

MINUTES OF ASSA COUNCIL MEETING – 9TH NOVEMBER, 2006

Held in the Auditorium, SAAO, at 20.00

- 1) Welcome by Dave Laney, President, ASSA
- 2) Present: D. Laney, P. Booth, I. Glass, A. Jones, A. Herder, C. de Coning, A. Mc Connell, D. Field, L. Labuschagne, L. Simone.
- 3) Apologies: L. Cross, G. Penning, W. Koorts, M. Soltynski, M. Streicher, P. Martinez, C. Turk
- 4) The previous minutes of the 29th August meeting ratified.
- 5) Matters Arising:
 - 5.1 The certificates awarded at the Symposium were well received and all agreed to keep them for coming awards.
 - 5.2 The discussion for a Membership Database was renewed. A. Herder will investigate M.S. Outlook.
 - 5.3 Cliff Turk is to contact Lerika Cross regarding the Malin lecture if there is any Money to be returned.
- 6) Alternates for Upcountry Members:
 - 6.1 L. Simone for M. Begbie, Harare
 - 6.2 I. Glass for A. Herder ?????
- 7) Section Directors:
 - 7.1 Case Rijdsijk as director of Education and Public Education confirmed
 - 7.2 Brian Fraser as director of Variable Star Section confirmed.
 - 7.3 Chris Middleton as director of Double Star Section confirmed.
 - 7.4 Cliff Turk received an application from Polla Tosen for the vacancy of the Computer and Imaging Section. The application was read by L. Simone to all present. L. Simone to write to Mr. Tosen to enquire what proposal he had in mind for ASSA and that the above application to be referred to G. Penning for input.
- 8) The Way Forward:
 - 8.1 C. de Coning on Robotic Telescopes reported that ASSA should look at partnerships with Project 27, Slooh or D-Space which is all web related and time would have to be purchased. C. de Coning to present a concrete proposal for evaluation.
 - 8.2 C. de Coning also introduced a Starter Pack (S.P.) for Amateur Astronomers created by G. Penning. The software that accompanies the S.P. was demonstrated on a laptop. The S.P. was well received. I. Glass expressed that it would be good for the Centres. The ASSA logo to be included. The approximate cost per pack if it is done by G. Penning would be between R 35.00 and R 40.00 excluding distribution and commission. G. Penning is to complete the SP and distribute 20 copies to Centres and Section Directors for evaluation and comment. ASSA will cover the cost up to R 1000.00 A. Herder suggested that the SP can also be distributed to Telescope Retailers. L. Labuschagne concurred and added that a leaflet is to be included with the S.P. detailing information about ASSA in view of attracting more members.

- 8.3 At this stage of the meeting L. Simone suggested that “The Way Forward” should be discussed at a separate meeting with its own Agenda. L. Labuschagne expressed that she was not happy that the debate on “The Way Forward” was in the public domain on ASSA’s web page and should be deleted. There was agreement with L.L. and a consensus that the debate be kept in house. C. de Coning said that he will redraft “The Way Forward” for publication in Mnassa.
- 8.4 L. Simone indicated that what was introduced with items 8.1 and 8.2 is all well and good, yet felt that we at present should be more concerned with the fact that we can sell 3500 Sky Guide’s but we can only attract a membership of 184 paid members. A. Herder added that the Johannesburg Centre alone had over 200 members, but they are not signing up with ASSA.
- 8.5 There was agreement in principal regarding Video Conferencing subject to cost restraints and to test drive a conference when possible. A. Herder said he would advise what software is needed for downloading for both dial up and broadband connections. I. Glass and D. Laney to make further enquiries with SAAO.

9)

Mnassa:

Rather than enhance Mnassa as L.Simone suggested, I. Glass indicated that Mnassa would go electronic. The cost of enhancing Mnassa electronically would be cheaper as it would include colour photographs. L.Simone then suggested that we go electronic anyway until the printed version is phased out over a period of time. I. Glass will look into the cost of laser printing Mnassa. Subscriptions could be reduced with an electronic Mnassa. D. Field added that there was an overwhelming response for a hard copy of Mnassa, but that only 50 members had responded.

10)

Sky Guide:

A.Jones thanked I. Glass and P. Booth for their contributions. There was problems with the file format at the printers. It took 2 days for A.J. to correct this. D. Laney suggested looking for another printer for the 2008 issue. The quoted quantity of 4000 of the 2007 issue will be finished by the end of November.

11)

SAAO/ASSA Scholarship:

D. Laney to contact P. Martinez to determine if any progress has been made.

12)

7th ASSA Symposium:

There was an attendance of 65 at the Boyden Observatory. The Symposium was enjoyed by all and will be a hard act to follow. There is a report on the ASSA web page, and more will be published in Mnassa. L. Simone to contact Centres regarding the 2008 Symposium. It may be Durban’s turn. This needs to be confirmed.

13)

Treasurer’s Report:

A. Jones standing in for C. Turk advised that the problems with the 2005 audit has been resolved and that the 2006 audit is in progress.

14)

New Members:

D.Field submitted a report. The application of 7 new members was approved. Total membership now stands at 260 of which 184 are paid up members. A non-renewal rate of 30%.

- 15) Correspondence:
M. Streicher emailed L. Simone with a suggestion by T. Cooper for a workshop dedicated to Amateur Astronomy. D. Laney requested that L. Simone contact all Section Directors and Centre representatives regarding the above workshop.
- 16) Any other business:
There was no other business.
- 17) Date of next meeting:
Tuesday 13th February, 2007