



# VIA STELLARIS

[www.vbas.org](http://www.vbas.org)

*The Monthly Newsletter of the Von Braun Astronomical Society*

## VBAS Highlights for February

Our next member's meeting will be held on Friday, February 19th at 7:30 pm. Our guest speaker will be Tim Pickens of Orion Propulsion. Tim played a big part in getting SpaceShipOne off the ground, and he's always a fun speaker. 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. 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.

On page 2, Jeff Delmas discusses the new Via Stellaris publishing schedule, the upcoming member's meeting, the upcoming elections, our new nominating committee, and progress on the Swanson 21" telescope.

Ed King donated a telescope-making kit to VBAS. Joshua Newton will be using it to grind an 8" telescope mirror. See page 2 for details.

John Miele gives an observer's report on December's Geminid meteor shower on page 3.

On page 3, Jeff Delmas discusses the Messier Marathon coming up on April 20.

Some of our members may enjoy the old sci-fi movies being shown at the main branch of the Huntsville Public Library this month. See page 3 for information.

Page 6 has the draft minutes of the latest members meeting, and page 8 has the latest board meeting minutes.

John Young reports on Matthew Farnell's Eagle Scout project on page 7, and facilities working party progress on page 11.

Gena Crook's 2007 transitional budget appears on page 8, her December report is on page 10, and her NASA grant report is on page 11.

Steve Edmondson lists several items he has for sale, on page 10.

Steve Sloan, Via Stellaris Editor  
[steve@sloan3d.com](mailto:steve@sloan3d.com)



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## President's Message

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As I described in the January Via Stellaris, we've changed the delivery schedule of the newsletter to come out prior to the beginning of each month. We hope the new schedule will allow us to provide you with more timely information about upcoming events planned for each month. And speaking of upcoming events, you won't want to miss the February members meeting on 2/16. We'll have Tim Pickens of Orion Propulsion in Madison as our guest speaker. Tim was involved in the SpaceShipOne project that won the X-prize in October of 2004.

At our January members meeting, we selected members for the nominating committee in preparation for elections in May. Committee members are James Brelsford, Mitzi Adams, Doug Horacek, Gerry Conrad, and Michael Cowger. Offices up for election this year are: Vice President (or President-Elect), Dir. of Facilities and Equipment, Dir. of Education and Programs, and Treasurer. Recall that the VP automatically becomes president after one year, and then

becomes immediate past-president the year after (a three year cycle). If you are contacted by the committee, please seriously consider committing your services to the organization as an officer.

Finally, I'd like to update everyone on the progress of the Swanson 21". We had a few work sessions in December and January. In December, the main mirror was cleaned. The result is much improved, but it also showed that the main mirror will need re-coating sometime in the near future. In later sessions, effort was put into getting the motorized dome working once again. One of the motors was rebuilt by Wes Swift and was remounted in the dome. Richard Sims, Allen Davis, and I worked with Walt Langley to manufacture a set of three customized shaft drive keys for the pulleys. We got the motors and pulleys mounted and successfully tested the dome drive on Saturday, January 20.

Jeff Delmas

## Ed King Donates Telescope Making Kit

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A few weeks ago, I was contacted by Ed King of Huntsville about donating some telescope equipment to VBAS. I paid Ed a visit later that week and he had several amateur telescope items to donate. He had these items for several years and when he moved into a smaller home, he decided to donate the equipment to VBAS. Included in the donation was an 8" mirror grinding kit, a tripod, a tube, several lenses, and a few eyepieces. At the January meeting, we offered the mirror kit to any member interested in accepting the challenge of completing it. VBAS student member Joshua Newton, along with his father Brian, have accepted the challenge of grinding the mirror and building a telescope. Joshua will provide periodic progress reports at upcoming members meetings.



