

Market Square Day

President's Message

Tom Cocchiaro approached the officers and board about having NHAS set up a booth at Portsmouth's annual Market Square Day, and we all agreed it would be a great event to get the club's mission out in the public eye, so in the best spirit of volunteerism, we let Tom run with the ball. Tom did a wonderful job setting us up with an excellent booth location, with sunshine all day (important for solar observing) and high visibility of the booth for the public. The day was long, but in the end we all agreed it was a big success. A big thank you to Tom as well as all the other volunteers who gave up a beautiful Saturday to attend this event. Look for a full report in this issue.

We have been also been very fortunate in receiving a grant from the New Hampshire Charitable Foundation in the amount of \$5000. This money is earmarked for equipment like laptops and projectors for our outreach programs. Tom Cocchiaro has worked hard behind the scenes and is to be commended for his efforts in making this grant happen. Details of the grant and equipment will be discussed at the June NHAS Business meeting. I hope to see you all there.

★ Gardner Gerry
NHAS President 2008

Highlights for this Month

The weather-plagued Astro 101 talks on Collimation and Deep Sky Observing (Stars and DSOs) finally took place. Others are planned.

Check out the club calendar and the reminder at the end of this newsletter for times, venues, and details.

Market Square Day was our big public observing event this month and there is a full report.

Rich DeMidio reports on an observing trip to the wilds of Maine.

Finally, be sure to read the important message from our Treasurer concerning donations to NHAS.

★ Paul Winalski
NHAS Secretary 2008

Membership and Astro 101/201

May/June have been pretty busy with member to member education. Astro 101 and 201 courses held include:

"Measurement of Astronomical Distances", presented by **John Bishop**.

"Deep Sky Observing: Stars", presented by **Paul Winalski**.

"Collimation", presented by John Bishop.

"Deep Sky Observing: Galaxies, Clusters, and Nebulae".

Currently scheduled courses include:

June 21st: **John Blackwell** presents an Astro 201 talk on "Stellar Evolution" at Exeter Academy. The presentation begins at 7:00PM and will cover the complete life cycle of stars of different masses. John has four seats remaining for this presentation. Registration is required by email to acshirey@comcast.net.

June 27th: Paul Winalski presents an Astro 201 course on "Carbon Stars" at 7:30PM at YFOS. Observing to follow if skies permit. (registration is appreciated)

August 16th: **Chase McNiss** presents Astro 101: "Lunar Observing" at YFOS. The presentation begins at 7:00PM with observing afterwards if skies permit.

October 10th: John Bishop has committed to another evening for his popular and useful presentation on "Collimation". This presentation will be held at YFOS and will begin at 7:00PM.

I am also looking for presenters for any of the other Astro 101 topics that haven't been given this year. If you have presented in the past and have an opening in your schedule, please let me know.

★ Alan Shirey

Astro Photons

The intrepid NHAS imaging corps continue to work in producing wonderful images. Please feel free to visit the NHAS pictures forum to see the latest postings.

I would like to organize a meeting of the committee for June or July, feedback on possible dates is encouraged.

★ Gardner Gerry

Portsmouth Market Square Day

On Portsmouth NH's 32nd annual Market Square Day, 14 June, the city's downtown was closed to traffic to allow pedestrian visitors to roam the tents set up by hundreds of vendors and community groups.

This year NHAS set up a tent at the event. We had a prime location at the corner of Congress and Fleet Streets, where we were visited by hundreds of the estimated 90,000 attendees.

Tom Cocchiaro, who coordinated the event, also designed and had printed up a fine brochure describing NHAS. He also obtained a large amount of handout material from NASA's SOHO (Solar and Helio-graphic Observatory) project. Solar observing was the theme. We had several telescopes set up and fitted for solar observing, including **Marc Stowbridge's** H-alpha Coronado PST. There was also a newtonian reflector focused on the North Church steeple weathervane. In addition to the many people who stopped by to check out the exhibit, we got a good mention in local press articles about the event.

★ Paul Winalski



A view of the crowd moving along Congress Street, where the NHAS booth was positioned.

Our appearance at Market Square Day was an unqualified success. We handed out nearly all of the 250 brochures printed and almost 150lbs worth of goodies including most of our care package from NASA's SOHO program.

