

Minutes

RASC Victoria Centre Council

April 4, 2012

Astronomy Lounge, 4th Floor, Elliott Building, University of Victoria, 7:30 p.m.

Present: Lauri Roche (chair), Sid Sidhu, Chris Gainor, Joe Carr, Sherry Buttner, Malcolm Scrimger, Nelson Walker, Michel Michaud, Charles Banville, John McDonald, David Lee, Jim Hesser, Li-Ann Skibo, Mark Bohlman (Recorder)

Meeting started at 7:30 p.m.

- 1) **Review Agenda-** no items added
- 2) **Review Minutes from February 1, 2012-** Lauri Roche
 - a) Action Item Review (all items completed)
 - b) Motion was made and seconded to approve the February 1, 2011 Council Minutes. Motion PASSED unanimously.
- 3) **Secretary's Report-** Mark Bohlman (no report)
- 4) **Financial Report-** Li-Ann Skibo
 - a) Li-Ann noted that she sent out by e-mail earlier today a transaction log showing all financial transactions for Gaming and Member accounts since September of last year. Li-Ann asked all members to check and see if transactions are correct and advise her of any discrepancies.
ACTION: All
 - b) Li-Ann reported that the current Member Account balance stands at \$6,012.53 and the current Gaming Account balance stands at \$1,279.42.
- 5) **Committees and Projects:**
 - a) **NREC-CU/Plaskett/ Membership-** Sherry Buttner
 - i) Membership- Current Centre membership is 164, down one from last month.
 - ii) Plaskett- No Plaskett observing nights are anticipated until Fall 2012 as Dave Balam is ill.
 - b) **Skynews Editor/Astronomy Café-** Malcolm Scrimger
 - i) Skynews-Malcolm is looking for Council Director reports, needs material by April 11th.
 - ii) Astronomy Café- Malcolm reports good attendance at recent meetings.

c) **Website- Joe Carr**

- i) Joe reports website is working well and no current issues.

d) **Public Outreach, Surplus Equipment Discussion/Lottery- Sid Sidhu**

- i) Public Outreach- Sid reported that we can expect a very busy summer of public outreach events. We have recorded 3.692 public connections since last September. A school program was held today and others are scheduled this month (April 18 and 19th). We will have a booth at the Centennial Square Earthwalk on April 21st. Telescope set-ups for the partial solar eclipse will be located at Mount Tolmie, the Inner Harbor and Cattle Point. The same locations will be used for the Venus transit on June 5th. The Greater Victoria Library system has asked us to make 3 presentations this summer at their branch locations. Fort Rodd Hill has also reached out to us for a camping event. Sid is also looking for volunteers for our B.C Parks summer program at the Rathrevor Beach, Miracle Beach and Goldstream locations.
- ii) Venus Transit- Lauri needs an informational document to help promote this event. Joe Carr will produce. Some information is already available on the National RASC website. **ACTION: Joe Carr**
- iii) Explore the Universe Brochure- Malcolm has prepared a pamphlet for Council review and possible distribution at events.
- iv) Equipment Sale/Raffle- Sid reports 85% of the 450 raffle tickets for the 12" Dobsonian have been sold. A \$300 scope was recently sold to Sherry and a \$100 scope was recently sold to a new member. Sid is hoping to raffle more telescopes next year.

e) **Tech Committee/Observatory Update- John McDonald**

- i) John reports a busy last two months at the VCO. The facility has continued to perform well for every opening time. Recent work that has been completed includes the moving of the UPS off the floor, upgrading of software to Windows 7, repair of the guide scope focuser, cleaning of the main telescope optics and installation of an 80 mm guide scope.
- ii) The safety meeting with the DAO occurred as scheduled on 2/15 with all MIC's in attendance. Jon reported that no substantive changes in safety policy arose out of the meeting.
- iii) VCO Friday openings will commence May 18th.
- iv) New work contemplated at the VCO in the coming months includes further maintenance work on the 14" including possible recabling. The telescope may need to be out of service for a month and ideally would occur during June. Lauri asked John for a report write-up of completed and planned improvements at the VCO to be included in the Newsletter. **ACTION: John McDonald**

