



VBAS Highlights for June

Public Programs for June

Our next member's meeting will be held on Friday, June 15th at 7:30 pm. VBAS Member Meetings are held on the 3rd Friday of each month at 7:30 p.m.; they're open to the public and are free.

Planetarium programs start at 7:30 PM. Cassie Lofts will present a show on spectroscopy on June 9, and Beth Bero will talk about summer skies on June 23. Admission to planetarium shows is free for VBAS Members, \$3.00 for Adults, \$2.00 for Children 6-11, and free for children under 6. Observation of the night sky through various telescopes normally follows each planetarium program, weather permitting.

President's Message

On page 2, Jeff Delmas talks about his vacation observing, and the upcoming member meeting and potluck dinner. Jeff also gives the last President's message of his term.

2007 Annual Members Meeting

On page 6, John Young gives a report on the Annual Members Meeting.

Concerts in the Park and Sidewalk Astronomy

Michael Cowger's report on the Sidewalk Astronomy event at the first Concert in the Park this year is on page 8. See the Calendar of Events on page 4, for a list of the next two months of Concerts in the Park.

Treasurer's Reports

Gena Crook's NASA NAPI Grant accounting is on page 2, the 2007 Transitional Budget is on page 5, the April 2007 Treasurer's Report is on page 9, and the full 2007 VBAS Budget is on page 10.

Observing Event at Doug's Condo

Doug Horacek is hosting a viewing of the almost-conjunction of Venus and Saturn at his condo on June 30. See the Calendar of Events on page 4 for more details.

VBAS Annual Meeting Minutes

Page 10 has the draft minutes of the 2007 Annual Member's Meeting.

Steve Sloan
Via Stellaris Editor
steve@sloan3d.com

Deadline for July 2007 Via Stellaris submissions is Friday, June 29.



In This Issue:

VBAS Highlights for June.....	1
President's Message.....	2
The Night Sky for June.....	3
Calendar of Events.....	4
Annual Meeting Report.....	6
Sidewalk Astronomy at Concerts in the Park.....	8
VBAS Annual Members Meeting Minutes.....	10



President's Message

by Jeff Delmas

I'm sorry I missed the May members meeting. From the reports I heard, it was a very productive and informative meeting – I would have particularly enjoyed John Miele's presentation on digital video processing. I missed the meeting because I was in the Outer Banks of North Carolina for the beach wedding of a friend's daughter. The wedding was great, spectacular even. More spectacular were the clear dark skies over the Atlantic Ocean. It's rare these days for anyone in the Eastern U.S. to find such dark skies. But there at the edge of the continent, with a perfect southeastern view, I was able to watch as Scorpius and Sagittarius rose well above the horizon with mighty Jupiter in their midst. I was even able to make thirteen new entries in my Messier observing logbook. The view reminded me just how important our Dark Sky initiative is and that we each need to support it as best we can.

For our upcoming meeting this June 15th, we're planning a pot luck dinner in the planetarium. I hope you'll all be able to make it to enjoy the food and fun. We'll conduct a small ceremony to formally introduce our new officers who were elected at the May meeting. If you plan to bring a covered dish or other food item, please contact me to let me know what you plan to bring (jeff@delmasfamily.net).

This is my last message as president. It's been a real honor and a pleasure to serve you as president and I now look forward to serving as Immediate Past President! Our new president, Michael Cowger, is charged and ready to lead us through the coming year. I hope you give him as much support and encouragement as you've given me this past year.

