

Astro 101

President's Message

Spring is finally here, and the warmer weather brings a new season of public sky watches. The Concord Boys and Girls club event will have taken place by the time this newsletter is published, and the Newfields Elementary sky watch is coming up on April 4th. Newfields was one of the first I ever attended and still one of my favorites, I have some wonderful memories of past sky watches there and the kids are always great. Three years ago the evening of the sky watch there was a double moon transit happening on Jupiter, and most of us were showing it to the kids. I had one young girl come up to the scope with her parents and very politely ask may I please look through the telescope. I told her of course and she came to the eyepiece, looked for a few seconds then gasped "Mommy, Daddy, I see it, I see it, I see the two moon shadows!" Her parents beamed, she very politely thanked me and they all went on to another scope. I will never forget how great that moment made me feel. That's why you see me at almost every sky watch we do. There will be another moment like that at a future sky watch, and I don't want to miss it!

∴ Gardner Gerry
NHAS President 2007

Highlights for this Month

Images taken by NHAS members swept the February AstroImaging Challenge! Congratulations to **Herb Bubert, John Buonomo, and Nils Wygant**.

The Messier Marathon got snowed out, but we'll try again next month.

Alan Shirey gave the first of the Astro 101 courses—"Telescopes and Optics"—to a packed house. These talks are an excellent way for beginners to learn the fundamentals of our hobby, and for veterans to brush up their knowledge.

∴ Paul Winalski
NHAS Secretary 2007

Messier Marathon Rescheduled

Our annual Messier Marathon observing event was to have taken place in New Boston, at **Larry and Linda Lopez's** home, on Friday 16 March. Unfortunately, a major snowstorm forced us to cancel. We will try again next month, on Friday 13 April with a rain date of 14 April. The event runs from 4:00 PM until the next dawn, and the idea is to see if you can observe all 110 objects in the Messier catalogue in a single evening (something that is only possible in early Spring at our latitude).

∴ Paul Winalski

Membership and Astro 101

We have one new member, **Paul Cezanne**, who joined at our last business meeting. Paul has already met many of you at our most recent YFOS coffeehouse.

Astro 101 had its initial presentation on March 9th. Telescopes and Optics had 15 attendees crammed into the YFOS warming room. Many new faces at YFOS.

Afterwards, **Chase McNiss** showed several attendees many sights through the observatory 14" and **Paul Winalski** gave several more a tour of deep-sky objects. Others on the field welcomed the attendees for a view of whatever

was in their eyepiece at the time. All around a good time for all and a remarkably clear night considering Sky Clock predictions.

Our next Astro 101, "Navigating the Night Sky", will be held at 6:00PM on April 20th, prior to our business meeting at CMP. Dave McDonald at CMP has generously offered the use the Dome for the first 55 minutes of this presentation. Please arrive early so course presenter Paul Winalski can begin on time and use all 55 minutes of Dome Time.

We also have courses scheduled on...

- "Intro to Photography" on May 25th
- "Planetary Observing" on June 8th

These events are posted on both the Calendar and the Resources section of our webpage.

∴ Alan Shirey

Concord Boys & Girls Club Sky Watch at YFOS

Another successful watch! Thank you all who helped out.

YFOS was very crowded Tuesday night (March 20, 2007). Members attending were: **Gardner Gerry, Paul Winalski, John Bishop, Joe Derek, Larry Lopez, Herb Bubert, Steve Lundahl** (new member? Thank you!) and myself (as always, my apologies for misspellings & omissions). Signed in guests from CB&G were 36 but it would not surprise me if a few forgot to sign the book (sorry Larry, I know that costs you 50 cents a head LOL).

Skies were clear, winds were brisk, Venus was brilliant and earthshine on the 1 day old moon was stunning. In fact, this was one of the objects at my scope which drew some of the biggest

“Oh wows!” of the night. Folks were amazed at how much detail could be seen in the unlit portion of Luna. For me, it was just pretty.

Many a galaxy, nebula, cluster and ringed planet thrilled the crowd.

Tom Parizo & Carol Morse (two of the unit directors for CB&G present) made a point of telling me how well the watch went and how grateful they were for the opportunity to come to YFOS along with the comment that we were definitely sparking a young mind or two.

Ain't that what it's all about?

Once again, thank you to all who participated. I'm sure this will not be the last invasion of YFOS by this group.

☺, Matt Amar

NHAS Sweeps February AstroImaging Challenge

The AstroImaging Challenge is a monthly competition for astrophotographers. Each month three sky objects are chosen—one easy, one moderate, one hard. Submissions are awarded 1st and 2nd place in the Novice category for the easy and moderate objects, and in the Experienced category for the moderate and hard objects.

