

Minutes of the University Lowbrow Astronomers for the Year 2004

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Note: It is possible that additional minutes were printed in one of the newsletters, look at the month in question and the next few months. Minutes are most likely to be found the month after. So the December 2004 minutes would most likely be in the January 2005 newsletter, but could be in the December 2004 or February 2005 newsletters.

University Lowbrow Astronomers--Membership Meeting Feb.20, 2004

Mike Garrahan and Steve Moore gave presentations on astronomy software. Mike showed us KStars, a Linux/KDE freeware open source project. While requiring booting up with Linux and being a work in progress, this software could become state of the art as more people participate. Steve had Starry Night Backyard, a very inexpensive (\$40) piece of software, with many nice features and very simple to use. There are Mac and Windows versions and it can be downloaded over the internet.

Treasurer Mike Garrahan is retiring--Efforts at drafting volunteers are beginning. This is a very important post and must be filled. All members who have not served as an officer, or served as one lately (the past year), should very seriously consider running for the post. The treasury has a balance of \$2480.

Lake Hudson Monument--The DNR will not allow the plaque on a concrete base that the clubs were able to raise money for and insists on a kiosk costing three times or more as much. Stay tuned...

Observatory Director Mike Radwick reports the mirror on the 24 inch has suffered no further degradation over the winter and that otherwise the observatory is in fine shape. Mike wishes to train more members to use the McMath and has offered to make time to do so. With a more ambitious schedule on the hill, help is needed.

New Open House dates were approved and are to be posted on the website.

Messier Marathon--Some members have mentioned a Lake Hudson trip either March 20 or April 17, while others proposed observing from Peach Mountain.

Webmaster Dave Snyder reported our website does about one gig of traffic per month.

Doug Warshow announced most club speaking slots for the next several months were filled with June yet open

Astronomy on the Beach at Kensington Metro Park is May 21 and 22 and as a result the May meeting will either advance or retreat one week.

Submitted respectfully, Jim Forrester

University Lowbrow Astronomers--Officers Meeting Feb.20, 2004

Annual Report--President Charlie Nielsen will author the Annual Report with assistance from Dave Snyder, Doug Warshaw, Mike Radwick, Paul Walkowski and other officers as needed.

Annual Elections--Nominations in March, elections in April. Most pressing is the need for a new treasurer as Mike Garrahan is retiring from the post.

Star Party rules--Will be published as part of an information brochure about the club. Jim Wadsworth is pulling together the materials and Jim Forrester will get it printed.

The Seventeen Inch Coulter--Sell or rebuild? The scope needs a new rocker-box with a wheelbarrow attached, new altitude bearings and pads, two inch eyepieces and a few other odds and ends. The officers feel the club should keep the Coulter and make the repairs. But if the club feels differently an appropriate sale price would be about \$2000.

Boone Hill website--This site provides space for several area clubs as well as GLAAC and links to other clubs including the Lowbrows. The price just went from zero to \$150. Since our club membership equals that of all the other clubs involved and the officers believe the website valuable to the Lowbrows and local amateur astronomy in general the officers voted up to \$75 be spent to help maintain this site.

Submitted respectfully, Jim Forrester

University Lowbrow Astronomers--Meeting Minutes--March 19, 2004

Joe Bernstein gave an informative talk on the inner workings of neutron stars focusing on their superconductivity.

Mark Deprest displayed comet pix and found more on the internet through Yahoo comets.ml and told us to remember the following:

1. Linear peaks at dawn in late April and early May.
2. Neat peaks at dusk beginning May 4 and continuing for most of the rest of the month.

Lake Hudson Kiosk funding has been found! A meeting will be announced to determine its content.

Lowbrows on cable TV! Some of our very own media sensations are surfing into your homes via public access. Also--The Lowbrows will be gracing the cover of the May "Current."

April elections--Nominations: President: Charlie Nielsen Vice-Presidents: Paul Walkowski, Bernard Friberg, Jim Forrester Observatory Director: Mike Radwick, Percy Lowell Treasurer: Kathy Hillig, Web Master: Dave Snyder Newsletter Editor: John Ryan.

A training session on the McMath Telescope will be held Sat. April 24 at 4:30.

Submitted respectfully, Jim Forrester.

Minutes of the April 29, 2004 Lowbrow Officer's Meeting

Call to order at 7:30

Discussion of new VP Bob Gruszczynski's activities.

- Bob will take minutes for the officer's meetings (*however Bobby is not stuck with the minutes permanently*).
- Bob will help work on the acquisition of speakers for regular Lowbrow meetings.
- Also, Bob will get a copy of the bylaws for reference.

