

Peterborough Astronomical Association  
Monthly Meeting - March 6, 2026 7:00 p.m.  
Riverview Park Zoo and Zoom

1. **Welcome** - Peter Curley opened the meeting at 7:00 p.m.
  - Attendees - 22 at the Zoo meeting room, 10 additional on Zoom
2. **Introduction/Acknowledgement of Guests & New PAA Members**
  - One guest, Alex, was present at the Zoo. Alex found out about the PAA through Facebook, and stated that he was interested in science-related activities.
3. **Amendments & Approval of Agenda**
  - Rodger Forsyth moved, seconded by Nick Valentino that the proposed agenda be approved. Motion carried.
4. **Amendments & Approval of Minutes of Last Meeting**
  - Nick Valentino moved, seconded by Rodger Forsyth that the minutes of the previous meeting (February 6, 2026) be approved. Motion carried.
5. **Membership Report (Dave Mills)**
  - Dave reported that 43 members had not renewed their memberships as of the meeting date, reducing the total membership to 75. Dave indicated that he would be sending out reminders (again) to hopefully retain some of those prior members.
6. **Unfinished Business/Directors' Reports**
  - Brett Hardy stated that 4 PAA members will be attending the regional Science Fair at Trent University on April 8th, participating as judges for astronomy-related projects. The 4 judges are Brett, Christine, Boyd and Montgomery.
  - The project judged to be the best astronomy-related one will be awarded \$100 plus a copy of Terrence Dickinson's "The Backyard Astronomer's Guide". Second place will be awarded a one-year family membership to the PAA.
7. **Announcements**
  - Peter Curley stated that there were no PAA members interested in purchasing the donated Meade LX90 telescope system, offered to club members at \$500, so the telescope will be sent to Ontario Telescope for sale on consignment.
  - Peter confirmed that special recognition awards had all been awarded for outstanding support of the PAA. The award recipients were Boyd Wood, Phillip Chee, Michelle Anstett, Rod Forsyth and Rodger Forsyth.
  - 14 PAA members/guests attended the February 22nd Peterborough Petes hockey game against the Brantford Bulldogs. Peter Curley stated that it was an exciting game, with the Petes winning in overtime, 4/3.

## **8. Presentation - Rodger Forsyth - PiFinder**

- Rodger had originally intended to give a presentation himself on the PiFinder device, but fortunately the developer of the PiFinder offered to give the presentation via Zoom. Rodger introduced Richard Wolff-Jacobson, who joined the meeting from Santa Monica, California.
- Rodger introduced the PiFinder as being an intelligent device that when mounted to a telescope, aids the observer to quickly locate and move to desired objects thus allowing the observer to spend more time observing and less time searching.
- The PiFinder is based on the Raspberry Pi single board computer, coupled with an optical camera and utilizing custom open source software.
- The device contains plate solving software, enabling very accurate determination of where the telescope is pointed.
- Richard offers the PiFinder in kit form, including all of the required hardware, 3D printed components, etc. For those with 3D printing capabilities (such as Rodger), Richard will supply the 3D models to enable his customers to make these parts themselves.
- Richard gave a very detailed presentation on the construction, capabilities and use of the PiFinder, which PAA members found very interesting.
- Following Richard's presentation, Rodger showed PAA members the PiFinder that he had built. He purchased a kit from Richard at a landed cost of \$450 Cdn and had a Raspberry Pi (~\$100 Cdn) in stock already. Khan Scope offers a complete PiFinder for approximately \$850.
- Rodger intends to apply his PiFinder to one of his telescopes when the weather improves!

## **9. The Sky This Month - David Mills**

- Dave reported that the Sky This Month (STM) report was complete; Nick Valentino stated during the meeting that he had uploaded it to the website.
- Dave stated that Venus and Saturn would be as close as 1 degree apart during the month, and that the Messier Marathon would offer a window of approximately 24 to 36 hours in which all of the Messier objects with the exception of M30 could be viewed.
- Dave further offered that a second Messier Marathon will occur in the fall, in which all of the Messier objects with the exception of M76 will be viewable.

## **10. Observation Sessions - Dianne Denton**

- Comments were made about the poor weather conditions for viewing lately. Boyd Wood commented that at his location in Peterborough, he had had good observing conditions!
- Rick Stankiewicz commented on the media having promoted a great observing opportunity, with many of the planets arranged in a straight line, to which Rick stated that it was mostly hype, and that for various reasons there was little to actually observe.
- Rick also commented on the lunar eclipse of early March 3rd and that he was able to capture good quality images despite the advancing cloud cover. His image of the blood red moon was televised on both Global and CHEX TV. Well done, Rick!

#### **11. Gadget Corner - Rick Stankiewicz**

- Rick, having had "frozen fingers" not only while trying to do observations during the cold winter nights but also from too many days operating his snowblower, decided to purchase a pair of heated gloves.
- Rick had researched the many selections for these battery-powered gloves, and arrived at a pair of gloves that he found most suitable for his needs.
- From amazon.ca, he purchased a pair identified as Xuan Mei GR, featuring lithium polymer batteries (2200 mAh), 7 layers, touch sensitive index finger and thumb (for operating things like a cell phone), 3 power levels with up to 8 hours use on low power, 4 hours on high power, with medium power (5.5 hours) being adequate for his needs.
- The included charger handles both batteries at once, with a charge time of 4 hours for a full charge.

#### **12. Presentation at Next Meeting - Peter Curley**

- Peter intends to provide an updated presentation on his use of NINA software with his SeeStar, using another piece of software that he found that solves the problem of not being able to simultaneously use the Zoo's wifi system for both the SeeStar and the PAA Zoom meeting.

#### **13. Next Meeting - Friday, April 3, 2026**

#### **14. Adjournment**

- Peter requested a motion to end the meeting. Dave Mills moved, seconded by Nick Valentino that the meeting be adjourned. Approved.
- The meeting was adjourned at 8:32 p.m.

prepared by:  
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PAA Secretary