



100s Observe at Sidewalk in Nashua

President's Message

As I wind down 2009 as President of this great organization, I cannot help reflecting on the many strategic accomplishments that NHAS has performed during this year, including:

- Building a deeper relationship with McAuliffe-Shepard Discovery Center (MSDC)
- Expanding our public outreach with Educational Outreach Committee (EOC) Activities
- Establishing a foundation for growth

We deepened our relationship with MSDC even more by participating in March for the opening dedication ceremony. NHAS had the opportunity to meet with and discuss our mission with several high level state officials. NHAS members also acted as volunteers for several aspects of operations within MSDC and had a very strong presence for Astronomy Day back in May.

On the public outreach front, our EOC formally established a library program which has grown beyond our wildest expectations and planned more sky watch events that I can ever remember. Finally, NHAS members worked on a long term strategic plan for infrastructure maintenance and improvements. Some of this plan is already in-flight with a majority to be executed during 2010.

When I was elected to this post, I articulated three fundamental areas that I wished to focus and I am happy to report that as an organization, we did an exemplarity

job on all fronts. An organization is only as good as its people, and our people represent the most valuable commodity, over all other materialistic acquisitions. The contributions made by NHAS members is really what makes this club strong and is what will continue to make us grow in the upcoming year.

On a personal note, I want to extend my heartfelt thanks and appreciation to everyone who has shown the passion and enthusiasm that makes this club great. I especially wish to thank the other officers and Board of Directors for their commitment and contributions throughout the year in club operations. On the whole, the contributions of all our membership make my job easy in simply keeping the ship pointed in the right direction.

In summary, I wish to extend my warmest wishes for a great holiday to everyone and their families. May you also all enjoy a prosperous new year.

Warmest Regards.

★ Rich DeMidio
NHAS President 2009

Highlights for This Month

We had several significant public observing events this month. A last-minute sidewalk observing setup at the Nashua Holiday Stroll attracted hundreds, perhaps over a thousand, of the public to see Jupiter and the Moon. This was a record-setter in terms of public attendance.

Sky watches also were held at Sandwich and Broken Ground School in Concord. Others were

scheduled but the weather didn't cooperate.

The library telescope program continues to be wildly successful. Read all about a special event to raise money to purchase a telescope for Ossipee library.

Finally, we elected our 2010 officers and director at the December business meeting.

★ Paul Winalski
NHAS Secretary 2009

Election of 2010 Officers

No further names were put in nomination at the December 2009 business meeting. As the slate of nominees was running unopposed, a motion was made and passed to elect the nominees by voice vote rather than by secret ballot. The nominees were elected by voice vote, with no nays.

Your 2010 officers and Board of Directors are:

President: **Rich DeMidio**
Vice President: **Mike Townsend**
Secretary: **Paul Winalski**
Treasurer: **Ken Charles**
BoD Chairman: **John Bishop**
Senior Director: **John Rose**
Junior Director: **Gardner Gerry**

★ Paul Winalski

Membership Committee

NHAS welcomes two new members:

Chester Orban, Fremont, NH
Rick Walters, Meredith, NH
NHAS Workshop "Navigating the Night Sky" was presented by **Paul Winalski** to a packed YFOS warming hut. Paul covered celestial

coordinates, star nomenclature, orienting to the night sky, star hopping and reading star charts. The workshop was followed with visual observing to point out the constellations and to practice how to star hop.

Some new members brought their new equipment and were able to put to immediate use the skills presented in the workshop. Seeing was marginal but there were lots of members at YFOS willing to help and share the views in their equipment. Thank you, Paul and other helping members to make this workshop a success.

The committee is working on other venues for this and other presentations. We welcome any suggestions if you know of a venue that we could meet that is closer to where you live.

★ Bill Steele

Educational Outreach Committee Meeting

In attendance: **Rich Schueller** (EOC Coordinator), **Barrie Sawyer**, **Scott McCartney**, **Tom Cocchiaro**, **Gardner Gerry**, **Chet Orban** (new member, retired teacher), **Chase McNiss**.

