

Observer Staff
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Paul Winalski

The NHAS Observer

Newsletter of the New Hampshire Astronomical Society



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"All the news that fits in print"

May 2009

Astronomy Day 2009



Photos by Ted Blank (outdoor) and Michael Saffarewich (indoor).

On the web at <http://www.nhastro.com/>

President's Message

April presented some good opportunities for viewing with the unseasonably warm weather and clear skies. Many members ventured to YFOS for observing sessions. We also spent the month planning for Astronomy Day. The planning and contributions by NHAS members resulted in a wonderful event. I want to thank and congratulate members of Educational Outreach Committee who really drove this event. **Chase McNiss** had the honor and stress of being the point person who spent months preparing for this event. However, let me emphasize that it would never have been successful without the contribution and passion of NHAS members who readily answered his call for support. **Tom Cocchiaro** did some wonderful artwork and had our brochures printed professionally. **Ted Blank** contributed educational items to our internal booth display. Speaking of displays, **Matt Marulla** donated a booth used at conferences for displaying our club posters and banner. **Rich Schueller** donated a telescope for a drawing while other members donated items as well. The outside tent was filled with NHAS members talking with the public and performing solar observing. Given all of this, expressing my personal thanks and gratitude somehow is an understatement but I shall do so anyway. As I went back and forth from the inside to outside display, I chatted with people who had been to the tent or inside booth. We were very visible and perceived to be part of the main show. It made me proud to be a member of this organization. Well done everyone!

In April, we had our quarterly officer meeting. The key topics of discussion were Astronomy Day budget appropriations, club inventory, and financial outlook. I also proposed the idea that during the summer, that we have a club BBQ at YFOS. We can combine that with hopefully solar and evening observing. I plan to bring

this topic up at the business meeting for discussion and ideas.

★ Rich DeMidio
NHAS President 2009

Highlights for this Month

We celebrated Astronomy Day 2009 on 2 May at the McAuliffe-Shepard Discovery Center's "Spacetacular Saturday" with large indoor and outdoor exhibits, and two public sky watches (our regularly scheduled 1st Friday of the Month Sky Watch and one on the evening of A-Day itself). **Dave McDonald** reports that a total of 575 people (guests and volunteers) attended the event. 35 NHAS members helped out with our exhibits. In addition to our exhibits, there was model rocketry, helicopter rides, the launch of a weather balloon, exhibits of meteorites, trying on a space suit, and the 2009 Year of Astronomy planetarium show, "Two Small Pieces of Glass".

There are numerous photos of A-Day in the "Kitchen Sink" forum in the Member's Area of the NHAS website. Be sure to check them out.

After a very heavy schedule in early April, the public sky watch calendar has calmed down. We do have some sky watch events scheduled for the summer; check the Calendar page at the NHAS website.

The New Hampshire dark sky bill has passed the Senate and is very close to becoming law.

★ Paul Winalski
NHAS Secretary 2009

Astronomy Day 2009

Astronomy Day 2009 has come and gone and this is a good thing, believe me. No more e-mails!

Looking back at the day and the period leading up to the event, I cannot remember another A-Day where there were so many volunteers and so much help. Even the weather cooperated, making the outside display and telescope area the place to be. Looking back at the images taken during the event, it is clear that the volunteers were busy and having a great time with the public.

There were solar scopes galore, both in H α and visible light. **Ken Charles** and **Joe Derek** had their big guns out to view Venus and the Moon. Heck, we even had radio telescopes, binoculars, an analemma demonstration and a magnification display. There were numerous floaters to help out the people at the scopes and there was no evidence of volunteers putting people in head locks and forcing them to look through the telescopes.

This was the first year in a long time that we had both an indoor display and an outdoor display. In all this required 35 volunteers on site during the event, with 3 shifts for taking a lunch breaks. The indoor display was well received and looked very professional thanks to **Tom Cocchiaro** and **Matt Marulla**. The indoor display also hosted a drawing with beginner amateur astronomy prizes to help raise funds for the growing Education Outreach push the NHAS is embarking on. Also at the main table was a great hands-on exhibit designed by **Ted Blank** that kept me and all the young visiting astronomers busy all afternoon. Rounding out the main display was an Astro-photography slide show and 2 static AP setups for people to stare longingly at.

