

# Natal Midlands Centre (NMC) - Astronomical Society of Southern Africa

Minutes of Committee meeting held at home of Rogan Roth, Monday 15<sup>th</sup> September 2003 at 19H30

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

## 0. Corrections to previous minutes 18<sup>th</sup> August 2003

1. R200 to be donated to girl guides not R240 (item 4.2)
2. Spelling correction, change Crozier to Croeser (item 8.3)
3. Girl guides future lease of R200 was provided a guideline-guess (item 6.3)

## 1. New Committee 2003/4

1. JW had dealt with ASSA handbook details and correspondence and had obtained AGM minutes from Leanne Hearmon.
2. JW updated the committee's addresses and telephone numbers.
3. Details to be supplied to ASSA Council .....JW
  - committee list
  - financials

## 2. Matters arising

1. Covered by minutes of previous meeting.

## 3. Planning

1. Planned talks are left as follows:
  - October 8<sup>th</sup> ..... The Moon (RR, Philip Hawkins)
  - November 12<sup>th</sup> ..... "Multiverses" (CK)
  - December 10<sup>th</sup> ..... Radio Astronomy (RR)
  - January 2004 ..... no meeting
  - February 11<sup>th</sup> 2004.. Quantum look at the early universe (FB)
2. FB also suggested that talks next year follow a particular direction and suggested "the interstellar medium – the life and death of stars" as being a topic that could be presented over several talks. This however depends on the survey being conducted amongst the society's members.

## 4. Membership

1. No new members, no resignations.
2. Potential members to be struck off the roll due to non-renewal of subscriptions include: .....JW
  - Beresford, Hill, Kirkness, Pooler (Wartburg), Prosser, Stewart and Hilton College
  - JW to contact Hilton College, MacKenzie
  - de Vos will be left on the roll as he often assists NMC beyond the value of the subscription.
3. 8 members are liable for suspension, representing about 10% of membership.
4. There is an impression that NMC isn't recruiting new members.

## 5. Correspondence

1. Banner dealing can be put to bed thanks to perseverance of JW. A cheque of R500 has been received. There is no need to alter NMC's banner although Cliff Turk has suggested the ASSA logo being placed on our own banner. He has supplied the ASSA logo for future reference. FB to find out if this can be done ASAP as the person involved starts full time employment on 26<sup>th</sup> September. .... FB
2. Handbook details sent off by JW.
3. Stardust and minutes to be sent to Peter von Blommestein. ....JW
4. Astronomy magazine subscription. FB has obtained the required documentation. NMC to encourage 5 interested members to subscribe to Astronomy magazine to obtain a reduced subscription rate. Members are to pay the Treasurer the subscription fees for him to send on to the magazine. To be advertised in Stardust and at monthly meeting. Cost is about R300 (US \$40) annually and is about 50% of local newsagents pricing. .... RR,FB
5. FB received a letter from Kerry Hampson who sends regards.
6. ASSA, Brian Fraser, has requested details of all telescopes 10" or larger. JW as curator of instruments to respond. CK to assist with coordinates of the observatory.....JW,CK
7. Usual correspondence received from other ASSA branches.
8. Second post box key to be located. Check with Philip Hawkins and Leanne Hearmon. ....TM

## 6. Treasurer

1. R4974 current at end August.
2. R2000 loan repayment approved by last NMC AGM. R1400 repaid so far. R600 still to be paid.
3. RC has supplied monies for October Stardust distribution. ....RR

## 7. Stardust

1. Article from FB received.
2. Any notices were requested.
3. Space article requested. ....TM
4. Sky calendar is being pursued. ....RR
5. Folk are impressed by the very good quality of the digital copier produced newsletter.
6. Do need more material to fill it to 8 pages.
7. Suggestions made included: ....RR
  - a small donation being made for advertisements placed; was felt that this could be too much trouble given the resulting administration
  - a Chairman's Corner
  - a monthly cartoon by RC
  - a bumper issue of 8 pages every few months. A pleasing comment from the survey has been that the newsletter is a good read particularly as it can be read through in one not-too-lengthy sitting.
  - viewing highlights for the week

## 8. Library

1. Nothing to report.
2. Not being used very much except for monthly meetings. Need ways of making it more accessible to NMC members. ....ALL

## 9. PRO

1. WM to check with newspapers what they're receiving from NMC. Witness, Mirror and Village Talk seem to be working well. Tonight, Friday Diary/Pinboard still advertising August viewing evenings. ....WM
2. Have heard nothing from museum's Peter Croeser about planetarium. Has been left to him to take the initiative.

## 10. Observatory & Instruments

1. Creaky wheel and wooden strips for hanging posters to be attended to. ....TM
2. CK's Barlow 2x eyepiece worked very well. Some discussion as to whether or not NMC should purchase one (costs cR900). RR to track down S&T article on making a homemade 2x eyepiece. ....RR

## 11. Education

1. Mars viewing was great except for the weather.
2. Howick school viewing evening did not happen.
3. Was suggested to change viewing evenings from Friday's to Wednesday's to confuse the weather.
4. Hilton Women's Institute presentation planned for May 2004. ....JW
5. Rotary presentation sometime during 2004 requested by Philip Hawkins. JW's previous Rotary experience's suggest RR check on main purpose of Rotary meeting before scheduling presentation. ....RR

## 12. General

1. Questionnaire response quite good. 15-20 returns so far. JW to look at analysis of returns perhaps regarding them as regular/non-regular meeting attendees. Some useful, nice, constructive comments received. Perhaps we need to report to our members how NMC compares with other ASSA societies. ....JW
2. Questionnaire reminder to placed in Stardust. ....RR

Meeting ended at 20H50

next meeting: Monday 13<sup>th</sup> October

venue: John Watson's residence, 16 Manor Close, Hilton, tel 033 – 343 3646