- f) **Light Pollution Abatement-** Mark Bohlman
- i) Mark thanked Lauri for her efforts in his recent work absence. Lauri participated in the three day public consultation process for the UVIC CARSA project meeting with the designer and university team. Lauri stressed the importance of keeping up the pressure on the lighting issue. The consultation process continues into May with the review of the 5 options presented. Mark will control our message in all presentations going forward. **ACTION: Mark Bohlman**
- g) **Regular Meeting Speakers/Star Party 2012 Discussion-** Nelson Walker, Sherry Buttner
- i) Speakers- Nelson has speakers set up for April, May, June, and September. A Star Party and AGM speaker still need to be identified.
 - ii) Star Party- Nelson and Lauri to evaluate the idea of a suggested donation fee to be solicited at the event as we cannot charge for camping based per the conditions of the field use contract. It was also suggested that we look at possible donations from book stores etc. to cut down on prize costs.
- h) **Science Fair-** Lauri Roche
- i) Science Fair at UVic Sunday April 15th in the afternoon, Elliott Building Annex... Unknown how many astronomy projects. Lauri is looking for helpers/volunteers to help judge. If there are no projects worthy of merit, no prize needs to be awarded.
- i) **National Issues/GA Discussion-** Chris Gainor
- I) Council meeting held last month with Jim Hesser in attendance and Chris attending by phone. National embarking on rewriting constitution by Fall 2014. Template will be created for local centres that will need to be adapted to provincial laws.
 - II) Directors and Officer's Insurance- There is no clarification yet on whether centre affiliates are covered. Nelson to work with Chris to locate existing full national policy and declarations, review document and provide recommendation whether our Centre should obtain extra D & O insurance or not. **ACTION: Nelson Walker, Chris Gainor**
 - III) 2014 GA-Extended discussion concerning various pros and cons of possible venues for 2014 GA. Chris has spoken to both UVic and Pearson College. Important to wind up events prior to July 1st holiday when rates increase. Acknowledged that if Pearson is selected, extraordinary volunteer effort would be needed. UVic will need commitment quickly because of its popularity. We will need to create a formal committee a year before there is a formal presentation. By May 1st, Chris and Lauri to prepare a proposal package based on last Victoria GA with dates for both Pearson

and UVic to bid on and provide “Pros and Cons” comparison matrix for Council to review. **ACTION: Chris Gainor and Lauri Roche**

- 6) **Budget Amendments and Update** Lauri Roche and Li-Ann Skibo
 - a) Charitable Status- We are in the process of re-applying to Ottawa for charitable status renewal and are awaiting confirmation. This status inadvertently slipped last year. We cannot by law currently give receipts for donations but we are able to backtrack these once status is renewed.
 - b) Budget- Lauri and Li-Ann distributed a revised budget dated April 4, 2012 to all Council members. We have a current projected budget deficit of \$4,052 for 2011/2012. Despite this, our cash account, which averages approximately \$6,000 month to month would still remain positive.. Lauri asked for questions and comments on the budget. Joe Carr and John MacDonald recommended that we work to reduce the deficit slightly to a more manageable level by re-reviewing expenses. It was generally agreed in the discussion, without a formal motion, that the new budget was accepted for information and that each Council member responsible for a budget component would look at possible expense reductions or deferrals in an effort to reduce the projected deficit. **ACTION: All Council Members**

- 7) **Astronomy Day Plans-** Sherry Buttner
 - a) Sherry reported that planning is generally under control with lots of volunteers available. Sherry needs volunteers for the “Ask the Astronomer” table- contact person Dennis Crabtree? Malcolm has an ad ready for newspaper distribution. Chris to do press release. Notice of Event needs to go to the Times Colonist in the next 10 days. Should get all Black Press newspapers in distribution as well.

- 8) **2012/2013 Council Nominations-** John MacDonald
 - a) John reminded Council that we need to start thinking about new officers for next year and review this issue on next meeting’s agenda.

Adjournment- 9:30 p.m.

Next Council Meeting- June 6, 2012

Submitted by Mark Bohlman, Recorder