

Southwest Region of the Astronomical League

Report to AL Council, July 27, 2023

Submitted by SWRAL Regional Rep: Edward P. Flaspoebler, Jr.

SWRAL - the Southwest Region of the Astronomical League - is one of the ten regions of the Astronomical League. It consists of AL member clubs and At-Large members located in Texas, New Mexico and parts of Oklahoma.

While SWRAL has assisted area clubs with events such as Okie-Tex Star Party, El Dorado Star Party and the Hill Country Astronomers Spring Banquet, the main focus continues to be its involvement with the annual Texas Star Party.

The SWRAL holds its annual meeting each year during the week of TSP, where there is the prospect of both high and convenient attendance by SWRAL clubs.

The following slate of candidates was elected as SWRAL officers, at the SWRAL Annual Meeting, held May 19, 2023, during the Texas Star Party.

- Chairman: David Moody, Canyon Lake
- Vice-Chairman: Gary Carter, Fairview
- Secretary: Anne Adkins, Ft Davis
- Treasurer: Dennis Wardell, Plano
- Regional Representative: Ed Flaspoebler, Dallas

SWRAL continues to coordinate with Texas Star Party, Inc, to organize and host the annual Texas Star Party, Eldorado Star Party and Oki-Tex Star Party. In addition SWRAL is currently looking for new ways to serve member societies in the region.

SWRAL has created a new website, SWRAL.ORG, to further its goals of astronomical outreach in its area of operation

SWRAL currently has approximately \$800 in its checking account. Vice-Chairman Gary Carter and Treasurer Dennis Wardell will open a new bank account at RBFCU in Allen, TX. They will need the Astronomical League Tax ID number to open this account. They will then coordinate with outgoing treasurer Alan Gilchrist to transfer by check the funds currently in the existing bank account in Fort Davis. This is necessary because it is not possible to add new signatories to the existing account.

Agenda for the SWRAL Meeting at TSP 2023.

SWRAL Meeting Agenda for TSP 2023, May 19, 2023

Meeting to include attendees via ZOOM

- CHAIR - David Moody (absent) - Vice Chair to assume Chair (interim by proxy)
- VICE CHAIR - Gary Carter - Gary to Chair meeting per Dave Moody's proxy
- REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVE - Ed Flaspoebler
- SECRETARY - Anne Adkins
- TREASURER - Allen Gilchrist

Agenda Items:

1. New SWRAL Treasurer Nomination :

- Nomination: Dennis Wardell (AL member in good standing via TAS)
- Bank Account signatories to be setup at new bank.
- Need to transfer balance to Southwest Region of Astronomical League by check
- Dennis and Gary to open new SWRAL Bank account at new bank at RBFCU, Allen, TX

2. SWRAL Activity:

- Ed Flaspoebler gave annual report to AL Convention in Albuquerque, NM
- SWRAL Plans for attending AL convention in Baton Rouge
- Strategies and plans to promote SWRAL in context with regional clubs and star parties.
- Contact Astronomical league to secure current membership list and contact information
- Participate in regional activities and activities
- Develop SWRAL's value proposition in support of regional events and activities
 1. What do the clubs/societies need/struggle with/desire support to better support their members?
 2. How can SWRAL volunteers support their objectives?
- Develop action plans accordingly, possibly hosting a SWRAL sponsored event.

3. Other items:

WEBSITE

- Ed Flaspoebler prototype to be demonstrated: <http://www.SWRAL.org>

EMAIL ADDRESSES

- Update SWRAL contacts accordingly. Discuss the use of Gmail or SWRAL url?

Southwest Region of the Astronomical League

Report to AL Council, July 23, 2023

page 2

Member Societies of the Southwest Region of the Astronomical League:

- Astronomical League
- Southwest Region and its Officers
- Alamogordo Amateur Astronomers (Alamogordo, NM)
- Albuquerque Astronomical Society
- Amarillo Astronomy Club
- Astronomical Society of South East Texas (Beaumont)
- Astronomical Society of Las Cruces (Las Cruces, NM)
- Austin Astronomical Society
- Big Bend Astronomers (Ft Davis)
- Brazos Valley Astronomy Club
- Central Texas Astronomical Society (Temple, TX)
- Clovis Astronomy Club (Clovis, NM)
- Corpus Christi Astronomy Club
- Crossroads Astronomy Club (Nursery, TX)
- Fort Bend Astronomy Club
- Fort Worth Astronomical Society
- Hill Country Astronomers (Fredericksburg, TX)
- Houston Astronomical Society
- North Houston Astronomy Club
- Kingsville Astronomical Society
- Leonardo's Star Quest Astronomy Club (Enid, OK)
- Mason Star Gazers (Mason, TX)
- Odyssey Astronomy Club (Midwest City OK)
- Oklahoma City Astronomy Club and Okie-Tex Star Party
- Psalm 19 Astronomy Society (Austin, TX)
- Red River Astronomy Club (Texarkana, TX)
- Rio Rancho Astronomical Society (Rio Rancho, NM)
- Roswell Astronomy Club (Roswell, NM)
- San Angelo Amateur Astronomical Assoc.
- San Antonio Astronomical Association
- San Antonio League of Sidewalk Astronomers
- South Plains Astronomy Club (Lubbock, TX)
- Texas Astronomical Society of Dallas
- Texas Star Party, Inc.
- Trinity Christian Academy Astronomy Club (Carrollton, TX)
- West Texas Astronomers (Midland, TX)

