

SMA Directors' Meeting Minutes

May 15, 2024

Via Zoom

7:00 pm

In attendance: Directors Bob Dodge, Carson Hanrahan, Russ Pinizzotto, Howie Marshall, Paul Howell, Mike Simmons, Dave Gay, Kevin Kane, Jeremy Wright and Rob Burgess and club members Al DiSabatino, and Dave Crocker. A quorum was present.

The minutes of the April 24, 2024 meeting were approved.

Follow-Up on Action Items and Committee Reports:

New Directors indicated their committee preferences as follows:

- Paul Howell – new committee on web communications – keeping site up-to-date and adding improvements, coordinating with Ara and Kevin on allocation of responsibilities
- Dave Gay – Membership, as chair
- Mike Simmons – Outreach, assisting Carson

Rob asked the new board members to review secondary roles they could play in administration of the club to provide back-up support to existing committee chairs.

Program Committee: Russ

- Russ and Carson are to choose four or five topics for beginners for our June meeting. We decided to offer two annually (the second in November) aimed at members new to the hobby. Russ and Carson will try to find other club members to present on these topics rather than doing all the work themselves. Speakers for other meetings were actively being solicited by the Program Committee. Many prospective speakers were looking for dates in the fall, given academic commitments. We are still seeking a NASA speaker on the Deep Space Network, on its 60th anniversary. **ACTION ITEM**: Rob will reach out to Spirit Aero Systems in Biddeford to discuss their role in supplying heat resistant materials for planetary missions.
- **ACTION ITEM**: July meeting: reschedule or cancel: No decision was made yet as we considered trying to tie some observing into the Open House that is now likely to be in mid-July.

Outreach Committee: Carson, Mike and Anne Dobriko

- Carson provided a schedule of dates, places and items to observe for club star parties through November. Bolded items were added by Rob as possible placeholders or for other specific events:
 - **June 15, 8pm** - Location TBD - **Moon and the Summer Skies**
 - Rain Date TBD
 - Newbie telescope setup, alignment, collimation, etc.
 - Ask volunteers arrive ~6pm to help with new guest questions, setup
- **July 20, 8pm** - Kettle Cove, Cape Elizabeth - **Star Clusters**
- Rain Date July 27
- Star hopping - how do I find objects in the night sky?

- **August 24, 8pm** - Cumberland Library w/Library Ice Cream Social - **Nebulae**
- Rain Date August 31; awaiting confirmation from Library
- More on Electronically Assisted Astronomy (EAA) and Smart Telescopes
- Using filters for observing

- **September 21, 7pm** - Bug Light Park, South Portland - **Various**
- Rain Date September 28
- Preserving Dark Skies, Astro software for finding objects & telescope control

- **October 05, 6pm** - Mitchell Field w/Harpswell Heritage Land Trust - **Various**
- Rain Date October 06
- Preserving Dark Skies

- **November 16, 6pm** - Eastern Prom/Kettle Cove/Bug Light (TBD) - **Planets are back in the evening sky!**
- Rain Date November 23
- The Planets and how to pick/find observing targets (e.g., Messier and other catalogs, etc.)

- **Brunswick Rotary – Monday, August 5 (Rob)**
- **Maine State Star Party in Cobscook Bay August 9-11**
- **Perseid Meteor Shower Star Party with BTLT – August 10/11 ?**
- **Maine’s First Ship – Bath – Sept?**
- **Brunswick Non-Profit Community BBQ – early September – solar viewing**
- **Bowdoin Students – Sept? Oct?**
- **ASNNE StarFest - September**
- **Stars Over Katahdin – Sept 28**
- Adaptive Outdoor Education Center – light pollution talk – TBD – Rob
- USM Garden Club – Sabattus – June TBD – Rob, others
- Clare Harrington – MSAD 51 (Cumb./No Yar) – fall 2024 (180 students)

Rob reported that the Open House/20th Anniversary Celebration initially proposed for late April or early May needed to be postponed until later in the season, possibly in mid-July. Equipment to be sold has been identified and research on pricing is underway. This could be a rain or shine event as we now have tents (10x10 and 10x20) to cover if necessary.