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## 2006 Geminid Meteor Shower

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The 2006 Geminids put on a nice display this year. On the peak night of December 13, starting about 9:40 p.m., while viewing from my backyard in Madison, I counted about 44 meteors over a two-hour span. They ranged in brightness from just barely visible streaks to several that were as bright as, or maybe even brighter than, the star Sirius. Around 10:15, I saw the brightest one of the night. It was a nice, slow-moving meteor that left a long trail and had a yellowish color to it. As Gemini and the radiant climbed higher, I saw meteors traveling in several different areas of the sky. A few were

likely sporadics, but I could pretty well trace most of the paths back to Gemini. It was not too cold out, and the sky was very clear. I could faintly make out some portions of the Milky Way, and a few stars were just visible inside Auriga's outline. This level of darkness was about as good as it gets in my area of Madison. There was a definite darkening of the sky after 11:00 p.m. I wondered if that was due to residential lights being turned off or just the transparency getting better. Even though it was darker, the rate declined after 11:00, and by 11:30 I was through.

## Messier Marathon Set for April 20

At the January meeting, we discussed possible dates for a Spring Messier Marathon at VBAS. We decided on Friday April 20, which is the same evening as our regular members meeting. That evening will be three nights past the new moon, so the evening will start with a crescent moon. Saturday, April 21 is the rain date for the marathon. Make

your plans now to attend this event, to rack up as many Messier objects in your log book as you can in one evening. This is a great opportunity for newer observers to learn more about the night sky, and to learn observing techniques from more experienced members.



*all films begin 6:00 PM*

- 11 January (Thu) — Destination Moon (1950)
- 16 January (Tue) — The Thing From Another World (1951)
- 24 January (Wed) — The Day The Earth Stood Still (1951)
- 30 January \*Tue) — Them (1954)
- 8 February (Thu) — Invasion of the Body Snatchers (1956)
- 20 February (Tue) — Forbidden Planet (1956)

*For more information, call David at (256) 532.5975*



# The Night Sky for February, 2006

Here is the view at 9 PM in mid February, 2006, at 34° N Latitude, 86° W Longitude. Jupiter, the lowercase "j" symbol, will be between Leo and Cancer.



# VBAS Calendar of Events, February through March

## Facilities Working Party

Help perform much-needed maintenance of the VBAS facilities.

## Planetarium Show:

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Join \_\_\_\_\_, WHNT Chief Meteorologist, as we hear the weather forecast of other planets. From the dust storms on Mars, to the storms of Jupiter and strange seasons on Uranus, you'll discover that the weather on other planets can be "out of this world".

## Regular Monthly Meeting

Visitors are welcome at our members meetings! Tim Pickens of Orion Propulsion in Madison will be our guest speaker. Tim was involved in the SpaceShipOne project that won the X-prize in October of 2004. He's always a fun speaker.

## Facilities Committee Meeting and Working Party

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

## Children's Planetarium Show:

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## Planetarium Show:

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Did you know that space has weather, and that it can have a big impact on our daily lives? Join MSFC space scientist \_\_\_\_\_ as he reveals the down-to-earth consequences of million ampere electric currents, space radiation, and solar outbursts in our space environment.

## Regular Monthly Meeting

Visitors are welcome at our members meetings!

## Tennessee Spring Star Party 2007

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The purpose of TSSP is a gathering of like-minded individuals to learn, share, and experience Astronomy under dark skies. Planned activities include dark sky observing on Friday and Saturday nights, daytime speakers and programs, and a concert by John Serrie on the observing field Saturday night. Programs are entry level to professional level. There is no cost for this event, other than food and lodging, which each participant may arrange directly with the park service. Fall Creek Falls State Park has created a special star party package for lodging at the Inn and will offer group camping. You will find this special offer very affordable. (Call 1-800-250-8610 for details.) No camping or RVs will be allowed on the observing field, but nearby camping areas, cabins and rooms in the Inn are available. If you have questions, please contact Lloyd Watkins ([watkinslk@comcast.net](mailto:watkinslk@comcast.net), 615-824-3005) or Allen Ball ([mistal@bellsouth.net](mailto:mistal@bellsouth.net)).

## Easter Planetarium Show

Why does Easter fall on a different date each year? Find out the relationship between the Full

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## VBAS Draft Member Meeting Minutes

by Steve Sloan

President Jeff Delmas opened by asking for any guests or new members to introduce themselves.