First Agenda item: DreamWeaver software for club website

Rich reported that **Ken Charles** had already contacted and submitted paperwork to Adobe about getting a non-profit (discount price) version of the software, Rich confirmed that the website will still be on **Matt Marulla's** server but that **Ted Blank** and **Tom Cocchiaro** will be maintaining the site. Tom indicated that he and Ted will be meeting with Matt Marulla to be brought up to speed on how to maintain and update the site. Tom noted that he is already familiar with "Go Live Suite", which is a software package that is very similar to DreamWeaver. Rich said he thought the cost of the software to a two-user license would be around \$270 and that a "How to get Started" DVD might also be purchased. Rich stated that there are \$585.00 of dedicated EOC funds in the NHAS

account. Rich also noted that Ken Charles had told him that the cost of the software should not be the total burden of the EOC.

Second agenda item: NH Charitable Foundation

Rich noted that **Rich DeMidio** had gotten an e-mail from **Marc Stowbridge**, who reported that he had registered to attend a "Grant Application Workshop" that is being held in North Conway. Marc reported that the 2010 application dates will be in March and September. Rich Schueller said that his wife informed him that Raytheon has a non-profit grant program and that he will be looking into the program further in the future.

Third agenda item: Library loaner scope program

Barrie Sawyer spoke up and reported that he is currently retired and he has already spoken to the Pease Public Library in Plymouth about getting a telescope for a loaner program. Barrie reported that the friends of the Pease Library have already committed to apply \$200.00 towards the purchase of a new scope. The type and style of a good loaner scope was discussed. Rich and other meeting attendees brought Barrie up to date on the loaner program. Barrie indicated that he plans to be the library contact for the NHAS and that he hopes to make a presentation and have a NHAS sky watch at the library in the near future. Rich Schueller noted that Marc Stowbridge said the Guilford Library scope should be arriving this very day.

Fourth agenda item: Sidewalk astronomy

Scott McCartney reported that since the last meeting he has not had the opportunity (new baby) to do much more than scope out the area near the food court at the Steeple Gate Mall would be a good area for a public sky watch. Scott said he will be contacting the mall people in the near future. Tom Cocchiaro noted that Ted Blank has had good luck with having sky watches at Barnes and Noble book stores. Others noted that bookstores are good

because they have the astronomy books to promote and will even arrange presentations. It was noted that we should be looking for areas with good foot traffic and reasonable horizons so at least the moon and planets can be viewed.

★ Chase McNiss

Library Telescope Program

I'm in my December mode of dealing with a few thousand kids a night as Santa at the Polar Express in North Conway.

The stuff for the Guilford Library is all in, and I will be printing up their instruction booklet that reflects the use of the Celestron Zoom eyepiece instead to the itty-bitty eyepieces that come with it.

Can someone send me a stack of Club brochures somewhat quickly? I have a few fund raisers that feature Santa and the Library Telescopes ("You'll burn you eye out!...") and I'd love to augment the display with the wonderful things.

Lastly, might we officially name the Library Program "The Brad McLaughlin Memorial Telescope Project"?

Just a thought...

★ Marc Stowbridge

An excerpt from the poem *The Star Splitter*:

So Brad McLaughlin mingled
reckless talk
of heavenly stars with hugger-
mugger farming,
till having failed at hugger-mugger
farming
burned his house down for the fire
insurance
and spent the proceeds on a
telescope
to satisfy a lifelong curiosity
about our place among the
infinities.

...

He got a good glass for six hundred
dollars.
His new job gave him leisure for
stargazing.
Often he bid me come and have a
look
up the brass barrel, velvet black

inside,
at a star quaking in the other end.

I recollect a night of broken clouds
and underfoot snow melted down to
ice,
and melting further in the wind to
mud.

Bradford and I had out the
telescope.

We spread our two legs as we
spread its three,
pointed our thoughts the way we
pointed it,
and standing at our leisure till the
day broke,
said some of the best things we ever
said.

That telescope was christened the
Star-Splitter,
because it didn't do a thing but split
a star in two or three, the way you split
a globule of quicksilver in your
hand
with one stroke of your finger in the
middle.