- Rob said he would reach out to the Brunswick Topsham Land Trust, the Maine Coast Heritage Trust and Maine’s First Ship, to invite joint events in 2024. These organizations all requested star parties in 2023 we couldn’t accommodate. This was an **ACTION ITEM.**

Dark Sky Committee: Rob, Howie, Jeremy

- As a Board Member again Paul thought he could better serve the club by handling our webpage and electronic messaging and accordingly has withdrawn from the Dark Sky Committee, at least from an Org Chart perspective. Ara did a masterful job in setting up our new webpage several years ago, as did Kevin in keeping announcements updated. But these were all ancillary duties for both of them. The use of the page for related materials and constant announcements

demands a webmaster (is that term still in use?) to be responsible for the quick responsiveness needed today.

- **ACTION ITEM:** Paul will now work with Jeremy and others to get the Google Map of our recommended star gazing sites up on our webpage.
- **ACTION ITEM:** Rob will put together some dark sky advice for our webpage from the DSI website that can guide people on their choices for outdoor lighting needs. We will also provide links to DSI, Dark Sky Maine and other resources.
- Rob informed that the Town of Brunswick is finally ready to take up lighting amendments to its zoning ordinance. He has submitted some draft language that will appear before the Planning Board in a workshop session on May 28.
- Efforts to modernize DSM's organizational structure, including to eventually seek chapter status by Dark Sky International, continue. Rob is representing SMA in those efforts but he welcomes others' participation.
- The Land Use Planning Commission has started the formal process preceding a formal rulemaking on updating its lighting ordinance for its 10.4 million acres of jurisdiction. We will engage in those proceedings once they begin and invite public comment.
- Jeremy reiterated he would undertake an informal survey of several retailers looking for low CCT bulbs and dark sky-friendly light fixtures to better understand what's in the marketplace locally. This will enable us to advise people seeking to do the right thing and perhaps push those retailers on the type of inventory they carry, if necessary.

Membership Committee: Dave and Kevin

- Al and Dave are working on transitioning all responsibilities related to membership. Dave also indicated he would assume the responsibility of reporting to Night Sky Network to keep us current with that platform.
- Al reported that the club's current membership moved up by three to 87. Seventeen of our members are woman, maintaining the approximate level of 25% female membership.
- Rob reported that as of May 15 there were 187 participants in Google Groups and that several requests to join are received monthly.
- Al has previously discussed a few membership questions that should be resolved: how, when and for how long should honorary memberships be maintained (Jerry LaSala and Ed Gleason); should former members (who are not dues-paying) remain on the roster (George Whitney); should donors who make a contribution of more than the Lifetime Membership level (\$1,000) become automatic lifetime members if the donation came from a charitable trust and not the individual (could affect the tax benefit of the donor organization if an individual received a benefit); and can we continue to advertise free admission to the Southworth Planetarium with a new planetarium director? We hope Al will continue to identify the cracks in our membership structure even though he is now off the board!

Equipment Committee: Ara & Kevin

- A work party took place at Neptune Dr on May 5 consisting of Carson, Bob, Dave, Jeremy, Dave Crocker, Dean Ostergaard, Steve Tondreau and Rob. Equipment was set up and sorted as to what was to be sold, with a few items to be decided. Listed below are items to be sold and retained:

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| To Sell: |
| 1. C-11 Edge and accessories |
| 2. Meade ETX 105 |
| 3. Meade ETX 70 |
| 4. C-8 on Pier Extension on GEM |
| 5. C-8 (w/ case), HD tripod and many accessories (NH donation) |
| 6. Pentax camera, four lenses (inc 400mm tele) in Pelican (NH) |
| 7. C-8 LL Bean edition |
| 8. Celestron Powerseeker 127 Newtonian |
| 9. Brass Celestron decorative "Cometron 50" refractor |
| 10. Celestron 100mm Achromatic refractor & mount |
| 11. 15" Mirror cell frame |
| 12. Mirror blank (10" ?) |
| 13. Konus 114 Newtonian reflector |
| 14. Miscellaneous eyepieces & filters |
| 15. Miscellaneous imaging cameras w/ filter wheels |
| 16. Celestron Heavy Duty Tripod & Wedge |
| 17. Acrylic box laptop protector (field use) (NH) |
| 18. ZWO Astrophotography kit from EAA scope |
| 19. Takahashi FS 102 |
| 20. 6-wheeled Wheely Bar telescope transport |
| 21. Scope Buggy Telescope transport |
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| To Keep: |
| 1. New C-8 (orange tube) on ALT/AZ mount w/ dew shield |
| 2. C-8 Starbright XLT |
| 3. C-9.25 on fork mount w/ Star Sense alignment system |
| 4. Meade EXT 125 |
| 5. 15" Dob |
| 6. Lunt Solar Scope |
| 7. Select eyepieces |
| 8. Observing chair |
| 9. Two Rubbermaid 2-step stools w/ storage (NH) |
| 10. C-8 Solar filter (NH) |
| 11. Eyepiece Box - small silver |
| 12. C-8 refurbished kept in Portland area for use there |
| 13. C-11 refurbished kept in Portland area for use there |
| 14. Astrozap Solar filter for C8 |
| 15. Celestron Lithium Powertank |