There was a question of whether the Listserve was still in use. Answer - yes.

Kathy Hillig reported that her transition into the Treasurer's position was going smoothly.

There was a discussion of the email lists and maintenance. Final details to be worked out as we go.

Current list of meeting speakers:

- May - Chris Sarnecki - trip to Mt. Palomar
- June - Mike Combi - comets
- July - John Kirchhoff - Rider's show and tell
- August - Rudi Linder - astronomy history
- unconfirmed - Perry Samson
- unconfirmed - Pat Seitzer

Another idea for speaker sources would be to send email to Sky & Tel or Astronomy authors.

As always, need more newsletter articles

Bobby G. is willing to provide walkie talkies to help with Open House parking.

Venus transit: Much discussion here - Charlie is speaking with Pat Seitzer to make a joint Lowbrow-UM event. Question is - Where? Angell Hall? Leslie Park? Other? Will this be a major event like Mars, where there are lots of people? Pat seems to think so. Advertising discussed here, main point is "safety first" so some of the larger, more open sites would be preferred.

There is a Leslie Science Center event planned for September - details to follow.

Kensington's Astronomy at the Beach is on for this year. Next year is planned to be in a different location. It was moved and seconded to send a \$200 contribution to the Ford Astronomy Club to offset some of the expenses.

Open Houses/Observatory

- A Boy Scout Troop has volunteered to paint the Observatory during the weekend of June 5th. We need to address cracks in the building before the painting begins. Also, the Astronomy Department may pay for the paint.
- Discussion of who has/should have gate keys. *Currently the OD, President and VP Bernard each has one. There is also one that may go back to Fred Schebor or Chris Sarnecki (OD had the extra key at time of meeting).*
- Discussion of having a "skeleton crew" for all events. Bernard made the observation that people show up even when it is cloudy. They are interested in astronomy and make very interesting discussions. Mike proposed to make the commitment to decide earlier, making "overcast" the decision point.
- Discussion of how effective the email system is for notification.

- Mirror coating seem to be OK for now, not deteriorating further, we should look into redo in October, after the summer OH schedule.

Dave Snyder reports that the officer's list has been updated.

Meeting adjourned - 9:30

Officer's Meeting Minutes - September 16, 2004

This meeting was held at 7:30 at Peach Mountain Observatory.

1. The tree situation was discussed. The trees around the observatory have grown. The officers looked around the observatory and after some discussion it was proposed that 2 bushes, 3 pines and 2 hardwood trees directly south of the building and 3 pines to the east of the building be cut. To the north of the building is a dead Ash tree and this should be cut as well.
2. Paul Walkowski and Mike Kurylo were considering making upgrades to the 17" Coulter scope.
3. Jim Forrester discussed the Transplant Center event. The winner of the auction had not made final arrangements and yet there was a request to have another auction. Jim had said we would not do another event until the first one had been taken care of. It was possible that the winner might decide on a date and Jim might be unable to attend on that date. Jim would try to do it if he could, but someone needed to be a backup in case he could not. It was decided to bring this up at the club meeting and ask for volunteers.
4. The club meeting schedule was discussed. The tentative schedule is Pat Seitzer (Angel Hall Planetarium) for October, Perry Samson for November, Fred Schebor (the Artsy Meaningless Slide Show) for December, Mike Foerster for January and Ken Burton (Venus Transit) for February. The Vice Presidents need to start working on the gaps.
5. The list of people who had keys was discussed.
6. Kathy said the treasury had about \$2000. There was some question about the Clear Sky Clock. The Lowbrows had sponsored this in the past, but appeared that the club was no longer listed as a sponsor. The officers voted 5-0 to pay the \$52 to renew our sponsorship of the Clear Sky Clock.
7. There was a discussion of two events that the club was asked to participate in. 1) An event at the Leslie Science Center on September 25 that involves kids up to 10 years old. This would require club members with telescopes show up the Leslie Science Center. 2) An event at Whitmore Lake on October 8. We were asked to supply someone who could talk about the club.
8. The annual order of calendars/observer's guides was discussed. Kathy was not going to order the Furman desk calendar anymore (too few people ordered it and it was not cost effective), but we would be ordering the wall calendar and the Observer's Handbook. We would ask club members to indicate how many of which item they wanted and do so by October 1st.

