



## **December 2011**

### **Minutes of the General Assembly Meeting - 11 November 2011**

The meeting was called to order at 7:32 p.m. by President Joyce Lynch. A quorum was present. There were 23 individuals in attendance.

The following were introduced as new members, returning members and visitors: Jim Sheets, Alan and Carina Caruth, Jason Colera, Robert Flores and his daughter.

Motion to approve minutes was made by Jim Spigelmire, seconded by Tim Brown.

Officer and Chair reports:

Treasurer: Mark Lyon – We are still floating around \$25,000. We are over +\$4000 on sales of old equipment for use toward a new solar scope. The scope loaner program will be kicking off next week.

Outreach: Events will be listed on the website, but here is what is currently on the agenda for November: 13<sup>th</sup> Wild Basin, 14<sup>th</sup> Scout Night at Bridge Point Elementary, 17<sup>th</sup> .at Summit Elementary, 19<sup>th</sup> Public party at COE and a second star party at Blanco State Park, 26<sup>th</sup> Members Only at COE. Our new banner has arrived!

Presentation of AL awards: Lauren Rogers for Northern Skies Constellations and Phil Schmidt for Outreach.

The holiday party this year is a potluck; sign up on the Evite for what you're bringing. There will be no white elephant gift exchange this year, but we will have a pub style trivia quiz.

Presentation: Video, part II – The City Dark (84 minutes) It is 6 chapters. We watched the first 3 last week; this is the conclusion of the video.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

## **Minutes of the Executive Committee - 7 November 2011**

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by President Joyce Lynch. Additionally present were: Tim Brown, Vice President; Dawn Davies, Outreach Chair; Jim Linn, Member Services; Mark Lyon, Treasurer; Jim Spigelmire, Communications Chair; Lauren Rogers, Secretary; Vic Ellisor and Terry Phillips, Members at Large; Jack Estes, ALCOR; Ron Carman, COE liaison; Steve Bosbach, IDA rep. A quorum was present.

The meeting was called to order by Joyce Lynch at 7:04pm.

Special guest: Joyce Lynch presented Torvald Hessel with the AAS contribution to the Austin Planetarium for corporate membership. The AP is very thankful for our support; they are always looking for outreach support and financial support as well (flash fundraiser, etc). People who shop at Randall's can also use their Randall's card to help support the AP (1% of spending is donated to a non-profit organization). AAS can also post information on the website in support of the AP.

Motion made to approve last EC meeting's minutes made by Jim Spigelmire, seconded by Dawn Davies.

### **Officer Reports:**

Treasurer – eBay sales are going very well, renewals are at about 240 members (including a few new members every week via the website)

VP – we have no speaker for this Friday night, January is Dr Crispin from the astronomy department, February will be Don Olson from Texas State, March will be AAS member John Huntsberger, and we'd like to do a presentation on astrophotography soon. We can finish last month's video on Friday. Michael Brown (How I Killed Pluto) is still a possibility, also perhaps a presentation by the Austin Planetarium.

Communications – 3 discussion groups have been created (general, outreach and astrophotography), additional ones can be created as well (newbies, ATM, EC). People can subscribe to the groups (like the Yahoo groups) available through the website. We would also like to move photos from the Yahoo group to the website. Anybody who has content to share on the website can be submitted to Jim S. Proposal to encourage participation: member awards (i.e. Image of the Year, Observer of the Year, Lifetime Achievement, and Outreach) to be given at the holiday party. Other ideas can be sent to the web team.

Equipment – Vent on shed at EEO needs to be replaced. Sale of excess equipment is going well; the last few items will be up as of Friday.

Member Services – Scope loaner program: scopes are together, and we anticipate emails will go out this week for scopes to be picked up. Practical astronomy program on filters this week.

Outreach – Banner is ready, we just have to pay for it and pick it up. We are still in the process of getting other merchandise samples to show at the holiday party. November events: Wild Basin this Sunday, 14<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> – elementary school events, public party 19<sup>th</sup> at Blanco State Park, Wild Basin and COE public nights are posted on the website. We currently have 310 Facebook fans and 74 Twitter followers. AUTS is scheduled for 3/10.

IDA rep – New job description submitted (bylaws do not outline specific duties).

Holiday party – Evite will be going out later this week (Dec 9<sup>th</sup>).

COE report – WiFi, phone, and water are all working on the field. The only problems with bandwidth: no YouTube and uploading pictures before midnight. We need a set-up and close-down checklist for the observatory. They would also like a 3-month calendar of what can be seen to attract visitors. Jim S. will help to compile some websites to do that. COE will help advertise that we are raising money for a new solar scope. Liability insurance: probably covers events but not individuals out there on their own...maybe people will have to sign waivers when they check in at the resort. Mark will speak to the agent regarding that and property damage insurance. Soon members will likely have to pay the entry fee at the gate for non-event nights. Jim S. will write up a draft of a contract with COE.

New business – We need to be thinking about a nominating committee together; be thinking about who might work on this. Green laser rules: 5 mW is the legal limit. Dogs at the star parties: Dawn will look into signs regarding not having pets at events. We will have a new form online for the star party request form. We are also looking at cancelling any event where we do not have 3 scopes guaranteed.

Agenda for 11/11/11 meeting: Joyce will present AL certificates to Phil Schmidt and Lauren Rogers.

Next EC meetings 12/5/11 and 1/9/12 (not the 2<sup>nd</sup>).

Adjourned at 8:49 p.m.

