

Minutes of the University Lowbrow Astronomers for the Year 2009

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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 2003 minutes would most likely be in the January 2004 newsletter, but could be in the December 2003 or February 2004 newsletters.

UNIVERSITY LOWBROW ASTRONOMERS
OFFICERS MEETING 3-20-2009

Attendees: Dave Snyder, Belinda Lee, Jim Forrester, Mike Kurylo, Ken Cook, Yasu Inugi, DC Moons, Charlie Nielsen

- 1.) All current officers are interested in continuing in their positions, except DC. Yasu reports that he would like to start training a replacement for his position and he will contact Liz Calhoun to see if she is interested. Belinda brought up Liz's name and everyone expressed agreement that Liz is "officer material". Mike Kurylo and Mike Radwick have been nominated for Observatory Director, and Bobby Gryszinski for VP.

- 2.) DC reports that he expects around \$1000 expenditure for observatory repairs and he has communicated with George Latimer about the work needed. George concurs and approves. The mirror recoating is expected to cost \$1,200. A U of M employee must be present during transit per U of M insurance rules. The possibility of flying the mirror via private plane was discussed and met agreement if feasible. DC stated that although he will not be OD, he will still apply his mechanical and other skills toward upkeep of the McMath into the future.

- 3.) Meeting speakers are:
 - April=Elections/swap meet
 - May=Belinda
 - June=Open (Mike will try to get Tom Trusock)
 - July=John Kirchhoff (new equipment)
 - August=Jack Lousma (Charlie will confirm in June)
 - September=Open (Ken is going to see if Ken Bertin can fill this)
 - October=Oki-Tex Report
 - November=John Kirchhoff (astrophotography)
 - December=Open (Discussion about doing a potluck, will need follow-up)

Belinda is willing to switch to July if the May date works better for Tom Trusock

University Lowbrow Astronomers Meeting in Room 130 Dennison on August 21, 2009 at 7:30 PM

Our meeting opened with a short presentation by VP Ken Cook of photos from an accidental trip to Lick Observatory on Mt. Hamilton just East of San Jose, California sometime in 1986.

President Charlie Nielsen introduced our featured speaker Sandra Macika from the Ford Amateur Astronomy Club (FAAC). Sandra gave a very nice presentation on some of the science results from Lick Observatory.

Sandra's talk covered several important professional developments at Lick including early work on Adaptive Optics, Artificial Guide Stars, Colorimetry, Spectroscopy, Exosolar planet detection via Doppler shift and proper motion, and Direct Imaging of Exosolar planets.

The Shane 3m telescope at Lick often serves as a test bed evaluating new technology prior to making changes at the Keck telescopes.

Charlie thanked Sandra and presented her with a Lowbrow's tee shirt – the club gave her a round of applause.

Charlie then called the business portion of the meeting to order.

A request came to Charlie that we share expenses with two other clubs when Brother Guy Consolmagno the Vatican Astronomer visits and does a presentation for our club.

A motion was made by Ken Cook and seconded by Doug Warshow that the Lowbrows offer \$100 to help cover car rental and gas expense for Brother Guy Consolmagno (Vatican Astronomer). The motion passed unanimously - D.C. Moons was in absentia.

Charlie requested that the club consider purchasing a laser optics teaching kit from Arbor Scientific and several accessories for demonstrating mirror and lens concepts at our Night Sky Network outreach activities. The laser kit is \$99 and the accessories are less than that. A motion was made by Mark Deprest and seconded by Jason Maguran that the kit and accessories be purchased. The motion passed unanimously except for Mike Kurylo objecting on behalf of D.C. Moons.

Charlie mentioned that the Brother Guy presentation seems more likely and details will be emailed and posted on the website as they become available.

The logistics and administrative issues of recoating the McMath 24" primary mirror were discussed with the conclusion that photos must be taken of the primary mirror so that FLABEG USA (website; <http://www.flabeg.com/en/index.html>) can determine the feasibility and cost of recoating our historic mirror. They want to be very cautious when working with the mirror.

Charlie heard from John Kirchoff who was originally scheduled to speak at our November 20th Monthly meeting. John has a conflict on that date and requested that he present in January. So we now need a speaker for our November meeting. VP Ken Cook mentioned that he had already sent a request to Tom Trusock of CloudyNights.com asking if Tom would be available for November 20th. Mark Deprest suggested that if Tom was speaking he could show an interview with Al Nagler of Televue.

Ken Cook asked for more speaker contacts - Doug Warshow suggested the Astronomy Department as a source of willing guinea pigs err.. graduate students who might have interesting topics to discuss.

We have several scheduling conflicts with star parties and outreach activities in September. Specifically September 19th. We need lowbrow's to cover these activities - please watch your email and help when you can.

Astronomy on the Beach is September 25th and 26th.

Newsletter Editor Mark Deprest claimed he didn't need any more articles! After we picked ourselves up off the floor he said that was just a little joke and he *always* needs more articles. The next newsletter is about half full - so keep those cards and letters coming.

Mark also spoke about Explore Scientific's selection of Riders Hobby Store (and specifically John Kirchoff) as their only Michigan distributor with an introduction of a new eye piece at a recent Riders open house. Scott Roberts of Explore Scientific gave a 1.5 hour talk. Mark suggested that we work with the Hands-on Museum to bring Scott to the Lowbrows for a talk on a Friday and then to the Hands-on Museum for an activity on a Saturday sometime during 2010.

