

**Marshall Martz Memorial Astronomical Association
Martz-Kohl Observatory
Wednesday, March 27, 2024
General Membership Meeting**

President Corey Swanson called the meeting to order at 7:35 p.m.

Secretary's Report: Walt Pickut presented the minutes of the February 28 meeting, President Corey Swanson called for a motion to accept the secretary's room report as presented with corrections noted. John Anderson so moved, seconded by Josh Campbell, and unanimously approved without objection.

President Swanson called for the treasurer's report.

Treasurers Report: John Anderson distributed the balance sheet. John reported that income vs expense seems to indicate a negative balance, but after accounting for solar classes sales, the insurance payment which exceeded the original budget estimate, and the initial gift shop inventory investment, the actual balance is on the plus side by exactly one dollar. President Swanson called for a motion to approve the treasurers report. Motion made by Brian Ceci, seconded by Phil Stafford, and unanimously approved without objection.

Finance Committee: Laurie Livingston.

1. The board approved a committee proposal to open a 13-month CD with \$10,000 from the savings account invested at Community Bank. The current rate is 4%, and this new investment would earn 4.5%, for discussion at the June board meeting. In the absence of further discussion President Swanson called for a motion to approve. Tom Traub moved that we adopt this proposal, seconded by Phil Stafford. Unanimously approved without objection.
2. The board approved a finance committee proposal made by at the suggestion of member Todd Annis that on April 8 we begin a Spring Membership Sale at a special price of \$20 for both individual and family memberships. It was noted that this program offered during Doors Open Jamestown resulted in 13 new memberships. President Swanson called for a motion concerning this proposal. Josh Campbell moved to approve this special, one-time rate, seconded by John Anderson, and unanimously approved without objection.
3. The board approved a finance committee proposal concerning the Library Telescope Program (which might soon include a new component) connected to the Educational Outreach Program. Five new library systems have registered interest in joining the program: Silver Creek, Sinclairville, Stockton, Cassadaga, and Haseltine Library in Busti. Laurie requested approval to submit an April application (with a response due in May) for a \$4000 Community Service Grant through the Chautauqua Region Community Foundation to support this project. Laurie will be working with Corey Swanson on this grant application. Laurie requested board approval to submit the application. President Swanson called for a motion in support of this request. A

discussion followed concerning the changing prices and availabilities of various brands of telescope, the decision to be made by the committee. It was also proposed that only one telescope be provided per library. The proposal to approve Laurie Livingston's submission of a \$4000 grant application to the Chautauqua region community foundation was made by John Anderson, seconded by Walt Pickut, and unanimously approved without objection.

4. Membership now stands at 91 members, which includes 35 new members, 13 of whom came to the Doors Open program, also 45 renewals have been posted, 10 lifetime memberships, and one honorary membership.

Facilities Committee: John Anderson reported that the book giveaway in the welcome center is proceeding, storage room reorganization is continuing. Repair of the Martz dome rotation mechanism is now complete.

Program Committee: Walt Pickut announced the rest of the year's speaker schedule, including himself as the April speaker, Doctor Michael Dunham on star formation in May, June open, for July Doctor Alexandra Yap, not yet confirmed, August Doctor Joshua Thomas from Alfred University, the Stull Observatory Director, September the International Year of the Moon night returns, October Doctor Darren Williams, November Doctor Jim Spann, NASA.

Solar Eclipse Committee: Tom Traub. We are down to 11 days until E-day, Total Solar Eclipse Day. We are closed to the public that day but open to membership. Facilities planning is just about complete, public presentations continue with many more that Tom still has on the schedule.

Educational Outreach Committee: the STEM camp application is now on our website, scheduled for July 15-19, with 10 registrations so far out of a possible 24 openings. We had 25 students last year. Will include building a telescope, rocketry, and a field trip to the Challenger Center in Olean, and part of the time at Faulkner school as well as MKO's site.

Technology Committee: Recently there have been a number of technology and mechanical breakdowns. The Boltwood system which we have had for 17 years, required for weather condition input into the automation system, has failed. The replacement will cost approximately \$2300. Focusing issues on the 24-inch scope have been mostly resolved. Tom hoped that by May we will be up and running with the automation system completely functional.

President Swanson noted that the new Apple computer has been set up to run the Kohl telescope. President Swanson noted that the Apple computer was a donation made by Andy Felong and expressed the associations gratitude for it.

Public and Media Relations: Andy Felong noted that Tom Traub has been picked up by national news media, including the Associated Press, the Washington Post, the Erie Times, and multiple radio stations quoting Tom Traub from the Martz-Kohl Observatory.

A newspaper article will be going into the Post Journal concerning our upcoming STEM camp. The April 17 talk by Walt on SETI and NASA will also be posted, and we are advertising our online store and eclipse apparel in a Facebook ad posted by Andy. We are also talking to the

Jamestown Gazette about a monthly article as well as a regularly sponsored ad in the Jamestown Gazette.

Merchandise display in the Welcome Center is still being set up. President Swanson gracefully modeled one of the eclipse event T-shirts. He indicated that the Falconer Printing offered to replace any merchandise incorrectly printed or incorrectly put together at no cost, and the faulty one could be kept.

Unfinished Business: President Swanson noted that the Members Only section of our website has a new password, mko2024. Members can read the general meeting minutes there every month, our events calendar, and any other information of special interest to members. Please logon at any time and stop by the Members Only site.

New Business: None reported.

Correspondence: President Swanson noted one piece of mail received indicating a gift of \$500 given in appreciation of “All the good work the Observatory does throughout the year,” from MKO members Marie and John Plum. President Swanson expressed his gratitude to the Plums and noted that Marie is very active on the Program Committee and in the STEM camp. They designated the donation in support of the STEM camp project.

President Swanson also received two Thank You cards from Gary Nelson, both of which thanked him for speaking to the Chautauqua Lake Region Antique Car Club about the upcoming eclipse and the Observatory.

For the Good of the Association: The Library telescope program currently has eight telescopes in four local libraries. We will be applying for another grant to place one new telescope in each other of five local libraries, Silver Creek, Sinclairville, Stockton, Cassadaga, and Haseltine Library in Busti. Member Marcy Kupiec generously donated the money for a telescope for the Asheville Library. Andy Felong is also planning to donate one telescope to the Bemus Point Library.

Upcoming Events: Tom Traub has several more eclipse presentations scheduled. No more group visits at the Observatory are currently scheduled.

There being no additional business, President Swanson announced that next Board of Directors and General Membership meetings are scheduled for Wednesday, April 24, at 6:30 and 7:30p.m., respectively. All members are invited and encouraged to get involved on one or more of the committees or in any other way with the observatory’s programs and activities.

President Swanson called for a motion to adjourn the meeting. So moved by Walt Pickut, seconded by Gary Nelson. Unanimously approved without objection.

Meeting adjourned at 8:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Walter W. Pickut
Secretary