

VIA STELLARIS

The Monthly Newsletter of the Von Braun Astronomical Society

VBAS Highlights for August

Public Programs for August

Our next member's meeting will be held on Friday, August 17th 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. Roy Young will present a show on Super Scopes on August 4, and Cassie Lofts will give a talk about "things that go boom" on August 18. 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.

Gearing up for Astronomy Day

Current plans are to hold A-Day some time in late summer or early fall. Please contact Melissa Snider at MelissaS@SpaceCamp.com if you would like to help with planning, or you want to help on the big day. Keep checking the website for details.

Concerts in the Park and Sidewalk Astronomy

There will be more Sidewalk Astronomy at the concerts this month. See the Calendar of Events on page 3.

Open Observing Session

The next open observing session is on August 11, during the peak of the Perseid meteor shower. See page 3 for details.

Venus and Saturn

Page 4 has Doug Horacek's report on his observations of two planets making a close approach (but only in the sky.)

Donation

Jeff Goswick donated a bunch of magazines and a finder. See page 4 for details.

VBAS Board Meeting Minutes

Pages 6-10 have the draft minutes for both of this month's Board Meetings.

New Grant Applied For

For VBAS, Jeff Delmas applied for a \$2500 grant for public outreach from Astronomy magazine. See his report on page 7 for details.

Harry Potter and the Society of Astronomers

VBAS held our Members Meeting and a Sidewalk Astronomy event at Barnes & Noble's Harry Potter book 7 release event on July 20. A bunch of pictures start on page 10, and Member Meeting minutes start on page 11.

Steve Sloan
Via Stellaris Editor
steve@sloan3d.com

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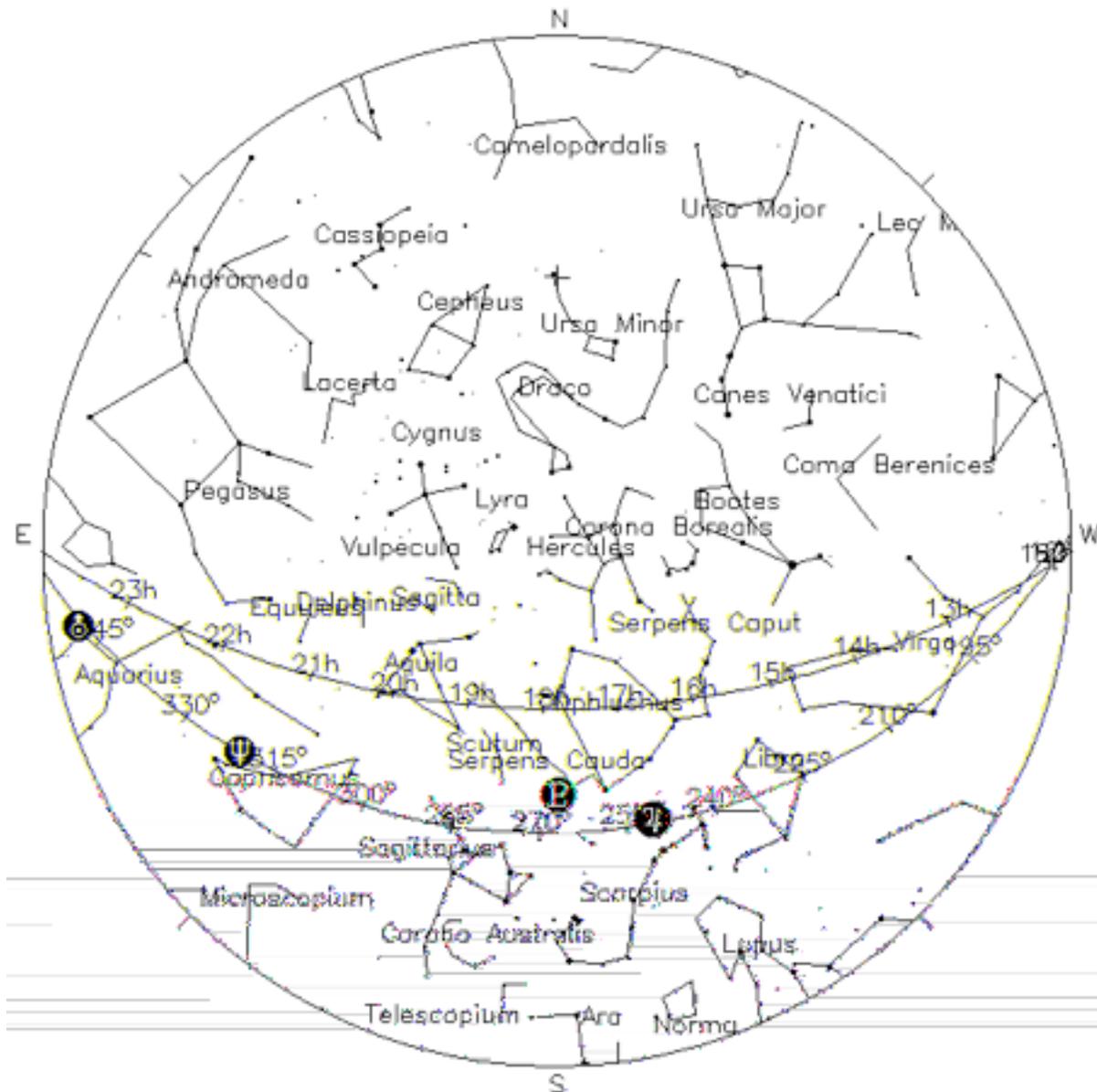
The Night Sky for August, 2007

