

KVAS Meeting Minutes – 2/15/13
Hansford Center, St. Albans, WV
Minutes Taken by John Willson, Secretary

Bob Frostick called the meeting to order at 7:30 pm.

Special Guest – Joe Farrell

Chuck Spann introduced a special guest, Joe Farrell. Joe lives in West Virginia, and worked for Douglas Aircraft on rockets for the Gemini and Apollo programs. He worked on the Saturn and Saturn 1B rockets – specifically the S4 stage. He also worked for Rocketdyne, on thrusters such as those used in backpacks. He owned his own aerospace company, bought a missile range, owns a Mariner A flight vehicle, and knew Tom Stafford – one of the experienced astronauts in the space program.

We appreciated Joe being with us, and hope he will attend future meetings.

Grant Status – Chuck Spann

Chuck reviewed the status of our grant proposal to get support for a new Astro-Physics mount for our club telescope. Chuck gave an overview of the seminar he attended for training on how to prepare the grant proposal, including a summary of the criteria used to judge proposals based on “types of community wealth”, and his arguments vs. the criteria.

The grant asked for \$10,028, which is 75% of the total projected cost of the new pier. We will know the results in 1 -3 months.

We will also need to identify measurements to use to judge the impact of the new installation – a suggestion was made to use the number of members who join after the new pier is installed. Another idea was to use feedback from groups we host.

Special thanks to Chuck’s wife for her help in preparing the grant proposal, and also to Danny Blair for pulling together all the financial information needed.

Requests for Star Parties – Bob Frostick

Bob led a discussion on star party requests and planning. We have gotten requests for star parties from the Boy Scouts and from the Library Commission. Bob pointed out that it is currently slower to find objects with the club telescope, and to host a successful star party, that we would need members to commit to bringing their personal telescopes.

Several ideas were shared –

- We could have our meetings at Breezy Point, and do star parties in conjunction with them

But what if it rains? We need to give the Hansford Center notice on when we want to meet there, and we wouldn't be able to know the weather until the last minute.

One idea proposed was that we could possibly meet in the lodge or lunchroom at Camp Virgil Tate.

Bob proposed that we set up two slots for star parties, and he will schedule one for the Library Commission. Bob will send an E Mail note to solicit volunteers to support the star parties.

Night Sky Highlights – Bob Frostick

Bob gave a brief overview of the current night sky, highlighting Orion, which is highest at dusk. He listed Betelgeuse, Rigel, the Orion Nebula, and the Trapezium as key targets to observe in Orion. Jupiter will be above Orion in the coming month.

Mercury can also be seen at dusk in the western sky at magnitude -1. Mars, Venus, and Saturn are also viewable – Saturn is up at midnight.

Mike Riggs discussed the upcoming comets. PANSTARRS is due in March, and is starting to develop a tail, but could be a little fainter than originally anticipated. Comet ISON is due in the fall. Both can be tracked on several websites, including JPL Horizons.

Astronomy Videos – Bob Frostick

Bob presented several short videos on various subjects – a simulated fly-through of the Orion Nebula, one on asteroids and meteors, and one on comets.

Bob also discussed the 15-ton meteor that exploded over Russia and showed several videos of it as well, including some that showed the effects of the shock wave.

Financial Update – Danny Blair

Danny gave a brief financial overview, and said we would need to allocate approximately \$4000 of Club funds to support the new pier installation, assuming we get the grant. He pointed out that we are doing OK.

Observatory Update – Ed Connors

Ed has recently upgraded the electrical switch for the scope to make it easier to use. We are still on the Astro-physics waiting list for the new pier and mount, even though we have not committed any money for a deposit.

Miscellaneous Discussion Topics

- Thanks to the Bowmans for bringing refreshments. They were excellent.
- We need volunteers who can provide refreshments for future meetings. We also need volunteers who would be willing to make presentations on astronomy topics in our meetings.
- Dan Pleska pointed out that the description of our Club scope on our website is out of date. Ed will provide an update.
- We wondered if governmental budget cuts would affect Green Bank and Star Quest. Ed will ask if Rodney can do some research for us and provide an update.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:45.

Minutes submitted by John Willson, Secretary

Attendance List

Joe Farrell	Chuck Spann
Robert Dean	Janet Willson
Carol Hilleary	Ed Connors
Danny Blair	Sandy Blair
Mike Riggs	Clarence Bowman
Linda Bowman	Ernie Snodgrass
Dan Pleska	Michael Riggs
Tom Schottle	John Willson

Summary of Follow-up Actions

- Bob will issue an E Mail request for volunteers to support star parties.
- We need volunteers to bring refreshments.
- We need volunteers who would be willing to present topics in meetings.
- Ed will provide Dan an update of the Club scope description to put on the website
- Ed will ask Rodney to research the possible effects of governmental budget cuts on Green Bank and Star Quest.