

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

Minutes of Committee meeting held at home of John Watson, Monday 13th October 2003 at 19H30

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

0. Corrections to previous minutes 15th September 2003

None.

1. Matter Arising from previous minutes

1. Correspondence received from Girl Guides thanking us for the donation we sent.
2. Nothing has been heard from the Natal Museum's Peter Croeser so he is being left to his own devices as regards Planetarium presentations.
3. JW to get database to RR JW
4. ASSA banner (Correspondence) - Mr Turk has queried NMC banner monies. The meeting agreed that NMC will pursue this matter. Unfortunately NMC have no record of ASSA council meetings nor the original correspondence pertaining to the funding of banners. It appears that there has been a misunderstanding somewhere along the line. The meeting agreed the best way forward was to simply finalise this matter. JW

New Matters Arising

2. Planning

1. Speakers were thanked for an interesting October 'Moon' talk.
2. Planned talks are left as follows:
November 12th "Multiverses" (CK)
December 10th Radio Astronomy (RR)
January 2004 no meeting
February 11th 2004.. Quantum look at the early universe (FB)
March 08th 2004..... Interstellar medium (FB)
3. CK is still on schedule for monthly meeting talk 12th November. If CK not available, then RR to do radio astronomy or FB to do interstellar medium, else FB to talk in March.
4. FB's interstellar medium talk to comprise 'life of stars', 'stellar evolution' and 'death of stars'.

3. Membership

1. A resignation letter was received from Roy Kirkness along with an enclosed cheque for his current subscription.
2. There has been a good response to the dire threat of membership:
 - there are only 4 members subscriptions outstanding (Smith; Beresford; Lynn Wright; MacKenzie)
 - Hilton College had made a generous donation
 - de Vos left on the membership roll as he often assists NMC beyond the value of the subscription)
3. In all, some 56 members have paid up subscriptions.

4. Correspondence

1. The possibility of subscribing to the Astronomy magazine through NMC was discussed. Subscription is c.R493.00 p.a. giving a discount of 33-50%. A better option seemed to be 5 people contributing to monthly costs of FB's Astronomy magazine purchase as the discount would only occur if NMC were to get 5 people to subscribe to the magazine.
2. Usual correspondence received from other ASSA branches.
3. Second post box key located and given to TM..... TM

5. Treasurer

1. R6424.15 current total.
2. The includes R600 still to be repaid on the loan but, even with anticipated expenses, NMC have about R2000 that can be spent as capital expenditure. Suggestions included upgrading of telescopes:
 - Maintenance work on telescopes
 - sighter (Telrad) for the 12" telescope..... RR
 - an Orion or Barlow lense could be acquired. An article to make a DIY Barlow lense from a 2x camera adapter to be located RR

6. Stardust

1. Chairman's corner has been included.
2. Space article still not done.....TM
3. Sky calendar is being pursued. Discussion on layout and in-graphic-horizon took place.....RR
4. Scrap book corner to be pursued.RC
5. FB has an article to send to RR.FB

7. Library

1. Not discussed . CK not present (poor health).

8. PRO

1. Croeser to be left on Stardust mailing list but we're not getting involved in the Museum's Planetarium presentations.
2. WM to check weekend events with The Witness (Jo Mathewman), Mirror and Village Talk especially those appearing in the Diary/Pinboard and whatever now replaces these as an 'events calendar'..... WM
3. The advertising of the 'Training Course' by the Witness and a shop in Howick to be resolved..... WM

9. Observatory & Instruments

1. Mowing, creaky wheel and wooden strips for hanging posters to be attended to.....TM
2. General work party to be held Nov 15/16th; also possible work on October 24th/25th and November 1st/2nd.....TM

10. Education

1. This is a quiet time of the year; Nothing to report.

11. General

1. Questionnaire feedback is along the lines of: topics either being too simple or too complex; we're all stalwarts for keeping NMC going; more hand on astronomy is required; more cosmology is required; and, telescopes must become more user-friendly.
2. Summary and/or analysis of responses received to be done.JW

Meeting ended at 20H56

next meeting: Monday 17th November

venue: Rogan Roth's residence, 2 Marwick Rd, Prestbury,, tel 033 – 344 2635