Here is the view at 9 PM in mid August, 2007, at 34° N Latitude, 86° W Longitude. Jupiter, the symbol like the numeral 4, will be high in the sky near Scorpius.

The best meteor shower of most years is the Perseid shower peaking at 7:02 PM on August 12, which falls during the new moon this year. This meteor stream is debris from the comet Swift-Tuttle, and the radiant in Perseus rises not long after dark. Meteors from this shower should be prominent from August 7 'til August 17.

There will be a total lunar eclipse on the morning of Tuesday, August 28, peaking at 6:35 AM.

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



VBAS Calendar of Events, August through September

Saturday, August 4, 2007, 10 AM to 3 PM

Facilities Working Party

Help perform much-needed maintenance of the VBAS facilities.

Saturday, August 4, 2007, 7:30 PM

Planetarium Show: *Super Scopes*

Presented by *Roy Young*

Monday, August 6, 2007, 6:30#8:00 PM

Sidewalk Astronomy at Concerts in the Park

Location: *Big Spring Park* in Huntsville, and *Village Green-Gazebo* in Madison

VBAS volunteers, telescopes, and the music of *Mike Ball & the Madison Mountaintop Band* and *Duane Walker & Desperado* (in Huntsville), and *Jim Parker* (in Madison). Check the calendar at the VBAS website for details.

Saturday, August 11, 2007, 7:30 PM

Open Observing Session, featuring the Perseid Meteor Shower

Presented by *John Young*

We'll have a brief tour of the facilities and an intro to the night sky. We'll then get scopes setup and have some fun. Although the focus for the evening will be the Perseid meteor shower, we'll try to run the celestial bases by viewing a galaxy, nebula, star cluster, and planet! Members and public welcome to bring your own scopes.

Monday, August 13, 2007, 6:30#8:00 PM

Sidewalk Astronomy at Concerts in the Park

Location: *Big Spring Park* in Huntsville, and *Village Green-Gazebo* in Madison

VBAS volunteers, telescopes, and the music of *Mambo Gris Gris* and *Abstract Band* (in Huntsville), and *Just Down the Road* (in Madison).

Friday, August 17, 2007, 7:30 PM

Regular Monthly Meeting

Pizza and refreshments to get us started. Guest speaker will be Barry Roberts from the Terrestrial and Planetary Environments Team at MSFC. Visitors are welcome!

Saturday, August 18, 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, August 18, 2007, 7:30 PM

Planetarium Show: *Things that go Boom!*

Presented by *Cassie Lofts*

Monday, August 20, 2007, 6:30#8:00 PM

Sidewalk Astronomy at Concerts in the Park

Location: *Big Spring Park* in Huntsville, and *Village Green-Gazebo* in Madison

VBAS volunteers, telescopes, and the music of *Room 240* and *Time Machine* (in Huntsville), and *Barry Kay & the UMC Praise Team* (in Madison).

Monday, August 27, 2007, 6:30#8:00 PM

Sidewalk Astronomy at Concerts in the Park

Location: *Big Spring Park* in Huntsville, and *Village Green-Gazebo* in Madison

VBAS volunteers, telescopes, and the music of *Glenn Walton & the Bluewater Band* and *Billy Lee and MOAB* (in Huntsville), and *Rusty Bay* and *Les Copeland* (in Madison).

