

Denver Astronomical Society
Minutes of April 10, 2015 E-Board Meeting

- Officers Present:** Ron Hranac – President, Stuart Hutchins – Vice President, Jeff Tropeano – Secretary
- Board Members Present:** Jack Eastman, Ron Pearson, Joe Gafford, Dan Wray, Chuck Habenicht, Ed Scholes, Johnny O. Barela, Ken Sturrock
- Observatory Representative:** Dr. Robert Stencel
- Absent:** Sorin, Luis Uribe, Hugh Davidson
- Other Members and Guests:** Dennis Cochran, Eileen Barela, Darrell Dodge, Michael Nowak, Zach Singer, David Shouldice
-

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

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

New Agenda Items: Joe Gafford requested that we add an item on the agenda to plan the Spring Picnic.

DU's Historic Chamberlin Observatory Business: Dr. Robert Stencel reminded the group that it's getting to be spring time, and critters will begin to be spotted at the observatory, including moths, bats, flies, wasps, and bees. If the problem gets significantly "biblical," he should be contacted. It is also advised to not pick up a bat with your bare hands, and thick gloves will be placed in the ready room.

The observatory dome seized up last week when being used by Ron Mickle, but it is suspected that the belt slipped due to the warm weather. Dan Wray suggested that the belt be tightened if necessary. Dr. Stencel added that the motorized dome slewing system is due for maintenance, repair, or replacement.

Doug Dreher and Todd Thomas have reported that the Telrad switch is wearing out, and will likely need to be replaced or repaired, and Dr. Robert Stencel asked if anyone would be able to donate a Telrad. Ed Scholes thinks there may be an unused Telrad in the DAS cabinet. He will check to see if the DAS has a Telrad to donate.

Dr. Stencel also mentioned that Doug Dreher reported that the right ascension lock was not locking.

Dr. Stencel spoke about the last open house, where there were many guests. He overheard a complaint by a parent that the "line hasn't moved for an hour." He suggested that we reinstitute using the bullhorn, or calling numbers, or giving guidance as to the wait. These changes will provide a better experience to guests.

Dr. Stencil also suggested that we begin planning for the Sunday, September 27 lunar eclipse, since the timing would be 8 PM – 11 PM.

The upper office has too many heavy items in it, and needs to be de-cluttered. Dr. Stencil is worried about the structural integrity of the office, as it is supported only by a pair of 2x4 joists.

Jack Eastman asked if the University archives have any parts from when the dome was hand cranked as a back up system. Dr. Stencil doesn't believe these parts exist anywhere.

Dr. Stencil mentioned there has been a lot of dark sky stuff in the news, including a few websites. LED lights are being installed in streetlights, and are popular due to energy efficiency. Unfortunately, these prove worse for overall light pollution. Dr. Stencil also recommends using orange goggles in bed to reduce the amount of light exposure.

Treasurer's Report: Luis was not able to make the meeting to deliver the treasurers report, attached below in "Online Updates." Ron Hranac read the Treasurer's report on behalf of Luis.

Dr. Robert Stencil clarified that the report states that a check was cut to Robert Stencil for head tax, but that the check is actually made out to DU.

OLD BUSINESS

Treasurer – Open: Ron Hranac introduced Mike Nowak, who has volunteered for the Treasurer position. Mike is a new member, and was invited to the board meeting to introduce himself and provide background. Previous to the meeting, Mike provided two references, which Luis Uribe called and received positive reviews.

Mike introduced himself to the group. He has a degree in accounting, and has been working in accounting for 8 years, including bookkeeping, reconciliations, tax, deposits, federal tax returns. He has always been interested in astronomy, and looking to contribute to the club. He saw the DAS Facebook posting looking for a treasurer, and decided to reach out. In his day job, Mike is doing property taxes at a telecommunications company in Boulder.

Stuart Hutchins asked if Mike will be able to devote the necessary amount of time required to fulfill the position, and asked how much time Mike can give per month? Mike responded 20 hours per month, which is the most that would be necessary in membership renewal season.

Ron Hranac mentioned the cumbersome magazine benefit, and it requiring investigation and solution. Darrell Dodge mentioned that there is a method by which the magazine can have the member renew him or herself.

Dr. Robert Stencil asked if Mike has experience with QuickBooks, to which Mike responded that he's been working with QuickBooks for over 10 years.

