

Officers Meeting of the University Lowbrow Astronomers March 5, 2016.

Present: President Charles Nielsen, Vice President Ken Ruble, Vice President Don Fohey, Vice President Dave Snyder, Webmaster Krishna Rao, Observatory Director Jack Brisbin, Treasurer Doug Scobel, Newsletter Editor Jim Forrester.

Absent: Vice President David Jorgensen, Observatory Director Emeritus Percival Lowell.

1. Email change

Last fall, a new member had sent some suggestions about how we handle email communication. Rephrasing: other clubs handle communication within their organizations differently than the Lowbrows do, and this member suggested that we change to be more like these other organizations. In October, Dave Snyder had sent a document to the officers as a possible response to these suggestions.

In brief the club could continue to do things the way we always have, or we can change.

Krishna Rao suggested we don't change. There was no objection.

Doug Scobel commented that he could educate new members (for example telling new members that club members frequently send messages on a variety of topics, and new members shouldn't be surprised by this).

2. Meeting speakers.

Charlie Nielsen brought up the issue of meeting speakers. The most immediate issue: we don't have a speaker for June. One question brought up: have we exhausted our leads in the Astronomy or Physics departments? Dave Snyder said no we haven't. Dave Snyder said that we still haven't gotten Jamie Cutler to return. He had been scheduled to give a talk about a year ago, and cancelled at the last minute because of illness. So far he hasn't returned.

There was discussion of the possibility of putting the business part of the meeting first. Charlie Nielsen mentioned that he has asked speakers if they wanted to go before the business part, or after and they have said they wanted to go before. No decision was made.

There was also discussion that we occasionally have a meeting with no speaker, where attendees can talk about club issues. One possibility was to go around the room and ask each person to talk briefly. Another possibility would be a pot luck or cookout. We have had potlucks in the past, but the last time was several years ago. This could be an "annual meeting", an idea that has been brought up in the past. A natural time to do this would be in April, the time of the elections, however we already have a speaker for this April. This was left open as possibility for the future.

3. Officer elections

Charlie Nielsen had asked if everyone wanted to continue as an officer. Jim Forrester said he wanted to continue for one more year and then step down. By that point he hoped to have a replacement picked out.

Jim Forrester mentioned that he will be out of town in May. While he can do most of his tasks remotely while he's gone, he won't be able to physically go to Kolossus printing and pick up the newsletters. So he asked for volunteers to handle picking up the newsletters. Doug would take care of these.

Dave Snyder said he was not going to continue. He was willing to continue contributing to the club, and would be available as a resource.

Charlie Nielsen had mentioned the possibility of eventually stepping down. Dave asked if he wanted to just step down or switch to vice president.

4. Plan to keep relations with U of M and get more keys

For about a year the Lowbrows have only had one key to the padlock (which is installed on the gate blocking the entrance on North Territorial).

Traditionally Stinchfield Woods has been under the jurisdiction of the School of Natural Resources and Environment (known as SNRE). SNRE had ceded jurisdiction of the area around the McMath building and radio telescopes to the Astronomy Department. Which meant anytime we had an issue like this, it was clear who we needed to deal with. Unfortunately that situation has changed. There is currently ambiguity over what part of the University controls the area around the McMath building and the radio telescopes. Both the College of Engineering and SNRE seem to be claiming jurisdiction.

We had been working with the SNRE to get more keys, but so far they have been reluctant. Jack Brisbin had suggested working with the college of Engineering to get additional keys that way. Dave Snyder suggested the College of Engineering might be easier to deal with. Charlie Nielsen thought this might antagonize SNRE. Jack Brisbin will talk with the College of Engineering.

5. Disposition of club telescopes in observatory

Jack Brisbin discussed the telescopes that are currently stored in the McMath building. He wanted to move some of them out of the building, hopefully to find good homes elsewhere. The 6" f/8 Cave O.T.A and equatorial mount needed repair, Ken Rubel volunteered to look at repairing it. Jack has the 8" f/6 Starliner and is fixing the azimuth bearing assembly, so it can be used during open house nights. It was suggested that the 10" Schmidt Cassegrain Meade mount that is no longer used, could be taken to the Ford Club's Swap Meet on March 19.

Former club member Harry Juday had called Dave Snyder and said that he would be willing to donate his collection of astronomy books to the club. He has over 200 books. But he would need someone to pick them up, he wasn't willing to bring them to us.

Jack Brisbin said he would pick them up, but it is not clear what we will do with them after that. There is no room in the Lowbrow library. Jim Forrester said he would catalog the books. One option: give them out to club members. Amy Cantu (who works for the Ann Arbor District Library) had previously suggested via email that books could be donated to the Friends of the Ann Arbor District Library or to the Saline Library.

There is a spreadsheet that has, among other things, a list of all books in the Lowbrow Library. It hasn't been updated in a while, but the list of Harry's books might be added to this spreadsheet. It is stored on the members only section of the web site.

Jack Brisbin discussed the Young Astronomer web site.

6. Process to improve assignment of tasks to officers

Earlier Don Fohey had suggested this agenda item, but now suggested dropping it. There was no further discussion.

7. Newsletter future directions

There was only a brief discussion before we moved on to the next topic.

8. Joining the Astronomical League - the cheap way

Doug Scobel suggested the club should join the Astronomical League. One way to do this would cost \$7.50 per member who joins the AL, or \$5.00 per member if 95% of the club joins the AL. No one had an objection to this and Doug will bring this up at the April club meeting. He will also present it in the April newsletter.

9. Other business.

Since Dave Snyder will not be continuing as VP, there were some issues. Someone will need to take over updating the calendar. Nothing was decided on this matter. Also Dave Snyder needs assistance with the printing of the flyers. The question is could anyone pick the flyers up and pay for them?

Submitted by Dave Snyder.