Clear Skies!
Jeff

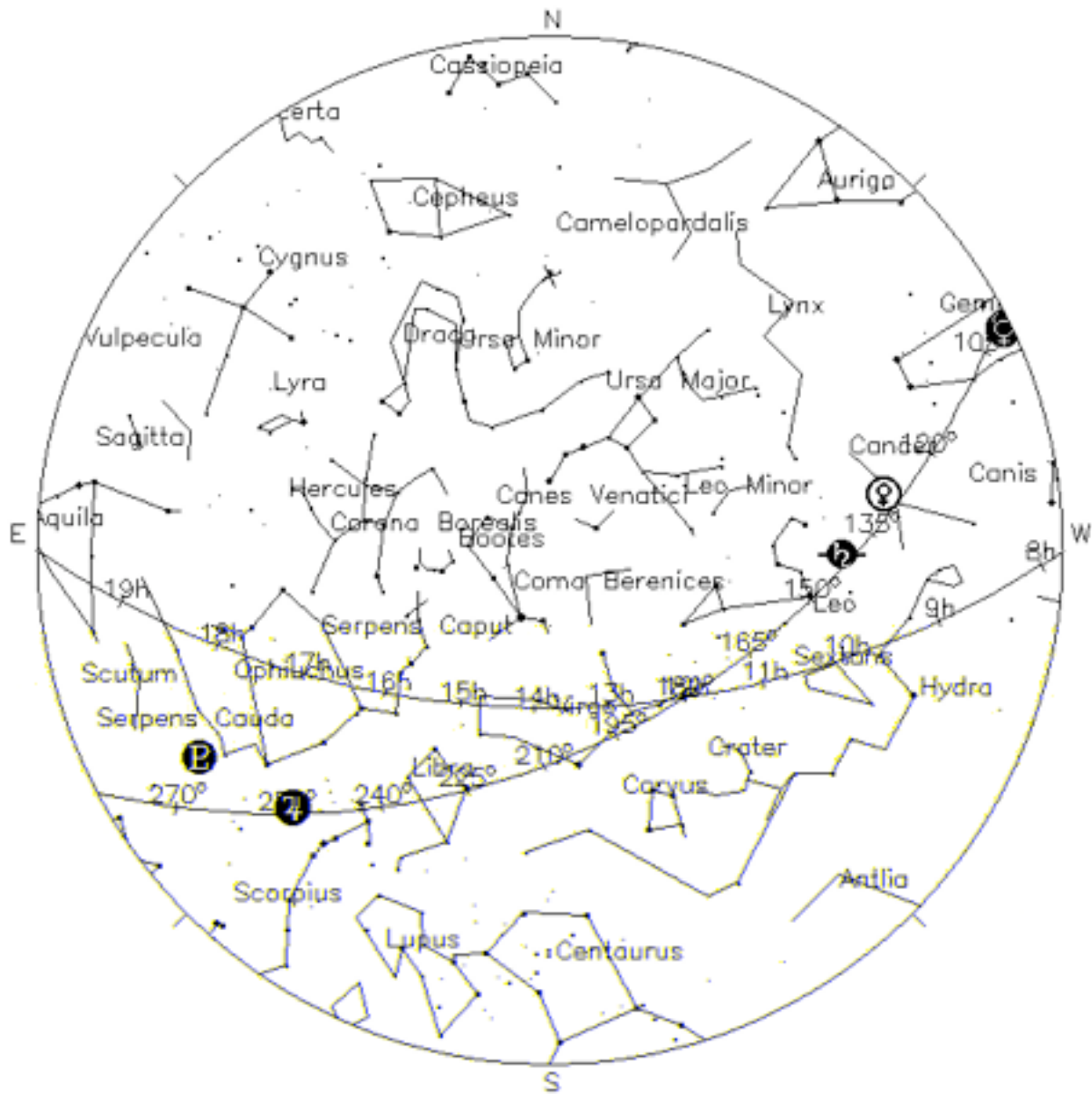
Accounting of Grant Funds 5/18/07	Total Jul'05- Dec'06	Net Funds Remaining	Jan '07	Feb '07	Mar '07	Apr '07	May '07	Total	Net Funds Remaining
Income									
MSCS	46700.00								
Planetarium Equipment	8554.85								
Observatory Equipment	5805.96								
School Partnership	10267.79								
Planetarium Programs	600.00								
Roof Repair	10800.00								
Restroom Facility	26505.40								
Electrical Work/Fire Door	5000.00								
Parking/Septic	10000.00								
Carpet	3000.00								
Paint	2750.00								
Sidewalk Astronomy	10184.00								
Total Income	140168.00								
Expenditures									
MSCS	46700.00	0.00						46700.00	0.00
Planetarium Equipment	7290.09	1264.76	64.79	92.06				7446.94	1107.91
Observatory Equipment	3805.96	2000.00						3805.96	2000.00
School Partnership	5668.13	4599.66	192.88	353.62	218.00	388.32	321.26	7142.21	3125.58
Planetarium Programs	600.00	0.00						600.00	0.00
Roof Repair	10800.00	0.00						10800.00	0.00
Restroom Facility	0.00	26505.40						0.00	26505.40
Electrical Work/Fire Door	0.00	5000.00		299.09				299.09	4700.91
Parking/Septic	450.00	9550.00						450.00	9550.00
Carpet	2981.20	18.80						2981.20	18.80
Paint	2899.22	(149.22)						2899.22	(149.22)
Sidewalk Astronomy	9216.44	967.56						9216.44	967.56
Total Expenditures	90411.04	49756.96	257.67	744.77	218.00	388.32	321.26	92341.06	47826.94

