

## **MINUTES OF ASSA COUNCIL MEETING WEDNESDAY 27<sup>TH</sup> AUGUST, 2008**

Held in the Auditorium, SAAO, at 8.00

1. Welcome:  
President Peter Martinez opened the meeting and welcomed all present.
2. Present:  
Patricia Booth, Cliff Turk, Kevin Govender, Lia Labushagne, Chris de Coning, Matie Hoffman, Laurie Simone.
3. Apologies:  
Dudley Field, Anthony Jones, Willie Koorts, Maciej Soltynski, Apologies from all up country members are automatically accepted.
4. Ratify Previous Minutes:  
The minutes of Council meeting of the Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> April and 3<sup>rd</sup> June, 2008 were not ratified as the Secretary did not have them available and they will be ratified at the next Council meeting.
5. Matters Arising:  
There were no matters arising so it was decided to select alternates for up country members. They are as follows;  
  
Magda Streicher - Pat Booth  
Michael Poll - Dave Laney  
Matie Hoffman - Kevin Govender  
Case Rijdsdijk - Maciej Soltynski  
Lerika Cross - Atze Herder  
Peter Cramb - Peter Martinez  
Frikkie de Bruyn - Ian Glass  
Robert Groess - Anthony Jones
6. Scholarships:  
The Scholarship Committee has decided that, because of satisfactory progress during the first half of 2008, Mpati Ramatsoku (holder in 2007) at UCT receives a SAAO-ASSA Scholarship for 2008.  
  
Other holders for 2008 are Daniel Olivier (ASSA) at Unisa and Rocco Coppejans (SAAO-ASSA) at University of Pretoria.  
  
SAAO has agreed that there will be three SAAO-ASSA Scholarships available in 2009 (up from 2 in 2008), and the value will remain at R4000.00 each. Thanks go to SAAO, Kevin Govender and Peter Martinez.
7. Astronomy Starter Pack. ASP:  
Gerrit Penning reported that from 1 July to 17 August, a total of 182 Starter Packs were sold. It is made up of 109 full packs (CD+planisphere) and 73 CDs only. A detailed record of cost and sales value is available on request. Note that there were very few individual sales (contrasted to the first semester of 2008). The majority of the July-August distributions are to the Boyden Science Centre and to ASSA Durban Centre.  
  
An update to the CD is only planned for the end of the year when I'll have time on hand. This is to bring the CD in line with the latest developments in spaceflight and also to update it with recent astronomical discoveries.

The Astronomy Starter CD is in a process of being translated into Afrikaans. The translation project is driven by the Boyden Science Centre, with the support of Prof. Matie Hoffman. He has given the task to Mariëtte Erwee, an M.Sc student in Astrophysics and also an educational assistant at the Science Centre taking part in the Department of Science Technology's "volunteer" program.

As Mariëtte is busy completing her M degree currently, the project's pace needs to adapt to her studies. But it has begun and is ongoing. It is hoped that this translation will provide a unique product in Afrikaans and even spur interest in the translation of the CD into other South African languages. Council will be kept up to date of the progress.

Further to the above, it was suggested that the front cover of the ASP include wording that would generate a response. It is the intent of Kevin Govender and Peter Martinez to find a means of branding the ASP with IYA products and to enhance the advertising of the ASP on the ASSA web site. It was also suggested that the ASP be reviewed by the Publication Board.

8. The 8<sup>th</sup> ASSA Symposium 2008, Durban:  
Emails received from Magda Streicher and Frikkie de Bruyn report that the Durban Symposium was a success. Congratulations to both centres from ASSA Council.
9. Terms of Reference - Observing Guide:  
No visible progress so far 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:  
Case Rijdsdijk reported that the results have been submitted to the European Journal of Physics. There are also plans to extend this exercise. Case will keep Council informed.
11. 100 Hours of astronomy - IYA 2009:  
Gerrit Penning reported that Mia Zeelie (club chairman) has, for ASSA Bloemfontein, together with the Boyden Science Centre, Friends of Boyden and Eunice Primary School, drafted a preliminary schedule on what we would like to do during those 4 days.  
2 April: "Treasures in the sky": with focus on binoculars (for a wide range of an audience)  
3 April: "The Galileo Telescope" theme, and observations through telescopes  
4 April: "Women in Astronomy" theme - Sky Watching.  
5 April: "Stars also tell tales" presentation - Sky Watching.

Further to IYA Peter Martinez recommended that a representative from each Centre be appointed for IYA and that Kevin Govender plan a workshop to integrate all ASSA Centre activities. Peter Martinez would like all Centres to get involved. Events such as Scope X etc, to be integrated as well.

12. Sky Guide:  
Demand for advertising in Sky Guide has picked up causing a few problems. Cliff Turk and Anthony Jones are to investigate the removal of repeated pages and replace them with adverts to solve the problems.
13. Awards:  
Council was unanimous regarding the presentation of awards. It was decided it would be best at the AGM to add more interest other than reading out reports.
14. Cambridge Light Scope:

Laurie Simone is to correspond with Jacques van Delft regarding the above scope.