All told it was a very successful event as evidenced by the tired but happy volunteers, the smiling faces of the public who attended and the hearty thanks from Dave McDonald and Jean Gerulskis at MSDC.

I am going to let the photos from the event tell the rest of the story, again thanks to all for your help and support.

★ Chase McNiss
2010 A-Day Coordinator?

NHAS A-Day participants:

Static Scope Display: **Joe Derek**, **Tim Printy**, **Bill Steele**

Magnification: **Steven Forbes II**, **Peter Kelly**, **Rich Schueller**

Solar Observing: **John Bishop**, **Ken Charles**, **Steve Forbes**, **Brian Icaza**, **Mike Townsend**, **David Weaver**, **Paul Winalski**

Table Sales: **Joyce Icaza**

Annalemma: **Marc Stowbridge**
Reflector Demo: **Ted Blank**
Astrophotography: **Gardner Gerry, Matt Marulla**
Floaters: **Matt Amar, Herb Bubert, Tom Cocchiaro, Rich DeMidio, David Gilmore, Ed Los, Scott McCartney, Evan McCartney, Chase McNiss, Marci Miller, Tom Morin, Mike Saffarewich, Charley Vailloncourt, Wade Walker**
Evening Sky Watch: **Tom Cocchiaro, Steve Forbes, Stephen Forbes II, Gardner Gerry, Brian Icaza, Dave McDonald, Chase McNiss, Tim Printy, Polly Printy, John Rose, Joe Schmidl, Dan Smith, Mike Townsend**
 The main indoor display.

A busy observing field.



(Rich Schueller photo)

Marc Stowbridge constructed a rather unique analemma on the lawn next to the solar display. He had children plot the analemma using dandelion blossoms. Here a family places a new mark.



The completed Dandelemma.



(Marc Stowbridge photos)

Joe Derek lines up the Moon in his 12.5" reflector.



(Rich Schueller photo)

Rich Schueller demonstrates telescopic magnification.



(Tim Printy photo)

Solar observing. Mike sets up his Coronado PST. Prominences were visible when the Sun wasn't in the clouds.



(Joe Derek photo)

A picture from the May 1 First Friday sky watch the night before A-Day. Tom Cocchiaro talks to a family observing the Moon through Mike Townsend's refractor.



(Tom Cocchiaro photo)

Chase explains how telescopes work. In the background is the astrophoto exhibit.



(Tom Cocchiaro photo)

Some of the donated raffle items. Proceeds to benefit the NHAS educational outreach program.



(Michael Saffarewich photo)



(Rich Schueller photo)

A-Day Message from the Discovery Center

A HUGE thank you to all the NHAS members for volunteering your time to get astronomy education out to the public on Astronomy Day.

I thought there was great participation out back with the scopes and the best indoor display I have seen yet. Fun, engaging and yet educational.

Thanks to everyone for cooperation in the finer points like parking, eating, etc. It was a pleasure to work with Chase on the organization of the day.

I was personally happy to enjoy the evening scope session. I enjoyed a look a Mercury and saw the moon like I have never seen it before. The peaks catching the sunlight near the North Pole being surrounded by dark made me think of a civilization with its lights on at night—who knows? ☺

From all of us here at the McAuliffe-Shepard Discovery Center ... THANK YOU !

★ Dave McDonald

Astro Photons

The NHAS Photo Committee was well represented at Astronomy Day. There were two static displays showcasing DSLR cameras, one set up by member **Matt Marulla** with his Astro-Physics 900 mount and an 8" Vixen compound telescope and another display set up by member **Gardner Gerry** with his Losmandy GM-8 and Stellarvue 80mm refractor. There was also a slide show of 82 fabulous NHAS member images running continuously on a 24" monitor. Members represented

in the show included **Chase McNiss, Nils Wygant, John Buonomo, Paul Cezanne, Gardner Gerry, Rich Schueller, John Blackwell, Larry Lopez, Paul Howard, Bob Gillette, Dave Weaver and Herb Bubert**. Thanks to everyone involved and especially those who helped us haul all the equipment in and out.

★ Gardner Gerry

Public Observing

The Newington Langdon Library has asked to "join" the Library Telescope Project! They are funding the equipment, so we can focus our limited funding on smaller libraries. Thank you **Tom Cocchiario** for setting this up!