NASA NAPI Grant Accounting, by Gena Crook

The Night Sky for June, 2007

Here is the view at 9 PM in mid June, 2007, at 34° N Latitude, 86° W Longitude. Saturn, the lowercase-h symbol, will be between Leo and Cancer. Venus, the hand-mirror symbol, will be in Cancer. Jupiter, the symbol like the numeral 4, is coming up near Scorpio.

Map courtesy of John Walker and YourSky (<http://www.fourmilab.to/yoursky/>).



VBAS Calendar of Events, June through July

Saturday, June 2, 2007, 10 AM to 3 PM

Facilities Working Party

Help perform much-needed maintenance of the VBAS facilities.

Monday, June 4, 2007, 6:30-8:00 PM

Sidewalk Astronomy at Concerts in the Park

Location: Big Spring Park

Come visit our volunteers, our Solar Telescope, and our 14" Meade, while you listen to the music of *Reunion*.

Saturday, June 9, 2007, 7:30 PM

Planetarium Show: *The Mysteries of Light (aka Light and Spectroscopy)*

Presented by Cassie Lofts

What is light? This program will show how astronomers harness this mysterious thing called light to discover the secrets of the universe. You will learn how light from stars can be broken down into a spectrum and studied through spectrosopes. You will even get to take a look through a spectroscope yourself. Spectroscopy has become one of the most important tools to the astronomer of the 21st century. This program will provide a fascinating look at light as you have never seen it before.

Monday, June 11, 2007, 6:30-8:00 PM

Sidewalk Astronomy at Concerts in the Park

Location: Big Spring Park

Come visit our volunteers, our Solar Telescope, and our 14" Meade, while you listen to the music of *Creel Family Band* and *Out & Runnin'*.

Friday, June 15, 2007, 7:30 PM

Regular Monthly Meeting

Visitors are welcome at our members meetings! This meeting, we'll be having a potluck dinner, so please bring food if you can.

Saturday, June 16, 2007, 10 AM to 3 PM

Facilities Committee Meeting and Working Party

Help perform much-needed maintenance of the VBAS facilities, and attend this month's Facilities Committee Meeting.

Monday, June 18, 2007, 6:30-8:00 PM

Sidewalk Astronomy at Concerts in the Park

Location: Big Spring Park

Come visit our volunteers, our Solar Telescope, and our 14" Meade, while you listen to the music of *The Flashbacks* and *Brass Band of Huntsville*.

Saturday, June 23, 2007, 7:30 PM

Planetarium Show: *Summer Skies*

Presented by Beth Bero

Join Professional Educator *Beth Bero* for a trip to the Milky Way and beyond! Learn to identify the constellations of the summer sky and find out which ones harbor interesting deep sky objects. Travel to the skies of faraway places while seated in the VBAS planetarium!

Monday, June 25, 2007, 6:30-8:00 PM

Sidewalk Astronomy at Concerts in the Park

Location: Big Spring Park

Come visit our volunteers, our Solar Telescope, and our 14" Meade, while you listen to the music of *Eyes Around*, and my girlfriend Jennifer's Celtic band *Slip Jig* (shameless plug.)