Totality Tuesday, August 28, 2007, 6:35 AM

Total Lunar Eclipse

Saturday, September 8, 2007, 10 AM to 3 PM

Facilities Working Party

Help perform much-needed maintenance of the VBAS facilities.

Saturday, September 8, 2007, 7 PM

C16 Training Session

Presented by *Richard Norman*

Members can learn to operate the C-16 to support VBAS shows and for private observing sessions. We'll have a lecture portion in the planetarium followed by a hands-on observing session (weather permitting).

Saturday, September 8, 2007, 7 PM

C16 Training Session

Presented by *Richard Norman*

Members can learn to operate the C-16 to support VBAS shows and for private observing sessions. We'll have a lecture portion in the planetarium followed by a hands-on observing session (weather permitting).

Weekend of September 14#16, 2007

2007 Tennessee Star Party

Location: *T.A.G. Primitive Baptist Youth Camp in Lynchburg, TN*

See the site at www.bsasnashville.com/tnsp/ for details.

Saturday, September 22, 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, September 29, 2007, 7:30 PM

Open Lunar Observing Session

Presented by *John Young*

We'll have a brief tour of the facilities and an intro to the night sky. With a waning Moon, we'll focus on lunar delights. We'll also try to get a galaxy, nebula, star cluster, and planet in! Members and public welcome to bring your own scopes.

A Saturday in Late Summer or Early Fall

Astronomy Day

Keep watching this space for more exciting information about the big event!

...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>.

Venus and Saturn

by Doug Horace&

On 30 June 2007, Saturn was pretty much obscured by clouds, but on 1 July 2007, it was just clear enough to see Saturn and Venus 0.8 degrees apart, in my 40 mm eyepiece, about 38 power for my light bridge Dobsonian. You could see Venus' crescent and Saturn's rings in the same field of view. I increased magnification to 59 using my 26 mm wide-angle eyepiece, and both just barely fit the same field of view. I hope other people who were able to see this planetary event will share their experiences. Finally, there was a sufficiently clear evening to observe such a wonderful sky event. I watched as the two planets set later in the evening, and had several neighbors come by and view.

Jeff Goswick's Generous Donation

Jeff Goswick enjoyed visiting the VBAS website so much that he made a generous donation to the Society. He donated a book and two years of Amateur Astronomy magazines to the library. He also donated a Vixen Red-Dot Finder, which we can certainly put to good use on one of our telescopes.

Mr. Goswick lives in Adairsville, Georgia. Despite having difficulty with traveling, due to being physically disabled, he would like to visit one of our meetings someday. He is certainly welcome! In fact, John Young offered a free pass or two to a show, a tour of the facilities, and some great observing, for whenever he is in town, and can make it to to a show.

1:18 PM 07/01/07 Accrual Basis		Von Braun Astronomical Society, Inc. Profit & Loss June 2007	
		TOTAL	
Ordinary Income/Expense			
Income			
donation		\$67.05	
donation /aquarium		\$13.00	
Gift Shop Sales		\$400.00	
IRS refund		\$1,600.00	
Magazine Income		\$32.95	
Membership Dues		\$318.00	
Program Fees		\$785.00	
Total Income		\$3,216.00	
Gross Profit			
		\$3,216.00	
Expense			
Buildings Maintenance		\$194.97	
Grounds		\$32.08	
Magazine Expense		\$32.95	
Newsletter		\$45.86	
Postage		\$8.60	
Professional Fees		\$1,600.00	
Supplies		\$35.79	
Telephone		\$35.88	
Website		\$53.90	
Total Expense		\$2,040.03	
Net Ordinary Income			
		\$1,175.97	
Other Income/Expense			
Other Income			
Interest Income		\$16.57	
Total Other Income		\$16.57	
Net Other Income			
		\$16.57	
Net Income			
		\$1,192.54	
beginning bank balance	\$60,140.21	ending bank balance	\$61,332.75
ending bank balance	\$61,332.75	Grant money remaining	\$47,826.94
difference	\$1,192.54	difference	\$13,505.81
certificate of deposit	\$5,261.66		