Treasurer Liz Calhoun said we have 108 members and \$8694.37 in the lowbrows account. She also pointed out that not everyone was responding to our renewal notice emails.

The Exhibit Museum has asked us if we would like to do a presentation called "So You Want To Buy a Telescope"? for them in early November. It looks like it will be Mark Deprest and Charlie, maybe John Kirchoff also.

Charlie and Mike Radwick talked to George Latimer, who informed us that there is a delay in repairs to the observatory building due to a change in U of M building maintenance procedure. But he assured us that the cement work and the new electrical outlets will get done. He would also like to observe the McMath mirror removal because he finds it interesting.

Belinda mentioned the St. Thomas star party dates (Oct. 23, alt. 30) and mentioned that it would be good for the Lowbrows to do something with Explore Scientific. If you are interested in helping with any of the star party dates then contact Belinda via email

Dave Snyder, D.C. Moons and Mike Radwick were not present.

The public portion of our meeting adjourned and an officers meeting began.

Respectfully submitted,
Ken Cook

Lowbrow Regular Meeting

12/18/09

Meeting Called to order 7:35 PM. 30 Attendees.

Dr. Tim McKay presented the topic - "Universal access to the sky: amateurs, professionals, and the virtual observatory."

Business meeting convened at 9:00.

- 1) This IYA has been very active for the club, but now is winding down.
 - Today's activity was a trip to the Lawton Elementary School to teach the third grade class about astronomy and to help them learn how to safely use a telescope. Yasu, Yumi, Charlie, Dave, Srini and Bob were there to present and help out.
 - For this event, and for future events and club use, four Celestron Firstscope 3" reflecting telescopes were purchased by Charlie, along with red-dot finders for each.
 - This purchase was approved by the club with one nay vote (Mark Deprest – proxy for DC Moons).
 - Further, a fifth telescope was donated by Srini with a huge THANK YOU from the club.
- 2) The officer's meeting was discussed.
 - Current club status with IRS – 501c7. Liz is researching the best filing status for the club (501c7/501c3). Discussion will continue at the next meeting.
 - Bylaw changes were discussed regarding
 - update of spending limit
 - update of section 6a2
 - discussion of "family" lifetime memberships.
 - Speakers for next months listed.
- 3) VP reports:
 - Bob G. – working on Mike Foerster for speaker at Feb. meeting.
 - Jim F. - Open houses mostly cancelled due to weather.
 - Mike R. - "How to use the McMath" lessons still available. Contact him for information. OBSCOM meeting due. Mike will send email invites. Also soliciting new OBSCOM members.
 - Dave S. - Catching up on website. He is looking to post the inventory of non-monetary assets when completed so that the membership knows what equipment is available for loan. A suggestion was made to make a secure location available for members to post current resumes. Dave will look into it.
 - Liz C. - Current balance is \$8346.58. We have 111 members currently. The RASC publications are in. Discussion of our IRS status (see above).
 - Mark D. - NEED ARTICLES!! Also inventory is near completion.
- 4) New Business -
 - Mike Kurylo – two items
 - Ken Cook has procured material to cover the McMath mirror during transport.
 - Mike has procured a "Pelican-style" case and foam for the 10" Meade. He has given the scope and case to Norb Vance for rehab. The club approved \$128 toward this.

- Mark Deprest has more information on the new Explore Scientific 100 degree eyepieces. The group commended him on his fine review of the 14 mm on the Cloudy Nights website. He has taken delivery of the 20 mm version and provided “show and tell”.

Meeting adjourned at 9:55 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Bob Gruszczynski

Lowbrow Officer Meeting Minutes

12/18/09

Meeting Convened at 6:30 PM. Attendees list – Liz Calhoun, Jim Forrester, Bob Gruszczynski, Belinda Lee, Charlie Nielsen, Mike Radwick, Dave Snyder.

1) Tax Status

- Liz reported that our EIN has gone dormant. We are currently a 501c7 entity which is a non-profit social organization. Currently our EIN is 2 years in arrears. The IRS will pull our EIN after 3 years, so we have time to figure out our next steps.
- The question is whether or not to reorganize as a 501c3 full charity non-profit entity including the full sales tax exemption. To do so would require more stringent reporting along with a more formal group structure. It also would require a \$400 filing fee.
- Discussion centered around legal issues, liability, and what we are about as a group. Current decisions are to go ahead and file the required 'e-postcard' to reinstate our current 501c7 status. There are no penalties or other remunerations due. Liz will further research the pro's and con's of both and return to the next officer's meeting with information. An informed final decision can then be made.

2) Bylaw amendments

- Charlie proposed an amendment that would allow for an email-only vote to approve expenditures > \$100. This would be similar to the current voting rules for officers. Belinda Lee suggested raising the limit to \$250, especially since there has been no increase since the inception of the current bylaws. This was accepted as a better idea. Charlie will put together wording and will be out to vote at the next officer's meeting.
- Discussion of Section 6a2 of the bylaws governing the responsibility of public publication relating to the website and the newsletter. Currently the webmaster is solely responsible for content. Proposed change is to make the newsletter editor responsible for content within the newsletter. Approved.
- Discussion of amending the lifetime membership to include "family lifetime" AKA the "Wadsworth membership". It was proposed to leave such decisions to the discretion of the Treasurer. Approved.

3) The speaker situation is mostly good through August. Bob G. is pursuing Dr. Foerster for February, June is still open, all others are covered.

Meeting adjourned at 7:15 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Bob Gruszczynski