# November 2011 Treasurer's Report

## Deposits:

Dues payments		
Checks		
Paypal	\$485.10	
<b>Dues payments totals</b>		<b>\$485.10</b>

S & T subscriptions

**S & T subscriptions totals** **\$0.00**

Astronomy subscriptions

**Astronomy subscriptions totals** **\$0.00**

Interest earned-checking	\$0.70	
Interest earned-CD	\$2.38	
Interest earned-CD	\$2.37	

**Total interest earned** **\$5.45**

RASC Handbooks	\$299.21	
Donation	\$313.45	
Sale of donated equipment	\$1,453.01	

Total Other Income **\$2,065.67**

**Deposit Totals November 1 through November 30, 2011** **\$2,556.22**

## Expense:

S & T payments \$0.00

**S & T payments totals** **\$0.00** **\$0.00**

Astronomy payments \$0.00  
\$0.00  
\$0.00

**Astronomy payments totals** **\$0.00** **\$0.00**

Outreach (banner)	\$51.76	
Wild Apricot annual subscription	\$540.00	
Shipping charge for equipment sales	\$63.14	

Austin Planetarium membership \$1,000.00

Total Other Expense	1654.9
Magazine Subscriptions	0

Check Totals November 1 through November 30, 2011	1654.9
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**Bank Balances:**

University Federal Credit Union Checking \$18,334.50

**Total checking account balances \$18,334.50**

University Federal Credit Union C.D. \$5,780.99

University Federal Credit Union C.D. \$5,757.94

University Federal Credit Union Scholarship \$457.98

**Total Certificate of Deposits \$11,996.91**

**Total Cash \$30,331.41**

AAS members on 11/30: 262

## December 2011 Observing Targets

by Brian Cuthbertson



Reading the results of recent discoveries of so many planets can transform one's view of the night sky. More and more I see the Milky Way, and the myriad galaxies beyond, as distant skylines, and begin to wonder who may be home at all those far flung addresses, with telescopes on their respective decks gazing back at me. Whatever your own view, it's still always impressive. So take a peek off your own deck, get to know your neighbors, and enjoy!

**Rho Persei rating EASY  
variable star in Perseus**

**RA 03h 05.2m Dec +38d 50.4' (2000)**

**Magnitude 3.3**

Located at the south end of the western "leg" of Perseus, Rho Persei is a semi-regular variable star of the Mu Cephei type. Mu Cephei, the class prototype, is a red supergiant - one of the largest and most luminous stars known in the Milky Way galaxy. In general, Mu Cephei semi-regular variables are all supergiants that vary with amplitudes of about one magnitude, with periods ranging from 30 days to several thousand days.

In particular, Rho Persei varies between magnitudes 3.3 and 4.0 with two periods: a 50-day period plus a possible superposed slow variation of about 1100 days. Rho is a three solar mass 440 million year old "second ascent" giant, meaning that it is brightening for the second time. In its first ascent as a giant, Rho had a dead helium core. Then it went through a stage of fusing its helium into carbon. Rho is now growing brighter and larger than ever with a dead carbon and oxygen core. Closing in on its last stage of life, Rho Per is losing mass, and will eventually expose the ancient nuclear-burning core at its center, which will become a white dwarf.

Rho radiates 3470 times more energy than the Sun, mostly in the infrared, and lies about 317 light-years from Earth.

**NGC 1545 rating MEDIUM**

**Open cluster in Perseus**

**RA 04h 20.9m Dec +50d 15.4' (2000)**

**Magnitude 6.4**

NGC 1545 is one of about half a dozen open clusters congregating around Lambda

Persei at the eastern end of the Segment of Perseus, a long curving line of some of the brightest stars in Perseus whose western end is typically associated with Eta Persei. NGC 1525 is on the east side of this cluster field, about a degree SE of open cluster NGC 1528, discussed in Observing Targets for Nov. 2007.

NGC 1545 is visible in large binoculars in dark skies. It is centered on a pretty 2.5' isosceles triangle of stars pointing SW, whose brightest member, orange, is magnitude 7.1. 11x80 binoculars can resolve this triangle, whose colors (moving clockwise from the SW apex), are blue, orange and yellow. A 6-inch scope can pull in 10 to 15 stars (depending on the power used) which are loosely centered on the triangle. And 10-inch to 17-inch scopes will show 45-50 stars scattered evenly in a 25' area. Wide-field scopes may be able to get NGC 1525 plus larger and dimmer NGC 1528 into the same field.

**NGC 1600 rating HARD**  
**Elliptical galaxy in Eridanus**  
**RA 04h 31.7m Dec -5d 05.6' (2000)**  
**Magnitude 10.9**

NGC 1600 lies in the galaxy fields of far northern Eridanus, just west of Rigel in southern Orion. You can find it roughly 35 minutes of RA west of third-magnitude Beta Eridani (Cursa), which marks the headwaters where the celestial river Eridanus rises and begins its long journey west and south.

The galaxy is a 2.5x1.8' E3 elliptical visible in 6-inch and larger scopes. In a 10-inch you'll see a smooth oval with a concentrated core, and a 12-inch brings out a circular core and stellar nucleus.

NGC 1600 dominates a quartet of galaxies, the rest of which are more difficult. Tiny NGC 1601 (13.8) and 1603 (15.5) lie very close to its north and east. Starlike NGC 1606, about 7' NE, is even tougher.

NGC 1600 is often classified as a member of a loose galaxy group, but the neighboring galaxies could be taken as satellites of NGC 1600. Studies suggest it is actually the result of an ancient merger of a loose group of galaxies, with the small companions being remnants of the merger.

Other such "fossil clusters" have been detected in X-rays, and are typically dominated by a single giant elliptical. They appear to be formed when the original members spiral slowly towards the center of the group and merge to form a single giant central galaxy, which progressively swallows all its neighbors. Once this process runs to completion, and there are no galaxies left to fall into the center, the result is dubbed a "fossil cluster."

## **Officers and Executive Committee**

Serving June 2011 - May 2012

President	Joyce Lynch	joycedlync@aol.com
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