

**Marshal Martz Memorial Astronomical Association
Martz-Kohl Astronomical Association**

General Membership Meeting January 8, 2025

Meeting called to order by President Corey Swanson at 7:00 p.m.

1. President Swanson called for reading of the Secretary's Minutes of the last General Meeting (as distributed). Secretary Walt Pickut, read the minutes, appropriate corrections being noted and recorded. Following a motion to approve made John Anderson, seconded by Lawen Griffith, Jr., the report was unanimously approved without objection.
2. President Swanson then called for the Treasurer's Report. Treasurer John Anderson presented both Profit and Loss, and Current Balances, indicating that both investment CDs had appreciated significantly over the last year. Both general and restricted accounts (those with funds designated for specific projects) continued with positive, growing balances, and forecast positive prospects of full funding for ongoing expenses and projects. John specifically noted a recent \$2500 member contribution received in support of the coming years STEM camp. In the absence of questions or corrections, President Swanson called for a motion to approve the Treasurer's Report as presented. So moved by Walt Pickut, seconded by Phil Stafford, and unanimously approved without objection.
3. President Swanson called for committee reports.
 - **Standing Committees**
 - **Executive Committee:** nothing reported.
 - **Finance Committee:** Laurie Livingston reported that the Finance Committee meets monthly on the Monday before the board meeting. Projects for 2024-25 include:
 - Development of financial policies, specifically for protection of the Mary Martz Fund for its intended use only.
 - Establishing fees and criteria for rental of viewing time on the 24-inch scope.
 - President Swanson invited general members to get involved in any of these committee projects of special interest to them.
4. **Facilities Committee:** John Anderson reported that the usual maintenance work continues to be done on schedule.
 - John thanked Josh Campbell for his diligent work on the new seating for the classroom.
 - Thanks to Bill Widell for his work on the storage room organization and cleanup.

- The concrete outdoor telescope observing pads and the sky shed have been installed, including power supplies for each. These are available for member use with their own telescopes or portable telescopes belonging to the observatory.
 - The satellite dishes have been moved to new locations.
 - The observatory sign has been erected beside the road.
 - The classroom and other portions of the facility have been repainted.
 - John offered a copy of the list of completed projects and upcoming projects to any member who would like to participate.
5. **Nominating Committee:** Gary Nelson invited all members interested in serving on the board or any of the committees to please let him know so their names can be added to the candidate list for the next elections or committee-task openings.

6. **Ad hoc Committees:**

- Laurie noted that the current **Strategic Plan** was slated for 2023 through 2026. Laurie will be pleased to distribute a copy of that strategic plan to any member requesting one.
- **Membership Committee:** Laurie noted that membership currently stands at 103. This has been relatively stable for a number of years. However, that level also includes family memberships raising the total member count beyond the total number of memberships. She also noted the number of memberships in various categories, student, lifetime, family, and one honorary membership, etc. Overall, 50 of those memberships are new and 52 are renewals.
- **Program Committee:** Walt Pickut reported that the program committee will begin meeting monthly, on the first Tuesday of each month.
 - The January speaker was announced as Erica Messmer, doctoral candidate at the University of Illinois, speaking about the cataclysmic end of stars that die in spectacular supernova explosions.
 - The February speaker will be Maggie Verrico, speaking about galaxy creation, evolution, and death throughout the universe. Maggie is also a doctoral candidate at the University of Illinois.
 - Both upcoming programs will be live via Zoom and open for guests attending in person at the observatory.
- **Educational Outreach Committee and Technology Committee:** Tom Traub unable to attend. Reports pending.
 - STEM Space Camp, a function of the Educational Outreach Committee, reported by Laurie Livingston. This will be our third summer of offering this camp, cosponsored by Falconer Central Schools, this year open to students entering grades seven through nine, with attendance capped at 24 students. Laurie also outlined a very exciting curriculum and highly skilled faculty, including collaboration with Jamestown Community College, all committed to this year's project. This includes a return of

Doctor Alexandra Yep for her third year in succession, also a popular repeat lecturer in the Special Guest Speaker Program series.

- **Public and Media Relations Committee:** Laurie Livingston noted that we are updating the website calendar and actively working with many media sources throughout Western New York and Northwestern Pennsylvania. Lori Cornell, publisher of the Chautauqua Gazette, has also been extremely helpful and supportive of MKO's media outreach, supported by a generous contribution by board member Phil Stafford to cover advertising expenses.
 - Concerning the **Technology Committee**, John Anderson reported that our IT specialist and member, Andy Felong, has contributed a technologically advanced camera for use. This was greatly appreciated. It is scheduled for installation on the 16-inch Kohl telescope.
 - **Internet upgrade** and update remain in progress. Nothing new to report.
 - **Bylaws Committee:** Phil Evans will collaborate with the Membership Committee concerning certain conditions of membership which require update and revision.
 - **Merchandise Committee:** Marcy Kupiec reported updating inventory on site in the Welcome Center and online in collaboration with Falconer Printing, to include regular updates on product sales and profit margins. Marci is also planning a Merchandise Committee meeting to consider new orders and product changes.
 - **Alarm System Committee:** Todd Anis, unable to attend, but reporting that the system continues to work properly with no false alarms or system failures, except for a regional power system failure which was properly handled by established policy and procedure.
7. **Unfinished Business:** none reported.
8. **New Business:** none reported.
9. **Correspondence:** no new correspondence reported.
10. **For the Good of the Association:** President Swanson referred to many positive actions already reported and thanked the membership for its continuing enthusiasm and support.
11. Brian Ceci recommended that MKO purchase a new lighting fixture for neighboring farmer and good friend of the observatory, Jack Jones, as his present system is creating a degree of light pollution on our southern sky. The general consensus supported this and it will be discussed at the next board meeting.
12. President Swanson repeated the appreciation of both the board and the general membership for the generosity of Gary and Nancy Nelson's donation of 14 acres of land to the Marshall Martz Memorial Astronomical Association and the Martz-Kohl observatory.
- 13. Upcoming Events:**
- Special Guest Speaker Erica Messmer, next Wednesday at 7:30 p.m.

- Bemus Point Library has invited a return visit for further library telescope training.
- Open Doors Jamestown: Saturday, January 25, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. All hands-on-board requested to support this important annual event.
- The next General Membership Meeting slated for March 12.
- Next Board of Directors meeting is slated for Wednesday, January 22 at 6:00 p.m. All board meetings are open to all members. All are invited to attend.

In the absence of further business, President Swanson thanked all members for attending and contributing to this general membership meeting, for both those attending on Zoom, warm at home, and those who braved the cold snowy night to attend in person.

Meeting adjourned at 7:53 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Walter W. Pickut
Secretary