Friends:

- Eldorado Star Party (Sonora, TX)
- McDonald Observatory
- Earth & Sky (Radio Series with TSP founder Deborah Byrd)
- International Dark Sky Association (Light Pollution)
- IDA Texas (Light Pollution)
- Riverside Telescope Maker's Conference (California Last held 2019)
- Stellafane Star Party (Vermont)
- Winter Star Party (in Florida Keys)
- South Pacific Star Party New South Wales, Australia

Southwest Region of the Astronomical League

Report to AL Council, July 23, 2023

page 3

SWRAL DRAFT Minutes
May 19, 2023

Attending: Gary Carter (via zoom), Dennis Wardell (via zoom), Allen Gilchrist, Anne Adkins, Ed Flaspoebler, Billy Beckett, Mark Jurena

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 10:00 a.m. by Vice Chair Gary Carter as the Chair David Moody was unable to attend in person or via zoom.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Minutes from the 8/23/22 SWRAL meeting reviewed. Motion to approve by Allen; seconded by Ed; motion passes unanimously.

SWRAL OFFICER POSITIONS

Gary notified those in attendance that David does wish to fulfill his term as Chair. All other positions will continue as well with the exception of Treasurer – Allen Gilchrist will be stepping down as Treasurer.

Gary nominated Dennis Wardell to serve as Treasurer. Dennis is a life member of TAS. Anne seconded the motion. Approved unanimously.

SWRAL BANK ACCOUNT

Allen reported that SWRAL account currently with Amplify which is Austin-based, originally opened by Dave Clark, has two signatories, Dave and Allen. Allen can close the account and get a check made out to SWRAL. Allen recommends finding a convenient bank and getting more than one signatory. Allen will continue in his position until the account is closed and the funds are transferred.

The current balance of the accounts:

Savings	\$ 25.61
Checking	700.55

There was no disbursement last year.

Gary will check with Comptroller on requirements for SWRAL to hold this account. Ed noted that AL will require that their tax ID be on the account. Gary agreed to follow up on this.

SWRAL ACTIVITY

Ed reported on the 2022 ALCON in Albuquerque. Ed provided the first SWRAL report at the Convention business meeting in ten years from material pulled from the TSP website. Ed will also attend Baton Rouge ALCON this year and provide details from the 2023 meeting.

GROWING SWRAL BEYOND TSP

Gary raised this topic of how to approach League clubs with the question, "How can SWRAL provide better support to you?" Then develop action plans accordingly. There was discussion about hosting the annual SWRAL meeting at a venue different than TSP, to take it around the SWRAL region to make it more accessible for attendance to those beyond the TSP audience. One possible venue is the 3RF Comanche Springs Astronomy Campus. Another possible venue is the X-Bar Ranch (where ESP is held) but not to be held during the ESP event. Zoom is yet another possibility. Gary suggested zoom might be the way to start.

Ed reported on a conversation with TSP board chair, George Ellis, who said biggest problem in TSP is people are dying. There is a dire need to get younger people involved.

Anne suggested undertaking an awareness building campaign, develop an accurate list of Region clubs and contact persons, and promote the benefits of AL membership to amateur astronomers region-wide. It was also noted that we should identify other star parties within our region to target.

Ed noted that the SWRAL Website is still in starting mode and no data on traffic at this time.

It was noted that, according to the bylaws, SWRAL is not an independent entity but rather a standing committee of the Astronomical League. We are subject to the AL bylaws and business practices. SWRAL can have a set of bylaws provided there is no conflict with the AL bylaws.

Ed gave a brief run down of the current features of the website as well as upcoming additions, including Events, Awards, Resources, etc.

CONTACTS

It was also noted that gmail addresses be set up for the officers that would exist in perpetuity as officers rotated in and out of position, e.g., SWRALpresident@gmail.com; etc. Ed will follow up with this.

TOTAL SOLAR ECLIPSE

There was discussion about various venues to set up an event for the 2024 April 8 Total Solar Eclipse. For example, Corpus Christi is the last major city in US before eclipse crosses Gulf. There is possibility of co-hosting event at museum. There was additional discussion on how to

educate teachers so they would be in position to organize classes for the event. Ed will create an eclipse resource page on the SWRAL website. Solar viewing glasses can be obtained, perhaps even an SWRAL-branded version.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 11:10 a.m.

*Respectfully submitted,
Anne Adkins, SWRAL Secretary*