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THE NHAS OBSERVER

Newsletter of the New Hampshire Astronomical Society



Volume 2000 No. 8

"All the news that fits"

August 2000

Through the Eyes of Hubble

President's Message

This month's business meeting will be followed by a private showing of CMP's most popular recent program, "Through the Eyes of Hubble."

Come and learn about the history and discoveries of what is perhaps the most important telescope in all of astronomy!

★ Ed Ting

Public Observing Highlights

The Public Observing Committee was quiet this month. There was one session on Friday night July 28 at Stellafane. Several club members set up their telescopes and showed a number of deep sky and double star objects to the general public. In addition, NHAS members helped a number of beginners with their telescopes.

★ Ed Ting

NHAS Goes to Stellafane

On Friday and Saturday, July 28-29, NHAS members went to the 65th annual Stellafane Convention on Breezy Hill near Springfield, VT.

Special thanks go out to **Chase McNiss**, who took on the unofficial role of Stellafane coordinator. Chase showed up early, set up the tent, and bought the food (which was cheerfully cooked by **Joel Harris**.) Say thanks to him when you get the chance.

For related stories on Stellafane see "NHAS at Stellafane."

NHAS Gets a Donation

NHAS received a Celestron Celestar 8 telescope, donated from the estate of **David M. Sallies** of Meredith, NH. Mr. Sallies' will stipulated that the scope be donated to an organization that will use it to show the night sky to the public.

I was contacted by the family and traveled to Meredith on July 15 to accept the donation. A plaque is being made for the tube, which will read:

In Loving Memory of David M. Sallies
May 10, 1949 - July 6, 2000

Dedicated to those who share the love of astronomy and the exploration of the Universe

Donated Scope of David M. Sallies



A second, smaller plaque will be made for the mount, stating the date of the donation, and will also function as an inventory tag for the club.

The telescope is in excellent condition, and came with accessories. I let the family know about our skywatches for local schools and at CMP, and they seemed very pleased. I will be traveling with the scope for a few months to our skywatches so look for it. After the observatory is built, the telescope will find a permanent home in Hillsborough for all to use.

★ Ed Ting

NHAS at Stellafane

What follows is a collection of anecdotes and photos from NHAS members who made the trek to the big ATM convention in Vermont on July 28-29.

Ed's Year 2000 Stellafane

Yes, Virginia, it's true. I showed up at Stellafane this year without a telescope.

Well, you know how this usually turns out. As I headed further north and west, the skies began to clear up. By dusk, there wasn't a cloud left in the sky, and a pleasant, cool breeze had picked up.

NHAS members displayed remarkable sensitivity to my situation by razzing me endlessly. For example: "Hey Ed, the Swan looks good over here, how does it look through *your* telescope??" And: "Ed, I can notch the close component of Nu Scorpii – too bad about all the rain, drizzle, and fog out here!"

Larry enjoying Stellafane peanuts



I spent Friday evening going from scope to scope and wound up seeing a lot. The highlights for me were the following:

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Feature Story

Stellafane 2000.....Page 1

(cont'd. from page 1)

Splitting Antares in Mike Townsend's AP Star12, sweeping the Milky Way with a pair of 20X70 Miyuchi binoculars, and seeing M13 at 288X in a 25-in. Obsession.

At 7 am the next morning, I hit the swap tables, but it was not early enough.

Reports had it that certain bargain hunters had been up since 5 am with flashlights looking over the cartons of stuff for sale, hoping to bag the deal of a lifetime. I helped **Chase McNiss** and **Dan Smith** sell stuff at their table, and left the swap area around 11 am.

Porter Turret Telescope at sunset



By 1 pm, it was clear that the skies were not going to hold up and I headed home.

★ Ed Ting (story and photos)

Larry Lopez Hits the Swap Tables

We arrived around 7:30 am, pitched tents, and wandered over to the NHAS site. We were pretty tired and didn't do much observing that evening.