Saturday, June 30, 2007, 7:00 PM

Private Gathering at Doug Horacek's Condo

Doug: "I intend to have members over to my condo the evening of 30 June 2007, to see the almost conjunction of Saturn and Venus. As I remember, they will be 2/3 of a degree apart. You should be able to see both in a wide-angle eyepiece at low power. Bring your portable scopes, and set up in front of my condo on the grass, to see this stellar event. I will have pizza and soda in my condo. All members and non-members interested in the event are welcome. Call Doug Horacek at 772-6788 for more information, and directions how to get there. Will be cancelled in the event of rain or overcast skies. This is on a Saturday evening starting at 7:00, which should hopefully give you some time to set up scopes and eat before late twilight and early evening, when we can see the two planets. RSVP by 29 June 2007, so I know how much pizza and garlic bread and soda to buy."

Monday, July 2, 2007, 6:30-8:00 PM

Sidewalk Astronomy at Concerts in the Park

Location: Big Spring Park

Come visit our volunteers, our Solar Telescope, and our 14" Meade, while you listen to the music of *Olde Towne Brass* and *Huntsville Concert Band*.

Saturday, July 7, 2007, 10 AM to 3 PM

Facilities Working Party

Help perform much-needed maintenance of the VBAS facilities.

Saturday, July 7, 2007, 7:30 PM

Planetarium Show: *Black Holes*

Presented by **Brenda Rogers**

What is a black hole? This program is a family-oriented presentation on black holes. What are they? What causes them? Will our sun ever be one? Could it be a form of rapid transit? What would happen if you dove into one? For answers to these questions, join us for fun family time studying black holes. Extra activities and hand-outs will be available for children and students.

Monday, July 9, 2007, 6:30-8:00 PM

Sidewalk Astronomy at Concerts in the Park

Location: **Big Spring Park**

Come visit our volunteers, our Solar Telescope, and our 14" Meade, while you listen to the music of **Wing & A Prayer** and **The Starlight Gospel Singers**.

Monday, July 16, 2007, 6:30-8:00 PM

Sidewalk Astronomy at Concerts in the Park

Location: **Big Spring Park**

Come visit our volunteers, our Solar Telescope, and our 14" Meade, while you listen to the music of **Band of Moose** and a military band to be determined. You'll also see a fireworks show celebrating Armed Forces Week.

Friday, July 20, 2007, 7:30 PM

Regular Monthly Meeting

Visitors are welcome at our members meetings!

Saturday, July 21, 2007, 10 AM to 3 PM

Facilities Committee Meeting and Working Party

Help perform much-needed maintenance of the VBAS facilities, and attend this month's Facilities Committee Meeting.

Saturday, July 21, 2007, 7:30 PM

Planetarium Show: *Measuring The Universe*

Presented by **Andrew Wilson**

Our universe is a big place, so how exactly do astronomers figure out how far away things are? Join Von Braun Astronomical Society's **Andrew Wilson** as he describes some of the techniques used by astronomers to ascertain the values for distances to stars.

Monday, July 23, 2007, 6:30-8:00 PM

Sidewalk Astronomy at Concerts in the Park

Location: **Big Spring Park**

Come visit our volunteers, our Solar Telescope, and our 14" Meade, while you listen to the music of **Rocket City Chorus** and **Disc Oasis**.

Monday, July 30, 2007, 6:30-8:00 PM

Sidewalk Astronomy at Concerts in the Park

Location: **Big Spring Park**

Come visit our volunteers, our Solar Telescope, and our 14" Meade, while you listen to the music of **Cristina Lynn** and **Island Soundz: Caribbean Band**.

...And as always, for the most up-to-date information about VBAS events, be sure to check the web site at <http://vbas.org/events.cfm>.

