

Minutes of the February 1, 2010, HAL Planning Meeting, Corrected

February 11, 2010

These Corrected Minutes from the February 1, 2010, Board meeting of the Howard Astronomical League (HAL), dated February 11, 2010, supersede any and all earlier versions.

The meeting was attended by President Bob Prokop, First Vice President Ed Sabala, Treasurer Peter Friedman, Observatory Chair Joel Goodman, Webmaster Charles Rimpo, Event Coordinator David Stein, Past-Presidents Wayne Baggett and Marc Feuerberg, and Secretary David Illig. The meeting was held at the "Pasta Blitz" restaurant in Ellicott City.

1. President Bob Prokop opened the meeting at 7:00 PM by asking whether we have a program scheduled for the February, 2010, general meeting. Wayne Baggett replied that Richard Orr has offered to present a lunar or planetary program, and President Bob Prokop will ask Richard to do so. There was a brief discussion of topics for future meetings, and the ideas that were mentioned included Q&A sessions and presentations by members who are willing and able to share their expertise in particular areas.
2. Event Coordinator David Stein raised the matter of the request by the Wilde Lake High School PTSA for HAL to conduct a star party for Wilde Lake students and their families. The Board's consensus was that a special session for Wilde Lake students be held in conjunction with one of our regular Alpha Ridge star parties. David will work with the PTSA to select a mutually convenient date for the event--this spring, before school closes, or possibly in the fall after school reopens.
3. David Stein is working on the 2010 star party schedule. David explained the HAL policy on Star party cancellations. Essentially, the policy is that there are no cancellations as far as the star party sponsor is concerned; the sponsor will show up even in unsuitable weather to explain to others who may arrive that the star party is not being held. David said that people will sometimes arrive even in the rain expecting a star party. When the star party schedule is finalized, Wayne Baggett will have it printed on a business card for distribution.
4. Past-President Marc Feuerberg reported that he has scheduled a memorial star party for the late Ron Smith, an active observer in both HAL and the Westminster Astronomical Society, for May 8, with a rain date of May 14. The memorial star party will be held at Ron Smith's observing site in West Virginia.
5. Treasurer Peter Friedman proposed opening a second bank account for the observatory fund. Initially, \$750 would be kept as HAL's operating fund and the balance of HAL's funds would be transferred to the new observatory account. The Board agreed that this is a good idea that will be carried out. The exact mechanism will depend on the kinds of appropriate accounts the bank has to offer. Peter said that he and the former Secretary and new Secretary David Illig need to go to the bank

together to have the former Secretary's name removed from the account and the new Secretary added. The new Secretary begged to be excused from this responsibility because his home is in Anne Arundel County, a considerable distance from the bank in Columbia. The President, who resides much closer to the bank than the Secretary, kindly agreed to have his name placed on the account in place of the Secretary.

6. Observatory Chair Joel Goodman suggested that he and the Webmaster should have their status changed to that of appointed Board Members. The Board voted unanimously to approve this change, pending a check to ensure that such a change is not in conflict with the bylaws. If there is a conflict with the bylaws, the bylaws will be amended to permit the change.

7. Marc Feuerberg, at whose home the Watson telescope is stored pending its installation in the observatory, led an informal discussion of the telescope's status. The telescope needs some adjustments to make it work more smoothly, and the equatorial mount is incomplete. Marc will recruit skilled volunteers to help with these tasks.

8. The meeting concluded with an informal discussion of the observatory project. Joel reported on some fund-raising opportunities, and some questions were asked about specific construction details, but the Board agreed that it is too early to make decisions concerning the construction itself, and besides, we will be guided by the architect's design. In addition, Wayne Bagget agreed to set up a Microsoft Project (project management) file that will present a timeline for the project, with dependencies. (Secretary's note: please see <http://blogs.msdn.com/project/archive/2008/07/29/back-to-basics-understanding-task-dependencies.aspx> for an explanation of "dependencies"). Joel said that groundbreaking might take place in 2010. Marc and the Secretary believe that construction will move along quickly once the foundation is ready to accept the structure.

The president adjourned the meeting at 8:30 PM.

David Illig, Secretary