Throughout the day, we made contact with hundreds of people with an interest in astronomy and wowed the media including a particular reporter from Foster's Daily Democrat. Check out the article at the following link.

http://www.fosters.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20080615/GJNEWS_01/900762450

The following people spent essentially the whole day there from the wee hours of the morning till

closing at 5:30 p.m. Special thanks especially to all those who drove long distances to be here in Portsmouth for the day—that would be everyone except me:

Gardner Gerry
Mike O'Shaughnessy
Marc Stowbridge (PST Rock Star)
Ken Charles
Bill Steele

It will be interesting to see what the actual impact of our participation will be. Chase may want to check the mailbox more often to keep it from overloading—we hope.

★ Tom Cocchiaro

I want to thank Tom for the excellent job he did in organizing the booth. We had a lot (!!!!!) of people stop at the booth thanks to its great location. Hopefully, the many people that said they were interested in joining and coming to meetings will fill out the new NHAS Brochure that Tom made and we'll see them again. There were also several teachers who stopped by and were interested in sky watches for their classes next year. The brochure had Marc's e-mail and some information on our public observing sessions, which made it easy to let them know who and how to contact us.

★ Ken Charles

Ken has it right! Tom did a wonderful job, and everyone there did the Club proud! I have no idea how many people stopped by for solar observing, perhaps someone new every 2 or 3 minutes, though perhaps every 5 or 6 minutes if I started to explain things... The crowds and the company could not be beat! We gave out tons of handouts. When we started cutting up and giving out some NASA shuttle film of Earth, people held them like they were Holy Relics!

The only thing better than sidewalk astronomy is when you do it in the street. (Note to self... In the future, avoid ambiguous statements that some might take the wrong way.)

What fun!

★ Marc Stowbridge

Market Square Day images by Tom Cocchiaro:



The NHAS boot setup from the inside looking out.



A schoolteacher takes a peek through Marc's PST.



A passerby gets a TeleVue of the Sun through Gardner's scope.



Viewing the North Church steeple through Bill Steele's Orion 10" XTI Dob.



Viewing the Sun through Gardner's scope.



Waiting to observe solar flares as Marc re-centers the Sun in the PST.



Solar observing in H-alpha.



Mike O'Shaughnessy talks to some young women about the society and its activities.

More Market Square Day images by Gardner Gerry:



Our booth, early in the day.



By midday, we had non-stop action due to the crowds.



We had solar scopes set up and lots of goodies to give away.

Random Acts of Observing

For those who want to go into more on **John Bishop's** talk at the last meeting, try Allen Hersfeld's book Parallax: The Race to Measure the Universe. An excellent account of the efforts leading up to the first accepted star distances.

Sunday May 25th **Mike Townsend** and I went to YFOS and had a very nice evening. The mosquitoes were pretty ferocious while setting up. I started to wonder if the holiday would prevent anyone else from making it when **Dan Smith** arrived. While Dan was setting up a couple of neighbors stopped by to see what was going on. We invited them back after dark, but perhaps memory of the swarm discouraged them from returning! Fortunately it cooled off fairly quickly and by dark the mosquitoes had disappeared. Except for some occasional high thin clouds we got in some nice observing with two of Mike's refractors and the club 16" and Dan's 12.5" dobs. Packing up around midnight was good timing as the haze started to increase.

★ John T. Rose

Camping and Astronomy at Moosehead Lake

I spent the weekend of June 13th at Lily Bay State Park just outside of Greenville, ME with Jean and several friends. The campsite is located on Moosehead Lake, which is one of the largest lakes in Maine and New England. It is roughly 1700 sq. miles and is just southwest of Baxter State Park. It's just about in the center of Maine. I am just now realizing how large a state Maine really is. It took us from my house just under 5 hours with a few quick stops for a total of 284 miles. The campground has several individual areas and one group area, which my friend reserved months ago. The site had a lean-to, fire pit, and plenty of open area for people to pitch their tents. Moreover, the state park had many facilities in the main area, which was just less than

a mile away from our site such as individual bathrooms for showers. We arrived on Friday afternoon the 13th to mid 70-degree temperatures and a nice breeze, which kept the bugs away. It was sunny and the forecast was for clear to partly cloudy but the moon was just past first quarter so I would have to contend with that. The site is oriented very well for observing. West was directly out into the lake and I took this picture shortly after arriving.



