

Denver Astronomical Society
Minutes of February 21, 2014 E-Board Meeting

Officers Present:

President - Ron Hranac Secretary - Dena McClung Treasurer - Brad Gilman

Board Members Present:

Johnny Barela Jack Eastman Joe Gafford Chuck Habenicht
Digby Kirby Ed Scholes Dan Wray

Absent: Lisa Judd Scott Leach Ron Pearson - Immediate Past President

Observatory Representative:

Dr. Robert Stencel

Other Members and Guests:

Luis Uribe - Treasurer-Elect

Sorin - Board Member-Elect Jeff Tropeano - Board Member-Elect
Hugh Davidson, Volunteer Coordinator Darrell Dodge, Website Administrator
Dennis Cochran Eileen Barela

The meeting was called to order with a quorum present at 7:30 p.m.

The Previous Meeting's Minutes were read, amended and approved. In the future, project and committee updates conducted online via the DAS E-board Yahoo group will be appended to the minutes of the previous meeting and reviewed by the board with the regular minutes.

Chamberlin Business: Dr. Stencel thanked the board for their ongoing work and support of Chamberlin. He noted that attendance for 2013 was down a bit from the previous year. He asked for and received approval to replace the red flashlights in the "toy box" with newer models. The annual 20" re-certification session is scheduled for Saturday May 17 at 1:00 p.m. He noted that an occultation of a star by an asteroid will be taking place at about 6:00 a.m. on March 19 and asked the board to make a request to use the 20" if interested. Dr. Stencel agreed to accept a speaker request from the Phi Beta Kappa Alpha Association of Colorado, and Dena agreed to introduce him to the representative via email.

Dr. Stencel gave a brief history of the remodeling of the observatory and the telescope maintenance that took place in recent years. He reported that an endowment fund is needed in order to help support ongoing and future DU staffing at Chamberlin. While the current but retiring DU chancellor has been supportive, the next chancellor will face many challenges including budget shortfalls. Hence, Dr. Stencel believes that now is the time to complete what Mr. Chamberlin originally intended, by finally putting into place a \$50,000 pledge nearly 120 years later, and asks DAS for help in this endeavor. To date, \$45,000 of the needed \$50,000 minimum endowment amount has been raised, and this in spite of the cost of repairs to DU's Meyer-Womble Observatory atop Mt. Evans. He asked the board for a contribution of \$5,000 to fulfill the \$50,000 minimum. When asked, he acknowledged that donations can be made to DU. The board did not take any vote on the matter but did agree to consider supporting the request, with details to be worked out later.

Treasurer's Report: Brad reported that the club has approximately \$20,000 in the General Fund checking account and \$15,000 in certificates of deposit. Due to the closure of the parking lot adjacent to Olin Hall, he recently closed out the parking pass cash box and deposited the contents into the General Fund.

2014 E-Board and Officer Election: Ron Hranac welcomed Luis Uribe, Sorin, and Jeff Tropeano to the board. He noted that in addition to himself, the other officers and board members re-elected to their current positions are Lisa Judd, Dena McClung, Ron Pearson, Jack Eastman, Joe Gafford, Chuck Habenicht, Digby Kirby, Ed Scholes and Dan Wray. He thanked the outgoing officer and board members, Brad Gilman, Johnny Barela, and Scott Leach, for their service to the board and club.

Outreach: Ron Hranac announced that the Outreach Coordinator position, formerly held by Luis Uribe, has been filled by Naomi Pequette.

Old Business

Van Nattan-Hansen Scholarship: No update is available. Information about the scholarship will be published in the March edition of *The Observer*. Ron Hranac agreed to contact Tim Pimental to get an update, and directed Jeff Tropeano to make posts about it in social media.