The objects for February 2007 were the M46 Open Cluster (easy), NGC2264 Cone Nebula (moderate), and IC2118 the Witch Head Nebula (hard). NHAS members won all four 1st place honors in the February 2007 competition. In the Novice category, **Nils Wygant** won best Easy object and **Herb Bubert** took top Moderate object honors. In the Experienced category, **John Buonomo** won Moderate object top spot, while Herb again took 1st place for best Hard object. Congratulations to Nils, Herb, and John. Well done!

You can find their winning entries on the AstroImaging Challenge website at <http://appstar.astronight.com>, and in the “Pictures!” section of the NHAS Forums.

☺, Paul Winalski

Astro Photons

The Astro Photo committee met at Nashua Public Library at 3pm on Saturday the 10th of March. The



meeting was attended by **Gardner Gerry, Chase McNiss, Nils Wygant, Herb Bubert, Dave, Marion, Tom Cocchiaro, Paul, Len Russo, and Kerry Hurd.**



Gardner (left) and Len (right) watch Herb process Leo Triplet photos.

We talked about the rapidly advancing state of the hobby, Herb put on a mini processing clinic for us, we discussed new observatories built by club members, Chase talked about his latest lunar camera and yours truly brought in a new scope to show off to the group, a Stellarvue SV80S which is probably the cause of all the bad weather we are having.



Nils gives an overview of his rooftop observatory project.

As always I encourage everyone to check out the Pictures section of the club forum to see the wonderful work being done. Keep clicking those shutters and posting images!

☺, Gardner Gerry

Radio Astronomy

In a continuing effort to find synergy between local radio and astronomy groups I am again giving the talk on “Hearing Jupiter” to an amateur radio group. I have presented to ham groups before. They seem to enjoy the prospect

of being able to hear extraterrestrial signals with their current radio gear. I dedicate a few minutes in the presentation to NHAS and talk of our rad-astro committee's budding interest in radio astronomy. My hope is that we can add a few talented radio people to our ranks for help on whatever endeavor we decide to partake.

The talk was held on 18 March 2007 as a guest presentation at a flea market.

I have expanded the presentation to include some general radio astronomy information, some photos of the local professional sites we visited, as well as the story line of detecting Jupiter's radiation..

∞, Bob Sletten

New Astronomy Day Coordinator Needed

After serving for several years as our Astronomy Day and Stellafane Coordinator, **Joel Harris** has resigned his post. So we need a new A-Day and Stellafane Coordinator. Contact one of the officers or directors if you're interested.

∞, Paul Winalski

Observing Report: YFOS MM Run, 20 March 2007

I had planned all along to assist in the CB&G Sky Watch at YFOS, but when the Clear Sky Clock predicted above average transparency for the whole night, I decided to attempt a Messier Marathon run. The Sky Clock prediction was accurate. It was cold (11°F) and at first very windy, but also extremely clear and, until midnight or so, very steady seeing. It was very dry—no problem at all with frost. The boys and girls were treated to a gibbous Venus, excellent view of Saturn, and an astounding 1-day old Moon with spectacular earthshine. And while they were still there, very nice and steady multiple star views, too. The sky muddied up considerably after midnight, and seeing deteriorated. I could not split Porrima at midnight in the 14" Tscope, and Gamma Leonis was being difficult.

I caught M77 in the evening twilight, but I didn't get M74 because the Moon washed it out. Aside from that, I had excellent luck until just before dawn. The increasing background haze brought the morning twilight up early, and I couldn't see the stars in Capricornus, let alone the last five globulars (M30, of course, was given as a write-off). So my total bag for the evening was 104 objects out of the possible 110. A major improvement over my previous personal best of 66!

During the 2-hour layover between the end of the Virgo Galaxy Cluster and the big rush in Sagittarius before the dawn, I got to do some other observing. Carbon star S Cephei was very dim—it is approaching minimum, but is very deeply red. T Lyrae is its usual stalwart and red self. The excellent darkness and steady skies gave excellent views of M51 (looked like one of Lord Rosse's sketches) and M82 (excellent filamentary detail).

∞, Paul Winalski

NHAS February 2007 Business Meeting

Membership

The first three Astro 101 observing courses have been scheduled and are on the club calendar on the Website. Alan wants to record the presentations and have them available for future use on the resource center of the website. It was suggested that we get **John Bishop** to give a presentation on telescope collimation. One new member (Paul Cezanne) joined at the Business Meeting.

Public Observing

Weather has not been very cooperative, but the major spring season for public observing is about to begin. Marc is working on setting up a session with a 7th grade class in Manchester.

Web Administration

No report.

Photography

No organized activity to report. Members continue to post astounding

photos in the Forum section of the website.

Radio Astronomy

Bob Sletten described Orbitron, a free, "Larry Lopez approved" computer application for tracking satellites. It shows the full-sky view at arbitrary time for lots of satellites, and has the radio frequencies for picking up radio signals from the satellites.

Other Business

The Board of Directors continues to track down missing club assets. The items donated by James Baker for which we recently lost the storage space have been liquidated.