15. Cosmology Section (CS) - Submission from Frikkie de Bruyn:  
The above submission to start a Cosmology Section was circulated to members of Council by email prior to this Council meeting for comments. The majority are in favour of a CS. There was concern towards the structure of a CS. Laurie Simone suggested that Lerika Cross with possible help from Case Rijdsdijk draw up a terms of reference. Peter Martinez also suggested that a professional Cosmologist may be requested to participate. Observation must be included in the CS and must make allowance for reporting any discoveries.
16. S.A. Meteorite Database:  
Peter Martinez will follow up progress with the IT department at SAAO regarding the above. Peter also suggested that Gerrit Penning, after the database has been established, follow it up by contacting Trevor Gould. Peter made one further suggestion and that is to incorporate a map of meteor strike locations on the ASSA web site.
17. Asteroids - South Africa and Poland:  
Tim Cooper has acquired a CCD camera and is busy developing routines for asteroids photometry. He is in contact with Anna Marciniak in Poland in this regard. With the help of Chris Middleton a test was done on one asteroid and the results were successful. The project is ongoing.
18. Star Atlas - Wayne Mitchell:  
Wayne Mitchell made a written submission with pictures to Council and it was circulated by email prior to this meeting for comments. It retails for R450.00 Case Rijdsdijk reported that it is a tremendous effort by a local amateur and Council was in agreement. Wayne seeks to promote the Star Atlas through ASSA and wanted to make sure there was no conflict of interest. The suggestions made are as follows; that the Atlas is reviewed by the Publication Board with possible publication in MNASSA. ASSA will offer special rates for advertising the Atlas in Sky Guide and that providing that Wayne is a member of ASSA, it can be advertised on the ASSA web site providing there is a "quid pro quo" to be determined at a later stage.
19. Iziko Museums - Planetarium upgrade.  
Theo Ferreira is the manager of the Planetarium/AV coordinator. He requests from ASSA a documented endorsement for the above upgrade. Peter Martinez asked Lia Labuschagne to draft a letter to Theo Ferreira and Peter in turn will formalise the letter and send it on to Theo Ferreira.
20. Independent Clubs:  
Correspondence was read from Gerrit Penning by Laurie Simone regarding Independent Clubs. It seems that these clubs are wary of ASSA and are hesitant to convert to an ASSA Centre. Apparently there are quite a few Independent Clubs and Peter Martinez suggested that Council members and representatives follow up with these clubs to allay any misconceptions, and to convert to ASSA Centres.
21. Imaging Section:  
The Secretary, Laurie Simone is to Correspond with Oleg Toumilovitch and request that he remove the line "This page is proudly sponsored by FOTON Optoelectronics" as no advertising is allowed on the ASSA web site.
22. Treasurer's Report:  
Cliff Turk submitted a report. Total assets from all sources are now well over R250,000 which includes the value of the Scholarship Fund, the Symposium Fund and funds held for Sections. The sales of Sky Guide will be approximately R 125,000 which excludes further revenue from online sales and subscriptions to MNASSA. We

have now enough funds to meet our commitments for the following year. Three proposals were made by Cliff and they are as follows;

1) That a further capital sum of R10, 000.00 is allocated to the ASSA Scholarship Fund. This was unanimously approved by all Council Members.

2) That the amounts of Honoraria paid to officials of the Society each year be revised. This was unanimously approved by all Council Members. An Honoraria Committee was selected to review the revisions. The three members are Cliff Turk, Pat Booth and Matie Hoffman.

3) Cliff Turk proposed that Maciej Soltynski be made Honorary Member of the Society. It was seconded by Peter Martinez and Pat Booth and endorsed by Council.

Matie Hoffmann also suggested to Council that further funds be allocated to the Symposium Fund by contributing to the cost of a plenary speaker for the ASSA Bi-Annual Symposium.

23. New Members:

A report was submitted by Dudley Field which included his resignation as Membership Secretary due to pressure of work. It could be for immediate effect. Dudley will advise Council as soon as possible. Peter Martinez made a tentative suggestion as a replacement. Cliff Turk pointed out to Council that the Membership Secretary has to be based in Cape Town where subscriptions are received to a local address. Laurie Simone advised Council that Lerika Cross is prepared to help to upgrade the existing database.

The numbers of members now total 277 of which 82 are full members, 12 are Honorary Members, 163 limited members and 20 new members.

24. Correspondence:

Peter Martinez read an email from our past President, Magda Streicher thanking the Society for the wonderful opportunity given to her to make a contribution towards Astronomy and she further thanks all Councillors for their invaluable support and co-operation during the year.

25. Any other business:

Council were all in agreement in no uncertain terms that all members are to be discouraged from using the term "ASSA National". We are ASSA, no more or less.

The possibility of an Astronomy Section for youth/schools was discussed. Peter Martinez tasked Kevin Govender, Lia Labuschagne and Chris de Coning to look into this. Cliff Turk pointed out to Council that the constitution requires that there be 5 ASSA founding members, and that the constitution may have to be changed to make allowance for School or student Astronomy Clubs.

26. Date for the next Council meeting:

Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> October

The meeting was closed by the President, Peter Martinez. Time: 11.30 pm