16. EAA OTA and Mount

Eyepiece and related detail

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|---|-----------------|
| Meade Super Plossl - Rob | 9.7 mm & 26mm |
| TeleVue - Rob | 4.8mm Nagler |
| Takahashi - Rob | MC LE 18mm |
| | 7mm, 23mm, |
| Celestron Luminos - Neptune & Rob | 31mm |
| Celestron Focal Reducer - Neptune | .7x |
| Plossl - Neptune | 32mm |
| Celestron Plossl - Neptune | 40mm |
| | 8mm, 12mm, |
| | 15mm, |
| Edmund Scientific Plossls - Neptune (tackle box) | 20mm(2),21.5mm, |
| Edmund Scientific - Neptune (tackle box) | 28mm |
| | 2.5x Barlow |
| | 6.7mm, 9.7mm, |
| | 12.4mm, 15mm, |
| Meade Super Plossl - Neptune (tackle box) | 20mm, 26mm, |
| | 32mm |
| Moonlight AutoFocuser - Neptune | |
| Binoviewer - Neptune | |
| Set of eight colored filters (1.25") - Neptune (tackle box) | |
| SBIG CCD camera w/ built-in filter wheel - Jeremy /Ara | |
| Attwood v500 water cooling system for CCD camera - Jeremy/Ara | |
| JMI Autofocuser - Jeremy/Ara | |
| TeleVue Plossl - Jeremy/Ara | 55mm |
| Kendrick Dew Removal system for C8 - Jeremy/Ara | |
| Lumicon off-axis guider, diagonal, filter holder - Jeremy/Ara | |
| | (2) 6mm, (3) |
| Orion Explorer II | 17mm |
| Celestron 45° 1.25" diagonal | |
| H brand | 20mm |

- Once list pricing is determined the club will offer these items to club members at a discount off of the list price for several weeks. Items will then be offered to other clubs in the state. Whatever remains unsold will be available for purchase at the Open House.
- The C-8 and C-11 that Carson refurbished (with out-of-pocket expenditures of \$832 and 2,092, respectively) the club agreed to keep. Carson offered to house the equipment at his home for use at southern Maine star parties. Carson also graciously deferred seeking reimbursement for the equipment upgrades until such time as the club chose to sell the equipment (if to him, at net of out-of-pocket expenditures, and if to third parties, then with reimbursement to him of out-of-pocket expenditures).

- Directors were encouraged to think of wish list items to bring retained equipment fully up to date, and/or enhanced, to provide the best experience possible for users.
- The club has received several recommendations from members regarding the equipment loan program, and how it was an inducement to join SMA. It was stressed that we needed an updated tab on the club webpage promoting this benefit, with pictures showing what was available, and procedures on how to borrow.

Treasurer's Report/Finance Committee: Bob

- Bob reported that as of 5/15/24 the club had \$9,858.23 in its operating account. The club also has a \$10,000 in a 15-month CD at Bangor Savings with a yield of 3.82%, with a current account balance of \$10,061.66.

Executive Committee: Rob, Ara, Bob, Russ

- **ACTION ITEM:** Post pictures and bios on webpage after getting pictures and bios from our slate of new directors. Paul is now working on.

The meeting ended about 9:00 p.m.

Submitted by
Rob Burgess

Next Directors' Meetings (all on Wednesdays at 7p.m. via Zoom):

- **Jun 19**
 - **Jul 17**
 - **Aug 21**
 - **Sep 18**
 - **Oct 16**
 - **Nov 20**
 - **Dec 18**
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