Matt Marulla designed a NHAS business card that describes the club and how to contact us, for members to hand out at public sky watches and whatnot. 1000 of them have been printed up. Matt distributed some of them to members at the meeting.

There was discussion of working with a local engraver to have engraved granite plaques installed on the CMP planetary sky walk.

Scope of the Month

Gardner Gerry described his Astro-Tech AT66-ED semi-APO refractor (\$329). It has lots of focus travel and a dual-speed focuser, rotating focus tube, and sliding dew shield. The scope has decent optics and a 400mm focal length. It comes in a hard carrying case. It takes 1-1/4 eyepieces. The focus aperture is SCT-width, so one could put in a 2" adapter.

Book of the Month

John Bishop presented Postcards from Mars, a large-format album of images taken by the two Mars rovers. He describes the book as "Ansel Adams goes to Mars". There are some breathtaking panoramas of the Martian surface.

Evening Program

Ed Ting gave his excellent presentation on the Messier Marathon. He is shown here with **Gardner Gerry** (wearing his MM running shirt).



2007 Membership: 115

New members:

Elizabeth Wood, Concord, NH
Paul Cezanne, Manchester, NH

by Chase McNiss

There are 110 objects to be observed over the course of the evening, which works out to nearly 10 per hour, or one object every 7 minutes. Fortunately it isn't as bad as it seems—the objects come in groups, and there are long stretches of the evening where one can relax and take a break. The most hectic parts of the session are the beginning, when one must catch several objects about to set, and the end, when one must catch some that are just rising before they're lost in the sunrise. Many other objects stay up for several hours and there is no rush to observe them.

Ed gave the outlines of an observing plan, and had many other tips for having success, and most of all, fun, with the MM. We will try to get the presentation onto the resources page of the NHAS website.

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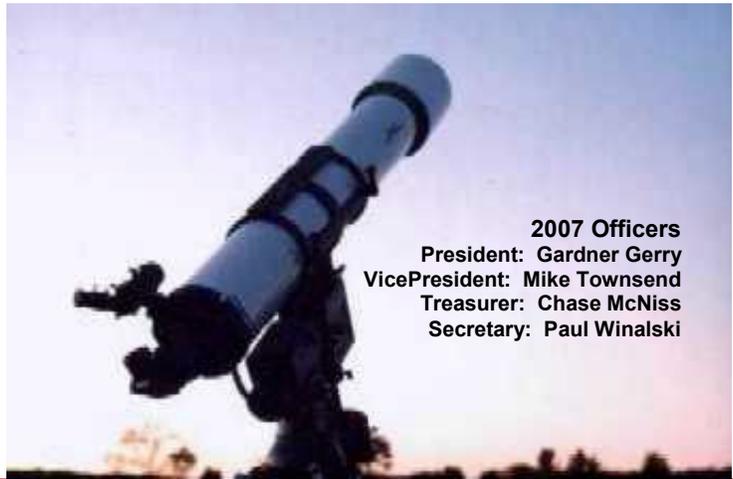
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The Bottom Line

Starting Balance:	\$4671.49
Deposits/Credits:	\$1272.95
(Membership, S&T, equipment sales)	
Accounts/Paid:	\$208.82
(Peerless, NHAS Cards, YFOS propane, S&T)	
Net Account Balance:	\$5824.62
Petty cash drawer:	\$195.75
Cash Balance:	\$6020.37



2007 Officers
 President: Gardner Gerry
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 Treasurer: Chase McNiss
 Secretary: Paul Winalski

DEADLINE April 2007 Issue: 5 PM Apr 13

E-mail articles to the Editor.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS – Notify the Treasurer of changes to postal or e-mail address.

How to Join N.H.A.S.

Write to us:

NHAS
 P.O. Box 5823
 Manchester, NH 03108-5823
 Attn: Treasurer

Send E-mail to:

info@nhastro.com

Use our web site:

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

This month's contributors:

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NHAS Upcoming Events

Event	Date	Time	Location
Concord Boys & Girls Club Sky Watch	Mar 20	6:00 PM	YFOS
Concord Boys & Girls Club Sky Watch (rain date)	Mar 22	6:00 PM	YFOS
March Business Meeting	Mar 23	7:30 PM	St. Anselm College
Newfields Elementary School Sky Watch	Apr 4	6:00 PM	Newfields Elementary School, Newfields, NH
CMP Sky Watch	Apr 6	7:00 PM	Christa McAuliffe Planetarium, Concord, NH
Coffee House Night	Apr 13	5:00 PM	YFOS
Messier Marathon	Apr 13	4:00 PM	Lopez residence, New Boston, NH
Messier Marathon (rain date)	Apr 14	4:00 PM	Lopez residence, New Boston, NH
Astro 101: Navigating the Night Sky	Apr 20	6:00 PM	Christa McAuliffe Planetarium, Concord, NH
April Business Meeting	Apr 20	7:30 PM	Christa McAuliffe Planetarium, Concord, NH

