

**Minutes of the Astronomical League Council Meeting
ALCon 2007
Portland, Oregon
August 2, 2007**

Part I. Call to Order

The annual Astronomical League Council meeting was called to order at 9:00 a.m. by President Terry Mann.

Part II. Roll Call: Council Members and Proxies Present

Terry Mann, President; proxy for Ron Whitehead, GLRAL Chair
Carroll Iorg, Vice President; proxy for Jackie Beucher, AL Exec. Sec.
John Goss, Secretary; MERAL Chair
Mary Sutter, Treasurer
Sue Wheatley
Mike Benson, SERAL Chair; proxy for Joe Haley, SERAL Rep.
William Bogardus; proxy for Paul Valleli, NERAL Rep.
Rich Huber, Amateur Observers' Society of New York
Wayne Green; proxy for Jerry Sherlin, MARS Rep.
Carol Huston, Rose City Astronomers President
Bryan Butcher, Des Moines Astronomical Society President
Naomi Pequette, 2007 National Young Astronomer
Roger Berger, AL Reflector
Phil Reid; Proxy for Joe Rottman, NWRAL Rep.
Gene Dietzen, NWRAL Chair
Wayne Johnson, WRAL Chair; proxy for Maryann Arrien, NERAL Chair
Tim Hunter, WRAL Rep.
Darrald Nye

Quorum: Council members and proxies present, according to Bylaws Article III, Section 4, must be two-fifths (2/5ths) of the members of the National Council to constitute a quorum. A quorum was present.

Part III. Reading and Approval of 2006 Council Minutes

Mike Benson indicated that he found two apparent typographical mistakes in the 2006 Minutes, but didn't have their specific locations with him at that time.

A motion was made by Wayne Johnson to look at the corrections to the minutes at a later time and that Mike Benson was to give the corrections to John Goss. Tim Hunter seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Later Mike Benson presented John Goss with the two corrections.

Part IV. Officer and Committee Reports

A. President: President Terry Mann reviewed the activities of the President's office over the past year. Terry visited NASA headquarters in Washington, DC to understand how that organization could benefit the League, especially through outreach. As one goal, she would like to create a "Memorandum of Understanding" (MOU) with NASA.

The History Channel is premiering a series called "The Universe" and would like the League's help in promoting it to League members. A description of the series is featured on the League's website and a short description of the League, along with those of the ASP and AAVSO, are on the HC website.

Another opportunity for publicizing the League exists with the PBS video production of Timothy Ferris' book, "Seeing in the Dark." Their PR company would like to do a promotion through the League.

Terry has stepped down from the Board of the Astronomical Society of the Pacific but has written a forward for a book by the ASP.

The League has not applied for any grant funding and Terry would like to change that. A notice will be placed in the Reflector for a League grant writer.

The new, vastly improved League website is nearly ready to be fully launched. This is due to the many hours of work by the League webteam: Terry Mann,

Tammy Plotner, and Mike Hotka. The site is currently running but the League Sales portion will not be active for another couple of weeks. When it becomes active, it will have credit card capability. Terry would like to see the website used for podcast interviews. There is a lot of potential for reaching League members with the new website.

The League has no attorney on retainer. Terry would like one to be available in the event that a legal problem arises. Tim Hunter feels that, on one hand, a “free” attorney may not be available when needed, but, on the other hand, paying for legal services may be costly—too costly for the League.

B. Vice President: Carroll Iorg thanked the Rose City Astronomers for hosting ALCon 2007 and commended their convention staff for putting it all together. They have devoted a lot of time to this major event.

Carroll reminded the Council that next year’s ALCon will be in Des Moines, hosted by the Des Moines Astronomical Society. Later today a presentation will be given by DMAS President Bryan Butcher.

Also, later today a presentation will be given by William Bogardus of the Amateur Observers’ Society of New York (AOSNY) describing their offer to host the 2009 ALCon just outside New York City.