SWOT Analysis: Ron Hranac said that while he does not intend to conduct another analysis, there is still plenty to work with from the one undertaken in 2013. The fact that the DAS is an all-volunteer organization is both a strength and a weakness, he pointed out. It is a strength in that there are no employees and no tax or employment issues with which to deal, but it is a weakness in that we are counting on each other to complete tasks with no employment requirement to do so. He put forth this topic for discussion: What can we do to better capitalize on being a volunteer organization, and overcome the challenges thereof? Jack stated that communication is still an issue. Dena suggested that we hold introductory sessions at Chamberlin and the Dark Sky Site. Digby suggested that we use a questionnaire to poll volunteers and members, asking them what we as an organization are doing right and wrong. Sorin suggested that instead of doing this via email that we use Survey Monkey online. Jeff agreed to create a trial set of questions for the board to consider, and assured that all answers would be anonymous. It was recommended that the SWOT process be reviewed, and if necessary, tweaked to update the club's needs.

Website Domain: People had difficulty reaching the DAS website at one point, but Darrell assured the board that it was never hacked. The domain had expired because the registrar had gone out of business. The new registrar was unable to contact the owner - then listed as Wayne Green - because Wayne had changed his email address and not informed them of his new one. Darrell sent payment of the \$10 fee to the new registrar and the website was restored in half a day. Darrell is working with Wayne to transfer the ownership to the DAS, and will utilize one of the DAS' email addresses to ensure that any subsequent notices are received. The actual DAS server is in Boca Raton, Florida. The Host Centric backup website was still available throughout, and surprisingly, the denverastro.org emails continued to work even when the site was unreachable.

New Business

Van Nattan-Hansen Scholarship Committee: According to the by-laws, the committee is to be composed of six members, plus one optional person with experience in a field such as astrophysics. Currently the members of the committee are Tim Pimental, Ivan Geisler, Ron Pearson, and Brenda

Wray. The committee needs to be filled out. Meetings are held irregularly. Eileen volunteered to join the committee. An announcement regarding the opening(s) on the committee will be made at the Spring Banquet; a notice will be posted in the April *Observer*; and Ron will ask Tim to place a notice on the listserv.

Chamberlin and University of Denver Anniversaries: 2014 is the 120th anniversary of First Light in Chamberlin's 20" telescope and the 150th anniversary of the University of Denver. Dr. Stencel suggested that DAS consider holding an anniversary celebration during the July 19 Open House. An anniversary committee composed of Darrell, Dena, Jeff and Sorin was created. Ideas discussed included a publicity blitz, having cake on hand for guests, doing fund-raising, offering (for a small fee) to photograph visitors with the telescope, with old-fashioned clothes on hand to make them look historical.

DAS Leadership/Mentor Program: Lisa is pursuing the idea on mentoring anyone who is interested in running for Vice President in years to come, teaching the ropes about securing speakers for meetings and other VP duties. Ron Hranac would like to extend this to other officer positions as well. He noted that some organizations have a second VP position. The consensus of the board was that this is worth pursuing. Ron agreed to create a notice to this effect to be published in *The Observer*.

DAS Finance Committee: Ron announced that he would like to have a Finance Committee formed to provide oversight and guidance. Digby volunteered to be on the committee; Dena advised that she has already offered to help Luis with some of the tasks (making deposits from mail received and Public Night proceeds). It was reported that Frank Mancini is winding down his business and that he may be available for the committee. Brad needs to continue to be available for advice, when needed. A motion was made and passed creating a finance committee to consist of three members.

DAS Finances - Contingency/Reserve Fund: Ron Hranac expressed his desire to create a fund for unforeseen expenses and circumstances which may arise, such as a poor economy. Possibilities include determining an amount based upon the expenses to cover a certain number of months, as well as designating a certificate of deposit. He noted that the Dark Sky Site has a contingency fund to cover expenses in the event of closing it. He asked that the Finance Committee, when formed, make a recommendation.

Miscellaneous: Dan reported that thirteen jackets for members will be ordered as soon as the last payment is received. The large disc featuring the DAS logo is missing. Banners for events need to be ordered, probably one 6' long and one 12' long. Handout materials are needed for Starfest. Chuck has asked the Night Sky Network for materials, but they are now charging \$90 for a box and postage. Ed asked that requests be made in advance for loaner scopes to be used during special events.

Next Meeting: The next e-board meeting will be held on Friday March 21 at 7:30 p.m.

Adjournment: A motion to adjourn was made and passed at 9:30 p.m.