

## **MINUTES OF ASSA COUNCIL MEETING TUESDAY 8<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2008**

Held in the Auditorium, SAAO, at 8.00

1. Welcome:  
Vice President Patricia Booth opened the meeting and welcomed all present
2. Present:  
Patricia Booth, Cliff Turk, Anthony Jones, Atze Herder and Laurie Simone.
3. Apologies:  
Dave Laney, Dudley Field, Maciej Soltynski, Lia Labuschagne, Ian Glass, Peter Martinez. Apologies from all up country members are automatically accepted.
4. Ratify Previous Minutes:  
The minutes of Council meeting of the Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> February were ratified by Patricia Booth. No corrections were required.
5. Matters Arising:  
Laurie Simone pointed out to Council that activity on the ASSA web site has picked up significantly requiring a lot more correspondence.
6. Scholarships:  
Ian Glass has been invited to join the Scholarship Committee, which now comprises Maciej Soltynski, Andrew Gray, Abe Mahomed and Ian Glass, and for SAAO-ASSA matters, Kevin Govander.

The committee met in early March. It was decided that all awardees must submit mid-year progress reports as well as their year-end results.

There are two SAAO-ASSA Scholarships available in 2008, each valued at R4000. SAAO is thanked for funding these scholarships which are for any year of BSc study in SA provided the applicant has expressed an interest in Astronomy.

One SAAO-ASSA Scholarship was awarded to Rocco Coppejans a 3rd year BSc student at the University of Pretoria.

A second was 'partially (R2000)' awarded to the 2007 holder, Mpati Ramatsoku, 3rd year BSc student at UCT and will be fully awarded subject to satisfactory progress at mid-year.

The 2008 ASSA Scholarship (for 2nd or 3rd year level astronomy subjects at any Southern African university) was awarded to Daniël Olivier, second year BSc (astronomy and physics student at UNISA). He is involved with the ASSA-JHB Telescope building group. He receives R2000 for books and expenses and course fees of R2070.

A report, similar to the above, will be published in MNASSA in due course.

7. Astronomy Starter Pack:  
Gerrit Penning reported that as at the financial year-end 29<sup>th</sup> February, 2008, 166 CD's have been sold. Royalties amounting to R996.00 has been paid to ASSA, and the same amount to Gerrit Penning. This is about R6.00 per CD average. The largest orders range from 10 to 15 CD's per order. Most however have been single copies sold, presumably through the ASSA web site. Since March however, sales have been much slower, and now stands at 25 CD's. It is necessary to launch a marketing campaign again, which I will slowly put into motion. Astronomy and Science institutions have not being fully marketed.

Cliff Turk suggested and Council approved that the R996.00 that was paid to ASSA be refunded to Gerrit Penning to contribute towards distribution fees. It was also suggested that a full page advert be included in the next publication of Sky Guide.

8. The 8<sup>th</sup> ASSA Symposium 2008, Durban:

Frikkie de Bruyn reported that at the last meeting of the organising committee the budget was finalised. It has been decided to charge R525 per person for attending the Symposium. Yesterday afternoon (29/03/2008) I received a phone call from the IT specialist in Durban saying that the symposium website (part of the Durban Centre's website) will be up and running in the next day or two. The registration form for the Symposium will be on the website. We still need more abstracts (12 received so far), but I am sure that we will receive more shortly. Everything is going well and we are looking forward to some very interesting papers.

Logan Govender placed a request with ASSA for an amount of R 10,000.00 for the Symposium. Council found this request unusual as none of us know Logan Govender and at no time prior to this meeting was Council aware that funds are required. Cliff Turk advised Council that there is a subsidiary account for these events and we could make R 3508.00 available. Cliff Turk will correspond with the organising committee regarding these funds.

A list of B. & By's for Durban has been circulated.

9. Terms of Reference – Observers Manuals – IYA 2009:

No visible progress during March from any of the contributors who are all tied up with various other commitments at present. Lerika will keep on following up.

10. University of Milan-Parallax Campaign:

Despite what was recorded in the previous minutes from the 5<sup>th</sup> February meeting, Lucas Ferreira did make the observations for the Mars Parallel. The details were communicated to Davide Cenedelli in Milan and a paper will be written up by Davide for publication in the "European Journal of Physics" To date we do not know if the paper will be accepted. Case has been assisting with this project and what ever the outcome we have requested that the paper or an extract from the paper be published in MNASSA.

11. MNASSA:

The April issue will be late and will only be distributed by the 15<sup>th</sup> May. This is due to the addition of extra pages.

