

Smoky Mountain Astronomical Society

Volume 29, Number 2
February 2006

S.C.R.A.P.S.

Society's **Ch**Ronological **A**stronomical **P**aper**S**

Feb. 10th SMAS MEETING

PSTCC, Main Campus,
Hardin Valley Road
7:30 pm, Alexander Bldg, Room 223



From the President - Mike Littleton

This is my last *From the President* of the current term. I'm afraid I cannot run for President for the new term - my work schedule just will not permit it. Overall, it was a good year for SMAS. We had good presentations at our meetings. SMAS participated in public outreach at Willow Brook School and TAO. The club rebuilt our 20" dobsonian, Sasquatch. We had numerous star parties, a summer picnic, and a holiday dinner. We gained several new members. SMAS attempted to give a public event in the Smoky Mountain National Park in October. As East Tennessee does, we were weathered out. The good news is we now have ties with the park rangers and are planning an event in the spring rain or "shine" (really dark). I would like to thank the club officers and all those members who gave time and money to make the year a success.

SMAS is looking for nominations for the new slate of officers. Last year the nominees ran unopposed. I would encourage other members to step forward to offer their time as a club officer. If there is something that you want to do different or new, please run for office.

- Mike

The SMAS meeting of January 13, 2006 - Lee Erickson

The SMAS met in Room 223 of the Alexander building of the Harden Valley campus of Pellissippi State Community College.

Socializing began at about 7:00 PM and Vice President Erik Iverson presided over the meeting which began at about 7:30 PM.

9 Members attended and a veritable galaxy (17) of guests because Angela Quick had invited her Maryville College class, Introduction to Star Gazing.

There was a brief solicitation for nominations of officers by the Secretary, Lee Erickson, and a decision was made to continue the nomination process on the Yahoo Groups.

To entertain and challenge both SMAS members and the student guests, we divided the attendees into two groups. We then participated in the game where astronomical answers are given in several categorical subjects, and the object of the game is to provide that question to which the correct answer was given. Can you say, "What is Astro-Jeopardy?"

Erik and Angela made up the categories and the row entries and so they acted as Quiz Master and Buzzer Master respectively. The two groups were captained by Bob Arr and Lee Erickson. The captains of teams, Sirius and Betelgeuse, attempted to find consensus with in their groups on the correct question to each of the answers posed. Some of the "answers" turned on very interesting details and even we seasoned amateur astronomers found the experience very informative. Good work to Erik and Angela for this stimulating activity which worked so well with our guests.

Next, Angela Quick presented a brief overview of telescopes types and then the Introduction to Star Gazing students broke up into groups and visited the telescopes that members brought for the purpose of showing off. Students, looking through my EXT at the "Moon", were surprised to find that locating major features was facilitated by the labels visible right there on the surface of the "Moon". The students were, however, somewhat confused by the reversal of the image that occurs in astronomical telescopes. The EXT reverses left and right but preserves up and down.

A good time was had by all and we hope some students come back.

Subject: Soliciting Nominations for SMAS Officers for 2006 - L. Erickson

Dear SMAS members,

I am writing to you as the nominations committee of one. Officer elections are this month, February the 10th. Although our current officers were nominated for second terms at the January meeting, personal commitments prevent some of them from accepting those nominations. However, in recent correspondence Erik Iverson has consented to run for President and Mike Littleton has consented to run for Vice President. Ron Dinkins has indicated that his work and distance from the PO Box in Knoxville has made it too difficult for him to serve as Treasurer. With Erik and Mike running as indicated SMAS will have important continuity of leadership. But we would also benefit from other members taking officer positions to both bring new ideas into SMAS and to spread the experience of managing SMAS within the membership. I, Lee Erickson, will be willing to serve as Treasurer, and Bill Dittus has consented to run for Secretary.

To recap then: The following people have accepted nominations for SMAS officer positions.

Erik Iverson for President.
Michael Littleton for Vice President.
Bill Dittus for Secretary
Lee Erickson for Treasurer.

During the February meeting, just before elections, we will open the floor to nominations. You may, and are encouraged to, nominate yourself.