Jeff Tropeano will send Mike the financial materials that Luis compiled a few months ago: Profit and

Loss, Balance Sheet, Budget.

Mike wants to sit with Luis to transition the duties, but doesn't feel he needs any more information from Luis to affect his decision to volunteer for the position.

Dan Wray moves that Mike Nowak is appointed to Treasurer position, and Jack Eastman seconded the motion. There was no discussion. **The Motion passed unanimously.**

Newsletter Editor – Open: Bernd will be moving back to Germany in early June. Ron Hranac introduced Zach Singer, who is taking over the duties of newsletter editor. Zach has volunteered for the Denver Astronomical Society as photographer of the 120th anniversary celebration, and has a background in publishing.

Zach introduced himself. Zach is a professional photographer by trade, and he has been the associate editor at Outdoor Photographer, PC Photo, and Digital Photo Pro. He was responsible for several articles, as well as associate editor duties, which included reviewing and fixing other people's work, and has 70,000 - 100,000 words in print. Zach has experience with Quark Xpress, and other desktop publishing platforms. Zach would use InDesign for the newsletter, which is a modern software package that he is familiar with.

Zach has been working closely with Bernd in the background for the April newsletter already, and feels comfortable with the duties of "herding cats" as well as the desktop publishing software.

Ron Pearson mentioned that Patti used Pages (a consumer Macintosh publishing software package), and moving to InDesign would provide a quantum leap forward in publishing opportunity for the newsletter. Zach plans to use a similar layout and look to keep it easy to produce.

Darrell Dodge will link the editor@denverastro.org address to Zach's email.

Stuart Hutchins recommends that Zach publish his expectations and deadlines for content on the DAS listserv. Stuart Hutchins, Zach, and Jack Eastman discussed the requirements around the lead-time for printing and publication. There is a complexity with The Denver Observer, since it publishes many upcoming events that people need to prepare for, and not receive the newsletter after some of the events happen. Bernd asked that the board define deadlines, publish dates, and arrival date goals. Ron Pearson mentioned that Patti was able to have the PDF version on the 1st of the month, and the physical printed copy would be shipped on the 1st of the month. Zach expressed concern that no matter the deadline or schedule that is defined, the current newsletter will be "behind" since we're already into April, and there is no content for the May newsletter yet. Zach also recommends to push the digital issue instead of physical, since the postal shipping time effects the publication date.

Jack Eastman moved to make Zach Singer the new editor of The Denver Observer, and was seconded by Stuart Hutchins. There was no further discussion. **The motion passed unanimously.**

Ron Pearson suggested to Zach that he do something to tighten up the proofreading, especially related to inconsistent information across multiple DAS material, such as the newsletter and website. It was suggested that the editor use Joe Gafford's calendar as the system of record, since the website

uses Joe's calendar as well.

Public Night Reservations, Fees: Jeff Tropeano met with Scott Leach to discuss the options available on the Public Reservation system. Specifically, it was possible to issue refunds or reschedules automatically. Scott reported to Jeff that it is **not** possible to automatically issue a refund if a guest cancels their reservation within a certain time frame. If the reservation is cancelled, and the guest wishes to get a refund, the refund must be issued manually. A potential work-around is to allow the guest to cancel, but to schedule a new reservation as a cash-paying customer, and have them bring their previous reservation's printed receipt for admittance. Scott has not been able to add the requested functionality to the Public Night system due to his busy work schedule. The additional functionality including automated e-mail reminders, working with Darrell to seamlessly integrate the look-and-feel of the website into the reservation system, and automatic alerting of cancelled reservations. Jeff expressed frustration at the lack of responsiveness and action on these lingering items, and suggested that someone else take the task of managing the IT infrastructure including the Public Night Reservation system.

David Shouldice mentioned that the goal of the program is to get people to show up when they have a reservation.

Stuart raised a situation where a school group paid for 26 spots, but came with only 6 guests, and used it as an example of a situation we should account for. Stuart mentioned that the school group leader completely understood that reserving takes up a "spot," and that's what she's paying for. David Shouldice was pleased with the situation, since in previous situations, large school groups just wouldn't show up at all.

Johnny O. Barela suggested that a person be able to cancel 2 weeks before the date to cancel, and issue a refund. David Shouldice said that the guest should have "skin in the game" when they make a reservation, and it's only \$4 for a great night of entertainment.