League Elections. August 31 ends the 2nd term of Jackie Beucher as the League’s Executive Secretary. Jackie has unselfishly committed the past 13 years to League management. Due to the League’s term limits, Jackie can not run in this position again. Her hard work and wealth of knowledge will be sorely missed. Thank you, Jackie!

“What’s Up With the Astronomical League?” Several times during the past year, Vice President Carroll issued an e-mail newsletter to all League ALCors describing important League news. This is a means of directly reaching the Societies.

C. Secretary: John Goss described the expense it took to have 25 copies printed of the 53+ annual League reports for the members of the National Council — \$190. A discussion followed about using an alternate means to issue the reports in future years: e-mail, cd, or posting them on the League’s enhanced website. It was agreed that next year 5-10 copies should

be brought to the Council meeting along with copies for everyone of the previous year's minutes and Bylaws copies (as stipulated in the Bylaws).

All actions of the Secretary were done with the following philosophy in mind: For the League to be successful, it must actively engage its constituent clubs and provide benefits that they truly want. But the League can not stop there, it must also promote those benefits. It must prove to its many members that it gives them what they want. Every one on the Council must realize that they are League ambassadors and what they say and do affects how the membership feels about the League.

John mentioned that the League is promoting "World Astro Cast." This is a British project that will use a live webcast on October 13 to deliver presentations by several well-known astronomical authorities. More information will be in September Reflector.

Another project, now in its beginning phase, is the League's promotion of a new film to be shown on PBS in the spring called "The Journey to Palomar."

D. Treasurer: Mary Sutter, completing her first year as League Treasurer, gave an overview of the financial condition of the Astronomical League. Balances in various League accounts as of June 30, 2007 were as follows:

Checking:	\$15,691.01
Endowment Fund:	\$1400.00 (non-interest bearing account)
Money Market Fund:	\$82,648.35
Certificate of Deposits:	\$26,000.00
Total Monetary Assets:	\$125,739.36

Due to the amount of time it takes in assembling all the financial figures from the various sources, Mary would like all the respective financial reports to be sent to her earlier next year:

1. Activity Cut Off Date: June 7, 2008 (any activity after that date should be considered FY 2008 — 2009)
2. Reports Due On: June 14, 2008 (Budget & Reimbursements)
3. Financial Statements Due: August 1, 2008 (Regional and Others)

According to the Bylaws SR 6, any League Region, Committee or League Concern that has a bank account should send the Treasurer an annual report

listing:

1. Bank Location (including address and phone number),
2. Account number,
3. Name listed on the signature card,
4. Owner of the account (including address and phone number),
5. and a copy of the bank statement for the month of June.

The projected 2007—2008 budget will be discussed later in the meeting.

E. Executive Secretary: Linda Sensenig, Chair of the Charter MAL program, submitted a report indicating that the League has 141 Charter MALs. No money for the program is requested. Linda will send to the Treasurer a check for \$800 which represents most of the money that the program generated last year.

F: National Office: Activity was concentrated in several areas. The items below were consolidated from the report submitted by Mitch Glaze.

1. Sales: Much time was spent reconciling inventory discrepancies discovered after League Sales moved to the National Office. New software was implemented which is working out well.
2. Website: Mitch assisted the design process of the new website and helped review the design of the new web store.
3. MALs: All member packets were sent from the National Office. This may prove to be a burden next year, time-wise.
4. Dues: Because many clubs fail to pay their dues in a timely manner, they must be contacted and re-contacted. This uses a substantial amount of the National Office time.
5. ALCon dates: Much of the League's year end reporting occurs in July. This places a strain on the ability of the National Office to assist with ALCon if it occurs in July. This will need to be addressed this coming year.
6. Club Dues Considerations: The "new" dues structure has confused many clubs and has greatly increased the time spent explaining the structure and options.

G: Webmaster: Terry Mann described the upgrade of the League's website. The new webteam is in place: George Baker, Mike Hotka, Tammy Plotner, and Vern Raben. The Regional pages will be password protected.

The League Sales section should be fully functioning by mid to late August.

H: League Sales: Through their submitted report, League Sales gave a state of their operations. Of note, total sales were down 50% from the previous year. This is attributed to the Sales section of the League website being off-line. This also implies that volume will be back to normal in the coming year.