If you can serve as an officer of SMAS, we'd to hear from you!

The suggested duties of all SMAS Officers

The following list of suggested duties is simply an imperfect record of how we tried to do what we thought needs to be done. The duties can be rearranged, deleted and new ones added as the officers see fit. The most important duty is to take initiative.

Within the rules of the SMAS constitution,

The suggested duties of all SMAS Officers (from Bob Arr):

(Continued)

1. Attend monthly meetings. There will be exceptions, of course, but the general idea that these meetings are part of the job is emphasized.
2. Attend monthly staff meetings
3. Maintain a written description of how you do your job. Give a duplicate copy to the Secretary for safekeeping.
4. Train your replacement at the end of your term.

The suggested duties of the President (from Bob Arr):

1. Provide leadership and encourage initiatives. In cooperation with the executive committee, set goals and priorities, and establish special projects. Use all avenues to keep the members informed: meeting announcements, email/website, SCRAPS, mail, telephone.
2. Recommend to the executive committee volunteers to fill the appointed offices of SMAS. Recommend replacement of appointees who do not perform.
3. Appoint task subcommittees as required.
4. Direct all disbursements by the Treasurer. Be a signatory on the club bank account.
5. Hold monthly staff meetings to insure coordination between offices, initiatives and meetings. Maintain a calendar of annual events that require attention.
6. Compose a monthly article for SCRAPS to keep the members informed of current efforts and/or problems, and recognize individual accomplishments.
7. Host the monthly meeting. Schedule the time and place well in advance. Avoid conflicts with other events which may cause difficulty with availability of the meeting place or parking.
8. Maintain a SMAS calendar reminding officers of task that need annual attention.

The suggested duties of the Vice-President (from Tom Rimmell).

1. The Vice-President is expected to act as lieutenant for the President in the implementation of initiatives.

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2. Substitute for the President in his/her absence at club meetings.
3. The Vice-President may substitute for any other officer unexpectedly unable to attend a meeting.
4. The Vice-President will track club property. (Currently the 20", 10" and 90mm telescopes and their accessories.)

The suggested duties of the Secretary (from Lee Erickson).

1. Maintain and bring to all club meetings the club Constitution, Bylaws and Operating Rules.
2. Record the proceedings of all club meetings.
3. Maintain a club Library and make the Library accessible to all members in good standing. (Membership cards issued upon payment of dues is proof of currency of dues?!?) The library activity may be delegated to others.
4. Form and chair an election committee before the January general meeting, to find nominees for all elected positions. The committee members will provide a copy of the suggested duties of the officers to the persons asked to be nominees.
5. To conduct elections as per the constitution.

Define the procedure for absentee balloting, which may include none. In January, report on nominations from the election committee and request additional nominations. Record nominations if seconded. Close nominations. Prepare ballots for the next meeting. Leave room on ballot for write in nominations which may occur at the February meeting. In February, appoint a balloting committee from members present. From the Treasure's roster of members in good standing, determine the eligibility of each voter or ballot. Pass out ballots to voting members. Reopen nominations from floor. Record nominations if seconded. Close nominations and begin elections. The balloting committee deals with any special or unusual events which occur including but not limited to bad or unintelligible ballots. The balloting committee counts all ballots, and the Secretary includes the results in the meeting notes.

6. Suggestion for tie breaking procedure.

In the event of a tie vote for all elected officers other than Secretary, the Secretary will decide the winner by a single coin toss.

In the event of a tie vote for Secretary, involving the reelection of the current Secretary, the newly elected executive committee will choose the new Secretary. (Mortal combat is no longer recommended to settle a tie vote.)

(Continued)

7. Maintain this list of suggested duties for elected officers.
8. Maintain a list of suggested duties for appointed officers and standing committees.