Dan Wray asked Dr. Stencel for some thoughts and advice on the situation. Dr. Stencel advised that the number voicemails has significantly lessened, and there doesn't seem to be a problem reported by guests.

NEW BUSINESS

IT: Ron Hranac brought up the IT request to fix the dome room laptop, since the laptop screen is dead. Scott's recommendation is that the laptop be replaced with a new laptop, with an SSD (Solid State Drive) hard drive so that it's more agreeable to the temperature fluctuation, as well as an LED screen. There are currently no cost estimates to procure this laptop. David Shouldice raised the issue that the laptop can be easily stolen, since they aren't chained down. He suggested that the laptop be much more simple, and not attractive to a thief, and to not spend much on a replacement laptop. Darrell Dodge suggested a Chromebook for \$199. David Shouldice doesn't believe temperature is a major issue. David Shouldice will ask the membership for an old laptop to donate and running the ad in the newsletter and DAS listserv.

Regarding IT staffing, Jeff Tropeano asked that the board seek some additional resources to the IT group, including replacing the IT coordinator, Scott Leach. Scott has a new job, and has been unable to respond to requests in a timely manner. There are 4 laptops, a wi-fi network, and the web reservation system administration that need attention by the IT staff. Stuart Hutchins suggested that we speak to Scott about the issue, and ask him if he's not able to take the duties.

Ken Sturrock mentioned that supporting the dome room laptop and lecture laptop wouldn't be a difficult task. He also mentioned that the IT person should provide documentation. Ken Sturrock would be willing to take on the IT role temporarily to feel it out.

Ron Hranac will discuss the IT responsibilities and potential change with Scott Leach.

David Shouldice asked that the team leads be given the administrator password to dome room laptop.

VNH Fund – 1Q: Ron Hranac had hoped that Luis would be able to speak to the outstanding task of transferring the Q1 VNH funds, but Luis was not able to make the meeting and no update was provided. Ron Hranac will follow up with Luis on the Q1 funds transfer.

DAS Roster: Darrell Dodge brought the current member list roster as a mock-up packet for review by the board. The last publication of the member roster was printed at OfficeMax and bound by Darrell himself to save on cost. Ed Scholes mentioned that he was recently involved in a similar project and found that Staples was much cheaper than OfficeMax. The booklet is 1.2 ounces and a booklet, so it could be expensive to mail, even if the printing costs were low. Two years ago the club handed them out at the banquet and general meetings. Ron Hranac asked that the board approve expenditure for not above \$400 to produce and mail the booklets. **Ron Pearson presented a motion to approve up to \$400 to print and mail the membership roster, seconded by Jack.** There was no further discussion. **The motion passed unanimously.**

Dark Sky Site: Luis Uribe will use last year's numbers to mail Henry a payment for the annual lease and electrical bill, as recommended by Darrell Dodge and Ron Hranac. Ron Hranac reviewed the new lease agreement with Henry that was negotiated last year, where DAS increase the lease amount by \$100, even though Henry asked for \$50.

Ron Pearson asked Darrell Dodge for a status on the updated formation of the Dark Sky Site committee. Darrell Dodge planned to drum up interest at the Messier Marathon, but because of poor skies, not many showed up. Darrell Dodge will e-mail the interested folks to form up the committee.

Spring Picnic: Ron Hranac asked for an opinion on the picnic. Last year the picnic was held during the day, and attendance was poor although the venue was great and folks enjoyed the event. Normally the picnic is coupled with an Open House. The question is if the picnic should be back at Observatory Park, or a different park similar to last year. The general thought was mixed, with a leaning toward having the picnic at Observatory Park, based on the fact that folks didn't well attend the event last year. David Shouldice suggested that we still do a potluck where the club brings meat and plates, and the members bring side dishes. A consensus was made to have a potluck at the park on July 25th 4:00 PM before open house. Stuart Hutchins will coordinate.

Miscellaneous: Dr. Robert Stencil asked the DAS to help coordinate an event for the September Lunar Eclipse. The DAS open House in September is on the 19th. Dr. Robert Stencil could have DU and student participation for the Special Lunar Eclipse Open House.

Ron Pearson asked what the DAS participation would be for Space Day at the museum. The museum is expecting 10,000 people. Ron mentioned that DAS would have a table inside as well as lecture time, and the west patio. Ron Pearson suggested we square up the details for this public outreach event.