It's a star-splitter if there ever was
one,
and ought to do some good if
splitting stars
'sa thing to be compared with
splitting wood.
We've looked and looked, but after
all where are we?
Do we know any better where we
are,
and how it stands between the night
tonight
and a man with a smoky lantern
chimney?
How different from the way it ever
stood?

★ Robert Frost

Sandwich Central School Sky Watch. 20 November

The Sandwich Central School sky
watch was a great success, if I say
so myself... **Bill Steele** and I set
up near the front of the school under
quite a dark sky. I brought along a
library telescope and set it up where
families entering the school for the
thanksgiving dinner held that night
could take a quick look. A typical
exchange went like this: "Well dear,

can you see the Moon?" Quoth the
1st grader "Oh Wow!" The parent
smiles and says, "Yup, I guess she
can!"

After we all had a thanksgiving
dinner that couldn't be beat, Bill
gave a swell talk to the assembled
families. I gave a short pitch for a
library scope for Sandwich. We
retired to the outside and had lots of
people take a look, including the
science class.

★ Marc Stowbridge

Sidewalk Astronomy: Nashua Holiday Winter Stroll, 28 November

Every year on the first Saturday
night after Thanksgiving, the City
of Nashua opens their holiday
season with The Winter Holiday
Stroll, which brings thousands of
people to the downtown area for the
annual tree lighting and music fest.
Main Street is closed off and
becomes a big sidewalk with
hundreds of people walking by. A
perfect place for SIDEWALK
ASTRONOMY.



**Ken Charles sets up *Soulshine* for
a LONG line of observers (Joe
Derek photo)**

Seeing that the weather forecast for
Saturday night was favorable this
year (I wanted to do it last year—
bad weather), I sent out a message
to club members inviting any to join
me. As I was setting up at 3:30pm
just south of the Nashua River
Bridge in a little park by Darrell's
Music, **Joe Derek** called and said
he would join me. Boy, was that a
good thing. Joe got there shortly and
started setting up his 12" reflector. I
was just finishing setting up
Soulshine, my Celestron CPC1100.
Starting at 4:30pm, people started to
stop and ask what we were doing. I

told them we were going to be
showing the Moon and Jupiter in
our scopes and they said they would
be back. As it started to get dark, we
aligned on the few stars we could
see from Nashua, and the parade of
people strolling down Main Street
to the tree lighting began, and so did
a solid 4 hours of people standing in
line to view through our scopes.

We had ten to twenty people lined
up at each scope the whole time.
Parents, children, teenagers and
seniors. They all loved seeing the
two objects we were showing, and
after viewing one object in one of
the scopes they would get in line at
the other scope to view the other
object. Many people said they
thought that we were "the best thing
going on" the whole night.

The night sky was pretty good all
night. No clouds, very clear, though
it was a bit windy. As Jupiter started
to set a bit after 9:00pm, it got very
murky down near the horizon and
you couldn't see the cloud banding
anymore. I tried to find another
object to show, but the downtown
lights were too bright and washed
out M31, M36, M37, M38 and most
of M42. Even the double cluster
was hard to see. I started to pack up
about 10:00pm, but Joe was having
a problem, as people kept coming
by to view the moon, so it delayed
his breaking down his setup.



**It can be a climb to look through
Joe's 12" scope (Joe Derek photo)**

We finally left a bit after 11:00pm.
We must have had a least 500
people viewing through each of our
scopes, and probably even more.
Had no time for a break all night
until the very end. It was a lot of
fun, and I think I had more people
view through *Soulshine* during this
one night, then all the other sky
watches I've attended added

together. Even Joe, who has been doing sky watches for years, said he never had a night like this before.



Looking through Joe Derek's 12" Newt (Tom Mandra photo)

Next year (weather permitting) I plan on doing this again, but I will need a lot more help. So mark your calendars now for Saturday, November 27, 2010. Maybe if enough of us can do it we can set up at both ends of Main Street.

★ Ken Charles

Broken Ground Elementary School Sky Watch, 1 December

Our annual sky watch for Broken Ground Elementary School, Concord MA, was held as usual in the White Farm field behind the SEE Science Center.