Jeff summarized the latest Treasurer's Report. The Society is in a transitional period from a calendar year-based fiscal period, to a July-to-July fiscal period. The expected income was about \$7600, but we actually received about \$9400. Membership dues were a big part of that income, along with almost \$800 in gift shop sales. Our total expenses were about \$7600. Among other expenses, we purchased a tool shed for \$2400. Our 2006 net income puts us in the black. We have \$17,177 in cash assets, which are actually VBAS assets, not tied to the NASA grant. There is about \$50,000 remaining on the grant, dedicated mostly to construction of a new bathroom facility.

Facilities Director John Young reported on progress on the bathroom. We had a perk test performed on the grounds in early December, and we passed. An application for a permit has been sent into the county. We will have money for a septic tank, and possibly for parking lot improvements.

Some of the grant money is dedicated for purchasing a new camera, for use on the 21" telescope.

Ken Farnell has done some work on the 14" telescope that was purchased for the sidewalk astronomy van, but the idea hasn't really taken off. So, we'll bring it to the planetarium for use in stationary configuration before trying to use it in the van. The power problems Ken has been having will be more easily solved that way. Michael has contacted a couple of contractors, to build a kit that will allow the scope to be transported in any vehicle. It's a good idea to decouple the society's scope from any one private vehicle. There are concerns about buying a van for the Society, instead of using Ken's privately-owned van. Where would we keep it? How would we keep it secure? Michael Cowger wants a three- to four-case solution for anyone to be able to transport the 14" sidewalk astronomy scope.

John Young gave the Facilities committee report. They will hold a work party tomorrow, mostly doing indoor work, from 10-3. They'll be working on small-

to medium-sized projects, including the planetarium dome lights, the hatch for the Stuhlinger, and a better cable for the video projectors.

Jeff reminded the Society that under the Bylaws, May is the annual meeting, which will include the officers' election, and the annual budget review. We need to designate a nominating committee. We'll need at least 3 non-officers. We will need to nominate a candidate for Vice President, who will become President the following year. We'll also need nominations for Treasurer, Director of Facilities, and Director of Education and Programs. There are no term limits specified in the Bylaws, with the exception of the three-year Vice President to President to Immediate Past President system. That means that any other officers can be reelected. We will be holding a board meeting next week, where we will designate two officers as committee members. However, we will also need three non-officers to serve. Michael pointed out that this is a good opportunity to bring in old members who haven't been active recently, but could be again.

Jeff discussed an email we received from Swapna Kakani, a Randolph School student, and member of their school science club. The club members are 9th-12th graders. She and her group would like to volunteer to help the Society somehow. Jeff asked the members for ideas for ways these volunteers can help. He described the projects that student volunteers Skylar Call and Matthew Farnell have done in the past. Skylar's group did work renovating the VBAS buildings, and Matthew put in a series of trail lights, which are much cheaper than the chemical lights we were using.

We then discussed scheduling for the spring Messier Marathon. The Mid South Star Gaze will be on the weekend of April 20-21, and the Texas Star Party will be held on the week of May 13-20. Scheduling against those events could interfere with the Marathon. There will be an early moon on Friday, April 20, and Saturday, April 21. It's better to have a waning moon, so the moon rises after people typically go home from a Marathon. We want to avoid March, because of spring break week. April 20's three-day-

old moon will set pretty early, only two-and-a-half hours after sunset. Friday, April 20 is the night of our regular members' meeting, so we could have the Marathon on the same night. So, April 20 would be best, and we'll keep April 21 as a reserve day. We'll write that date up on the website calendar and the newsletter.

Jeff received an email from Ed King, who wanted to donate equipment. Jeff met with him Monday night. Ed gave him a mirror-making kit for making an 8" telescope mirror. He gave us a tube to go with it, but it's only 7". He also gave us a tripod that needs to be worked on. Jeff asked if anyone is interested in doing a mirror project. There was a discussion of mirror sizes. A 10" mirror isn't a good beginner's project, and a 3" mirror is too small to be worth the effort. 8" is a good size, but it's not as common as 6" for a beginner project. This kit is plate glass, rather than Pyrex, which means faster grinding. This would make a great project for a 12-13 year old.