There is a tree just to the left of this picture so there would be some obscuring of a portion of the west sky, but the vegetation opens up so most of the southwest and south become visible. Due East was nearly blocked, but NE was very favorable. Total visibility was about 70%. We were able to observe Friday night and I gave my friends a really good tour of objects even with the moon providing light pollution. Saturn looked great and I also showed them M13, M92, and Albireo to name a few. Even with light pollution and average transparency, the objects looked great. We stayed up to about 1AM before deciding to go to sleep. On Saturday, I also spent some time taking photos and got this great one of a sunset that evening.



Unfortunately, conditions deteriorated Saturday evening so no observing but we had a wonderful campfire chat along with some

wonderful food. There was plenty of wildlife in the area including Loons and several Geese and Duck pairs.



I also saw a bald eagle circling overhead several times but he never came real close. Nonetheless, I managed to snag this photo, which has been cropped for zoom in.



The Ranger did suggest that we put all food in a closed up car after dark as we did not want to tempt any bears. We never did see any evidence of them, thankfully. The one bad part was the black flies, which really got to us Sunday morning. Given the forecast, we decided to pack in and leave a day early. Since this was Maine, we were always on the lookout and Jean spied this fella next to the road and got a great shot. When we zoomed in on it at home, the antlers can be seen just starting to form so this must be a young male.



Photo by Jean Buckley

We had a great trip and with no lights around, it promises to be a fantastic sight for observing. As such, my friend has already reserved this site for the end of September and I will be planning another weekend trip there. We verified that weekend is just after new moon so if the skies are clear, Obby should be able to see the darkest ever.

★ Rich DeMidio

So You Want To Make or Recommend a Donation

With the recent confusion and concerns involving donations made to the NHAS I thought it a good time to publish some type of guideline regarding donations as a whole.

Although not listed in the club's bylaws or constitution, the officers and the board have adopted the policy that any and all equipment donations should be made through and be approved by the current NHAS board. Eventually, once the language has been approved by the officers, we will list this little known policy on the club website.

This policy does not include cash donations made to the club and I will discuss this in more detail later in this article.

There are several reasons we have adopted this policy concerning equipment donations:

1. The board is responsible for keeping track of the club equipment / property inventory and if the board is not made aware of new equipment gains the board cannot fulfill their basic duty of protecting the club's property. Past board member **Don Ware** has gone to great pains to update the club inventory and the current and future board members do not want to let it get out of control like it has in the past, especially since the club property is now insured.
2. The club has limited storage space and we do not want to turn our facility in Hillsboro into a warehouse...

3. ...and because we are a volunteer organization we do not want to turn officers' or board members' homes and property into warehouses as well. Obviously this has been a problem in the past and I apologize if the officers have become a little sensitive to this issue.
4. The officers and the board are also concerned about the quality of the equipment the club takes as donations and they do not want to accept equipment that does not meet the quality standards that the club recommends to the public and the membership.
5. The board is also concerned if donated equipment will be used by the membership. Given the time or opportunity the board could help the donating party find another party, club member or another club or school that could make better use of the donated equipment.

Be assured we do not want to discourage equipment donations. We just want to make sure that what we take in meets the current needs of the club and its membership and that we can afford on all levels to maintain the donated equipment.

Now when it comes to cash donations we are not nearly as restrictive. It is my understanding as club treasurer that the club will take cash donations any time and any place. There are some restrictions dictated by our 501c3 status with the IRS concerning the level of our yearly cash flow but previous years cash flow have never come to a level where this has become a concern.

Anybody interested in making a cash donation to the club is encouraged to do so. Because we are a nonprofit 501c3 corporation your donations are tax deductible. I recommend you make donations by check so you have a record of your donation but if cash donations are made, you can request a letter of donation on club letterhead for your record.

Also keep in mind that you can request that your donation or any portion of it be made to a specific project or group within the club's organization. Currently there are four areas you can designate for your donation:

- The General Fund (this is where all membership dues go to cover general expenses)
- The YFOS Fund (obviously this supports the YFOS site and its upkeep)
- The Educational Outreach Fund (this fund is new but one that the club will be drawing on in the near future)
- The Insurance Fund (also a new area since the club recently voted to insure the club assets)

★ Chase McNiss

NHAS May 2008 Business Meeting

ATM

No activity to report.

YFOS

Larry Lopez reports that the portapotty has been pumped, but the light needs fixing. There will be a clean-up session on 7 June.

Membership

Alan Shirey reported 3 new members. Only one Astro 101 session (the Scope Clinic) came off, but there was no sky watch afterwards due to clouds. The Astro 101/201 calendar is full for the rest of the spring/summer.

