

Denver Astronomical Society
Minutes of August 30, 2013 E-Board Meeting

Officers Present:

President	Ron Hranac
Vice President	Lisa Judd
Secretary	Dena McClung

Board Members Present:

Johnny Barela	Jack Eastman	Joe Gafford
Chuck Habenicht	Dan Wray	Ed Scholes
Digby Kirby	Scott Leach	Ron Pearson, Immediate Past President

Absent:

Brad Gilman, Treasurer

Observatory Representative:

Dr. Robert Stencel

Other Members and Guests:

Eileen Barela

The meeting was called to order with a quorum present at 7:33 p.m.

The Previous Meeting's Minutes were read, amended and approved.

Chamberlin Business: Dr. Stencel reported that the dome motor polarity issue has been “fixed” by placing a placard denoting the new directions of travel next to the switch. He advised that the 20” telescope needs roughly 1/4” more travel in order to accommodate 10mm and 24mm eyepieces. He noted that there are two places on the existing fittings that could be shaved to provide that extra measure of travel. Larger eyepieces, however, may require the addition of extra pieces to avoid colliding with the mirror in the diagonal. Jack favors shortening the metering rods instead. It was decided that the lower knurled end of the focuser will be shortened, and that Dr. Stencel will consult with Jack prior to that work being done.

Dr. Stencel requested that DAS continue to charge \$5 per family at Open House events for a few more months on a trial basis. A lengthy discussion ensued as to how to deal with Open Houses that happen to fall during periods of inclement weather that prevents the use of the 20”. Suggestions included posting a sign explaining the situation, and placing a donation jar. The issue was re-tabled until next month's meeting. It was noted that the DAS website still reflects a \$1 charge for the open houses despite the change to \$2, and also that Darrell has been sent emails about this issue.

The need to install a wifi repeater in a dome window to permit internet access on the lawn during open house events was discussed. Dr. Stencel, Ron Hranac and Scott agreed to look at the location after the meeting. The password for the general public access point will be “astronomy,” and will be posted on a temporary sign to be displayed only when needed.

Ron Hranac raised the issue of using something to inform visitors that they are not to climb the gantry when not in use. After suggestions of a safety rope or a chain, Dr. Stencel asked the board to look for fluorescent caution tape to use on the gantry.

Dr. Stencel reported that DU will approve his request to install an AED (automated external defibrillator) at Chamberlin. Noting that the current first aid kit is a few years old and has been depleted, Dr. Stencel agreed to have it replaced or updated.

He also reported that progress on the repairs to the Meyer-Womble observatory is very slow due to the contractor being behind schedule.

Treasurer's Report: There was no financial update. It was reported that the Terms of Service draft has been received from attorney Elizabeth Lewis, which will be distributed to e-board members. The version of the Intuit program that Brad has requested (Quickbooks Accountant 2013) will cost approximately \$500. He is trying to find it at a discounted price.

Committee Reports

Dark Sky Site: The oil rig lights are no longer on. Safety instruction signs have been posted.

Van Nattan-Hansen Scholarship: As of the July 1 application deadline, no one had applied. Interested candidates for 2014 should be referred to the website.

Public Night Teams: The collection envelopes have been finalized. Team Four's lead, Carl Schulz, is moving to Wisconsin; his last night will be September 19. Lisa has volunteered to replace him. Team Four has lost other members but Jeff Kieft and Jeff Tropeano have been doing their best to continue serving visitors. A few other people have shown interest, but no one has been showing up on a steady basis. It was suggested that a standalone news item be included in The Observer, asking interested members to visit on Public Nights to see how they are operated, and help out. Lisa also identified the need for a dedicated speaker, but no one on the board volunteered. Lisa will ask Patti to include the speaker's job in the Job Jar.

IT: Scott reported that he does have a zero-lux (night vision) video camera which will be used to take footage for a DAS video project. The laptop heating pad has been removed by Dr. Stencil. Ron Hranac directed Scott to order a chiller pad (approximate cost: \$30) and a wifi repeater (approximate cost: \$50)(see Chamberlin update above for details).