Suggested Duties of the Treasurer (from Janice Erickson)

The duties of the Treasurer of SMAS shall be as follows:

1. Responsible for the collection, deposit and record keeping of membership dues and or special donations, as well as issuing receipts for the same.
2. Issuance of checks for club expenses as approved and necessary.
3. Reconciliation of the checking account for the club.
4. Reporting to the President and general membership of the club's finances as specified by the club by-laws.
5. Maintenance of the membership roster for availability at each club meeting. Providing the same to the Executive Committee, newsletter editor and web master as required to ensure proper membership notification.
6. Maintenance of the listing of available publications and discount magazine subscriptions and providing availability and renewal rates to the general membership.
7. Unless otherwise delegated to another person, the Treasurer shall retain the key to the Post Office Box and pick up mail on a regular basis. The mail received shall be opened, reviewed and filed or timely forwarded on to the most appropriate person.
8. The Treasurer will also be SMAS's Astronomical League Correspondent (ALCor), submitting quarterly rosters in accordance with the AL's schedule (details on AL website). If messages are received from the AL, s/he will forward them to the appropriate person for action.

Smoky Mountain Astronomical Society
2006 Ballot and Membership Renewal Form

Complete all three sections of this form and bring to the February 10th meeting
OR

mail to: SMAS, PO Box 53265, Knoxville, TN 37950

BALLOT -- Please check by name to confirm / vote for your choice:

President:
Erik Iverson

_____ (write-in)

Vice President:
Mike Littleton

_____ (write in)

Secretary:
Bill Dittus

_____ (write in)

Treasurer:
Lee Erickson

_____ (write in)

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL -- Please confirm the following information:

Your Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Email Address: _____

Additional Names (if family membership): _____

I am signed up for the smokymtnastro Yahoo! Group using the email address / Yahoo! Profile below:

E-mail Address: _____ Yahoo! Profile _____

**DUES & SUBSCRIPTIONS PAYMENT -- please enclose a check payable to SMAS for your total below.
(Ok, cash is fine, too.)**

SMAS dues for 2006 -- \$20

(Your mailing address will be supplied to the Astronomical League for your subscription to *The Reflector*.)

Sky & Telescope subscription at the club discount rate of \$? Per year -- \$

Astronomy subscription at the club discount rate of \$? Per year -- \$

TOTAL: _____

Ballots must be received by February 10 to be counted, although you can still vote at the meeting.

The Wiz

Dear Wiz,

I'd like to get an observing chair that I can haul easily. Know of any good ones?

L. Comphee

Dear Liktube,

You'd think it would be simple, wouldn't you? But No, it's a bear.

Do your observations regularly keep the eyepiece between 40 and 50 inches above the ground? Is your focuser twistable so that you can adjust the eyepiece's axis roughly parallel to the ground?

If either is No, you aren't going to find a good chair. Either you need one so high it's suicidal, or one so low you'd be better off with a mattress on the ground.

If Yes and Yes, the only other questions are 1) How old are you, and 2) How much money are you willing to spend?

Some chairs have casters, and that's very practical on pavement because you often have to move your body to track your target in the eyepiece. If you don't move the chair, you must lean, further and further. Usually, a twitch of the posterior is sufficient to drag the casters along. But if the chair doesn't roll, you have to rise off the chair and often use two hands to try to reposition it; it can snag, turn cockeyed, or move too far or not far enough. It can be trying.

And about your age, it's this simple: the older you are the more likely you are to capsize your chair during the night. Really! To put a quantitative edge on it, put a decimal point in front of your age and add it to 1; call the sum A . Between one-eyed squinting, vertigo from bending over, lack of a visual horizon and tiredness, only a chair footprint A times the diameter of your tush is likely to save your tush.

Those cute little tripods that fold up so neatly are invitations to catastrophe. You need five legs for the same reason OSHA mandated them in the office.

Care to see my scars?

Da Wiz

February 2006

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
			1	2 Groundhog Day	3 UTK	4 SMAS Star Party TAO
5	6	7	8	9	10 SMAS Meeting PSTCC Rm 223 7:30 pm	11
12	13 <i>Full Moon</i>	14 Valentine's Day	15	16	17 UTK	18 TAO
19	20	21	22	23	24	25 SMAS Star Party TAO
26	27	28 <i>New Moon</i>		UTK—roof of Neilson Physics Building on The Hill at UT 1st & 3rd Fridays TAO —Tamke-Allan Observatory Public Stargaze Watts Bar Lake, Roane County 1st & 3rd Saturdays		