John Young reminded us that this is the Society's 50th anniversary year. Jeff thinks it would be a good idea to hold a dinner at the planetarium, along with a presentation. Perhaps it could be catered, and we could sell tickets.

Jack Lundy mentioned the movie flyers he'd brought, advertising a 50's sci-fi movie marathon at the Huntsville Public Library.

Michael Cowger gave the program, a presentation on infrared astronomy. He also talked about our upcoming speakers for the next two members' meetings. Tim Pickens from Orion Propulsion will be speaking in February, and we'll have a NASA speaker in March, to talk about their project to capture lunar meteor impacts on video.

## Matt Farnell's Eagle Scout Project

I am happy to announce that Matt Farnell, son of longtime VBAS members Ken and Linda Farnell, has recently completed his Eagle Scout service project up at VBAS. The project consisted primarily of building and installing a solar-powered lighting system along the roadway from the upper to lower parking areas. As most of us know, this road is a high-traffic path for attendees of our shows. Although darkness is an astronomer's best friend, it doesn't lend well for pedestrians... especially when cars are thrown into the mix. In addition, Matt's project supported the inclusion of several lights around the facilities, to not only support safety, but also add an element of beauty. These solar-powered lights are stored in a sturdy, custom-made charging station, and have switches to eliminate unnecessary charge/discharge cycles. In addition, Matt and several members of his volunteer team spent considerable time clearing the impacted soil and leaves to



help reclaim some of the "lost" pavement from the aforementioned roadway. The VBAS Officers and members extend heartiest thanks for a job well done!

# VBAS Draft Board Meeting Minutes

by Steve Sloan

The board meeting was called to order at 7:41 PM. Board members present were Gerry Conrad, Michael Cowger, Gena Crook, Jeff Delmas, Eric Peterson, Steve Sloan, Melissa Snider, and John Young. Four board members are required for a quorum.

## US Space and Rocket Center Corporate Shows

The Space and Rocket Center wants us to present planetarium shows to groups of their clients who book a corporate trip through their travel agent. They want to book one Thursday evening each month, through at least next fall, and possibly beyond that. They will book about 30 people per show. They would also like telescope viewing, if possible.

We should pay presenters to do this. According to Gena, we currently have 5 trained college students who can give planetarium presentations. We will need at least two people in the planetarium per show. We also have at least 5 trained VBAS members.

John asked if we need to have a special sign made for these events.

Jeff asked Melissa to put together a proposal for USSRC. He noted that we should have standard policies for this sort of thing in the future. We'll be wanting a minimum of \$200 per show. We can use the funds to help our school programs.

Jeff talked about how the Huntsville Botanical Gardens does fundraising. Their 2006 revenues were \$2.1 million. They generate tons of revenue. Perhaps we could learn from them.

For the future, we need a standard schedule of rates.

This is a longer-term agreement than usual, so it may be worth the board voting on it. Should we vote on a minimum price? No fee structure currently exists. Mitzi Adams came up with one a while back, but no one is sure if it was ever approved. We should charge if the customer doesn't show, without a 24 or even 48 hour notice.

Jeff is comfortable with Melissa going ahead on our behalf. We can hash out any of Melissa's questions over email.

In the past, we've been paying a total of \$60 per show to presenters, split \$40/\$20. For this job, we should pay both presenters \$40 apiece. Perhaps we should charge a flat fee per planetarium load. If there are too many people, we will run a second show.

## Transitional Budget

Partial Budget 2007 Feb. 1 to Jun. 30	
<b>Income</b>	
Donations	291.67
Membership Dues	1458.33
Program Fees	1041.67
Food Sales	83.33
Gift Shop Sales	291.67
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>3166.67</b>
<b>Expense</b>	
Astronomical League	333.33
Liability Insurance	104.17
Newsletter	333.33
Phone	187.5
Website	125
PO Box	30
Awards	41.67
Postage	100
Printing	150
S&T Magazine	13.75
Food Purchases	104.17
Gift Shop Purchases	41.67
<b>Facilities</b>	
Supplies	104.17
Grounds	41.67
Buildings	709
<b>Total Facilities</b>	<b>854.83</b>
<b>Planetarium</b>	
Maintenance	352.08
Publicity	62.5
<b>Total Planetarium</b>	<b>414.58</b>
<b>Observatory</b>	<b>333.33</b>
<b>Total Expense</b>	<b>3167.33</b>
Lawn Mower/Leaf Blower	1500

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Gena presented her transitional budget, to get us from a calendar-year-based fiscal year, to a July-to-June fiscal year. This is a budget for February through June, 2007. Gena moved that we accept the budget as amended, Michael seconded, and the vote to accept was unanimous.