Stuart Hutchins mentioned that Daniel Bisque is the speaker for the May meeting.

Ron Hranac met Justin McHeffey of CBS 4 Denver Weather and suggested that he speak at an upcoming meeting. Jeff Tropeano will introduce Chris and Justin to Stuart Hutchins via e-mail.

Next E-board Meeting: The next e-board meeting will be held on Friday, May 8 at 7:30 PM. at DU's historic Chamberlin Observatory.

Adjournment: A motion to adjourn was made and passed at 9:43 PM.

MOTIONS

- A motion to appoint Mike Nowak to the Treasurer position was made by Dan Wray, and seconded by Jack Eastman. **The Motion passed unanimously.**
 - A motion to make Zach Singer the new editor of The Denver Observer was made by Jack Eastman, and seconded by Stuart Hutchins. There was no further discussion. **The motion passed unanimously.**
 - A motion to approve up to \$400 to print and mail the membership roster was presented by Ron Pearson, and seconded by Jack Eastman. There was no further discussion. **The motion passed unanimously.**
-

SUMMARY OF ACTION ITEMS

The follow Action Items are indicated in the meeting minute with underlined text, and are aggregated below:

- Dr. Stencil will put a pair of thick gloves in the ready room in the event someone needs to grab a bat.
- Ed Scholes will check to see if the DAS has a Telrad to donate to the 20" Clark telescope.
- Jeff Tropeano will send Mike the financial materials that Luis compiled a few months ago: Profit and Loss, Balance Sheet, Budget.
- Darrell Dodge will link the editor@denverastro.org address to Zach Singer's email.
- David Shouldice will ask the membership for an old laptop to donate and running the ad in the newsletter and DAS listserv.
- Ron Hranac will discuss the IT responsibilities and potential change with Scott Leach.
- Ron Hranac will follow up with Luis on the Q1 funds transfer.

- Darrell Dodge will e-mail the interested folks to form up the new Dark Sky Site committee.
- Stuart Hutchins will coordinate the Spring Picnic.
- Jeff Tropeano will introduce Chris Spears and Justin McHeffey (CBS 4 Weather) to Stuart Hutchins via e-mail.

PREVIOUS ACTION ITEMS

- ✓ Ron Hranac will deliver voicemail follow-up list to Hugh Davidson.
- ✓ Stuart Hutchins will follow up with Luis on the receipt of Jack Eastman’s banquet check.
- ✓ Ron Hranac will coordinate with Darrell Dodge another Constant Contact mailing regarding the treasurer vacancy.
- ✓ The treasurer vacancy is to be posted on Social Media sites by Jeff Tropeano.
- Stuart Hutchins will provide a written report of the Spring Banquet to the e-Board listserv.
- ✓ Luis Uribe to complete the VNH donations account transfer.
- ✓ Jeff Tropeano will follow up with Scott Leach to provide the approval and designs necessary to facilitate rescheduling, refunds, and automated e-mails related to the reservation and pre-payment system.

ONLINE UPDATES

Subject: Yahoo Group Listserves

Reported by: Greg Marino

Report: *Total membership is 182, up 3 from last month. No issue with either listserv.*

E-Board Action: *None Required*

Subject: Quartermaster’s Report

Reported by: Ed Scholes

Report: *No scopes on loan. No board action required. I will bring the inventory book to the meeting again. If you are interested, you can see where we are with the DAS inventory.*

E-Board Action: *None required*

Subject: External Outreach

Reported by: Lindsey Shaw

Report: *The only outreach event that we participated in over the past month was AnomalyCon. Please see Sorin's event report for full details. We also have not received donations through our outreach events this past month. Below are the events I'm currently actively recruiting for. We*

currently have no one signed up to present the mythology of constellations lecture.

April 12, 8am-12pm: Frank Shorter Race4Kids Health 5K and Expo at the 1STBANK Center in Broomfield.

April 17, 7:30pm: Candelas Star Party at Candelas Swim and Fitness Club at Townview in Arvada.

May 7 (between 12:30pm-2:30pm) or May 8 (between 7:45am - 2:30pm): This is a request for a "Mythology of Constellations" lecture by Aurora Quest K-8 in Aurora.

May 9, 9am-3pm: Scout Day at Dinosaur Ridge in Morrison.

May 31, 10am-4pm: Space Day at the Denver Museum of Nature and Science.

.....