We made it to the swap table at about 7:45 am. We purchased four sets of six-inch mirror cells, four spiders, two secondary holders, and one laser collimator with a grid hologram. I spent a long time with the person who made the laser collimators discussing all sorts of things.

Eventually I returned to the NHAS tent and had a hamburger, some dogs, and watermelon.

We got to the afternoon talks late. One talk was on tube currents, the other was on making spherical mirrors into parabolic mirrors by bending them by applying pressure to the back. [ping!]

Joe Derek won first place in the Mechanical category and second place in Craftsmanship! **David Levy** gave the shadowgram.

We left in the middle of the evening talk, which was about the Hale telescope and Russell Porter's involvement in it to go home. It was raining all evening and the talks were in the big tent. Naturally, in true Stellafane tradition, there were a considerable number of people outside in the rain.

★ Larry Lopez

Prize Winner

At Stellafane, **Joe Malinowski** was the winner of over \$300.00 in astronomy books from Willman-Bell after entering the raffle on Saturday night. That is three years in a row that someone from the club has won a major raffle prize.

★ Chase McNiss

Cooks and Canopies

Let's not forget the chef for the day, **Joel Harris**, who brought his gas grill from home and cooked the burgers and dogs.

Joel, **Barbara O'Connell**, and company also had the canopy all taken down and pretty much packed by the time I arrived on Sunday morning. Thanks for the help!

★ Chase McNiss

Bert's Stellafotos

Here are four of the many photos that **Bert Bingel** supplied.

Andy Jaffe and Phil Harrington at Swap Meet



Ed Ting and Chase McNiss found a good-sized Nagler



What would Stellafane be without the Saturday cookout? When did we stop more roughing it with charcoal and liquid firestarter?

Joel Harris does NHAStroburgers



NHAS chows down



ATM True Grit

We had a small meeting on Sunday July 23 and moved on to the next grit. One new member (**Brent**) brought his own blank. **Larry** had to take out a defect on his mirror with the Makita grind stone. It looked kind of cool.

★ Larry Lopez

Photography in Focus

The NHAS Photography Committee met on July 21st at the YFOS warming hut in Hillsboro with a half-dozen members in attendance. We cover a wide range of topics during the meeting, unfortunately the weather did not cooperate so the meeting adjourned at 9:30 pm.

The next meeting will be at 7:30 pm, Friday, August 18th at the YFOS site and all NHAS members are invited. I hope that we will have the opportunity to do some astrophotography after the business meeting. See you there.

★ Chase McNiss

More Stellafane Sights

Barbara O'Connell sent a few photos including one of **Joe Derek's** award winning masterpiece.

Barbara O'Connell eyes Joe Derek's scope



Barbara O'Connell inspects eclipse model



Donations

NHAS thanks the following people for their contributions to the club:

Mike Morris – \$10

David Sallies – Celestron Celestar 8 (in memoriam)

August' Aug'ust Meteors

The first weeks of August may well be the most active week of this particular summer. Several showers in the Aquarius/Capricornus region reach maximum activity, even as the Perseids are really gaining strength.

The Alpha Capricornid shower has rates that can be quite variable, ranging from 0 to 5 per hour. While most shower members are faint, there is an occasional colorful fireball, which may well fragment ("sparkle") as it streaks through the heavens. The North Delta Aquarids peak

around Aug. 8, and the South Iota Aquarids reach maximum on August 4.

The Perseids, which peak on August 11, 12 and 13 will appear to radiate from a point near the Perseus/Cassiopeia border, reaching as high as 30-50 meteors per hour. Perseid meteors are swift and noted for their many persistent trains and colorful meteors. Moonlight, however, will be a hindrance.

Clear Skies and Happy Watching!

★ Lew Gramer, dedalus@latrade.com

The Bottom Line

The club financials have been brought up to date (input to Quickbooks) and reviewed by the Board.

Cash on hand is about \$5,400. Membership reached a new record of 168.