Moultonborough Library hosted a sky watch that was clouded out, but inside we had a very good presentation by Dan Reidy of the M Central School (host of a few NHAS sky watches, himself...). I gave an introduction to using the Library Telescope to about forty people. In the crowd were about five families with telescopes gathering dust, so we made plans to get together for a "How to Use It" session.

The week of April 13-19 was remarkably full, with three sky watches and a meeting at MSAC! Thank you all for your help, either directly at the events, or for moral and other support.

Keep watching the skies! (and the calendar for upcoming events).

★ Marc Stowbridge

Membership and Astro 101/201

We have four new members since last report:

Jim Robidoux of Manchester NH
Barrie Sawyer of Groton NH
Donald McDaniels of Hampton NH
Christine Windler of Manchester NH

Please welcome our new members when you meet them at a business meeting or sky watch.

One of our new members has expressed interest in the entire Astro 101 series. I need a few more members to consider the courses we have available on the Resources Webpage and let me know of their interest. If I have three members express interest in a course I will have it scheduled.

★ Alan Shirey

New Hampshire Senate Adopts Dark Sky Bill

The New Hampshire Senate yesterday adopted HB 585—the Outdoor Lighting Efficiency Act. I am told the Finance Committee has now waived its right to further review the bill based on the fiscal note DOT attached to it.

As the NH House has already approved the bill, it now goes back to the House Committee for acceptance of two minor technical amendments, which should be routine.

This means New Hampshire will have a dark sky protection law in place this summer that encourages energy conservation in outdoor lighting by the state and by local governments.

The bill requires that:

1. All state-funded new and replacement outdoor lighting shall be fully shielded and not exceed minimum IESNA recommended levels of illumination, unless there is a demonstrable case that doing so would add cost, compromise public safety or violate federal regulations;
2. Utilities shall provide fully shielded streetlight fixtures (that also do not exceed IESNA minimums) as the default option for all new and municipal lighting, unless a local government explicitly opts out.
3. The Public Utilities Commission will develop a rate structure allowing towns to have utilities install timers on selected streetlights to save approximately half the electricity such lights now consume (and save local taxpayers money);
4. New Hampshire implements a policy of protecting dark skies as a natural and cultural resource.

Hopefully the new law will encourage more local governments to consider their own regulations. Once the law is in place, there will be a concerted effort to make all NH country and municipal governments aware of its benefits.

★ Robert Gillette

NHAS April 2009 Business Meeting

Attendance was light as many members were at the NorthEast Astronomy Forum (NEAF).

ATM

No report.

YFOS

No report.

Membership

No report. Three new members, from Groton and Bow NH, attended the Business Meeting.

Astrophotography

No report

Radio Astronomy

No report.

Public Observing

Marc Stowbridge reports that there were three sky watches held this past week. The one for science students from the high school near Dover. Very attentive kids and a big success.

Moultonborough Public Library (the 2nd to participate in our library program) has a public sky watch on Monday.

Library Telescope Program:

Moultonborough has a waiting list with people calling repeatedly to find out where they were on the list. There is extremely positive feedback. Goffstown will be our next scope deployment. Club members have donated spare eyepieces for use with the library scopes.

Marc made up cards with film photos taken from shuttle flights (these are the ones we gave out at Portsmouth Market Square Day last year).

Educational Outreach

Matt Amar reports that the committee is working on a new design for the NHAS website. This should make it easier for new members to join and for educators to request sky watches.

Several NHAS members were able to put together a talk on the Cassini mission to Saturn for the McAuliffe-Shepard Discovery Center at very short notice. The EOC was key to facilitating the communication that made this talk a great success. Kudos to all who helped out.

The committee is looking at expanding the library telescope loan program and at setting up monthly outreach events, such as sidewalk astronomy as a NHAS activity.

Webmaster

Bill Steele reported that a note needs to go to **Matt Marulla** correcting the A-Day start time from 11:00 AM to 10:00 AM. **Paul Winalski** will e-mail Matt.

Board of Directors

No report.

Book of the Month

None this month.

Scope of the Month

None this month.

Highlights for the last 30 Days

- The Q2 officer's meeting was held on 4 April.
- The EOC produced a program on Saturn/Cassini at very short notice
- The Messier Marathon took place.
- The Officers approved expenditure for A-Day advertising. Volunteers are distributing posters to schools and other locations.

