

# **BY-LAWS OF THE ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY OF THE TOMS RIVER AREA**

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## **ARTICLE I - Name**

The name of the organization shall be "Astronomical Society of the Toms River Area", hereinafter referred to as "A.S.T.R.A" or "the organization." A.S.T.R.A. is associated with the Robert J. Novins Planetarium, Ocean County College, Toms River, NJ.

## **ARTICLE II - Objective**

A.S.T.R.A. is a local astronomy club open to anyone interested in astronomy and space sciences. The objective of A.S.T.R.A. is to provide an open forum for those interested in astronomy to explore all aspects of astronomy and space sciences and to promote knowledge of astronomy and associated equipment.

## **ARTICLE III - Members**

### **Section 1. ELIGIBILITY**

All persons interested in the objective of the organization shall be eligible for membership.

### **Section 2. CLASSES OF MEMBERS**

There shall be the following classes of membership: Individual and Honorary. Individual members shall be dues paying members. Honorary members shall be non-dues paying and non-voting members.

### **Section 3. DUES**

a. The annual dues for membership shall be reviewed and determined by the Executive Board and approved by the members.

b. Annual dues are payable by the March meeting.

c. The Executive Board may review rules for determination of initial dues for persons wishing to join at other than the beginning of the year. The dues structure shall be listed in the supplemental A.S.T.R.A. Policy document.

### **Section 4. PRIVILEGES OF MEMBERSHIP**

Privileges of membership include a subscription to the club newsletter, Astral Projections, use of the club telescopes, voting rights, a copy of the Bylaws and Policy documents when joining or requested and items stated in the A.S.T.R.A. Policy document.

### **Section 5. VOTING**

a. Individual members shall have one vote. Only fully paid members over the age of eighteen (18) can vote.

b. Only people present can vote at a meeting where a vote is taken (no proxies).

c. A quorum of members, ten percent (10%) or 10 of the members eligible to vote whichever is less, must be present for a vote.

d. Except for election of officers or amendment to the bylaws, a simple majority shall be sufficient to pass a vote at a meeting or for a mail in vote.

## **ARTICLE IV - Organization**

### **Section 1. OFFICERS**

The officers of the organization shall be the President, the Vice President-Secretary, and the Treasurer. The Officers shall be elected, and no person may hold more than one elected office concurrently.

a. The President shall be the primary point of contact for the organization, speak for the organization in all official matters, and preside over all meetings.

b. The Vice President-Secretary shall

- 1) assume the responsibilities of the President in the President's absence
- 2) make a record of any formal actions taken by the organization
- 3) coordinate with the Newsletter Editor in mailing appropriate club business
- 4) perform as the ALCor (Astronomical League Correspondent). The ALCor communicates with the Astronomical League (AL) and periodically furnishes the AL with copies of our membership list.
- 5) Keep track of telescope equipment loans
- 6) Keep the official version of the Bylaws and Policy documents

c. The Treasurer shall be the club membership chairperson, shall maintain the club treasury, shall collect club dues, and shall expend funds as directed. Recurring expenditures normal to the operation of the organization are authorized. The Treasurer shall provide a written report of the years expenditures, which shall be included in the Newsletter, published within the first calendar quarter. Separate accounting will be maintained for the Telescope Fund and it will not be used for general club operations without a vote at a regular meeting.

### **Section 2. ADMINISTRATORS**

Administrators of the organization shall be appointed by the Officers from volunteers and shall be the Newsletter Editor and the Webmaster. Officers may serve as Administrators.

a. The Newsletter Editor shall publish the club newsletter, ASTRAL Projections, once a month and for any special event, and shall coordinate with the Vice President-Secretary to publish appropriate club business in the ASTRAL Projections.

Publication of Club Business: The club newsletter, ASTRAL Projections, shall be the official organ of A.S.T.R.A. The newsletter shall carry the dates, times, locations, and subject matter (if known at the time of publication) of impending meetings. Any policy matter requiring a vote of the general membership must be published in the newsletter not less than one month prior to the meeting at which the vote is to be taken. If the matter requires a mail ballot, the ballot shall be mailed with the newsletter one month after the issue in which the impending vote is announced. The club is not responsible for lost or misdirected mail. The newsletter shall include other items as necessary.

b. The Webmaster shall manage the club website and the associated discussion board.

### **Section 3. EXECUTIVE BOARD**

The Executive Board shall consist of the three elected officers and the two Administrators.

a. The Executive Board shall recommend dues, expenditures, voting issues, and shall perform other duties as appropriate.

b. The Executive Board may appoint standing committees as needed to carry out recurring or ongoing tasks required by the club. These standing committees will continue until the officers determine that their functions are no longer required. All committees so established shall act solely in accordance with the authority granted by the Executive Board

c. The Executive Board may appoint special committees to perform single tasks as needed by the club. These special committees will disband upon completion of their function.

#### **Section 4. PLANNING BOARD**

- a. The Planning Board shall consist of members of the organization: the Executive Board and any other member wishing to participate in the planning process.
- b. The Planning Board shall meet to plan the meeting agenda for the following year.

#### **Section 5. ELECTIONS**

- a. Election of officers shall take place at the December meeting.
- b. Nominations for all offices shall be accepted by the October Meeting. Members can self-nominate or nominate someone that has agreed to serve if elected. Nominations and acceptance can be done at the regular meeting or in writing. The written self-nomination or acceptance must reach the club Officers by the October meeting. The Newsletter Editor shall mail ballots by the November meeting, at the direction of the Vice President-Secretary.
- c. Individual members shall have one vote. A plurality shall be sufficient to elect.

