

**Minutes of the ASSA Council Meeting held at 20h00 on August 30, 2005  
in the  
SAAO Lecture Hall.**

**1 Welcome**

The chair, Ms Pat Booth, welcomed everybody, thanked them for coming and started the meeting at 20h00

**2 Register**

This was passed around and signed. The following were present:

Chris de Coning, Cliff Turk, Ian Glass, Rupert Hurly, Pat Booth, Andrew McConnell , Keith Gottschalk and Case Rijdsdijk.

**2.1 New Council**

There was some initial discussion whether there was a quorum and on the incoming council. The constitution states that if there are no nominations for council then the existing council would continue in their present positions. However what was the case if there were some nominations: would those form council and could they then co-opt others? There was ambiguity here and Case Rijdsdijk said that the intention of the constitution was clear and in the spirit of these intentions he proposed that the existing council continue with its present members and office bearers. This was seconded by Cliff Turk. After this the meeting was able to continue as per agenda. Cliff Turk to e-mail all members to contact the secretary stating that they were willing to continue.

**3 Apologies**

M A Gray, Maciej Soltynski, Auke Slotegraaf, Peter Martinez, Peter van Blommestein, (ill health), Dave Laney, Abe Mohammed and out of town members.

**4 Minutes of the Previous meeting – June 21, 2005**

Proposed by Pat Booth

Seconded by Cliff Turk

**5 Matters arising**

- 5.1 Maciej Soltynski's withdrawal of proposal from previous council meetings. Chris de Coning said he would like to re-propose the original proposal. The president, Ms P Booth said that she would like to propose that there be a wide discussion on this and that then a small sub-committee (working group?) be set up. This was seconded by Ian Glass. Cliff Turk disagreed with this and there was some discussion. Eventually Chris de Coning said that he would start a wide ranging discussion by contacting Auke Slotegraaf and get something into MNASSA to initiate the discussion.
- 5.2 Certificates. Auke Slotegraaf (via e-mail) said he had a graphic designer producing a template for a certificate and Magda Streicher was thanked again. Cliff Turk and Rupert Hurly pointed out that there were other certificates and that these were Observing Certificates.
- 5.3 Museum articles – Andrew Gray. As Andrew Gray was not present it was decided to drop this matter for the present.
- 5.4 Sky Guide Africa South – present status. (From Auke Slotegraaf via e-mail) Striking front and back covers have been selected and the copyrights negotiated (thanks to Maciej Soltynski). Adverts are in place and have been finalized (thanks to Cliff Turk) excluding an advert-request made this week, which is being attended to. The contents is undergoing final revision; section directors have given their cooperation in updating the various parts relevant to them. Centre details have all been updated. The make-up of Council is outstanding. Council members are asked to please look at the table on p 115 in the current Sky Guide ("ASSA calendar for

2005") and let me have updates for 2006, please. I expect to be able to take the job to the printers by Monday, September 12.

I have prepared two posters (which may or may not go into the Sky Guide) for 2006; the first is a lunar calendar, showing the phase of the Moon for each day for 2006. The second is a "Best of 2006", highlighting the most exciting celestial events visible in the southern skies for the year. These are available electronically to anyone interested.

Cliff Turk added that the inside back cover had been sold at R1000 for advertising and expressed concern over the thickness of the Sky Guide as this could affect the cost of postage.

## **6 Council for 2005/6**

See above. The secretary had received a letter from Tony Jones saying that he would no longer be serving on council:

*It is for the following reasons that I regretfully find it necessary to resign my position on Council. For some time I have questioned the benefits of being an ASSA member or indeed serving on Council and conclude that there are none.*

*Council has no idea what is required of it and has no direction or goals for the future, instead council meetings are little more than arguments over trivialities. To this end I endeavoured to encourage council to embark on a program that would encourage observational observing within the Centres, with I might add, little backing or enthusiasm from council members. In fact the President's AGM report intimated that this was my project and that I had failed in bringing it off. In other words, that is that and we will not bother to continue with the project. This lack of ownership or support only shows that ASSA is a toothless, ineffective organisation.*

*The Directors are left to their own self motivation instead of being informed of what is expected of them or given any form of direction. Council should have a firm plan of what it wants to achieve and motivate the Directors to this end and also to make them more visible to the Centres. Most Centre members have no understanding of what ASSA is and in fact the Centres have become autonomous of ASSA.*

*I raise the above points not so much in criticism but in the hope that council may be encouraged to rethink its agenda.*

*For many years I have been involved with tour groups, giving talks and courses to schools, the Cape Centre, not to mention public evenings etc. With this sort of involvement, I felt that I needed to improve my knowledge of astronomy and applied to Council for financial assistance towards a one year university diploma course and was turned down. The reasons given were that I was not supporting a South African institution and that my claim might set a precedent, resulting in a rush of applicants. Surely if applications are reviewed and granted on their applicable merits, it would not matter how many applications are received. Might I add that the SAAO had no hesitation in supporting me and I obtained my diploma this year with a distinction.*

*So again I ask, what are the benefits?*

*Regretfully Yours,*

Pat Booth responded by saying that her remarks were aimed at the general apathy within the ASSA and that they were not directed at him personally.

Council regretted his decision thanked Tony Jones for his services. Case Rijdsdijk proposed that Magda Streicher replace Tony Jones as incoming vice President. Seconded by Pat Booth.

## **7 History Symposium progress**

The ASSA Symposium to be held in Bloemfontein was progressing well and there were no immediate problems.

The History Symposium was progressing well and had received a grant of R98 000 from the National Research Foundation, NRF. There were however a few problems with this as

R50 000 was to be used for getting local experts, and once this had been done the balance could be used for overseas speakers. Ian Glass said that this was a problem as virtually all academic institutions had been contacted for speakers and that response had been poor. There was a similar problem with the IAU Symposium 232. Ian Glass continued by saying that unless there was some positive development, he felt that they might well have to cancel the Symposium. Keith Gottschalk suggested that a letter be drafted to the NRF explaining this.

## **8 Correspondence**

A letter had been received from Tony Jones announcing his resignation (see 6 above). In addition here had been the normal correspondence of Newsletters etc.: nothing that needed councils attention.

## **9 New Members and Dr Heyman's Hon. Membership**

Dudley Field was not present and new members list was carried forward. Cliff Turk raised the matter of Dr Heyman's Honorary Membership. He had not been able to trace Dr Heyman and it was decided to remove his name from the list.

## **10 AOB**

- 10.1 Tony Hilton was to be contacted as the computing section appeared to be defunct. There had been enquiries about this and Case Rijdsdijk to contact Tony Hilton in connection with this.
- 10.2 Ian Glass said that several other sections appeared to be moribund. Chris de Coning to look into this.

## **11 Next meeting**

Next meeting is to be held at the usual venue: the SAAO Lecture Hall on Tuesday, November 01, 2005 at 20h00.