Astrophotography

No activity to report.

Radio Astronomy

No report.

Public Observing

No report.

Webmaster

No report.

Book of the Month

John Bishop presented Exploration of the Universe, a 1964 Astronomy textbook.

Scope of the Month

A Stellarvue 80mm f/7 refractor on an Orion mount. It has a 2-speed 2

element ED apochromatic refractor. It has a 2" focuser, carrying handle, and 9x50 finder. It has good optics, with 1/8 wave spherical correction and good color correction.

Astronomy Day

Unfortunately cloudy and wet with small crowds.

NEAIC and NEAF Report

NEAIC had lots of people telling you how to use Photoshop, and talks on spectrographs and astrographs.

NEAF had lots more high-end astrographs and large German EQ mounts. Astronphotography really has taken off. Lots of CCD companies. A small Celestron display but a huge display by Vixen. Astronomer Dorothy Metcalfe Lindenberger gave a talk on how amateur astronomical sky watches are so important in generating enthusiasm among kids.

Evening Program

John Bishop presented "The Distance Ladder", a talk on measuring astronomical distances.

★ Paul Winalski

The Bottom Line

| | |
|-----------------------------|------------------|
| Starting Balance: | \$5314.95 |
| Deposits/Credits: | 0.00 |
| Accounts/Paid: | 0.00 |
| Net Account Balance: | \$5314.95 |
| Petty cash drawer: | \$100.00 |
| Cash Balance: | \$5414.95 |

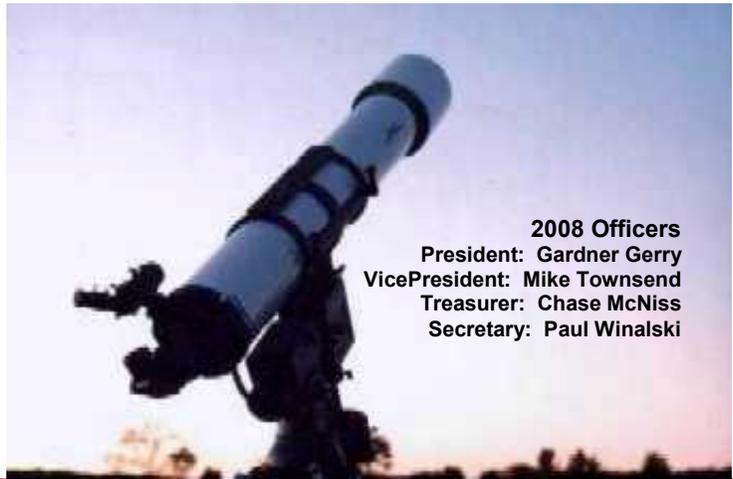
2008 Membership: 132

Donations:

| | |
|---|------------------|
| Grant from NH Charitable Funds | \$5000.00 |
| Purchases from PC Connection (Projector, Laptops, etc.) | 4190.30 |

Balance of Grant Funds \$809.70

★ Chase McNiss



2008 Officers
 President: Gardner Gerry
 VicePresident: Mike Townsend
 Treasurer: Chase McNiss
 Secretary: Paul Winalski

DEADLINE July 2008 Issue: 5 PM July 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:

Gardner Gerry, Alan Shirey, Tom Cocchiaro, Ken Charles, Marc Stowbridge, John T. Rose, Rich DeMidio, Jean Buckley, Chase McNiss

New Hampshire Astronomical Society
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NHAS Upcoming Events

| Event | Date | Time | Location |
|------------------------------------|-----------|---------|-------------------------------|
| Astro 201: Carbon Stars | June 27 | 7:30 PM | YFOS |
| Merrimack YMCA Solar Observing | July 6 | 9:00 AM | Camp Sargent, Merrimack, NH |
| Coffee House Night | July 11 | 5:00 PM | YFOS |
| NHAS Business Meeting | July 18 | 7:30 PM | St. Anselm College |
| Goffstown Public Library Sky Watch | July 23 | 8:30 PM | Cemetary Field, Goffstown, NH |
| Coffee House Night | August 1 | 5:00 PM | YFOS |
| CMP Public Sky Watch | August 1 | 7:00 PM | Christa McAuliffe Planetarium |
| NHAS Business Meeting | August 15 | 7:30 PM | Christa McAuliffe Planetarium |
| Astro 101: Lunar Observing | August 16 | 7:00 PM | YFOS |