#### **Section 6. TERM OF OFFICERS**

Office shall be effective on January 1 for a term of one year or until a successor is elected.

#### **Section 7. REMOVAL FROM OFFICE**

If an officer is not performing his or her official duties or is subverting the aims of A.S.T.R.A., a member or the Executive Board can request that the officer be removed from office. The Executive Board (less the officer in question) will investigate the matter and a recommendation will be made to the membership. The membership will vote on any recommendation for removal (by mail), and a majority shall be sufficient for the removal. A special election will be held to fill the remainder of the term of that office. If the remainder of the term is 3 months or less, one of the other officers can act in that position until the regular elections.

### **ARTICLE V - Meetings**

#### **Section 1. REGULAR MEETINGS**

The schedule of regular meetings shall be determined by and amended by the club members and listed in the A.S.T.R.A. Policy document.

#### **Section 2. CONDUCT OF BUSINESS**

Except for actions taken by the Executive Board in accordance with the Bylaws, business of the organization may only be conducted at regular meetings. Notification of any items for vote shall be made in the Newsletter. For any items placed before the members for vote, a simple majority shall be sufficient to pass.

### **ARTICLE VI - Amendment and Interpretation of the Bylaws**

#### **Section 1. AMENDMENT**

Any member may recommend amendments to these Bylaws. Voting on recommended amendments by the membership shall be accomplished by mail ballot. Any proposed amendment must be announced in the newsletter one month before the vote is taken. Balloting will be by mail. The ballot will be sent with the next newsletter after the proposal is first announced; all ballots must be returned no later than the meeting one-month after the ballot is sent out. To take effect, an amendment must be passed by at least two-thirds of the members voting, provided that the number of members voting is more than a quorum of the membership.

## **Section 2. INTERPRETATION**

The Executive Board shall recommend interpretation of these Bylaws. Voting on recommended interpretations by the membership shall be accomplished at the following regular meeting. The Executive Board may make corrections to the Bylaws and Policy documents that do not change the intent, (such as spelling or grammar) without a vote.

# **A.S.T.R.A. Policy**

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## **1. Introduction**

This Policy document supplements the Bylaws of the Astronomical Society of the Toms River Area (A.S.T.R.A.), which is envisioned to remain relatively constant and would require the full membership to affect a change. This document contains those specific items that would change from time to time. In an effort to change these specific items easily, they are separated from the Bylaws. Any member may recommend changes to the A.S.T.R.A. Policy document. Any proposed changes must be published in the newsletter at least one month before the meeting at which the vote will be taken. The vote shall be taken at the general membership meeting; the changes must be passed by a majority of the members present, provided that a quorum of the membership is present.

## **2. Membership Privileges**

In addition to the items listed in the Bylaws, membership in A.S.T.R.A. has the following additional privileges:

- a. Club Membership in the Astronomical League upon request.
- b. Membership in the Night Sky Network.
- c. Use of ASTRA's library of Books.

## **3. Meetings**

Regular meetings shall be held on the second Friday of each month (except August) at 7:00 P.M. at the Ocean County College. Business shall be limited to 15 minutes at a regular meeting, except when installing officers.

## **4. Dues**

- a. Dues for membership shall be \$25.00 per year.
- b. In addition to regular dues, all new members shall be assessed a one-time surcharge of \$5.00 for their first year. This surcharge shall be dedicated to the maintenance of the club telescopes.
- c. Collection of dues shall be complete by the March meeting. New members starting after July shall pay prorated dues as follows:
  - 1) July to December: New membership \$20.00 + \$5 telescope fund; membership to expire at the end of the current year.
  - July to December: Returning members \$15.00; membership to expire at the end of the current year.
- d. Honorary members will not be assessed dues, but will have privileges as determined by the Executive Board.

## **5. Club Telescope**

- a. Club telescopes are available to club members (18 years or older) who have been members for at least six months.
- b. Members must get basic training on the telescope use before the loan.
- c. The telescopes are available for a one-month loan, with a one month extension provided no one else wishes to borrow the telescope.
- d. Members will sign out the telescope and accessories and will account for each item on return. The borrowing member is responsible for the safe return of all equipment signed out.

A standard loan form that lists all the equipment signed out, that includes the terms of the loan in this document, shall be executed by the borrower (original and copy). All of the clubs equipment will be listed, and the appropriate box(s) will be checked for the actual equipment being borrowed.

### **e. Damaged equipment**

- 1) Any equipment that is damaged shall be replaced or repaired as necessary to bring said equipment to original specifications and/or condition at the time of lending.
- 2) The Club Executive Board shall determine the need for repair or replaceability as well as choice of vendors necessary to do so.
- 3) Not included in this agreement are consumables, e.g. batteries.

### **g. Recovery of telescope**

- 1) Any additional expenses incurred in the recovery of monies that may include but not limited to litigation shall be the responsibility of the borrower.
- 2) The Club Executive Board shall determine any necessary action to recover any and all monies due.

h. Equipment for checkout can only be authorized and signed out by a member of The Club Executive Board.

i. Members who do not abide by these rules will lose the privilege of borrowing a club telescope.

## **6. Expenditures**

The Executive Board shall not expend in excess of \$50 on one project unless authorized by the members at a regular meeting. Recurring expenditures to maintain club operations are authorized.

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The dues were increased on December 12, 2008 by vote of the membership. The By-Laws reflect the new dues structure.

The meeting start time was changed from 8:00pm to 7:00pm by a vote of the membership.