### **Nominating Committee Member Selection**

James Brelsford and Doug Horacek have already volunteered to serve on the committee. We need at least three members, and at most two officers, for a total of five. Jeff would like to establish a tradition where the Immediate Past President chairs the nominating committee. Gerry already volunteered on Friday. Michael volunteered at the board meeting. Steve suggested asking Richard Norman to be on the committee, because he was the driving force behind the last committee. Gena said it's not fair to push him, because he did it last time.

### **Annual Renewal Plans**

We've been getting full renewal payments from a lot of confused members who don't understand our proration system. Should we do away with the confusing proration? Melissa can help with the annual renewal process. The renewal forms will be sent out in February, with March 1 as the official renewal date. Jeff will contact Linda to get the ball rolling. We should put something about the renewal in the newsletter.

### **Mower**

As Facilities Director, John described the 42" riding lawnmower he wants the Society to buy. It's a 42" Troy-bilt mower, with a 19 horsepower engine, so it's pretty standard fare. 42" is the size recommended for our acreage. Recently, the park has been mowing our facilities, but according to the concession agreement, we're supposed to be doing the mowing. John moved that the board approve the expenditure from capital funds, to spend \$1500 for a riding lawn mower and leaf blower. The motion was seconded, and the vote to accept was unanimous.

### **Swapna Kakani Volunteer Offer**

Swapna Kakani, a Randolph School student, and member of their school science club, has offered her club as volunteers to help the Society in some way.

It's not really something the board needs to vote on, but do we have any good ideas for things they can do? John says that since it's a science club, we want to keep them engaged, not just doing simple labor, and especially nothing that could be dangerous, like electrical work.

Should we let them refurbish the old mirror-making equipment? Jeff noted the mirror-grinding kit that Ed King donated. Refurbishing the mirror-making machine could be a possible safety hazard without supervision. That means we'd need adult supervision to guide them.

Spring outreach season is coming. Melissa can get them making displays, traveling exhibits, and decorations for the library's display case. Maybe they can help with parking or other help for our shows. They could refurbish, or just reassemble, our 16 1/2" telescope, not really to use, but just as a display with historical significance.

### **Planning for 50th Anniversary Events**

Could we hold a catered dinner in the planetarium? We don't need anything too elaborate. When's a good time? Jeff recommends June. We could have a speaker or two, and bring in old VBAS members and a guest speaker. May would be too soon, because the elections and the annual meeting are in June. We could do something on October 4, Sputnik's 50th anniversary. The Space and Rocket Center is also doing 25th anniversary events this year. Melissa really likes the idea of an October event. September and October are also a big star party season. How's September? Can we do a two month long event then, but do a potluck dinner in June?

Michael moved that we form a committee to plan and coordinate events for the 50th anniversary. John seconded, and the vote to accept was unanimous. Jeff volunteered Michael and Melissa as co-chairs.

Melissa moved to adjourn the board meeting at 9:00 PM.

		<b>Von Braun Astronomical Society, Inc.</b>	
		<b>Profit &amp; Loss</b>	
		<b>December 2006</b>	
10:02 AM			
01/22/07			
Accrual Basis			
	<b>TOTAL</b>		
<b>Ordinary Income/Expense</b>			
<b>Income</b>			
donation		70.00	
donation /aquarium		39.00	
Gift Shop Sales		36.00	
Magazine Income		32.95	
Membership Dues		97.00	
Program Fees		838.00	
<b>Total Income</b>		<b>1,112.95</b>	
<b>Gross Profit</b>		1,112.95	
<b>Expense</b>			
GRANT expenditure		530.41	
Liability Insurance		250.00	
Magazine Expense		32.95	
Newsletter		59.62	
P.O. Box		72.00	
Social		96.00	
<b>Total Expense</b>		<b>1,040.98</b>	
<b>Net Ordinary Income</b>		<b>71.97</b>	
<b>Net Income</b>		<b>71.97</b>	
beginning bank balance	\$61,715.98	ending bank balance	\$61,787.95
ending bank balance	\$61,787.95	Grant money remaining	\$49,756.96
difference	\$71.97	difference	\$12,030.99
certificate of deposit	\$5,147.46		

