

KVAS Meeting Minutes – 2/21/14
Hansford Center, St. Albans, WV
Minutes Taken by John Willson, Secretary

Bob Frostick called the meeting to order at 7:45pm.

Update on Arrangement with WVSU – Bob Frostick

Bob updated the group on the status of our developing partnership with West Virginia State University. As of next week, we will have free access to the bottom floor of Hamblin Hall at WVSC. There is a 75-seat auditorium as well as a classroom with tables that we will be able to use. In addition, we will have access to the physics lab as well.

Our next meeting in March will be at WVSU. Bob will send directions and Dan Pleska will post them on our website. Plans are to post fliers to encourage students to attend. In the future, we hope to allow students to do research with our scope at Breezy Point.

Club Telescope Update – Ed Connors

Ed provided an update on the latest enhancements to our scope. The new focuser has been installed and is working great. It has 2 speeds for focusing, with a fine adjustment.

We plan to raise the scope by raising the base – it will be more work than just raising the mirror, but it will be a better solution for the long term.

There is a syncing issue that can occur if the scope is not shutdown properly – it can get confused and think that the counterweights are the scope! Rodney Waugh is preparing directions on how to shut it down to avoid the problem, while the team works on a permanent solution.

Messier Marathon – March 29 – Rodney Waugh

Rodney reviewed plans to hold a “Messier Marathon” at Breezy Point on Saturday, March 29. We may move it to March 28 if the weather is expected to be better that day. Plans are to meet at the Pizza Hut in Cross Lanes for dinner, then go to the Observatory. The event will last all night, from sundown until sunrise, and the goal is to view all 110 Messier objects that night.

Program Presentation on Messier Objects – Bob Frostick

Bob showed a interesting video on the Messier Objects. Charles Messier was a comet hunter, and began cataloging objects that got in the way of hunting comets. His list became the list of 110 Messier Objects.

The Objects are classified in 6 groups –

Spiral Galaxies, Elliptical Galaxies, Planetary Nebulae, Diffuse Nebulae, Globular Clusters, and Open Clusters. All were explained very well in the video.

Useful Apps for Astronomy – Bob Frostick

Bob shared “Astro Planner”, which is an app for iPhone or iPad. It has a catalog of the Messier Objects, and will allow you to download images of what you want to observe, with best times, locations, etc. It is a great planning tool to use in observing. There is a free version, an enhanced version that costs \$5.99.

Rodney mentioned that there is a good app for Androids also, called “Mobile Observatory”. Cost is \$4.99.

Yuri’s Night – Scott Blake

Scott reviewed plans for Yuri’s Night, which will be on April 12. He is trying to get Melanie Vickers to attend – she is the West Virginia Teacher in Space candidate. Comments from the group were that we should start small and build this event, rather than trying to do too much this year. In terms of logistics to get people to the Observatory, the consensus that that we should ask people to walk from the parking lot rather than driving up to the Observatory.

This led to a brief discussion about signs to use for Yuri’s Night and use at WVSU – we have had some signs in the past, but are not sure where they are – need to talk to Melissa and Chuck to see if they have the signs.

Work Party at the Observatory – Bob Frostick

Bob mentioned that we need to schedule a work party at the Observatory to remove rust and paint, to upgrade the warming shed, to cut some trees that are starting to impede our observing, and to a general clean-up, including installation of shelves and containers for supplies. We may do some road maintenance, adding some new gravel. Bob will schedule the event.

Scheduling for Blackwater and our Annual Picnic – Bob Frostick

Since Astronomy Weekend at Blackwater Falls will likely be in September, Bob suggested we move our Annual Picnic to June. There was general agreement to make this change. Bob also shared that we are not on Blackwater Falls' schedule right now – the weekend we picked has a conflict with other Blackwater activities. Chuck Spann is resolving this.

Volunteers Needed – Bob Frostick

Bob encouraged all members to volunteer to present programs at future meetings, and also to volunteer to bring refreshments.

The meeting adjourned at 8:30 pm.

Minutes submitted by John Willson, Secretary.

Attendance

John Willson	Ernie Powell
Rodney Waugh	Bonnie Dean
William Blake	Debbie Null
Michael Riggs	Jane Corathers
Ed Connors	Bryson McCain
Robert Dean	Judy Waugh
Janet Willson	Bob Frostick
Dan Pleska	