

**Denver Astronomical Society**  
**Minutes of April 18, 2014 E-Board Meeting**

**Officers Present:**

President - Ron Hranac                      Vice President - Lisa Judd  
Secretary - Dena McClung                Treasurer - Luis Uribe

**Board Members Present:**

Jack Eastman      Joe Gafford              Chuck Habenicht              Digby Kirby  
Ed Scholes              Sorin                      Jeff Tropeano                  Dan Wray

**Absent:**      Ron Pearson

**Observatory Representative:**

Dr. Robert Stencel

**Other Members and Guests:**

Hugh Davidson, Volunteer Coordinator                      Dennis Cochran  
Darrell Dodge, Website Administrator                      Brad Gilman  
Naomi Pequette, Outreach Coordinator

**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.

**Chamberlin Business:** Dr. Stencel reminded the board that his request for a \$5,000 donation is still on the table, and that the annual operator recertification training will be held on Saturday May 17 at 1:00 p.m. He reported that Aaron Reid is on leave. He discussed the status of the 20" telescope following its recent breakdown; the RA axis has frozen in place. There is no sign of damage on its exterior surfaces. Fred, who worked on it a few years ago, is in favor of dismantling the portion of the RA assembly containing the rollers; he is advising Dr. Stencel via telephone. Dr. Stencel estimated that the telescope will be down for at least another week, and asked for assistance from DAS members - standing on ladders, turning wrenches, and finding a machinist. The issue of the focuser was also discussed. Stuart Hutchins has made drawings of an adapter plate that would allow another 1" of travel with the current focuser, and Dr. Stencel has approved that plan.

**Treasurer's Report:** Luis reported that all DAS accounts have had the signatures changed over except for the one(s) at the credit union, which need(s) more documentation. QuickBooks is working fine now, he has a manual for it. He is still working on the bookkeeping system and expects to be up to speed in a couple of weeks. He asked that requests for payments include a date, the firm to be paid, the amount, and which fund the payment is to come from. Account balances are as follows:

General Fund:	21,497.12
Dark Sky Site:	4,633.57
180-day CD:	10,522.65
90-day CD:	5,173.97
VNH:	19,819.19
VNH CD:	64,829.00
Paypal:	1,649.46

Ron Hranac requested a head count of current members.

## Old Business

**Chamberlin 120<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration:** Dena reported that she, Sorin and Naomi had met with Dr. Stencel regarding plans for the event, which will take place on Saturday July 19. Rather than charging a fee, it was decided that Dr. Stencel and other DU staff/students would use signs with suggested donation amounts and collection boxes to solicit donations from guests. These donations will constitute the “photo-shoot fee” and will be handled solely by DU personnel, relieving DAS of any financial involvement or handling of funds. The need to publicize and promote the event was discussed, including press releases, social media, putting posters in libraries and other locations, covering it on DU and DAS websites, in *The Observer*, and advising the Observatory Park HOA (which Dr. Stencel will do). Volunteers will be solicited via the Yahoo listserve, Constant Contact messages, and in *The Observer*. Volunteers will be needed to do presentations, build temporary structures (such as a “fishing booth”), and man various stations. It was decided that the e-board listserve will be used to come to a conclusion in the near future regarding advertising materials, in light of the upcoming StarFest and DMNS Space Day outreach events. The event will be held from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. to prevent overheating issues for those attending as well as volunteers, and to provide a clean break between the celebration and the Open House the same evening. It was discussed that guests who donate should receive either a hand stamp or a “I donated” button to grant them access to the observatory at no charge that evening. The issue of holding a raffle arose, and Luis agreed to look into the legalities and e-mail a report to the e-board.

**Summer Picnic:** It was decided that, because of the 120<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration, that the summer picnic be moved to another date. Dan Wray has been checking on the possibility of holding it at Bear Creek Park, just east of C-470 and north of Hwy 285. He suggested that we bring our own lunches and our telescopes, and arrange in advance an area to use for observing, inviting campers to join us. It is possible that a reservation would be required. With consensus from the board, Dan agreed to look into it further.

**Van Nattan-Hansen Scholarship Fund:** Ron Hranac read from a report emailed to him by VNH Chairman Tim Pimentel. Two checks totaling \$340 have been received by the fund since the banquet. The committee is still working on getting information out to Denver area high schools and colleges, despite issues finding contact information for guidance counselors. The committee has decided to keep the advertising local, as opposed to using Scholarships.com. One application has been received from a student in Maryland, and distributed to the committee members for consideration. Any funds awarded will be announced no later than August 1, 2014. Jeff advised that he will make posts about the fund using DAS' social media.

