

Natal Midlands Centre - Astronomical Society of Southern Africa

Committee meeting held at home of Colin Kay, Monday 18th August 2003 at 19H30

Present: John Watson (JW), Frikkie de Bruyn (FB), Roger Clifford (RC), Rogan Roth (RR),
Colin Kay (CK), Trevor Morley (TM)
Apologies: Willie van der Merwe (WM)

1. New Committee 2003/4

1. John Watson also Council representative
2. Details to be supplied to ASSA for handbook with: TM
 - list of committee
 - balance sheets
 - AGM minutes; these to be obtained from Leanne

2. Matters arising

1. Covered by minutes of previous meeting.

3. Planning

1. Till further notice, talks are left as follows:
 - August 13th Cosmic background radiation experiments (Dr Catherine Cress)
 - September 10th Spectral Classifications (JW)
 - October 8th The Moon (RR, Philip Hawkins)
 - November 12th "Multiverses" (CK)
 - December 10th Radio Astronomy (RR)

4. Membership

- Peter Baxter, paid
- Hilton College membership list & cheque to be followed up. Stardust to be sent to Don Whitfield for distribution to Hilton College members.JW

5. Correspondence

1. Newsletters to be sent to Natal Society Library
2. Banner correspondence ongoing. Cliff Turk has suggested ASSA logo being placed in a corner of our own banner. FB to find out if this can be done. FB
3. Peter van Blommestein is an alternate ASSA contact and has been in touch with JW. Peter to be put on Stardust distribution list.JW
4. Magazine subscription. Discussion taken to advertise Astronomy magazine's enrolment form to members and to see if 5 members are interested in subscribing to the magazine in order to obtain a reduced subscription rate. RR,FB
5. Usual correspondence received from other ASSA branches.

6. Treasurer

1. R5097.54 in bank (was R2540.76 in 2002).
2. Educational training course, main source of income, was non-event in 2003. 8 evening bookings of the girl guides hall were cancelled. It was agreed that JW donate R240 as compensation to the girl guides and claim this back from NMC.JW
3. Girl-Guides rates are to go up next year to R200 p.a. up from R20 p.a. They lease from Pmb municipality as they're on leased out Pmb municipality timber lands.

7. Stardust

1. Copy for issues is low although FB and RC have supplied some material.
2. A source for space material is required and this should include iridium flares, Hubble telescope info etc. TM
3. A digital copier is being used to produce the newsletter. It's a bit more expensive but gives better quality costing R40c per double-sided copy. It was agreed to use the digital copier.RR

8. Library

1. February 2003 issue missing. No progress from S&T on its whereabouts. It was agreed that we not worry about this any more as the subscription has been cancelled.
2. RR requested a decrease in subscription fees as S&T was a society perk that has now been done way with.

9. PRO

- 1. FB paid for 2x notices to be advertised at Hayfields Centre but found the folk to be uncooperative and inefficient. He also put up notices at the Natal Society Library. JW thanked him for his efforts.
- 2. The Natal Witness and The Mirror are doing quite well for us.
- 3. Village Talk to be followed. Need to find out whom to address notices to. JW to follow up with WM. JW
- 4. Planetarium is due for arrival at the museum during September 2003. Peter Crozier of the museum is being a bit vague about it so the ball has been left in his court. He's to let us know when & what he wants us to do. The 6-month display has been on show at the museum for about 18 months.

10. Observatory & Instruments

- 1. Creaky wheel, lawnmower and burning (Jeremy Dickson) to be attended to.TM
- 2. PF12 viewfinder is skewed towards the bottom left hand corner of the field actually viewed. Another eyepiece is required to increase Mars viewing magnification. CK offered to loan his 1.25" 12mm focal length eyepiece.JW
- 3. Wooden strips are required on the observatory walls for hanging posters etc using velcro. A generator to be arranged for drilling etc when fitting strips to walls. TM to liaise with JW so JW can vacuum clean at the same time.TM

11. Education

- 1. JW thanked those that had manned the observatory the last few months as it is the main PRO and educational activity.
- 2. RR to deal with newspaper PRO regarding special Mars opposition viewing on Friday 29th August.
- 3. JW reported that a private viewing session is scheduled for Saturday 23rd August.
- 4. JW reported that a Howick school viewing function is scheduled for Wednesday 20th August at 6pm.
- 5. RR had had a very successful viewing evening with a recently held cubs camp at the girl guides centre.
- 6. RR had also done a presentation to some 120 Scottsville school pupils after he'd criticised the school's educational astronomy material.
- 7. JW reported that yet R156.00 of yet another Laddsworth School viewing evening experienced poor weather.
- 8. JW noted that we should be more selective in terms of schools selected for viewing evenings and presentations.

12. General

- 1. Joan Houston had prepared a questionnaire. It was agreed that some questions be rephrased and that this be included with the next Stardust.RR
- 2. RR suggested a sky calendar for incorporation with the Stardust. It was agreed that this would be worthy copy for the Stardust. Compilation of such calendars to be pursued.ALL

Meeting ended at 21H15

next meeting: Monday 15th September
venue: Rogan's residence

RC noted his apologies for next meeting due to his been in Italy on a painting trip.