The full page ads in the Reflector helped — Randy received many orders that were written upon the torn out ad from the Reflector.

Randy would like a format guide developed by the Publications Committee outlining the basic layout of AL Observing Guidebooks.

I: Reflector: John Goss gave a brief overview of the Reflector. In the March issue, there appeared a section concerning “Astro-friendly accommodations.” These were a listing of bed and breakfasts and country lodges where observing could be done. One of the establishments listed offered to donate \$50 to the League for each League member booked.

In the June issue, there appeared two 1/12 page ads promoting Regional meetings (MERAL and NWRAL). Next year, the Reflector will offer to each Region one complimentary 1/12 ad to promote their annual meetings. This may help boost attendance at these meetings.

A discussion was held about publishing the winners of astrophoto contests at the various star parties held this autumn. It was suggested to feature some done with “low end” equipment and others captured with more expensive gear. Wayne Green suggested running these shots on the website also.

J. ISS-AT (International Space Station — Amateur Telescope): The telescope is operational at Arizona Sky Village, but not without problems. To keep the system running, four volunteers contributed 26 man-days to the project. Their travel expenses were contributed at no expense to the League.

K. Publications: Sue Wheatley informed the Council that they are moving away from “hard copy” to electronic copy. This may result in a reduced income.

Mike Benson suggested instituting a discounted rate for electronic copies or have only the bare minimum on the website for completing the desired observing program.

Carol Huston said that it would be good if each observing book included an award submittal form.

Tim Hunter mentioned that the League could place the various observing programs on a cd and charge for it. Wayne Green added that a cd format would help the people who don't have high speed internet access.

Bill Bogardus said that the League could price the two formats accordingly, since books would be more costly than cds.

L. Publicity: Sue Wheatley asked, "What to do with the office?" She said that there isn't much to do. Tim Hunter recommended keeping it open for at least another year.

The so-called "Spectacular Mars Email" would be a good item for the Publicity Office to handle. An explanation of that bogus email will appear on the League website. Carol Huston offered to send Sue her own explanatory write-up.

M. Observe Committee Reports: Mike Benson wishes to continue awarding the Master Observers plaques. He would like to budget the money to pay for this.

Last year's proposed Master Observer Network is on hold until the website is fully functioning. Bill Bogardus would like to part of the group that handles it.

N. Astronomy Day Awards:

A discussion ensued regarding whether or not there should be two Astronomy Days, one in the spring and the other in the fall.

In 2008, there will be two Astronomy Days.

O. Awards

President's Award: none given this year.

Peltier Award: Daniel M. Troiani, primarily for his outstanding work on Mars.

Wright Award: Marilyn Unruh is this year's recipient. She has given much of her time running the League Book Service.

National Young Astronomers Award: Naomi Pequette for her project, "The Orion Nebula: A Good Contender for Housing an 'Earth-like' planet."

Horkheimer Service Award: 1st place winner is Carter Smith of the Tucson Amateur Astronomy Association. Unfortunately, he will not be able to attend ALCon as he is traveling in Europe. The 2nd place winner is CJ Wood of the Delmarva Stargazers. CJ is at the conference. Many thanks go to Jack Horkheimer for making this important youth award possible.

Mabel Sterns Newsletter Award: Larry Deal of the Rose City Astronomers who edits *The Rosette Gazette*.

Webmaster Award: Travis Swaim of the Oklahoma City Astronomy Club, www.okcastroclub.com

Carol Huston would like to know what makes a winner for each award. Tim Hunter suggested placing a description on the website of why the award was given to the respective recipient.

P. Nominating Committee

The results of this year's election for the offices of Executive Secretary and Secretary will be announced at the Business Meeting on Saturday.

Q. Region Reports.

John Goss explained his use of a chart tallying many club characteristics as a way of all clubs getting to know each other. Carroll Iorg asked him to submitted a description of this method for "*What's Up?*" Tim thought it would be good to post it on the website as well.