June 2007 Treasurer's Report by Gena Croo&



Von Braun Astronomical Society, Inc.						
Profit & Loss						
February through June 2007						
	Feb 07	Mar 07	Apr 07	May 07	Jun 07	TOTAL
9:54 AM 07/20/07 Accrual Basis						
Ordinary Income/Expense						
Income						
donation	\$0.00	\$0.05	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$67.05	\$67.10
donation /aquarium	\$30.00	\$33.00	\$12.00	\$5.00	\$13.00	\$93.00
donations/auction	\$0.00	\$74.50	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$74.50
Food sales	\$0.00	\$7.00	\$0.00	\$5.50	\$0.00	\$12.50
Gift Shop Sales	\$117.00	\$52.00	\$16.00	\$21.00	\$400.00	\$606.00
IRS refund	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$1,600.00	\$1,600.00
Magazine Income	\$100.95	\$266.75	\$32.95	\$66.95	\$32.95	\$500.55
Membership Dues	\$544.00	\$924.00	\$285.00	\$92.00	\$318.00	\$2,163.00
Program Fees	\$494.00	\$297.00	\$342.00	\$555.05	\$785.00	\$2,473.05
Total Income	<u>\$1,285.95</u>	<u>\$1,654.30</u>	<u>\$687.95</u>	<u>\$745.50</u>	<u>\$3,216.00</u>	<u>\$7,589.70</u>
Gross Profit	\$1,285.95	\$1,654.30	\$687.95	\$745.50	\$3,216.00	\$7,589.70
Expense						
Awards	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$96.86	\$0.00	\$96.86
Buildings Maintenance	\$107.25	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$438.85	\$194.97	\$741.07
Food expense	\$10.64	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$30.00	\$0.00	\$40.64
Gift Shop Purchase	\$0.00	\$92.85	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$92.85
GRANT expenditure	\$744.77	\$218.00	\$388.32	\$321.26	\$0.00	\$1,672.35
Grounds	\$25.78	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$32.08	\$57.86
Lease	\$1.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$1.00
Magazine Expense	\$133.90	\$0.00	\$299.70	\$66.95	\$32.95	\$533.50
Newsletter	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$107.00	\$32.24	\$45.86	\$185.10
Observatory Maintenance	\$298.28	\$9.00	\$0.00	\$71.28	\$0.00	\$378.56
Planetarium Maintenance	\$350.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$350.00
Postage	\$70.88	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$8.60	\$79.48
Printing	\$2.38	\$10.78	\$3.90	\$23.65	\$0.00	\$40.71
Professional Fees	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$1,600.00	\$1,600.00
Supplies	\$45.68	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$29.61	\$35.79	\$111.08
Telephone	\$35.78	\$35.75	\$35.75	\$35.99	\$35.88	\$179.15
Website	\$26.95	\$53.90	\$0.00	\$26.95	\$53.90	\$161.70
Total Expense	<u>\$1,853.29</u>	<u>\$420.28</u>	<u>\$834.67</u>	<u>\$1,173.64</u>	<u>\$2,040.03</u>	<u>\$6,321.91</u>
Net Ordinary Income	<u>-\$567.34</u>	\$1,234.02	<u>-\$146.72</u>	<u>-\$428.14</u>	\$1,175.97	\$1,267.79
Other Income/Expense						
Other Income						
Interest Income	<u>\$0.00</u>	<u>\$0.00</u>	<u>\$0.00</u>	<u>\$0.00</u>	<u>\$16.57</u>	<u>\$16.57</u>
Total Other Income	<u>\$0.00</u>	<u>\$0.00</u>	<u>\$0.00</u>	<u>\$0.00</u>	<u>\$16.57</u>	<u>\$16.57</u>
Net Other Income	<u>\$0.00</u>	<u>\$0.00</u>	<u>\$0.00</u>	<u>\$0.00</u>	<u>\$16.57</u>	<u>\$16.57</u>
Net Income	<u>-\$567.34</u>	<u>\$1,234.02</u>	<u>-\$146.72</u>	<u>-\$428.14</u>	<u>\$1,192.54</u>	<u>\$1,284.36</u>

End of Year Profit and Loss Report "February through June" by Gena Crook

VBAS Planetarium, 9:00 AM

Saturday, July 7, 2006

by Steve Sloan

Board members present were Michael Cowger, Jeff Delmas, Steve Sloan, and Melissa Snider. Richard Norman, Wesley Swift, and Roy Young were also present.

The meeting was called to order at 9:27 AM.

Wes has assorted useful material about optics for the web site.

Membership Discrepancies

Michael has concerns about discrepancies in the membership data. Michael moved that we assume that everyone in our list is paid up, and we send them membership cards. We can start fresh tracking membership dues next year.

Signs

Michael moved that we authorize the construction of a sign to be placed at the Monte Sano State Park entrance off of Governor's Drive/Highway 431.