	Partial Budget 2007 Feb. 1 to Jun. 30	Actuals	Remaining
		\$39,220.00	
Income			
Donations	\$291.67	\$154.55	
Membership Dues	\$1,458.33	\$1,845.00	
Program Fees	\$1,041.67	\$1,355.05	
Food Sales	\$83.33	\$12.50	
Gift Shop Sales	\$291.67	\$202.00	
Total Income	\$3,166.67	\$3,569.10	
Expense			
Astronomical League Membership	\$333.33		
Liability Insurance	\$104.17		
Professional Fees	\$0.00		
Lease		\$1.00	
Newsletter	\$333.33	\$107.00	
Phone	\$187.50	\$143.27	\$44.23
Website	\$125.00	\$107.80	\$17.20
PO Box	\$30.00		
Awards	\$41.67	\$96.86	
By-Laws Mailing	\$0.00		
Postage	\$100.00	\$70.88	\$29.12
Printing	\$150.00	\$40.71	\$109.29
S&T Magazine	\$13.75	\$32.95	
Bank Service Charge	\$0.00		
USSRC Presenter	\$0.00		
Food Purchases	\$104.17	\$40.64	\$63.53
Gift Shop Purchases	\$41.67	\$92.85	
Facilities			
Supplies	\$104.17	\$60.85	\$43.32
Grounds	\$41.67	\$25.78	\$15.89
Buildings	\$709.00	\$546.10	\$162.90
Total Facilities	\$854.83	\$632.73	\$222.10
Library			
Planetarium			
Maintenance	\$352.08	\$350.00	\$2.08
Publicity	\$62.50		
Speaker Honoraria			
Total Planetarium	\$414.58	\$350.00	\$64.58
Observatory	\$333.33	\$378.56	-\$45.23
Total Expense	\$3,167.33	\$2,095.25	\$1,072.08
Lawn Mower/Leaf Blower	\$1,500.00	\$1,534.46	-\$34.46

2007 Transitional Budget, by Gena Crook

VBAS Annual Member's Meeting Report

by John Young

The 2007 VBAS Annual Member's Meeting was held on Friday, May 18th in the Von Braun Planetarium. A great turnout caused there to be scarcely a pizza crust or two left when we got the official business started around 7:30. A brief review of the membership numbers and a read of the last members and board meeting minutes were conducted. VBAS Treasurer Gena Crook presented the board-approved budget for the 2007 fiscal year to the members.

A summary of the highlights of the preceding year was shared, including: 21" restoration milestones, lots of quality planetarium shows and observing sessions conducted by our planetarium and observing teams, lease renewal, dark skies initiatives, Astronomy Day, C16 improvements, outstanding guest speakers, facilities/planetarium improvements, Stuhlinger solar telescope repair, Messier Marathon, and even a recent marriage proposal on the second deck of the Angele.

Several presentations were made during the course of the evening. Gena Crook expressed her thanks and certificates of appreciation to attending presenters for their exceptional support and dedication to VBAS' planetarium programs. Mitzi Adams formally presented the Ann Sanford Memorial Questar 3.5" telescope to Sara Neale for her contributions to VBAS thus far and to help further her interest in astronomy during the coming year. John Young presented a certificate of appreciation and planetarium show passes to attending members of the Randolph HS Science Club in thanks for their library cataloging efforts. In



Gena Crook (on the left) presents certificates of appreciation to three members, Sara Neale, David Lofts, and Cassie Lofts (left to right), who were indispensable to our planetarium programs.

addition, young VBAS member David Lofts presented VBAS with a beautiful glass piece handcrafted by renowned artist Josh Simpson.

The concluding item of business for the evening was the election of officers for the



Mitzi Adams (on the right) presents the Ann Sanford Memorial Telescope to Sara Neale.

coming year(s). As per the constitution and bylaws, with only one nominee per office a simple voice vote was conducted to confirm the nominees for: Vice President – John Young, Dir. Of Facilities and Equipment – Eric Peterson, Dir. Of Education and Programs – Melissa Snider, and Treasurer – Sara Neale. They will assume duties on July 1st while current Vice-President Michael Cowger will assume the role of President and Jeff Delmas transitions to Past President.

The business portion of the meeting was followed by an exciting and informative workshop on astrophotography, given by experienced VBAS observer John Miele. After a few minutes of introducing the basic concepts and equipment, he led the group outside to his 11" Celestron SCT rig, and showed members how to image and capture objects. He concluded the presentation by returning to the planetarium and demonstrating how to process the images. Given the clear night skies, several members and a few visitors stayed up until almost midnight. All in all, a very productive and pleasant evening!



John Young (on the right) and the Randolph High School Science Club.



David Lofts (left) presents a Josh Simpson glass piece to John Young.