Ed Ting organized the event. As he pointed out, it holds the record among our sky watch events for consecutive years without interruption due to inclement skies. We sort of pushed the envelope this time, as the Clear Sky Chart was (very rarely) wrong this time, and we had near-overcast conditions instead of the predicted clear skies.

Nonetheless, six NHAS members—**Gardner Gerry, John Pappas, John Rose, Rich Schueller, Ed Ting, Paul Winalski**—braved the poor conditions to show off the near-full Moon and, when sucker holes permitted, Jupiter and three of his moons, to a crowd of about 70. The good behavior of the public, and the excellent hospitality of the SEE Science Center staff, are legendary, and they make this for me one of the highlights of our public observing calendar.

For my 14" TScope, the intermittent clouds were not much of an issue

for lunar observing. It just meant that I didn't need to use a polaroid filter to cut down the light. The image of the Moon was very sharp, with rays from both Tycho and Copernicus clearly visible, and good crater and mountain ridges at the terminator. I never got a good enough view of Jupiter for anyone to see bands, but the planetary disk was visible, as were three of the moons, and that was enough.

Later in the session, a big sucker hole opened over Deneb and the apex of the Northern Cross, covering also Lyra, and stayed that way for about an hour. I was able to get very good views of 61 Cygni, a nice, bright binary star close to the Sun, with a vivid orange color, and a lot of scientific history. That, and the Moon, and Jupiter (when it was visible) were the three objects I showed the public.

Rich Schueller jokingly asked me to find a carbon star. So I found T Lyrae for him. So there! ☺ I also found the Ring Nebula (but only just!).

This was the second worst conditions I've ever been at for a scheduled NHAS sky watch (our attempt at the Mount Washington Hotel is the worst—we were reduced to a telescope show-and-tell on the hotel veranda because the sky was completely overcast), but I'm really glad I came.

Thanks to Ed for organizing this, and for not yielding to the temptation to cancel or reschedule.

★ Paul Winalski

Ossipee Library Telescope

The Village Variety in Ossipee had a Grand Re-opening and sponsored the town's Library Telescope!

The New Owners, Angela Carver and Brian Emmett, wanted to give something back to the community. On Sunday, Dec. 20th they held a Christmas party for the "beautiful little village" where they live. Santa visited for a few hours, and a professional photographer was there to take and print pictures of children of all ages sitting on Santa's knee.

100% of the proceeds (over \$204 was collected!) of the picture taking, a candy cane sale, and many contributions will be used to purchase a telescope for the town library. The telescope and all the accessories you need to start seeing "what's up" will be available in January. Townspeople can check out the scope, just like a book.



The new library scope, James Holzrichter, Santa Stowbridge, and Brian Emmett (Holzrichter photo)

The Library Telescope Project is supported by the New Hampshire Astronomical Society and includes a very user friendly, quality telescope, and an equally user friendly Club member who will make sure the scope is adjusted and clean.

★ Marc Stowbridge

NHAS November 2009 Business Meeting

The meeting took place on 13 November at the St. Anselm College.

President **Rich DeMidio** presented a report on several topics:

- Following up on a suggestion by **Ted Blank**, we have member ID badges for use during meetings, so that we can all know who everyone is to facilitate conversation and networking.
- Key decisions from the Q4 officer's meeting:
 - The Board is looking into asset automation
 - **Scott McCartney** is leading an effort to hook up with the Astronomical League

- NHAS merchandise (look for this in 2010)
- Dues collection will remain non-electronic, as a cost saving measure
- NHAS 2010 business meetings and calendar: Discovery Center dates will remain third Friday; St. Anselm requests are in for the first 1/2 year.
- NHAS awards: send nominations to Rich directly. The presentation ceremony will be at the December meeting.
- Nominations are open for 2010 officer elections, with the vote to take place at the December meeting. Remember that only paid-up members can vote.

Directors' Report

Mike O'Shaughnessy reported that the Board is working on an online list of assets, where members can click to reserve a loaner scope. The Board is looking at old, unused assets and maybe unloading some to make room for more.