12. Sky Guide:

Anthony Jones will be designing a form to request information from all the Centres for publication in the next issue of Sky Guide.

13. Awards:

Cliff Turk nominated Tim Cooper for the ASSA Long service Award. Seconded by Patricia Booth and Anthony Jones and passed by Council. Cliff Turk nominated Patricia Booth, Peter Cramb and Peter Smits for Honorary Members. Patricia Booth was seconded by Laurie Simone and Anthony Jones, Peter Cramb and Peter Smits was seconded by Atze Herder and Anthony Jones and all nominations were passed by Council.

14. Cambridge Light Scope:

The debate in Council was favourable towards a light collapsible scope. We welcome further information from Jacques van Delft after he returns from his visit to Cambridge and then Council will pursue it further.

15. SABC Africa View Invitation:

This all started with an email from Kgabane Madiehe we received on the ASSA web site. He was looking for guests for his live TV Show, African View which was broadcasted on the 18<sup>th</sup> March, 8.00 pm on DSTV. The programme was about Meteors and impact craters. Magda Streicher, Tim Cooper and Case Rijdsdijk all had a hand in getting Trevor Gould and Prof. Marian Tredoux on the programme together with Pro. Roger Gibson, head of the Impact Cratering Research Group from the University of the Witwatersrand Geosciences and Prof. W.U. Reimold former head of the same research group.

Trevor Gould reported that the hour long show included many graphic images, with the intention of illuminating the depth and scope of the subject at an entry level, and creating an incipient interest.

Following the show, interest was expressed by the presenter in visiting the Observatory at the invitation of ASSA Johannesburg Centre, and finding out more about the SKA project (referred to Robert Gross). A potential for further communication in astronomy in general was opened.

16. Eclipse 2009 China:

Brian Fraser has been working with a travel agency in China, they have put together a suggested itinerary and a full report was submitted. Council suggested that we approach Brian to have the report published in MNASSA.

17. Asteroids – South Africa and Poland:

It was decided unanimously by email that Tim Cooper would incorporate and work with Anna Marciniak in Poland on Asteroids within his Comet and Meteors Section.

Tim Cooper has already had several contacts with Anna Marciniak and they have agreed on a way forward. Tim described the technicalities which will require the purchase of a CCD camera amongst other details in his report for Council. Though Tim advised that he has been very busy of late, he will start to develop observing programs for Asteroids.

18. Photo Competition – Lunar Eclipse:

A total of 29 photographs were posted on the ASSA web site for the competition. Council thought this was good considering the short time there was to submit entries. Pat Booth said that another competition had been introduced to guess the winner and that more prizes were required. It was decided to offer Oleg Toumilovitch a total of three Sky Guides and Three Astronomy Starter Packs. Oleg was also requested to submit to Council a sum of his expenses for reimbursement.

19. AGM in Johannesburg:

Council unanimously approved that the forthcoming AGM will be held in Johannesburg. It will be held on Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> July, 2008 at 4.00 pm. Lerika reported that after the AGM there will be refreshments and viewing through the Innes Telescope. The Centre will also approach SAASTA if it would be possible to arrange a viewing of the multifaceted Science Park that has been established on site.

20. Treasurers' report:

"The treasurer reported that the financial position continues to be very satisfactory and there will be no need to consider having to increase subscriptions for next year.

"Sales of the Sky Guide are still continuing, though naturally these are slowing down considerably at this time of the year. The 2008 Sky Guide will, however, create record sales both as regards cash flow and number of copies sold.

"Bank Charges on US dollar cheques or electronic transfers received in payment of MNASSA subscriptions have increased considerably but fortunately this has coincided with fluctuating exchange rates which have softened the blow as far as we are concerned. We have also been able to negotiate with our bank for preferential rates in respect of the smaller cheques with an equivalent value of less than R300."

21. New Members:

Dudley Field submitted a written report. The application of 6 new members was approved by Council. The total membership for April now stands at 247 of which 84 are full members, 10 honorary members, 147 limited members and 6 new members.

22. Correspondence:

Correspondence was received through the ASSA web site from Naimul Opu in Bangladesh. He is an Astronomer and wishes to visit South Africa with a team of astronomers. Members of ASSA are currently corresponding with Mr.Opu to make the necessary arrangements.

23. Any Other Business:

Cliff Turk suggested that due to the problems we have subscribing to Sky and Telescope that we change over to an USA publication simply titled "Astronomy" Reaction from ASSA members is required before anything is done.

24. The next Council meeting is on the 3<sup>rd</sup> June to discuss the AGM.  
The AGM is on the 26<sup>th</sup> July in Johannesburg.