**Dark Sky Site:** Darrell will get a copy of the lease to Ron Hranac. The current lease expires December 31, 2017. The DSS committee needs to discuss storage options. Several measures are being taken to prevent a re-infestation of rattlesnakes. Live mouse traps that will hold 8-10 mice have been ordered. Galvanized hardware cloth needs to be installed as building skirting, extending below grade to a depth of 20”. The cost is estimated to be more than \$300. A work team will be put together, and no spraying will be done this time.

**Missing Items:** Hugh has compiled a list of all volunteers who will need access to the cash drawer and the equipment cabinets. Keys for the new padlock have been made and stamped with unique

numbers. He is in the process of distributing them in accordance with his list. Ed circulated examples of asset stickers. They are difficult to remove by peeling, and some of them will leave the word "theft" on the item if removed. The cost of a set of stickers could be \$200-\$300. It was mentioned that stickers for eyepieces would need to be rather small. Ed was instructed to purchase whichever stickers he and Ron Hranac deemed best. Two new sets of binoculars have been purchased and added to the inventory.

**Endowment Request:** The consensus of the board is that it intends to support the request, but that the manner and amount need to be determined. It was recommended that a deadline for coming to a conclusion be established, and that two or three options be presented at the May e-board meeting. In light of the need for legal advice on the issue, Brad agreed to send our attorney's contact information to Ron Hranac.

**Finance Committee:** The committee's charter is not complete. Former member Frank Mancini has contributed some language toward the wording of the charter. The committee still needs one more member. Lisa agreed to list the opening in the Job Jar. One task for the committee will be to recommend an amount for the contingency fund. Suggestions include setting aside one-third to one-half a year's operating expenses. This would be an amount somewhere between \$6,500 and \$10,000.

### **New Business**

**Member Survey:** There were 96 responses (a 32% return rate), three of which came from people who were not renewing. A 32-page pdf of the raw responses was emailed to every board member. Ron Hranac asked that an email be sent to the members to thank them for their participation, and tell them that we are committed to reporting back to them. He would also like this email to ask them to step forward and become involved. Jeff has agreed to sort the written answers into categories, and Jeff, Jack, Digby and Lisa volunteered to participate in a group to analyze the results, and to report on the feasibility of implementing suggestions. Most responses were positive. Constructive criticism included improving youth outreach and making it easier for members to get to meetings. The feedback on the dues indicates that they are satisfactory to low. Some comments addressed a desire to see activities offered, such as an astrophotography workshop. The results will eventually be posted online and made available to the public.

**Social Media:** Jeff asked the e-board if everyone was okay with him posting videos on the DAS You-Tube channel, and all said yes.

**Banners & Outreach:** It was agreed to have Chuck obtain two more banners; one 5' long, and one 10' long. Darrell was approached by a woman who suggested that we get embroidered sew-on patches. Sorin has looked into getting 4" vinyl stickers. Naomi said she would ask David Catlin about the rigid stickers that he had printed.

**Wyoming Bear Trap Site Trip:** The Casper astronomy club would like some help scoping out their potential replacement for the WUTS star party site. Lisa and Digby expressed interest in visiting the Bear Trap campground July 26-27, along with perhaps one or two other DAS members. The site is in a national forest. It was mentioned that an SQL meter should be used to take readings. If this site is suitable, Casper may resurrect WUTS next year.

**New Members:** At present, no printed or email letters are going to new members. Digby is making calls to new members, but is reaching less than half of them. Those he reaches do give him good responses. It was suggested that a pdf letter be created to automatically go out to new members, and that it include a paragraph from the president. A printed letter should be sent to new members who do not have an email address. Lisa agreed to check with the Denver Postcard Society to see if we can use, sell or post the cartooned Chamberlin postcard. It was recommended that we have a designated greeter to meet new members and guests after our meetings; that we have member applications available at meetings, public nights, and open houses; that board members spread out during the general membership meetings so as to mix more with members and guests; and that a youth group be established, along with packets specially designed for young people.

**Next Meeting:** The next e-board meeting will be held on Friday May 18 at 7:30 p.m.

**Adjournment:** A motion to adjourn was made and passed at 9:50 p.m.

### Online Updates

Received prior to April 2014 E-board meeting

Topic: IT

Reported by: Scott Leach

Status: IT is in good shape. I have had no requests, or reports of difficulty or problems in over a month. Reservation system is also in good shape and has no issues at this time.

E-board Action: None

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Topic: Speakers

Reported by: Lisa

Status: Just got contacted by a club member, Dave Schlichting, who's done some work on the MAVEN mission and has grabbed the September spot. So, the whole year is booked.

E-board action needed: None

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Topic: Picnic

Reported by: Lisa

Status: Need to know whether 120th anniversary celebration would be a morning event ending by 4:00, or an evening thing leading into Open House as described on preliminary brochure. Believe a private club event would be a conflict with a public outreach event held for the observatory. Realize that it's already on Joe's calendar, but 120th anniversary planning came about after the calendar went out. Since it's one of those unique positions where OH is at last quarter, so as not to conflict with July 4th weekend, hope that buys us some space for the ordinarily bad practice of moving a date. If we do, I'd like to try a concept of moving the place too, up in the mountains, as a full potluck.