Upcoming Events

The date of National Astronomy Day is September 15th. Can we make that our date as well? There were no objections at that time.

Eric Johnson's Volunteer State Star Party will be held on the weekend of October 12th and 13th.

This afternoon, we will be testing a system to send personalized email to each member's email address, as an alternative to an email list that members must actively join.

The Harry Potter event at Barnes & Noble will be held on the same night as our Members' Meeting, so we will be holding the meeting in their coffee shop at 7:30 PM.)Later changed to the other corner of the book store.* This will be establishing a precedent. It will be the first meeting held off the mountain since the VBAS facilities were built.

Growth of Planetarium Programs

The last three planetarium shows have been growing in attendance. The last show actually needed two showings to fit everyone. It had 61 adults, 32 children ages 6-12, and

tween paying jobs. SOMTC needs more advertising, and an outlet for public service, and we can provide that.

Other Topics

We need a new Director of Administration, to replace Eric Peterson, who has moved into the position of Facilities Director.

Michael showed off a quick demo of the new look of the VBAS web site.

Recap

We need to work out final details on membership and the web site. Dennis will send out membership cards to all members. We need to gear up for Astronomy Day on September 15th. It may be moved to later this summer or early fall, due to scheduling conflicts. The Volunteer State Star Party will happen in mid-October. We need planetarium training, so we can target weekly shows beginning January 1st. Signs need to be made up for the front gate and Highway 431. Roy will do three Christmas shows this year, so we can phase into weekly shows. Dome restoration and the bathroom addition will be tabled until later.

Public Outreach Grant Opportunity Seized

by Je, Delmas

In my new role as Past President, one of my main responsibilities is fundraising. My first effort in that area was to submit an entry for VBAS in the Astronomy magazine "Out-of-this-world" Award for ongoing public outreach programming. Astronomy magazine will present its annual \$2,500 award to an astronomy club or organization for excellence in astronomy outreach activities. The "Out-of-this-world" Award focuses on ongoing public programming — not one specific event — as conducted by any educational or civic organization. The prize will reward a group's sustained efforts to involve its local community in the science and hobby of astronomy, and will be awarded for use in future public programs.

	Budget 2007 Feb. 1 to Jan. 31	5 Month Budget 2007 Feb. 1 to Jun. 30	Actuals \$39,263.00
Income			
Donations	\$700.00	\$291.67	\$234.60
Interest			\$16.57
Membership Dues	\$3,500.00	\$1,458.33	\$2,163.00
Program Fees	\$2,500.00	\$1,041.67	\$2,473.05
Food Sales	\$200.00	\$83.33	\$12.50
Gift Shop Sales	\$700.00	\$291.67	\$606.00
Total Income	\$7,600.00	\$3,166.67	\$5,505.72
Expense			
Astronomical League Membership	\$800.00	\$333.33	
Liability Insurance	\$250.00	\$104.17	
Professional Fees		\$0.00	\$1.00
Lease			\$185.10
Newsletter	\$800.00	\$333.33	\$179.15
Phone	\$450.00	\$187.50	\$161.70
Website	\$300.00	\$125.00	\$30.00
PO Box	\$72.00	\$30.00	\$96.86
Awards	\$100.00	\$41.67	\$0.00
By-Laws Mailing		\$0.00	\$79.48
Postage	\$150.00	\$100.00	\$40.71
Printing	\$250.00	\$150.00	\$32.95
S&T Magazine	\$33.00	\$13.75	\$0.00
Bank Service Charge		\$0.00	\$0.00
USSRC Presenter		\$0.00	\$40.64
Food Purchases	\$250.00	\$104.17	\$92.85
Gift Shop Purchases	\$100.00	\$41.67	
Facilities			
Supplies	\$250.00	\$104.17	\$111.08
Grounds	\$100.00	\$41.67	\$57.86
Buildings	\$1,900.00	\$709.00	\$741.07
Total Facilities	\$2,250.00	\$854.83	\$910.01
Library			
Planetarium			
Maintenance	\$845.00	\$352.08	\$350.00
Publicity	\$150.00	\$62.50	
Speaker Honoraria			
Total Planetarium	\$995.00	\$414.58	\$350.00
Observatory	\$800.00	\$333.33	\$378.56
Total Expense	\$7,600.00	\$3,167.33	\$2,549.01
Lawn Mower/Leaf Blower		\$1,500.00	\$1,534.46

2007 Five#Month Budget by Gena Croo&

We met all the requirements very well and I feel our chances are good to win the award, which will be announced in September. Last year, there were 32 total entries. I focused our entry on the School Outreach Program, under which over 2200 students have been served to date. I also included our regular public planetarium programs, annual Astronomy Day efforts, and our growing Sidewalk Astronomy program in our entry. Keep your fingers crossed for VBAS!