Sue Wheatley wanted the website to include a section where members could learn of nearby/local clubs.

International Clubs?

A lengthy discussion took place about the possibility of having international clubs within the League.

It was asked why not have clubs in Britain join the League. AOSNY President Sue Rose was mentioned as a possible intermediary in such an endeavor.

Tim Hunter suggested instituting a “sister club” program. Bill Bogardus mentioned creating an adoption program to help offset the cost of overseas clubs joining the League. From the League’s point of view, the major difficulty of having international clubs is the high cost of Reflector postage. Naomi Pequette suggested sending only a small number of Reflectors to these clubs. Bill Bogardus thought that, with an adoption program, the adopting club could assist in offsetting the Reflector’s mailing costs.

“Astronomy in a Box.” Wayne Green discussed the “Astronomy in a Box” program as a means for bringing kids into amateur astronomy.

Wayne Johnson, thinking out loud, said, “People say they can get the astronomy they need from the web, so why do they need the AL?”

R. Book Service. Unfortunately, Marilyn Unruh couldn’t attend the convention this year.

S. Education Committee. For the status of the Education Committee refer to the report that was distributed.

T. IDA. Tim Hunter brought to the Council’s attention that the US is installing massive lights along the Arizona-Mexico border in “high traffic” areas. Environmental groups are worried about the effect these lights will have on wildlife migration. The observatories in southern Arizona are worried about the light pollution.

John Goss spoke about last January’s IDA Night Sky Symposium and described the “Globe at Night” program. He also mentioned some of the correspondence the League had regarding light pollution: wind turbine light concerns, supporting the Healthy, Safe and Energy Efficient Outdoor Lighting Act before the New York state legislature. John also described a work-in-progress called the “Dark Sky Advocate” which will be similar in format to the League’s observing programs. Through a series of activities participants will be able to earn a pin and certificate recognizing their efforts in promoting dark skies and good outdoor lighting.

Wayne Green mentioned his simulated light pollution display which shows the effect of increased lighting on the sky in a dark area. Wayne felt that any kit used in Dark Sky Advocate program should be directed towards kids. But Bill Bogardus said that schools have their own agendas which are full. They simply may not have the time to include light pollution concerns in their curriculum.

Other Lighting Comments.

Carol Huston would like the Regions to be involved with light pollution efforts. They could coordinate the efforts of local clubs and also persuade power companies to make the proper fixtures available for their customers.

Wayne Johnson said that the Western Region's annual meeting features an IDA light pollution conference. This will be held on September 28.

Tim Hunter and Wayne Johnson commented that the National Park Service is doing a great job at addressing dark sky issues.

U. Future Conventions Proposals/Approval.

2008 ALCon: Bryan Butcher, President of the Des Moines Astronomical Society, gave a great presentation describing the plans for next year's ALCon in Des Moines, Iowa. Convention planning is well underway and Council is looking forward to being in Des Moines next year.

2009 ALCon: Bill Bogardus described the proposal for the Amateur Observers' Society of New York to host the 2009 ALCon. The venue will be at Adolph University in Garden City which is just east of Brooklyn on Long Island. They hope to join forces with the AAVSO, ALPO and ASP.

John Goss emphasized that many potential attendees will be concerned about the high cost of the area and their perceived feelings of crime and safety. He thinks that the AOSNY will need to address this.

A motion was made by Tim Hunter to have ALCon 2009 in New York. Wayne Johnson seconded the motion. It passed unanimously.

Future Conventions. The IDA and AL will be working on a joint convention. Their details are not formulated.

PART V. Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Mary Sutter reports that the income numbers are not finalized yet, however, the League is financially sound. It appears that the deficit that was forecast this time last year is less than originally thought.

There were four factors not anticipated this past year that will also affect the coming year:

1. The drop in League Sales volume has resulted in less money coming from Sales. However, this is expected to eventually change after the web-site for sales is online.
2. There were additional costs in implementing the "Quick Book" accounting program for the Sales office, and for Sales office consulting fees.
3. The League is receiving less money in dues because of a drop in membership of about 1000 people following the change in dues structure.
4. Postage rates have risen. It costs more to mail the Reflector and observing awards.