This Summer, VBAS members and their families
are gathering as a group to enjoy

		Von Braun Astronomical Society, Inc.	
		Profit & Loss	
		April 2007	
4:15 PM 05/18/07 Accrual Basis			
	TOTAL		
Ordinary Income/Expense			
Income			
donation /aquarium	12.00		
Gift Shop Sales	16.00		
Magazine Income	32.95		
Membership Dues	285.00		
Program Fees	342.00		
Total Income	687.95		
Gross Profit	687.95		
Expense			
GRANT expenditure	388.32	school programs	
Magazine Expense	299.70		
Newsletter	107.00		
Printing	3.90		
Telephone	35.75		
Total Expense	834.67		
Net Ordinary Income	-146.72		
Net Income	-146.72		
beginning bank balance	\$60,715.07		
ending bank balance	\$60,568.35	ending bank balance	\$60,568.35
difference	(\$146.72)	Grant money remaining	\$48,148.20
		difference	\$12,420.15
certificate of deposit	\$5,147.46		

April 2007 Treasurer's Report, by Gena Crook



Long exposure of Venus and the Moon, showing Earth-shine on the Moon, on May 19, 2007. Sent in by Richard Norman.

VBAS Planetarium, 7:30 PM

Friday, May 18, 2006

by Steve Sloan

John Young called the meeting to order at 7:33 PM.

Doug Horacek had an announcement. He will be holding an observing event at his condo on June 30 at 7 PM, to see the near-conjunction of Venus and Saturn. You can call him for directions. [See the Calendar of Events on page 4 for more details.]

John read membership numbers from the most recent member's list, and compared them to last year's, to show how much VBAS has grown. This time last year, there were 149 active members, and 63 members whose membership had expired at least three months before. This year, we had 188 active members, and 68 expired memberships.

John asked if we had any guests. We had one guest, along with the members of the Randolph High School Science Club.

As Secretary, Steve Sloan summarized the minutes of the last members' meeting and board meeting.

Per the Bylaws, Treasurer Gena Crook presented the upcoming budget at the annual meeting. The budget's total income was \$8300, and the total expenses will also be \$8300. About half the expenses will go to facilities, and other smaller expenses include Astronomical League dues, liability insurance, newsletter, and phone.

One new member introduced himself. He is Russell White, an astronomer at UAH.

Gena left a report for Jeff to read. Our total income was \$1185, and our total expense was \$1534.

As Secretary, Steve Sloan read highlights from the March Board Meeting and Member Meeting minutes.

Presentation of the Budget

Per the Constitution and Bylaws, the treasurer

Alabama for five more years. The Messier Marathon was great last month. We have done good work for the Dark Skies Initiative, spearheaded by Richard Norman. Richard is working hard to get Monte Sano State Park qualified for the International Dark Skies Park bronze award. We even had a marriage proposal here!

Planetarium Committee

Both Gena Crook and Mitzi Adams had presentations. Gena handed out certificates of appreciation to Sara Neale, David Lofts, and Cassie Lofts, for their hard work in the school planetarium programs. Gena also thanked James Brelsford, Eduardo Mendoza, Brenda Rogers, Laine Hall, and Megan Beatty.

Mitzi Adams told the Society about the late Ann Sanford, who was a long-time VBAS member, a great observer, and a great librarian for VBAS. She passed away at 65, of a stroke. She left her Questar telescope, and many of her books, to VBAS. She asked that we choose a promising female astronomer to loan them to. Previously, the telescope was awarded to Rebecca Noble, who had it for about two years. Mitzi presented the Ann Sanford Memorial 3.5" Questar to Sara Neale that night. Sara must complete an observing project, and report on it to the VBAS membership, in about six months.

Facilities Committee Report and Presentation

The Randolph High School science club visited the meeting. John Young reported on their efforts. John then presented them with a certificate of appreciation, and passes to planetarium shows.

Restroom Addition Update

Architect Gerry Simpson and his daughter reported on his work on the restroom addition. Park Manager Kent Wilborn signed off on the restroom addition. Gerry gave a brief overview of his progress so far. He will put together an engineering package within the next two weeks. Gerry usually reports on his progress at the VBAS Wednesday lunch meetings, which are held at the Adtran cafeteria at noon every Wednesday. Everybody is invited to attend.