Submitted respectfully, David Snyder

University Lowbrow Astronomers--Club Meeting Minutes for September 17, 2004

1. The meeting started with a presentation by Mark Deprest, Doug Scobel, Doug Nelle, Chris Sarnecki, Jim Wadsorth. They all attended the Black Forest Star Party recently and reported their experiences.
2. The annual order of calendars/observer's guides was discussed. Kathy was not present, but Kathy was not going to order the Furman desk calendar anymore (too few people ordered it and it was not cost effective), but we would be ordering the wall calendar and the Observer's Handbook. A signup sheet was passed around, club members were to indicate how many of which item they wanted. If they didn't do so now, they could tell Kathy of their preferences as long as they did so by October 1st. The calendars are \$12 each and the Observer's Handbooks are \$20 each.
3. Two upcoming events were discussed. The Asian Moon Festival would take place at the Leslie Science Center on September 25 that involves kids up to 10 years old. This would require club members with telescopes show up the Leslie Science Center. 2) An event at Whitmore Lake on October 8. We were asked to supply someone who could talk about the club.
4. Jim Forrester discussed the Transplant Center event. The winner of the auction had not made final arrangements and yet there was a request to have another auction. It was possible that the winner might decide on a date and Jim might be unable to attend on that date. Jim would try to do it if he could, but someone needed to be a backup in case he could not. Jim asked for volunteers to act as a backup.
5. Mike Radwick discussed several issues - he was willing to have more training sessions on the 24" telescope, anyone interested should contact him. There was going to be an open house the next day.
6. Dave Snyder mentioned that there was software called SiteMaker and asked for volunteers to try it out.
7. Mark Deprest mentioned two comets that are visible now, namely C/2004 R2 (ASAS) and Comet 78P Gehrels.
8. Mike Kurylo asked about plans to refurbish the 17" scope.

Submitted respectfully, David Snyder

10/15/04 Lowbrow Meeting Minutes:

1. Charlie introduced the club to new members and introduced the speakers: Bobbie G. and Mark D.
2. Lorna donated an 8-in dob to the club in honor of her late husband Lou. She also donated her 3.5 inch Questar to the Lowbrows and asked that it be repaired professionally. This was put up for a vote and the motion carried.
3. Bobbie G. gave the first presentation, a show 'n tell on the assembly and the story of purchasing his PortaBall telescope.
4. Mark D. gave a presentation on upcoming observables entitled "Incoming, Outgoing & Up-Coming."
5. Dave S. accepted dues and magazine subscriptions as virtual treasurer of the month.
6. Charlie read a letter from the Detroit Science center asking for a seat sponsor for \$1,000 each. There was general agreement that we did not have the resources for this and it was never put up for a vote.
7. Future meeting topics were listed as follows:
 - a. Nov- Perry Sampson
 - b. Dec 17- Meet at Angel Hall's new planetarium
 - c. Jan- JPL Cassini Ambassador Mike Foerster (no relation)
 - d. Feb- Ked Burton Venus Transit from Greece
 - e. Mar- Fred S.- Artsy Meaningless Slide Show
 - f. April- Swap Meet and annual elections (didn't we just have an election?)
 - g. May- Mark D - Taurus Tracker photography
8. Charlie and Doug S. presented the case for astronomical league membership as individuals and a club. The basics are \$10/club+\$3 each club member or \$20 individual member at larger per year for dues. Get quarterly "Reflector" magazine, participate in observing groups, get awards for documented completion. In spite of individual enthusiasts, there did not seem to be widespread enthusiasm within the club and it was tabled until it could be discussed in an officer's meeting.
9. A general discussion ensued concerning raising dues in 2005 ensued. Officers were thinking about raising general family membership from \$20 to \$25/year; with seniors to be \$20 and Students \$15. Discussion was closed and a formal proposal; will come from the officers at the next meeting for a general vote.
10. For IRS purposes the club is a 501 C7 Misc Non- Profit Organization.
11. In order to combat perceived declining membership (steady around 100 for last 5 years but meeting attendance dropping slightly) 2 suggestions were made. (1) Put together a flier with membership application and info on the back for open houses and meetings. Explain that we cannot solicit donations; expenses/coasts are defrayed by membership (like public radio or TV). (2) Actively sell memberships, especially at the art fair. The issue was tabled for further discussion. Jim F. Summarized how well the Transplant Center special open house night went. Apparently 8-10 folks attended; good weather refreshments by Jim and Janet; a half dozen lowbrows helped out; a good time was had by all.
12. Dave S. explained that the private "members Only" section of the website had been significantly updated.
13. Saturday Morning Physics was starting up again at 10 am; room 170.

Submitted-- P. Walkowski 11/16/04