Mary remarked that the League has not yet received from Meade their donation for the NYAA.

Terry Mann said that AAS sent the League \$1000 for the NYAA. Thank you AAS President Kevin Marvel.

Mary will send standardized report forms for the various observing clubs to their respective administrators.

Endowment Fund. Treasurer Mary Sutter states that the Endowment Fund has \$1400 in a non-interest bearing account. Tim Hunter comments that this money needs to be quickly accessed because it is viewed as an "emergency" fund.

Tim Hunter moved to authorize Mary Sutter to buy a short term cd for the Endowment Fund. It is seconded by Wayne Johnson. The motion passes unanimously.

Part VI. Trust Fund Report

Jackie Beucher is stepping down as a trustee of the Trust Fund. There is a need to fill that spot.

Wayne Johnson motioned that Joanne Hailey be the new trustee. She has previously consented. Tim Hunter seconded the motion. It is passed unanimously.

Gene Dietzen remarked that about 20 years ago, it was said that the Trust Fund interest be used for paying a League employee.

From Bert Stevens' report, last year the interest was \$2398.

PART VII. OLD BUSINESS

Report of the Bylaws Committee

Gene Dietzen would like a link on the website to the Bylaws.

Mary Sutter brings a concern about Article II, Section 4d of the Bylaws. It states in part, "The treasurer will annually prepare the IRS form 990 in time to meet the required IRS deadline." She feels that she is not qualified to do this. It would likely require a CPA to tackle this which might cost \$500-\$750.

After much discussion, Tim Hunter motioned that the wording be changed to: "The Treasurer will annually oversee the preparation of the applicable state and federal reports by the required deadlines." Wayne Johnson seconded the motion. It passed unanimously. The Bylaws will be changed to reflect the motion.

President Terry Mann tells the Council that the League passed the full audit that was conducted this past year.

EPO and ASP Liaison. Terry explained that the Pro-Am Committee is

where the professionals can work with the amateurs.

NYAA discussion. Naomi Pequette recommended creating a committee of recent winners to examine the NYAA and explore ways of improving it. She said that they could contact ALCors to give details on submitting applications. Honors and gifted schools should be notified of this award.

The award should be promoted so that it appeals to high school juniors and seniors. Bob Stencil is offering the winner a 4 week stay at the University of Denver and the opportunity to use the telescope at the Mt. Evans Observatory. This can be thought of as being an internship.

Terry Mann suggested that Naomi head a committee to make NYAA better and promote getting more applicants.

Wayne Green informed the Council that MARS Rep. Jerry Sherlin would like to see a higher monetary value for the NYAA. The Council gave Jerry permission to seek additional funding.

Tim Hunter wondered what happened to the lives of the past 11 or so winners of the NYAA.

After much discussion, President Terry Mann appointed Naomi Pequette as chair of the NYAA Improvement Committee. She has permission to find a co-chair, if she desires. Terry would like a preliminary report in 3—6 months, and Council would like a full report next year.

More on Astronomy Day. Representing Sky and Telescope, Kelly Beatty expressed some thoughts about Astronomy Day. He was worried about publicity for the September event. He would like all the ALCor reminded. He also asked how Astronomy could be married with Scout merit badges. Kelly said that S&T would like to partner with the League on producing 8 page Astronomy Day handouts. He didn't have details at that time.

PART VIII. NEW BUSINESS

A. Dues Structure Change. Mary Sutter wanted the updated dues structure to appear on the League website. John Goss felt that the League

needs to spread the word about the dues structure to non-League clubs. Sue Wheatley suggested writing a letter to the editor of both S&T and Astronomy magazines explaining the new dues structure.

B. New “Observe” Clubs. Mike Benson informed Council that Al Lamperti of the Delaware Astronomical Society would like to introduce two new observe clubs: the Southern Arp, and the Flat Galaxies Clubs. Mr. Lamperti has not presented costs yet.