★ Mike Stebbins

Looking Back at Last Month

Opening Remarks. Ed Ting welcomed the new members in attendance. He reviewed the benefits of signing up for the e-mail newsletter.

Book of the Month. Larry Lopez circulated *Making and Enjoying Telescopes* by Miller and Wilson.

Scope of the Month. Mike Townsend displayed an 80 mm f/6 Stellarvue achromatic refractor that showed very little color but had a long draw tube that vignettted the light cone. Quality was good due to hand-picked components. Cost for the OTA was about \$270. Ed Ting brought a 4-in. f/10 off-axis Newtonian scope from DGM Optics. The mirror was one of four cut from a 10-in. mirror (don't know how!) and the scope sat on a fine wooden Dob mount. It performed well and cost about \$750.

Committees.

ATMs: Larry Lopez said the mirror grinders were just finishing the second grit and would meet July 30.

Photo Comm:

Chase McNiss noted that they met at YFOS and tested Chase's new scope.

Web: Barbara

O'Connell was to start posting the PDF versions of the newsletter on the web.

Membership: John Pappas reported that they are working on a new member initiative. He discussed his interview on NPR, saying that the host spent much time reviewing potential questions with him but didn't use them during the taping! Now that's what I call rude and cavalier behavior.

YFOS. The roof actually rolled. A work session was to occur later in August.

Public Observing. Ed Ting was the guest speaker at the last CMP Skywatch and many followed him outside for observing. Ed also mentioned a potential donation of a Celestron 8-in. scope. Jeff Schnick announced an observing event on Aug. 16 at the Audubon site on Lake Massabesic on the Route 28 Bypass east of Manchester.

Treasury. Mike Stebbins announced that all A-Day t-shirts were sold. Bank balance is about \$5000 and we had 164 members, a new world record.

Evening Program. David Speltz made a last-minute switch of programs and instead discussed "A History of Longitude" based on the book called *Longitude*. He also mentioned the current TV program on the topic. A great debate was in process in the early 1800s as to how to measure longitude. Many shipwrecks resulted from not knowing one's exact position at sea. The kings of England and France offered a great reward, 20,000 £, for a solution after a major shipwreck near England in 1707. (Cont'd. next page)

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>>DEADLINE FOR September 2000 ISSUE: 4 PM Sep. 8<<

E-mail articles to Editor. Call to schedule late submissions.

Looking Back (Cont'd. from page 3)

In England a Longitude Board composed of famous astronomers was set up. After several wacky proposals came forward, like the “wounded dog” method and the “powder of sympathy,” an inventor named John Harrison produced a series of clocks that met the test and more. But the astronomers conspired against him. Even after an appeal to the King of England and approval by Parliament, the Board never gave Harrison his rightful award.

★ Michael Frascinella

How to Join N.H.A.S.

Write to us:

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PO Box 1001
Manchester, NH 03105-1001
Attn: Treasurer

Send Email to:

Treasurer@nhastro.com

Use our web site:

<http://www.nhastro.com/>

2000 Officers

President.: Ed Ting President@nhastro.com

Vice Pres.: Barbara O'Connell VP@nhastro.com

Treasurer: Michael Stebbins Treasurer@nhastro.com

Secretary: Michael Frascinella Secretary@nhastro.com

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Eyes of Hubble, Aug. 11, Planetarium

NHAS Upcoming Events

Event	Date	Time	Location
Aug Club Meeting	Aug. 11	7:30 pm	Planetarium, Concord, NH
Photo Comm.	Aug. 18	7:30 pm	YFOS, Hillsborough, NH
Coffee House	Aug. 25	Dusk	YFOS
ATM Comm.	Aug. 27?	3 pm	Lopez Grindorium, New Boston, NH
CMP Skywatch	Sep. 1	9 pm	Planetarium, Concord, NH
Sep. Club Meeting	Sep. 15	7:30 pm	St. Anselm's College, Goffstown, NH