Subject: IT Request

Reported by: Ron Pearson

Report: As previously reported, at last Open House I arranged with Hugh to open a bit early so I could get the Stellacam video going and perhaps load Team Viewer (previously requested w/ emails) if it hadn't already been loaded. In addition to no Team Viewer software, the USB capture software for the Stellacam 3 camera was gone from the ready room laptop. I also heard that the DAS laptop at the Clark for DSC & The Sky IV has not been working for a month or more.

E-board Action: "DAS IT Dept." needs to restore the capture software for the Stellacam 3 USB device and install Team Viewer on ready room and presentation's laptop. Other software perviously on the ready room laptop may also be gone and need to be restored, as only 3 icons, (one for Starry Night astronomy software) were present on Win 7 desktop. Determine problem with DSC laptop and if fix is possible or needs replacement. If these are not to be supported or used by DAS then board needs to discuss disposal of Stellacam 3, wireless video system and and other pricey hardware like the LCD monitors.

.....

Subject: Van Nattan Hansen Scholarship Fund

Reported by: Ron Pearson

Report: DAS temp Treasurer Luis, mailed me a check from DAS Gen'l Fund of 2014 donations to the VNH Fund. Check was received and deposited in the liquid VNH Credit Union money market account on April 3rd. Waiting on Treasure's accounting and check for transfer of any donations of 1st Qtr. 2015 (member renewals) for deposit.

No report of 1st Qtr. earnings and amount of VNH invested fund from LPL rep. Will be tracking that down.

Have sent out an email for VNH committee and 3 potential new committee members to meet on April

25th @ Chamberlin before Open House starts.

No applications or request for info for scholarships received via email or VNH PO Box, last checked on Apr. 3rd. App deadline is June 15th.

E-Board Action: Treasurer needs to send or hand off accounting and check to transfer any 1st Qtr. 2015 donations to VNH Fund.

.....
Subject: Communications and Web Site

Reported by: Darrell Dodge

Report: Sent out 12 new member welcome emails during March.

Assembled the 2015-16 DAS Roster for review. Print and distribute in April

Sent out CC Emails for March and April Newsletters and posted on Web site.

EBoard Action Required: approve \$300-400 expenditure for printing and distributing roster.

.....
Subject: EG Kline Dark Site

Reported by: Darrell Dodge

Report: Inspection and Site Cleanup in March; Nothing significant to report. No rodent activity in buildings. Rodent/snake barriers holding.

Noted that users are not following instructions for stowing the wind screens, resulting in slight damage to some of the screens. Issued an update of the Wind Screen manual and posted on the Web site. Wind Screen use and storage made a regular part of the site orientation.

Most Encana equipment has been removed from the SW Exploratory Oil Well Site.

EBoard Action Required: Need report on status of the annual lease and electric power payment to Henry Weisenssee.

150
.....

Treasurer Report

**Standing Accounts
April 4 2015
1st Bank Accounts and
Investment Fund**

Type of Account	Ref No	Amount
Checking	X9663	\$9,971.36

Checking	X1049	\$3,602.14
Premier Time Savings	X9213	\$10,546.28
Time Deposit Savings	X3552	\$5,176.27
Principal Fund (4nd Qrtr Rprt)		\$67,014.89
Total		\$96,310.94

Deposits		Total
General Fund	Deposit 3/30	\$666.00
		\$666.00

Transactions in Mar 2015			
PayPal	Number	Fee	Total
Memberships	41	various	\$1,306.00
Banquette	16		\$650.00
Donation Darksite	1		\$20.00
Donation General	1		\$10.00

Current Balance **\$16,645.88**

Note: Transfer to General fund will show in Apr

Mail	Amount	Fee	Total
Mail-In Membership	1	\$36.00	\$36.00
Mail-In Membership	1	\$21.00	\$21.00
Mail-In Spring Banquette	1	\$50.00	\$50.00
Public Night	1	\$8.00	\$8.00
Total			\$115.00

Public Night	Number	Fee	Total
15-03-05	34		
15-03-10	10		
15-03-12	17		
15-03-17	20		
15-03-19	18		
15-03-24	20		
15-03-26	15		
Total	134		
Public Night			\$205.00
Open House			\$346.00
Total			\$551.00

Note: I don't have break outs for each date this month

Payments	Descripti on	Amount
Dr Bob Stencil	Head tax	\$988.00
Total outlays		\$988.00