Social Media: Ron directed Dena to contact Jeff Tropeano to proceed with DAS Social Media efforts. He would like Jeff to make postings on Facebook, and to place a link to The Observer on the DAS Facebook page. Dr. Stencil recommended using Yelp as well.

Loaner Scope Program: Jeff Tropeano still has one of the 8" Dobsonians; Russell Quan has checked out the other 8" Dobsonian; and Mike Hotka checked out the PST. The Orion short-tube 80 is also available, but is used mostly to augment Public Night and Open House events.

Newsletter: Since Patricia Kurtz is moving, she has requested that all material for the October issue of The Observer be submitted ASAP.

Outreach: The Roundup Fellowship Fundraiser is still scheduled for September 19 and volunteers have been recruited.

Old Business

Colorado Astronomy Day: CAD is scheduled for October 12, 2013, but the DMNS will not be able to participate on that date due to their new exhibit (Mythbusters) scheduled to open on October 11. We have tentatively asked them to set it for Sunday, September 29; Ron has yet to receive a reply from Dave Cuomo of DMNS. It was agreed that we should advertise the October 12 event during the DMNS event. The DAS Open House is already set for October 12, and it was discussed that we may want to start sometime in the early afternoon with solar observing. The possibility of creating a theme based on Comet ISON was raised, and the question was raised as to whether we should have speakers at DMNS and Chamberlin. It was noted that Okie-Tex opens the weekend of September 28. Since we cannot proceed with plans until we hear from Dave Cuomo, Ron said we can have an online discussion to resolve issues in the mean time.

New Member Packets: The information regarding the link to the current by-laws has been changed. We need to ask Darrell about doing automatic welcome letters for new members.

Job Jar: Ed Scholes has accepted the Quartermaster position, and Luis Uribe has accepted the Outreach Coordinator position. This information needs to be added to the DAS website and The Observer.

DAS Brochures: Dena agreed to follow up with Darrell, as these brochures are needed before Astronomy Day.

Secure Storage: Dan reported that Home Depot sells a 5 shelf, two-door locking cabinet measuring 7' tall, 31" wide and probably 15" deep for \$250. The units are made by Husky, black and silver in color, and are strong enough to hold heavy equipment. A **motion was made and passed** approving purchase of two of these units, pending approval from Dr. Stencel. The existing shelves are to be removed and disposed of however the DAS sees fit.

AlCon/AstronCon: Ron thanked Lisa for attending the planning meeting in Casper, WY. Lisa noted that the name of the event has officially been changed to AstroCon. She has agreed to compose a list of vendors to solicit their attendance, which will be DAS' main contribution to the event. Lisa distributed information about the event, and asked members to help check out a possible observing site, Bear Trap Campground, which is being considered as a replacement for the WUTS. Scott volunteered to do that, and Ron suggested that they ask members of the Cheyenne club to do that as well. Lisa noted that the conference property is already accepting reservations for the event.

Auction: Dan advised that he doesn't not need anything from the board in advance of the auction, set for the October general meeting date.

Calendar: Joe and Eileen are going to resolve any outstanding questions to allow the 2014 calendar to be published. Dr. Stencel noted that the proposed schedule has only 10 open houses, and asked the board to consider trying to fit in one or two more. Joe pointed out that the normal times that would be open houses have conflicts with holiday weekends (Labor Day and Thanksgiving) and fuller moons, but agreed to move those to the prior weekend, which will be the same as the Dark Sky Site Weekends.

New Business

Christmas Party: Lisa reported that the Embassy Suites on Hampden Avenue east of I-25 has given her a price of \$17.50 per person for dinner before tax and tip. Drinks would be available for purchase at a cash bar. Their flexible layout would ensure that there is plenty of room for as many as wish to attend. Ron directed Lisa to ask about PA equipment, their commitment deadline, and a deposit as we continue the dialogue online.

Quartermaster: Ed asked board members to send him information on the DAS equipment that they are storing for the club at home.

2014 Election: Ron Pearson suggested that the board take up changing the date of the 2014 election at the next meeting due to the possibility of inclement weather, which would require changing the by-laws.

Adjournment: A motion to adjourn was made and passed at 9:36 p.m.