For more information, visit the Astronomy Magazine website:

<http://www.astronomy.com/asy/default.aspx?c=a&i d=5605>

VBAS Draft Board Member Meeting Minutes

VBAS Planetarium, 7:30 PM

Monday, July 23, 2006

by Steve Sloan

Board members present were Michael Cowger, Jeff Delmas, Ed Mendoza, Sara Neale, Steve Sloan, Melissa Snider, and John Young. Four board members are required for a quorum. Gerry Simpson, Wesley Swift, and Roy Young were also present.

The meeting was called to order at 7:40 PM. Secretary Steve Sloan read a summary of the board meeting minutes from July 7th. Michael moved to approve the minutes as read, Jeff seconded, and the motion carried with a unanimous vote.

Treasurer's Report

There is one weird check Sara can't classify. It was probably payment for show admission, for a total of either \$239, or possibly \$230.

Of the remaining grant money, \$47K can be spent for the restroom addition. There is still about one thousand dollars available for sidewalk astronomy. \$45K was the initial estimate on new restroom construction.

While looking at the Treasurer's Report spreadsheet, Roy asked if Gena counted the stuff that was covered under the grant as expenses. That approach looked a little weird to him, but everything balanced out at the end.

The NASA grant requires that we generate an annual report, which is due in April. We also have quarterly reports due every calendar quarter, which are good for 3 months. We have 15 working days to deliver the latest quarterly report to them.

Education and Programs

Melissa reminded everyone that Astronomy Day is scheduled for September 15.)Moved since then, possibly to October 20, because September 15 interferes with the Tennessee State Star Party.* She'll be trying to get it started in the next ten days or so. We need to find a speaker, and she is open to suggestions. Michael contacted two speakers, with no response yet. John suggested Tim Pickens as a possibility.

Michael complimented the Society for the Harry Potter public outreach event Friday night. The Sidewalk Astronomy group there had an amazing view of

Jupiter, considering the terrible seeing conditions. 180 people came to the table.

Michael got email from Sci-Quest soliciting funds for their portable planetarium, so that rumor has been confirmed. There are now three groups doing astronomy education in town, and an additional group is trying to get into it. There is a similar portable planetarium in Decatur, owned by the Woodmen of the World. Huntsville City Schools also has one. They cost about \$15 thousand each.

Sci-Quest is talking about a digital planetarium projector, essentially an LCD screen with a fisheye lens, so it won't have a great picture.

Melissa suggests that we wait at least six to twelve months before entering into any financial deals with Sci-Quest about their proposed inflatable.

For the school programs, bus cost reimbursement is not the incentive we thought it would be. Most school administrations don't know how to deal with our reimbursement. We had a general discussion about the logistics of school field trips. There are multiple destinations on Monte Sano, so schools might be able to make a combined field trip to multiple destinations on the mountain in one day.

Working with the Burritt Museum's youth camp worked well for us in the past Gena did the lion's share of working with them. Burritt is talking about putting us into their brochure. Crystal Kitchens is currently active in the Museum, and she is also a former VBAS officer, so she might be a big help.

The Sierra Club runs guided nature trail tours on Monte Sano, and Doug Horacek is on their board. Sierra Club might be willing to volunteer to do that for a combined school field trip.

According to Jeff, we have had about twenty school programs this year, about twenty last year, and about thirty-five the year before. Teaming with other groups on Monte Sano would be beneficial.

Chamber of Commerce

Michael recommends that we join the Huntsville/Madison County Chamber of Commerce. Membership costs \$295/year for a non-profit. Among other things, they offer advertising in the Visitor Center in exchange for membership. It would be beneficial for us to belong.

Tomorrow at UAH, the Chamber is holding an event to convince out-of-town students interning at NASA to stay in town after their internships end.

Wes noted that big corporate money will be needed to get a real planetarium building, so the Chamber could help.

According to Michael, it's also a good way to publicize our web site. He suggested that the board members can go to the Chamber's web site for more information on what they have to offer.

John said we should look into it more. Michael asked John if he wanted to take the action item to look into it. John said no.

