

Oracle Dark Skies Committee
Minutes August 4, 2016
La Hacienda Club, Saddlebrooke Ranch

Attendees: Mike Weasner 520-289-3402, mweasner@mac.com; Evaline Auerbach 520-610-8742, evalineja@icloud.com; Stan Bembenek 520-8962464, ahab@iinet.com; Wendy Ostrander 520-896-2951; Charlotte Poole 520-850-4641, charpoole@q.com; Roddy Wilder 520-500-4641, roddywilder@gmail.com; Barbara Wilder 520-500-4641, barbarawilder03@gmail.com; Chip Parfet 303-257-9475, cparfet@gmail.com; Jennifer Rinio 520-896-2425.

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved as written and sent to the members.

Treasurers report: See report attached. Donation of \$10.00. Balance of \$59.18.

Light pollution control community report:

Rinio reported that someone had approached her to talk to Mike about a neighbor's bright light. Weasner reported that he will be collecting incidents of assistance with light pollution problems for the annual report.

Upcoming Events this year

- **September 10:** Steward Observatory Centennial Event & Star party, etc. @5:00 Tables: ODSC, IDA. @5:30- 7:00 pm. Dr. Tom Fleming of Steward Observatory - History of the Steward Observatory. @7:00 - 9:00 viewing. Tucson Amateur Astronomers Assoc. will provide telescopes.
- **October 17:** At Steward Observatory: @ 7:30: New film about SO History plus panel discussion.
- **November:** Art show at Triangle-L with Adam Block and Miwa Block. Mike and/or I will be meeting them soon to take samples of their art to Triangle-L and arrange details.
- **December 18** 3:00 - The Oracle Piano Society and the Oracle Dark Sky Committee will present, jointly, a Celestial Concert. Evaline Auerbach is organizing it overall; the OPS is organizing the music and the venue set-up; Mike Weasner is organizing the stargazing after the party. Adam Block's astrophotography will be shown between music pieces and Fr. Chris Connolly of the Vatican Observatory will present a talk on the Bethlehem Star just after the Concert. Food from a local restaurant will be available. Star gazing afterwards. Saddlebrooke Skygazers Club. IDA & ODSC tables.

Report on these events - Auerbach

- **September 10** all set. The press release has gone to the SO itself. Before sending it out elsewhere, we need to know whether to tell people to get in touch for car pooling to the University Campus, SO. Auerbach will contact Dr. Fleming about a meal before the program or during it as a picnic. Who wants to be in on the meal? The committee as a whole corrected/edited the press release for the September 10 event and following. They decided that the committee would not be in charge of carpooling to the Observatory.
- **December 18.** Dr. Steven cook, Artistic Director of the Piano society is finishing up his program of music related to Block's astrophotographs on slides. He has asked Dr. Block whether or not he will be reading the descriptions at the program or whether someone else will do it.

Report from Weasner:

- Next May or June the OSP could have a Summer star party and overnight camp. Stellar Vision could bring out a trailer - Telescope. Several places for camping but places for camping vs. a “telescope field” needs to be designated. It could be associated with an educational event. A discussion of where, food, etc., followed. Catered lunch? Sponsors? Details would be decided later.
- A report on meetings with Megan Bonham on June 25. She will be at IDA on occasion doing research. She was happy with the meetings she had with the committee and with Rinio at the park.
- Weasner and John Barentine of IDA met with Sue Black, executive Director of Arizona State Parks. Had a meeting for one hour. When she left, the two spent another hour with her staff. From that meeting:
 - * All Parks that meet the qualifications should apply for International Dark Sky designation. Kartchner Caverns is pending; Red Rock has a problem with night sky readings, so is delayed.
 - * Competition from other states was emphasized.
 - * Several reasons that a push for more Dark Sky parks fits with the mission of Arizona State Parks. Natural resource disappearing fast; Positive public image; and more.
 - * A draft economic study was presented by IDA.
 - * Weasner reported that shortly after the meeting - at 9 pm - an email went to all the park managers about this presentation: It said that the parks which would be working on getting IDA designation are Kartchner Caverns, Catalina, Red Rock, Homolovi, and Alamo Lake. (The IDA is working on a new category: Urban night sky parks. These don't qualify from a sky quality, but qualify through other standards.)
 - * Director Black wants to qualify for the “Gold standard” among state parks in 2017.
 - * A “Sister Park” arrangement could be worked out with the South Korea Dark Sky Park, representatives of which visited Oracle State Park and who used it's application as an example for its own. The Governor who was here had proposed the sister park possibility. Black wasn't against it; Weasner suggested jointly publicized and held special events.
 - * There was a hint that the park could be open more. Black didn't like the part-time opening.
 - * Arizona State Parks is working on buying simple cabins to put at parks.
 - * Arizona State Parks will develop an agency-wide lighting management plan - IDA and Weasner will work with them.
 - * The scheduling of Star parties needs a new head since Ty Farrell, the major supporter in the agency, has gone.
 - * Dark Sky event programs were discussed (harmful effects of light pollution on human health, wildlife, safety, energy use). The agency didn't commit to helping with their development but endorsed the idea. The ODSC and IDA will work on their development. The programs will be available to all Arizona State Parks.
 - * The topic of timely publicity led to a discussion of whether everything had to be sent to the Central Office before being sent out. Black said those at the parks shouldn't feel hamstrung because that is actually not a firm requirement. Individual parks can publicize events locally if they want to. The Central Office just needs to know about the event in order to handle questions. Black directed Sarah Steele to get to all the parks and be sure they know they can contact the local media.

- Arizona Dark Sky Highway is still being planned. A contact for at the Arizona Office of Tourism was provided. Arizona State Parks liked the idea.
- An app for inventorying lights in parks has been developed by IDA and the National Park Service. It was successfully tested at Catalina State Park. The time needed to document existing lighting is cut drastically by using the app.
- The Annual assessment for IDA is due October 1. Weasner would like pictures from events at the park. He asked Rinio to log sky readings for future reports and he will provide the SQM meter to her.

Adjournment & future meetings

The meeting was adjourned at 8:07. The next meeting is September 1, at the same place and time. At that time, we will decide whether we want to do daytime meetings, and whether they should rotate among the Park, Saddlebrooke Ranch, and Saddlebrooke.

Membership

The committee said good-bye to long-time members Stan Bembenek, who is moving to Maryland, and Charlotte Poole who has moved to the east side of Tucson. Their past dedication and contributions to the Oracle Dark Skies Committee and to Oracle State Park is greatly appreciated.

Signed,

Evaline J. Auerbach, Recorder

Signed,

Mike Weasner, Chair