

Southwest Region of the Astronomical League

Report to AL Council, July 10, 2024

Submitted by SWRAL Regional Rep: Edward P. Flaspoehler, 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 traditionally 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. However, this was impossible in 2024, because of the April 8th Solar Eclipse, whereby TSP was moved out of its usual May time frame at Prude Ranch in order to create a one-time event around the Solar Eclipse of April 8, 2024. Furthermore, Texas Star Party, Inc., is undergoing internal administrative reorganization.

The following slate of candidates was elected as SWRAL officers, at the SWRAL Annual Meeting, held via Zoom on May 28, 2024. Chairman David Moody has stepped down due to health reasons.

- Chairman: Gary Carter, Fairview, TX
- Vice-Chairman: Becky Ramotowski, Albuquerque, NM
- Secretary: Anne Adkins, Ft Davis, TX
- Treasurer: Dennis Wardell, Plano, TX
- Regional Representative: Ed Flaspoehler, Dallas

SWRAL still 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. Nevertheless, SWRAL continues to look for new ways to serve member societies in the region without Texas Star Party.

SWRAL has maintained and expanded its website, SWRAL.ORG, to further its goals of astronomical outreach in its area of operation, which includes the Eastern corridor of Texas, comprised of DFW, Houston, Austin and San Antonio, and Oklahoma City, and the Western corridor, comprised of El Paso in Texas and Las Cruces, Roswell, Albuquerque and Santa Fe, in New Mexico. The size of the region continues to be the region's greatest challenge to effective communications among our member societies.

SWRAL currently has approximately \$800 in its checking account. Chairman Gary Carter and Treasurer Dennis Wardell will open a new bank account at RBFCU in Allen, TX. They have received the Astronomical League Tax ID number to open this account. Once the new bank

account is created, 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. The main challenge in this effort is to find a bank that will offer a free account, so that our small assets will not be used up on monthly fees.

Youth Outreach is an important part of SWRAL activities, as well as of the Texas Star Party. Because of active and successful youth programs in larger clubs in the region, junior members of the Texas Astronomical Society of Dallas, and other clubs, have applied for and been awarded Youth Awards from the Astronomical League in 2024. These awards will be presented at ALCon 2024 in Kansas City.

Eclipse activities have been an important part of SWRAL activities in 2023-2024.

The Annular Solar Eclipse of October 14, 2023, was widely observed across the region, with clubs in Albuquerque, Roswell, Midland/Odessa, San Angelo, San Antonio, and Corpus Christi in the direct path of the eclipse.

The Total Solar Eclipse of April 8, 2024, was a national event. Clubs along the I-35 Corridor were in the direct path of the eclipse, including Uvalde, San Antonio, Austin, Waco, Fort Worth, Dallas and Texarkana. In addition to club outreach activities and observing parties, national organizations across the country, including Astronomy Magazine and Flagstaff Observatory, organized large events aimed at the general public across the path of the eclipse.

Agenda for the SWRAL Annual Meeting of May 28, 2024

Annual Meeting of the Southwest Region of the Astronomical League

Tuesday, May 28, 2024 at 2:00pm

Attendance: (* means attendance recorded)

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. * David Moody – Chairman | bicparker@mac.com |
| 2. * Anne Adkins – Secretary | limpiagirl@gmail.com |
| 3. * Ed Flaspohler – Regional Representative | EFLASPO@aol.com |
| 4. * Dennis Wardell – Treasurer | star_browser@hotmail.com |
| 5. * Gary Carter – Vice Chairman | gary.carter@fairviewtx.biz ; |
| tasdoublestars@gmail.com | |
| 6. * Becky Ramotowski – Member | astrobeck@gmail.com |
| 7. Allen Gilchrist – Past Treasurer | |

David Moody – Call to Order 2:03 pm

Southwest Region of the Astronomical League

Report to AL Council, July 10, 2024

page 2

Agenda:

1. 2024 Election of officers (Chair and Vice Chair)

- Gary Carter running for Chairman
- Becky Ramotowski running for Vice Chairman
- David Motion Anne First, Dennis Second, Vote by Acclimation
- David, Motion to approve existing positions (RR, Sec, Treas), Becky First, Gary Second. Vote by Acclimation

David – Pass the Gavel

2. Review Old Business

- Review Meeting Minutes of May 19, 2023, Motion Dennis, Ed Second, Approved unanimously
- Strategy for moving our bank account.
 1. Gary and Dennis will select a bank and open an account using Letter of Auth from Bill Dillon, A.L. Treasurer, A.L. Bylaws, and SWRAL Meeting Minutes.
 2. Gary to follow-up with the Texas Comptroller's office RE: A.L./SWRAL accounting rules.
- Brainstorm on building a master contact list of SWRAL member societies. Cultivate relationships with the leadership teams (Will A.L. help?)
 1. Ed to follow-up with the A.L.

3. New Business

- Annual report to be presented to the A.L. in July
 1. Highlighting Clubs' Accomplishments (Awards Earned, Junior Activities)
 2. Highlighting Regional Events (Two Solar Eclipses)
- Brainstorm a calendar of regional and national activities and events to potentially attend as representatives of SWRAL.
 1. S.W.R.A.L. Outreach to new/smaller clubs (How do we help?) 29 A.L. clubs
 2. International Dark Sky Parks/Places – New A.L. Members?
 3. List of Clubs (webspaces list), some who may not be A.L. members
 4. National Event, July 17-20. Ed to attend in person, Gary to attend virtually.
 5. Star Parties? Other event venues? Club talks?
 6. 3RF? Transition in progress.

7. Astronomy on Tap model? UT system?
 8. Engage Houston/Austin Club Members with SWRAL/Astro experience.
- Set a meeting frequency and method (physical & virtual) to further develop our plans for 2024/2025
 1. Set a target date in the near future once Ed has explored the A.L. and other sources for contacting regional clubs.
 2. Quarterly meetings? Start with one, grow based upon participation.
 3. Where should we hold meetings? Star Parties? Urban Areas? Other?
 - 4.

Motion to Adjourn – Anne Adkins. Adjourned @3:31pm

After meeting notes: Promoting Astronomical League Memberships for individuals and Organizations?

- Homeschool groups?
- K-12 School Clubs/Organizations?

Letter of Authorization from Bill Dillon, Treasurer of the Astronomical League:

SWRAL Bank Account



William Dillon <wildil820@gmail.com>

To gary.carter.fairviewtx.biz
Cc president@astroleague.org

 You replied to this message on 2/7/2024 2:37 PM.



Wed 2/7/2024 1:41 PM

Gary,

This email authorizes SWRAL to open a bank account under the TIN of the Astronomical League. The TIN is 52-6054301.

If you require this authorization in a signed hard copy format, send me your address and I will do so.

William C. Dillon
Treasurer
Astronomical League

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 10, 2024

page 5