

Meeting highlights

Board Meeting November 5, 2002 Arlington Planetarium

- ★ **Craig Tupper** and **Pete Johnson** presented proposals soliciting funding from NOVAC for a member-run project to place a robotic telescope on private property in West Virginia. After presentations and a question and answer period, the Board voted overwhelmingly in favor of funding the **robotic telescope project**. Presentations are on file with the Secretary and available from the NOVAC website.

Submitted by Renée Pleasant.

Board Meeting December 3, 2002 Arlington Planetarium

- ★ **Tilly Smith** gave a report on NOVAC's various observing sites. **Treasurer Pedro Martinez** provided an invoice to help Tilly track down the vendor of the porta-john at Savage. The **Savage agreement** is up for renewal this month and Tilly will finalize it.
- ★ The **Camp Highroad** lock issue was resolved, so members continue to enjoy access to that site. Members should carefully use the back entrance at Mercer Park, as there is a problem with mud at the main entrance.
- ★ **Crockett** renewal is due this month; Tilly will finalize it. Mason Neck has about 1/2 dozen regulars. The regular public night requirement was fulfilled in October.

- ★ **Pete Johnson, Bob Parks, and Craig Tupper** gave an update on the **robotic observatory project**. Pete Johnson invited more participants at the November ATM meeting and got several volunteers. CAD renderings will be placed on the website. Bob Parks stated that a computer has been donated by Phil Wherry. Craig Tupper stated that he has mounted the scope on a pier on his deck.
- ★ **Bob Garrett, Donna Blosser, Tyler Swing, and Bob Traube** will have a meeting with **Ed Witkowski** to get resources for outreach. They have developed a



questionnaire/survey to determine a volunteer base. Bob Parks suggested steering people to already existing public nights.

- ★ Discussion then followed on the best use of observing sites and the division of activities between the various sites. Consideration was taken of the obligation already existing for **hosting public nights** and Crockett and the volunteers needed for that. A motion was made to use Crockett for 6 nights and 6 other sites throughout the year for **Club Observing Night**. Motion carried. **Bob Parks** and **Tilly Smith** will convene to work out details.

Submitted by Renée Pleasant.

NOVAC Monthly Meeting December 8, 2002

- ★ **Elections were held.** Officers for 2003 are:
 - **President:** Ed Karch
 - **Vice President:** Craig Tupper
 - **Secretary:** Bob Hand
 - **Treasurer:** Pedro Martinez
 - **Trustees:** Alan Figgatt, John Avellone, John Deriso, Rob McKinney, Bob Stewart
- ★ Bob Parks announced plans for **Monthly Observing Sessions**, which will include a mentoring program. Ed Karch showed the video of a recent lunar graze, while Bob Stewart discussed the **VOID program (video of occultations)**. Mike Mills will give Pete Johnson a break as coordinator of the **ATM group**.
- ★ For the **Sky Tour**, Alan Figgatt found treasures in Camelopardalis, including open clusters, a planetary, a few good doubles (or triples) and a galaxy.
- ★ The presentation topic was **Star Parties**. Pete Johnson talked about the **Winter Star Party** in Florida. Alan Figgatt spoke about the **Laurel Highlands in WV**, the **Black Forest in PA**, and the **Year-Long Star Party at Spruce Knob**. Bill Jensen discussed the **Oregon Star Party**. Each discussed how long to get there, limiting magnitude, horizons, food, porta-johns, showers, speakers/prizes/no-frills. My conclusion: not all star parties are the same, but there is one out there for you.

Submitted by Bob Hand.