Mergers in the Transient Night sky
Nov	Dr. George Bokinsky – Biography of Fritz Zwicky
Dec	Open House
Jan 2020	Telescope Workshop
Feb	Cancelled – snow
Mar	Dr. Russ Pinozzotto – the Color of Stars
Apr	Zoom – Russ – What to See in Ursa Major
May	Zoom - Ara Jerahian – Introduction to Astrophotography

Half of our speakers were club members illustrating the knowledge and talent that resides in the Club. It is of special note that Dr. Morgan MacLeod was a young mentee of the club, more particularly, Paul Howell, who helped Morgan with a school science project on variable stars while Morgan was a student at Greely High School in Cumberland. Morgan went on to graduate Bowdoin College, then obtain his PhD in Astrophysics at UC Santa Cruz. The circle was complete with Morgan’s return to the Club some 10 years later to address us on stellar mergers!

It is also of note that Club members Jon Wallace and Dr. Russ Pinozzotto have also addressed sister clubs in Maine in the past year. SMA is “sharing the wealth” by the good nature of these members reaching out to other astronomy clubs in Maine.

The Club has also benefited greatly with the regular presentation by Russ Pinozzotto on “Interesting Things to See in ____ Constellation.” So far, Russ has covered Gemini, Leo, Virgo, Bootes, Moon/Apollo sites, Aquila, Taurus, Cassiopeia, Canis Major, Ursa Major and Hydra – delighting us all with further objects to explore in our night sky.

The Club also participated in a number of star parties and outreach activities throughout the year while several others were cancelled due to poor weather. Many thanks to club members who participated in these events, or attempted events, and supported the Club’s outreach commitment.

- April, 2019, Star Party Twin Brooks Recreation Center, Cumberland
- May, 2019, Star Party at Portland Yacht Club with brief sky map Presentation.
- August, 2019, Star Party at the Wildlife Park, Gray, with 3, sky map Presentations.
- August, 2019, Star Party with BTLT at Crystal Spring Farm, Brunswick, with sky map presentation.
- October, 2019, "Stars and S'mores" at LL Bean, Freeport. Solar and evening viewing, with sky map Presentation.
- November, 2019, Star Party with "Eastern Trails", Scarborough CANCELLED
- January 2020 , Star Party at Westbrook High School
- January, 2020, Star Party with Cape Elizabeth Land Trust, CANCELLED but gave Astro 101 presentation, at Cape Elizabeth Library and hands-on with the Library Telescope.
- January, 2020, Friends of Merrymeeting Bay, FOMB, at Brunswick Library.
- January, 2020, Keynote address “Let There Be Dark” at Annual Meeting of Friends of Merrymeeting Bay
- Ongoing support of the Cornerstones of Science Library Telescope Program by Ron Thompson, on behalf of SMA. Not only has Ron (and Forrest Sumner) assisted with assembling new scopes and repairing in-use scopes, but Ron has been a regular at teaching librarians how to use and maintain the scopes in their libraries. To date, Cornerstones has placed hundreds of Orion 4.5” StarBlast reflecting telescopes in libraries through Maine and in 27 other states.

I would like to thank board members Bob Page, Joan Chamberlin, Paul Howell and Greg Thorup who relinquished or will soon relinquish with our 2020 Annual Meeting their seats on the Board. It is worth special note that Paul was a founding member of the club in 2004 and that Joan is the longest, continuously serving Board Member. Each member has contributed significantly toward making the club what it is today. We look forward to new members joining the Board and for the continued support, participation and advice of these departing Board Members.

With the COVID 19 pandemic we have had to adapt to new ways to hold meetings and communicate with one another. While it is far less satisfying that gathering personally, face-to-face, it has opened new doors. Once we can safely return to in-person meetings the lessons learned from remote communications will help the club reach out to new speakers for club meetings and new ways to reach audiences we have never reached before.

Robert Burgess
President, SMA