**E-board action needed: Latest info on the anniversary celebration, discussion, preferences.**

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Topic: ALCON 2017 vendor invitations

Reported by: Lisa

Status: nobody's booked yet with Lowell, but it's still very early. Will be sending out reminders in late April.

E-board action needed: none

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Topic: Bear Trap Meadows scouting expedition

Reported by: Lisa

Status: need to go scoping for a weekend in July and check out light pollution at the site. Believe that all other details of the grounds (restrooms, campsites, water & electricity, proximity to hotels) will bode well for possible large WUTS-like annual star party in the future. Site will definitely be used for large star party during 2017 eclipse, so structure needs to be developed during summers between now and then.

**E-board action needed: volunteers of the star-party-nut variety**

Topic: Quartermaster's Report

Reported by: Ed Scholes

Status: I recorded the new binoculars and a microphone that was donated by Jeff (thanks Jeff). We covered the a couple of the telescopes in the storage room at Chamberlin with plastic bags. I received samples of asset tags of various types. Al the new tags use a bar code instead of simple numbers. If we use the new tags to identify DAS items we will also need to purchase a bar code reader. Total cost \$300 - \$400. But I'm not quite finished shopping yet.

**E-board action needed: Not specified**

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Topic: Social Media

Reported by: Jeff

Status: Doing great on Social Media. Had been a bit of a quiet period over the past few weeks, but the Lunar Eclipse posts were very popular. I received an e-mail from Scott Lewis from knowthecosmos.com and the official Google+ Weekly Virtual Star Party. He wanted to use my lunar eclipse video on his weekly podcast. I gave him the OK, but only if he agrees to put the DAS information on the video, and plug DAS.

Facebook: 625 likes, up 125 (25%) from last board meeting.

Twitter: 140 followers, up nearly 35 (33%) from last board meeting.

YouTube: 175 views of the Project PANOPTES video.

**Board Action Needed: I'd like to upload my Lunar Eclipse video to the DAS YouTube account. I'll put the DAS information on the video so it feels like a DAS thing, not a Jeff Tropeano thing. Want OK from the board to do that. If anyone else has video or photo content that can be uploaded to DAS Social Media, please let me know!**

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Topic: DAS Membership Survey

Reported by: Jeff

Status: Phew. Survey results have been collected, and I've pulled all of the data together into a report that is attached. Warning: It is 32 pages, so grab a coffee or beer when you sit down with it.

**Board Action Needed: Review the survey results and discuss at upcoming board meeting. I would recommend that we dedicate 20 minutes at the board meeting for discussion, and 10 minutes to compile a list of action items based on the survey feedback.**

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Topic: Outreach

Reported by: Naomi

Status: April Events:

**Majestic View Nature Center:** Luis organizing

**Henry World Middle School, April 25th:** We have 3 volunteers, including myself, signed up for this event.

**Starfest:** Sorin's astronomy panel has been confirmed for Saturday. The DAS will have a table in the main atrium Saturday and Sunday. Weather permitting, we will also do a small star party Saturday night. We have 5 volunteers signed up for Saturday, and 4 for Sunday.

**East High School, May 7:** 2 volunteers signed up so far. As the event gets closer, I will put out another call for volunteers as this could have up to 60 students and their families attending

**Dinosaur Ridge Open House, May 10:** 2, possibly 3 volunteers signed up for this event. They will be at a table for the club as well as doing solar viewing

**Space Day at DMNS, May 10:** They would like us to have a table at the event as well as solar viewing. I will be giving a presentation on Mayan Archaeoastronomy. Just put out call for volunteers via the listserv and a sign-up sheet was available at the last general meeting

**Boy Scouts of America Camp June 24 - 27:** Their camp this year is astronomy themed. On one of these nights they would like us to provide a speaker to give a 30 minute presentation on some astronomy topic. In the early stages of organization.

**Mt. Evans:** Date unknown, working on following up on this

**Keystone Science School,** date unknown: A weekend event. There would be nighttime observing and some solar observing and lectures during the day. DAS member Mark Laurin is the point of contact for this. He imagines a "mini-RMSS" like experience for these kids. Dorms would be provided for DAS members to bunk. He still needs approval from the school's "DC" for this event, but is keeping us in the loop.

E-board Action: None Required

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Topic: DAS Banner

Reported by: Chuck the Grumpy

Status: I recently had a 6 foot DAS banner printed up. With multiple events coming up, do we want to get 1 or 2 more? Different sizes? Different styles? Different layouts?

**E-board Action: Discuss and decide**