Planetarium Projector Update

Wesley Swift had a phone conversation with Walker County, and they will definitely give us the projector, one way or another. We will trade them our current projector for the new one.

Messier Marathon Report

See the full report in last month's Via Stellaris.

Earth Day Report

Richard told us about the recent Earth Day event. Melissa, James, and Richard participated. The VBAS solar telescopes were set up to show a "very bland sun". They reached many new people about light pollution.

Election of Officers

According to the Constitution and Bylaws, a voice vote is only allowed if there is only one candidate for every position up for vote. We had that, so we did just a yay or nay vote. For Vice President, John Young had no nay votes. For Director of Facilities, Eric Peterson had no nay votes. For Director of Education and Programs, Melissa Snider had no nay votes. For Treasurer, Sara Neale had no nay votes.

The new officers will assume office on July 1. In addition, Michael Cowger will become President, and Jeff Delmas will become Immediate Past President on that date, according to the Constitution and Bylaws.

Concerts in the Park Series

The first 2007 Concert in the Park will be held on Monday, May 28, at 6:30 PM, at Ditto Landing. Several VBAS members will be holding a sidewalk astronomy event there. They'll be taking the 14" LX200 telescope, the flat panel display, and other odds and ends. It would be best if this were a coordinated effort, so that we look professional.

Note that only the first event will be at Ditto Landing. The following events will be held weekly, at Big Spring Park.

On a related note, Wes says that one option for transporting the telescope to sidewalk astronomy is to mount the 14" LX200 on a trailer. Wes has a trailer, stuck behind trees, that we can use if we can get it out. "It's a project." With this idea, one person could deploy it safely.

Volunteer State Star Party

Eric announced that his fourth annual Volunteer State Star Party is coming up. It is tentatively scheduled for October 12 and 13, but wait for him to confirm. *[He has since confirmed those dates.]*

Infinity Planet

Josh Simpson is a famous glass artist. He creates small glass "planets", intended to be buried in inaccessible locations. David Lofts asked him to donate one to VBAS. David presented the "infinity planet" to VBAS.

Program

John Miele gave an astrophotography demonstration. He took real photos of Saturn on his webcam, then he came back inside to process the photo stack.

Contributions to Via Stellaris

We welcome contributions to our newsletter that may be of interest to the astronomical community. Contributions are best sent by email to Steve Sloan at editor1@vbas.org. If you don't have access to email, you can send articles in either Word or ASCII format to Steve at 2110 Vilaret Dr, Huntsville, AL 35803.

Membership and Renewal

The VBAS currently has four categories of membership. All four include free admission to the planetarium shows; subscription to this newsletter; membership in the Astronomical League; and use of VBAS library and equipment. The four categories of membership, and the dues for each, are: REGULAR at \$24.00 per year, FAMILY at \$36.00 per year, STUDENT (must be full-time student) at \$12.00 per year, and LIFE at \$500.00. Newsletter Only is also available for \$12.00 per year. Membership renewal occurs for all members annually on March 1st.

All VBAS memberships will be renewed in March 2007. If you have sent us membership renewal money during the year, your membership has been renewed until March 2008. If you have questions regarding membership, please contact Linda Farnell.

Please send your renewal to the Membership Secretary at VBAS, P.O. Box 1142, Huntsville, AL 35807. Make checks payable to the Von Braun Astronomical Society. If your mailing or email address changes, please report the new address promptly to the Membership Secretary, Linda Farnell, at 534-5060, to avoid missing issues of *Via Stellaris*.

Reprints

Permission is hereby granted to any non-profit astronomical association to reprint, in whole or in part, any article in this or past *Via Stellaris*. We ask that credit be given to the *Via Stellaris*, Von Braun Astronomical Society, date of issue, and author of article used.

VIA STELLARIS



A Publication of the
Von Braun Astronomical Society
A Member of the Astronomical League
P. O. Box 1142
Huntsville, AL 35807-1142

Address Service Requested

We are trying to limit the paper copies we generate, to save costs, clutter, and a lot of work for everyone. If you would like to receive your newsletter electronically, please send your email address to editor1@vbas.org, and let me know.

Steve Sloan, Via Stellaris editor