



COFFS HARBOUR ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY INCORPORATED

MINUTES AND NOTICE OF MEETING

MINUTES OF APRIL MONTHLY MEETING HELD AT BOAMBEE HALL, MONDAY 2 APRIL 2012 AT 7:00pm.

PRESENT: 6 members and 4 visitors.

MEETING OPENED: 7:18pm with President, Win Howard in the chair.

APOLOGIES: Peter Black, Brett and Jacquie Connolly

MINUTES OF LAST MEETING: adopted as circulated by e-mail.

BUSINESS ARISING FROM MINUTES: nil

CORRESPONDENCE:

IN: Nil

OUT: To Peter Black accepting his resignation with reluctance and wishing him the best possible outcome with his health.

GENERAL BUSINESS:

Nil

REPORTS FROM MEMBERS:

- 1) There was a show on SBS1 last night (1 April) on asteroids that is highly recommended. This can be viewed by going to the SBS site.
- 2) The TV show on ABC1 each Sunday night titled, "Australia; Time Traveller" is highly recommended for viewing. It covers the history of Australia, right from the time the earth was formed.
- 3) From Win Howard;
 - a) Thanks to an APOD (Astronomy Picture Of the Day) picture of M95 in Leo, Win was able to actually view a supernova through his scope in this region.

- b) Another nova has just been discovered in the Large Magellanic Cloud.
- 4) In response to a question from the floor Win gave an explanation of the term, “Magnitude” as related to the brightness of heavenly bodies. For those not sure of this term you can get a very similar explanation at [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Magnitude_\(astronomy\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Magnitude_(astronomy)) .

REPORTS FROM THE PRESIDENT: (this material is collected from the internet each month and presented in an edited form).

1. Studies show the existence of a “strange lump of dark matter” about 2.4 billion light years from us. Anyone interested in this elusive matter can read more at <http://www.space.com/14773-strange-dark-matter-colliding-galaxies.html> .
2. Saturn’s moon Dione has some oxygen in its atmosphere. The concentration is very low, about one atom per 11cc. More information at http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/46630550/ns/technology_and_science-space/t/saturns-icy-moon-dione-has-oxygen-atmosphere/
3. Asteroid 2011 AG5 is now the biggest impact threat to the earth in the near future. This asteroid is about 140m long and there is a slight chance that it could impact earth in 2040. Read more at <http://www.jpl.nasa.gov/news/news.cfm?release=2012-051>
4. The Fermi telescope has been very busy finding gamma ray sources in the few years it has been in orbit. It has found over 1500 so far. Interestingly, about 500 of these come from parts of the sky where there are no known heavenly bodies. Obviously there are some objects emitting these rays. More information at http://science.nasa.gov/science-news/science-at-nasa/2012/16mar_theedge/
5. The final site for the Square Kilometre Array radio telescope has still not been determined. (Secretary’s note: see <http://www.skatelescope.org/news/ska-members-meet-discuss-site-selection/> to find that their meeting determined on 4 April to get the next report on site selection in mid-May). Will it be Australia or South Africa? Who knows?
6. It has long been known that long periods of zero gravity affects various parts of the human body. Muscles get weak, bones lose density, etc. Most of these changes are reversed when back on earth for a while. A new problem has recently been found. The brain swells and pushes on the back of the eyeball, deforming it and changing the astronaut’s vision, making him or her more long-sighted. It appears that this effect may not be quickly reversed when back on earth. This effect may also cause more problems in long flights and may be a limiting factor in time spent in space.
7. The space probe Messenger on orbit around Mercury has found that the core of Mercury has a much larger than expected iron section. This could be up to 85% of the radius of the planet. Read more at <http://www.abc.net.au/science/articles/2012/03/22/3460456.htm>

CLOSURE AND FUTURE MEETING TIMES:

The next monthly meeting will be Monday 7 May, again at Boambee Hall at 7:00pm, all members and interested persons are encouraged to attend.

Meeting closed at 8:35pm.

VIEWING

THE SKY WAS CLEAR!!! As unbelievable as it may sound to regular meeting goers, the stars were there or us to observe.

Astute readers will have noted that the meeting did not start as early as usual. This was due to an early observation session that included a bright satellite and the international space station.

After the meeting we were lucky enough to have three telescopes to view through. There were two reflectors and one refractor.

During the viewing session we examined Mars, Saturn, double stars in Crux Centaurus and Leo, the moon, omega centauri, eta carina and many others. We also looked at many naked-eye constellations and asterisms.

Terry GILL
Secretary