Jeff asked if they treat non-profits differently. According to Michael, membership costs almost \$400 for for-profit corporations. Jeff took the action item to look into the Chamber more.

John noted that you get out what you put into it. We must attend their events to be in their publications.

Fundraising

Jeff showed the fundraising slideshow he's working on. He asked us to think about what needs we have, and how to turn them into goals we can solicit money for, and how we can give something to donors in exchange.

Wes suggested that we need a custom trailer for transporting the 14" telescope. It should be a self-erecting telescope mount on wheels. It would cost about \$1000 to \$3000. Ray noted that vocational schools could help, given a prototype.

Jeff asked us to send our ideas through email. It would be good to host the slideshow on a members-only website, so the rest of the members can also give their ideas.

Planetarium Update

Our contact at Walker County will call us when he's ready to get rid of his projector, and trade it for our older projector.

Roy told Ed that we talked about running a planetarium show every week, so college students would be good for presenting them, for \$30 per session. Because three out of four shows would be canned, those would be good shows for students to deliver.

Who does Roy send his blurbs for planetarium shows? Sara, who is still publicity director.

Planetarium Projector Update

Walker County will definitely grant us the newer projector, in exchange for our current projector. In a previous Board meeting, \$1000 was approved for installation.

Observatory Update

Wes has been tracking the new optics set SOMTC (NASA's space optics manufacturing group) is building for the 21". SOMTC's new head, Dr. Helen Cole, has kids, and she is very interested in the Society. Wes suggests putting her on the list of people we will appoint to an advisory committee. For political reasons, our good publicity can help SOMTC. With this one big donation from them, it will be easier to get other groups to donate. We already consider SOMTC one of our corporate sponsors.

The VBAS buildings have been having problems with pooling water. Wes suggests removing the parapets. Less drastically, we could water-blast away the "waterproofing." We need to add slope to the parapets. Gerry had some suggestions. Apparently, there are some really good new materials and sealants nowadays. Michael asked Gerry if he can look into it, come up with recommendations and a cost estimate, and get back to us later.

Wes needs to get a crew together, to do tear-down and a major maintenance session on the C16. SOMTC could probably do it, but when would they be able to get to it? Wes will ask. We can always use the 14" as a backup, while the C16 gets worked on.

Richard is supposed to do C16 training in September.

On the first two weekends after Christmas, Michael would like to help people who got new telescopes, and don't know what to do with them.

The 21" needs the control system and operating software in a better state. It must be reliable enough to run unsupervised, while someone operates it from downstairs.

There was some question about storing active, usable scopes in our storage room. We allow members to store their personal scopes there. The only issue is limited space.

Restroom Addition

Gerry's drawings aren't finished yet, but he's close. He showed what he had to the Board. He needs another print of Overbeek's site plan.

We aren't sure if we need a county building permit, since we're on state land, but we'd need the blessing of the county fire inspector. The inspector wants ceramic tile in our bathrooms.

With the new safety estimates, the restrooms will cost about \$75K instead of about \$50K, so we're going to need to do more fundraising.

Gerry suggested that if we have the money, the dome should be painted professionally, by someone with a cherry picker.

According to Gerry's timeframe, we should get the plans done by the end of next month, so it can be available for contractor bid as soon as possible. We

must make sure any contractors we hire are properly licensed. That is Gerry's responsibility as an architect.

We should use pressure-treated lumber throughout.

Should we ask people to buy a block, as a donation?

Aerospace construction companies might be able to do it for a lower cost.

We must wait until the drawings are completed before soliciting bids.

The law doesn't require review by the state park architect, but we'll send the plans as a courtesy.

According to Michael, we need to consider parking next.

Michael moved to adjourn at 9:44 PM, and Melissa seconded.