Public Observing

Marc Stowbridge reports that word is getting out to librarians about the telescope program. The Guilford library sky watch is being well advertised in town by the library. Upcoming sky watches: Sandwich (20 Nov.), Broken Ground School (1 Dec.), Boy Scout Troop 159, Salem (14 Dec.).

Educational Outreach

Rich Schueller reported that there was no EOC meeting this month. NH TechFest: **Marc Stowbridge** has been in contact with the coordinator; we have a spot available. We have a crew of four who will be there most of the day. Marc has the NHAS display.

Gardner Gerry will set up a static astrophoto display and slides. **Ken Charles** will bring *Soulshine*.

Membership

Bill Steele reports that there are upcoming Astro 101 workshops: "Navigating the Night Sky", and "The Moon". He is looking for venues other than YFOS for Astro 101/201 presentations. Possibilities

include the Discovery Center and Phillips Exeter Academy.

We have three new members this month, from Nashua, Moultonborough, and Guilford.

Amateur Telescope Making

Larry Lopez reports that there hasn't been a meeting in years. If you need help on an ATM project, we can direct or help you.

YFOS

Larry Lopez reports that the portapotty will be salted this week and grade stakes will go in this weekend. The propane tank for the big heater needs to be topped up. We have plowing arranged for this year.

Astrophotography

Gardner Gerry reported on the new SBIG 8300. At \$2000, it is inexpensive for a SBIG astro-camera.

Webmaster

Matt Marulla is working with EOC to train our website developers.

Scope of the Month

Marc Stowbridge presented the Orion FunScope mini-scope at \$49. A 76mm, 300mm f.l. Newtonian reflector, it takes 1-1/4" eyepieces. It's worth it for the finder alone.

Teaching Lesson of the Month

Ted Blank constructed a 3-D mag-7 star atlas from Andrew Johnson's star atlas from Cloudy Nights.

Miscellaneous Business

Tom Cocchiario sent a notice about the Sunset Hill star party.

Thanks to all for stepping up for the NH TechFest.

Appropriations are upcoming for the NH TechFest.

The floor was opened for nominations for 2010 officers. There were no further nominations.

Evening Presentation

Dave Speltz presented photos from his worldwide astronomy travels, including Africa, a total solar eclipse at the North Pole, Mauna Kea in Hawaii, and Kitt Peak in Arizona.

The Bottom Line

Starting Balance:	\$7455.87
Deposits/Credits:	
Membership:	559.00
Donations (EOC)	20.00
Bank interest	3.37
Calendars (sold 36)	49.00
Total :	631.37
Accounts/Paid:	
Total:	0.00
Net Account Balance:	\$8087.24
Petty cash drawer:	\$100.00
Cash Balance:	\$8187.24

Membership: 95

New Members:

Chester Orban, Fremont, NH
Rick Walters, Meredith, NH
Gary Doody, Goffstown, NH

★ Ken Charles
 NHAS Treasurer 2009



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

DEADLINE January 2010 Issue: 5 PM January 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:

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 Attn: Treasurer

Send E-mail to:

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Use our web site:

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

This month's contributors:

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NHAS Upcoming Events

Event	Date	Time	Location
Discovery Center Public Sky Watch	January 8 2010	7:00 PM	McAuliffe-Shepard Discovery Center, Concord NH
Coffee House Night	January 15	5:00 PM	YFOS
Astro 201 Workshop: Photometry	January 15	7:00 PM	Philips Exeter Academy, Exeter NH
NHAS Business Meeting	January 22	7:30 PM	St. Anselm College, Manchester NH
Discovery Center Public Sky Watch	February 5	7:00 PM	McAuliffe-Shepard Discovery Center, Concord NH
Coffee House Night	February 12	5:00 PM	YFOS
NHAS Business Meeting	February 19	7:30 PM	McAuliffe-Shepard Discovery Center, Concord NH
Cub Scout Pack 75 Sky Watch	March 4	7:00 PM	2010 Bow Community Building, Bow NH
Discovery Center Public Sky Watch	March 5	7:00 PM	McAuliffe-Shepard Discovery Center, Concord NH
Coffee House Night	March 12	5:00 PM	YFOS
NHAS Business Meeting	March 19	7:30 PM	St. Anselm College, Manchester NH