Vice President Carroll Iorg motioned that Council table both observe clubs suggestions until the meeting next year. That would give Mr. Lamperti time to present a completed proposal. Tim Hunters seconded the motion. It passed by consensus.

C. AL Audit and Board Structure. As President Terry Mann mentioned earlier, last year’s audit went fine.

D. New laws for 501c3. This past year, the IRS established new rules relating to the nonprofit status of clubs, the 501c3 regulations. Each club is encouraged to examine how the new rules affect them.

E. League Travel. Terry Mann presented thoughts about instituting a “League Tours” program. The Executive Committee would work with a travel agency to put together a tour to an astronomy relevant location or event. The tour would be about 1 week long and would include League members as speakers. This format is believed to be a little cheaper than professional tours with major speakers. The first trip would be restricted to the US, Canada and Mexico and would take 1 year to prepare.

Mike Benson motioned that League leadership (the Executive Council) be encouraged to set up a single one week tour with a year lead time at some location of astronomical interest. Bill Bogardus seconded the motion. It passed by the consensus of Council.

F. Council Travel. As everyone who attends Council meetings know, these can be quite costly. At the moment, this is one downside to belonging on Council. A general question was asked, “Can we find grant money to assist with League travel expenses?”

G. **The Journey to Palomar.** This was described by John Goss earlier in the day.

H. **Honorary Member Nominations.** Wayne Green nominated Richard A. Sweetsir of Jacksonville, FL to receive Honorary Member status. Wayne described Mr. Sweetsir's many astronomical accomplishments.

Tim Hunter expressed concern about the criteria of the award. In past years, the nominee was more well-known. Wayne Johnson read the criteria as given in the Bylaws: "The title of Honorary Member of the League may be bestowed upon any person who has made a significant, sustained, or outstanding contribution to the Astronomical League or the science of astronomy."

Richard Sweetsir was unanimously approved for Honorary member status.

I. **"Seeing in the Dark" film.** This was discussed earlier in the day.

PART IX. APPROVAL OF BUDGET

The budget will be discussed on 12:45 p.m. on Saturday in the Memorial Student Union, Room 338.

PART X. ADJOURNMENT

Tim Hunter motioned to adjourn. Wayne Green seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

2007 Council adjourned at 4:50 p.m. (to be reconvened on 8/4 at 12:45 p.m.)

PART XI. COUNCIL RECONVENES (Part 2)

Roll of those present and votes held:

Terry Mann	2
Carroll Iorg	2
John Goss	2
Mary Sutter	1
Wayne Johnson	1
Mike Benson	2
Wayne Green	1
Bill Bogardus	1
Total	12

QUORUM. The requirements for a quorum are met.

New Business.

Mike Benson informs the Council that Mike Reynolds, Chair of the Outreach Club, requests that the Northeast Florida Astronomical Society be a sponsoring club for the Outreach Club. He would like their assistance administering the Outreach award.

Kathy Machain wanted to know what “sponsoring club” meant. President Terry Mann thought that phrase needed clarification.

Kathy Machain also felt that the administrators of all the observing clubs should have “back up” people ready in the event that they are unable to fulfill their duties. Terry Mann instructed Carroll Iorg to place a notice for administrator backups in the next “What’s Up?”

Sue Wheatley suggested a new award: Educator Award that would be presented to a deserving educator, most likely a high school teacher. President Terry said that she’ll present this idea to the AAS for funding and ask for their input.

Adjournment of Part 2: 1:00 p.m. Due to the Astronomical League Business Meeting, part 2 of the Council meeting was adjourned until the Business Meeting concludes.

PART XII. COUNCIL RECONVENES (PART 3)

Role of those present and votes held:

Terry Mann	2
Carroll Iorg	2
John Goss	2
Mary Sutter	1
Mike Benson	2
Wayne Green	1
Bill Bogardus	1

QUORUM. The requirements for a quorum are met.

PART IX. APPROVAL OF BUDGET

Treasurer Mary Sutter presented the budget values. It was agreed that the budget, as presented, will need adjusting as more reliable values are obtained. Therefore, the final budget will need to be approved at a later date.