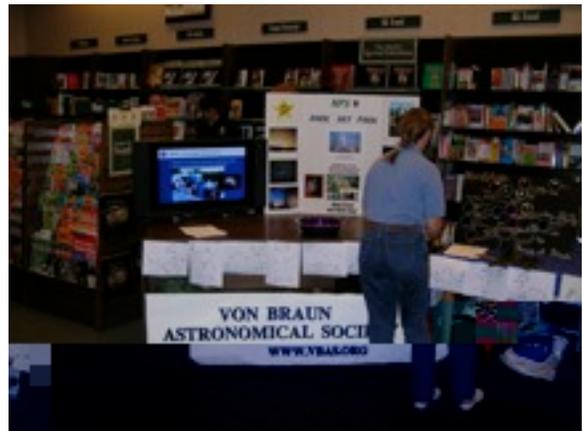
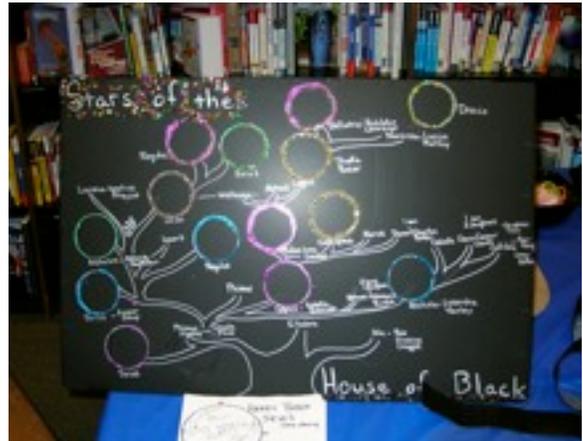
Assorted costumers at the Harry Potter book 7 release event at Barnes & Noble. This month, we held the VBAS Members Meeting there, along with a Sidewalk Astronomy group doing public outreach.

Harry Potter and the Society of Astronomers

(a.k.a. VBAS Draft Member Meeting Minutes)

Barnes & Noble on University Drive, 7:30 PM
Friday, July 20, 2007

President Michael Cowger welcomed everyone to the meeting at 7:51 PM. The meeting was held alongside the Sidewalk Astronomy event held at the Harry Potter and the Deathly Ha\$ows release. Several members were in costume as Harry Potter characters, including Mitzi Adams as Professor McGonagale.



Our returning Membership Secretary, Dennis Culver, introduced himself to the members present. Dennis served in that position for about fifteen years, then took a hiatus from the Society, and now he's back.

Members introduced themselves.

Various people gave status updates and announcements. Eric Johnson's Volunteer State Star Party is coming up in October. Jeff Delmas is working on a slide presentation on fundraising. Richard Norman had no Dark Sky news to report. A group from the Barnard-Seyfert Astronomical Society (BSAS) may come down to Eric's dark sky site soon, so look for details in

the Via Stellaris. The Perseid meteor showers are coming up around August 12 and 13.

Wesley Swift spoke with Dr. Cole. She is the head of SOMTC, NASA's space optics manufacturing unit. Dr. Cole said they'd like to make their work on our 21 inch optics a higher priority, because it's good publicity for their group.

We will be starting new planetarium and C16 training sessions soon. C16 scope training is scheduled for September 8th.

Incoming Treasurer Sara Neale was welcomed.

Melissa Snider is wanting to gear up with fall school shows soon, so help will be appreciated.

The Sidewalk Astronomy event outside needed help setting up the 14" Meade for camera observing.

The meeting adjourned at 8:02 PM, followed by observing and public outreach.



Accounting of Grant Funds 6/11/07	Total Jul'05- Dec'06	Net Funds Remaining	Jan '07	Feb '07	Mar '07	Apr '07	May '07	Jun '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							\$46,700.00	\$0.00
Planetarium Equipment	7290.09	\$1,264.76	\$64.79	\$92.06					\$7,446.94	\$1,107.91
Observatory Equipment	3805.96	\$2,000.00							\$3,805.96	\$2,000.00
School Partnership	5668.13	\$4,599.66	\$192.88	\$353.62	\$218.00	\$388.32	\$321.26	\$0.00	\$7,142.21	\$3,125.58
Planetarium Programs	600.00	\$0.00							\$600.00	\$0.00
Roof Repair	10800.00	\$0.00							\$10,800.00	\$0.00
Restroom Facility	0.00	\$26,505.40							\$0.00	\$26,505.40
Electrical Work/Fire Door	0.00	\$5,000.00		\$299.09					\$299.09	\$4,700.91
Parking/Septic	450.00	\$9,550.00							\$450.00	\$9,550.00
Carpet	2981.20	\$18.80							\$2,981.20	\$18.80
Paint	2899.22	-\$149.22							\$2,899.22	-\$149.22
Sidewalk Astronomy	9216.44	\$967.56							\$9,216.44	\$967.56
Total Expenditures	90411.04	\$49,756.96	\$257.67	\$744.77	\$218.00	\$388.32	\$321.26	\$0.00	\$92,341.06	\$47,826.94

NASA NAPI Grant Accounting, by Gena Croo&

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*.

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Steve Sloan, Via Stellaris editor