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## Astronomy Equipment for Sale

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I have some astronomy equipment for sale, and I would like to offer an opportunity for local astronomers to buy them first. Anything left after Feb 8 will be taken to the Winter Star Party and sold there. Please distribute as you see fit. Contact info: Steve Edmondson, (256) 772-1798, [edmondson@knology.net](mailto:edmondson@knology.net).

1. \$500 Televue Gibraltar (old style) mount with tripod and Televue encoders
2. \$45 dovetail system for mounting AP scope on Gibraltar
3. \$150 NGC mini-Max computer (JMI) with 4,000 object database
4. \$500 ST-4 auto-guider (SBIG)
5. \$100 Taurus off-axis guider/flip-mirror with astro-photography camera
6. \$75 Lumicon film hyper-sensitization kit (complete)
7. \$100 6" Orion dob telescope (good for beginner or child)
8. Miscellaneous stuff (colored filters, etc.)

Accounting of Grant Funds 1/22/07	Total Jul'05- Dec'06	Net Funds Remaining	Jan '07	Feb '07	Mar '07	Apr '07	May '07	Total	Net Funds Remaining
<b>Income</b>									
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								
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>140168.00</b>								
<b>Expenditures</b>									
MSCS	46700.00	<b>0.00</b>						46700.00	<b>0.00</b>
Planetarium Equipment	7290.09	<b>1264.76</b>	64.79					7354.88	<b>1199.97</b>
Observatory Equipment	3805.96	<b>2000.00</b>						3805.96	<b>2000.00</b>
School Partnership	5668.13	<b>4599.66</b>	192.88					5861.01	<b>4406.78</b>
Planetarium Programs	600.00	<b>0.00</b>						600.00	<b>0.00</b>
Roof Repair	10800.00	<b>0.00</b>						10800.00	<b>0.00</b>
Restroom Facility	0.00	<b>26505.40</b>						0.00	<b>26505.40</b>
Electrical Work/Fire Door	0.00	<b>5000.00</b>						0.00	<b>5000.00</b>
Parking/Septic	450.00	<b>9550.00</b>						450.00	<b>9550.00</b>
Carpet	2981.20	<b>18.80</b>						2981.20	<b>18.80</b>
Paint	2899.22	<b>(149.22)</b>						2899.22	<b>(149.22)</b>
Sidewalk Astronomy	9216.44	<b>967.56</b>						9216.44	<b>967.56</b>
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>90411.04</b>	<b>49756.96</b>	257.67	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	90668.71	<b>49499.29</b>

## Facilities Working Party Progress

Just wanted to give an update on some of the projects that we've been working on up at VBAS over the last several weeks. In conjunction with members of the Observatory committee, members of the group have begun some repairs and adjustments on the 16" Celestron. The old, cracked paddle cable has been replaced, and the dec drive has had some moderate rework. In addition, work has begun on refurbishing the top-side housing and the optics for the 12" Stuhlinger solar telescope. We also went through all of VBAS' household chemicals (solvents, cleaners, and paints) and turned in unneeded and unusable material at the county's monthly collection day. Along the way, we've kept up with housekeeping and grounds work. Finally, I am happy to report that we have recently acquired a new riding mower which will enable VBAS to fully assume our groundskeeping responsibilities... with grateful appreciation to Park Manager Kent Wilborn for his assistance in the in-

terim. Thanks to all of our volunteers so far including Rick Laws, Doug Horacek, Dylan Patterson, Walt Langley, and assorted officers.



**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](mailto: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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