Miscellaneous Business

NHAS did get a few hours in for the worldwide 100 Hours of Astronomy. **Mike Townsend** and **Matt Amar** set up solar scopes in the Discovery Center courtyard.

Astronomy Day planning: May 1 is the usual Discovery Center first Friday of the month sky watch. A-Day setup starts at 9 AM. The

event starts at 10 AM. We will have three locations: an outdoor exhibit area with tent and static displays (exact location not yet confirmed); solar telescopes by the exit way from the old planetarium on the quadrangle; indoors by the reception desk area. A final list of volunteers and duties will be sent out prior to the event. Most slots are filled but floaters are always a good thing.

There are tentative plans for a club barbecue event in July.

Evening Program

There was no evening program this month.

★ Paul Winalski

The Bottom Line

Starting Balance:	\$5707.33
Deposits/Credits:	
Membership:	105.00
Donations:	469.50
Bank interest:	1.41
Mugs:	10.00
Total :	585.91
Accounts/Paid:	
Plowing:	55.00
Insurance:	98.67
Office supplies:	141.84
Total:	406.76
Net Account Balance:	\$5886.48
Petty cash drawer:	\$100.00
Cash Balance:	\$5986.48

Donations:

North Hampton Public Library:
\$50.00

Mike O'Shaughnessy: \$419.50

Membership: 116

New members:

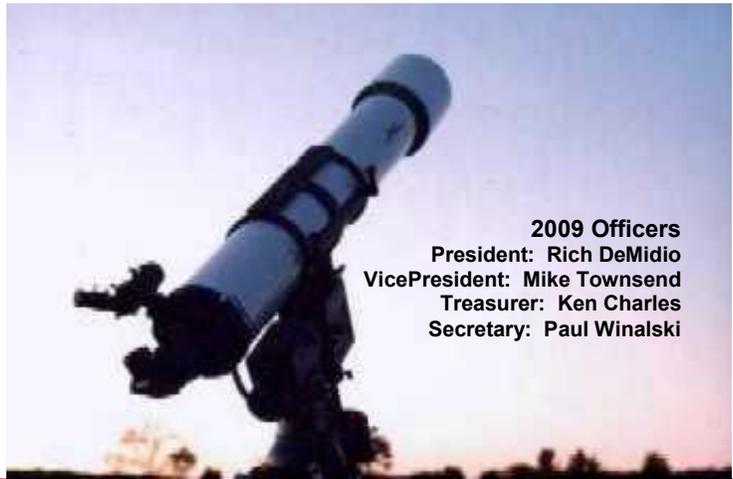
Christine Windler, Manchester NH

Donald McDaniels, Hampton NH

G. Ryan Siggins, Kittery, ME

Thomas Morin, Gilmanton Iron Works, NH

★ Ken Charles



2009 Officers
President: Rich DeMidio
VicePresident: Mike Townsend
Treasurer: Ken Charles
Secretary: Paul Winalski

DEADLINE June 2009 Issue: 5 PM June 13

E-mail articles to the Editor.

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How to Join N.H.A.S.

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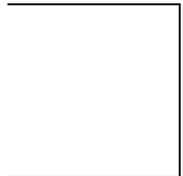
Use our web site:

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

This month's contributors:

Ted Blank, Michael Saffarewich, Rich DeMidio, Chase McNiss, Tom Cocchiario, Rich Schueller, Marc Stowbridge, Tim Printy, Joe Derek, Gardner Gerry, Alan Shirey, Robert Gilette, Ken Charles

New Hampshire Astronomical Society
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NHAS Upcoming Events

Event	Date	Time	Location
NHAS Business Meeting	May 15	7:30 PM	St. Anselm College, Manchester NH
Coffee House Night	May 22	5:00 PM	YFOS
Sky Watch	May 26	7:00 PM	Portsmouth Middle School, Portsmouth NH
Discovery Center Public Sky Watch	June 5	7:00 PM	McAuliffe-Shepard Discovery Center
Cub Scout Pack 610 Sky Watch	June 13	7:30 PM	Raymond Park, Pelham, NH
NHAS Business Meeting	June 19	7:30 PM	McAuliffe-Shepard Discovery Center