



## Market Square Day

### President's Message

The first half of 2010 is now closed and I am proud to report that it was a very good one for NHAS. In January, I outlined initiatives and what follows is a status of each

**Infrastructure**—An updated version to our Website was released which was designed to be more public facing and easily accessible by the membership. EOC and Web team spent many long hours looking at the content and how to best present them to our members, public, and educators. They did a fantastic job with a large collaborative effort.

**Expanding our Outreach**—The Aerospacefest 2010 event was a huge success that required months of planning. NHAS has also been contacted by some school systems to assist in Astronomy curriculum and to even help them use their own facilities. Finally, the Library Telescope program continues to expand and get visibility from both inside and outside New Hampshire.

**Streamlining communications**—We started to investigate ways to communicate other than email, which can sometimes be overwhelming for the membership. While the forums are good, a good portion of the membership prefers not to use them. This is an area that we will focus on for the second half of the year including possible utilization of facebook.

**Membership Contribution**—What is nice about being president is that it allows one to see and appreciate the hard work of our members. We have a very dedicated and passionate group of people who

completely enjoy working with the public. The number of booked sky watches has increased this year and some members are proactively creating their own events. Notable events include Aerospacefest 2010 and Portsmouth Market Day.

The second half of year has now started and we will continue to work on projects and achieve goals in these areas. Some of these include potential automation of inventory via the Website, membership in the Astronomical League, and better ways to communicate internally. The officers will start discussing these projects at our Q3 officer meeting.

Finally, thank you for a great first half of the year with your hard work and dedication to our mission. I am looking forward to a great second half of the year. Enjoy your summer!

Clear Skies,

★ Rich DeMidio  
NHAS President 2010

### Highlights for This Month

Compared to last month's hectic public event calendar, this month was relatively calm. We only had two events (aside, of course from our first Friday of the Month sky watch at the Discovery Center): a sky watch at the Madison Library, and Market Square Day in Portsmouth.

Overcast skies continue to be a problem for observing activities, but we did get an excellent report on the latest of Robert McNaught's comet discoveries, and some other public outreach events put on by our

members, but not officially on the club calendar.

And we have some belated pictures from NEAF.

★ Paul Winalski  
NHAS Secretary 2010

### Madison Library Sky Watch, Madison NH, 11 June

The Clear Sky Chart was iffy, but I decided to drive the two hours to Madison, because I know they have superb dark skies when it's clear, and I've had a lot of fun at past Madison Old Home Week sky watches, and they're one of our library telescope sites.

I arrived at the Library midway through **Marc Stowbridge's** excellent lecture on how to use the library scope, attended by about twelve astronomical disciples (all adults). The sky actually part-way cooperated for us. During dusk we were able to show the three current evening planets—Venus, Saturn, and Mars. Saturn was showing Titan and at least one other (perhaps two other) moons. While the sky was clear it was too bright for DSOs, so I contented myself with views of double stars, both in my 14" TScope and in the library's 4" reflector. We got to see Mizar, Albireo, and Gamma Leonis on the double star front. I also found M13 and M57.

Marc and I spent a lot of time pointing out constellations and star-hopping aids (e.g., "follow the arc to Arcturus").

Alas, very bad dew set in, and it got progressively cloudier as the night progressed.

I think we conclusively demonstrated that, though the Library scope may be small and compact, it can show off a lot of stellar wonders.

Wouldn't you know it—when I got back to Merrimack at 1 AM, sky conditions were steady, clear, dew-free, and exceptionally dark. But I had to get some sleep for Market Day in Portsmouth.

★ Paul Winalski

### Market Square Day, Portsmouth NH, 12 June

Every year at this annual event the city of Portsmouth NH closes off several blocks of Market Street for an all-day festival. The streets are lined with vendor's booths, food stands, and booths for non-profit organizations—NHAS among them.

Having been up very late the previous night at the Madison Library sky watch, I arrived mid-morning for the event. It was raining, and the NHAS contingent (Ted Blank, Ken Charles, Tom Cocchiaro, Don McDaniels, Dave "Rags" Gilmore, Bill Steele) was huddling under the booth canopy, to keep out of the rain. Attendance was very light during the morning, what with the rain.

Thanks to Tom Cocchiaro for all the photos.



No sun—we are not pleased. Ken Charles's telescope Soulshine sits

covered, awaiting the end of the rain.

Around noontime the rain tapered off, and though it remained overcast the rest of the day, a crowd of many thousands of people turned out for the event. Our booth was very busy, with hundreds of visitors stopping by our booth to learn about astronomy, and to peer through the scopes.



Bill Steele offers close-up views of the downtown church steeple.



Yes—that's really what you're seeing in the scope!

I spoke to several educators and librarians who were very interested in our public outreach programs, especially the library telescopes. I also had several members of the public ask me where the nearest public library with a loaner scope was. We need to have a list of

library scopes that we can hand out at events such as this.



Ken Charles and Dave "Rags" Gilmore man the booth. The Newington Library telescope is on the right.



Fortunately, the rain didn't deter all early visitors to our booth!

We had the Newington Library Telescope checked out for the weekend, and it was focused on the weathervane on the downtown church tower. It was an excellent demo of what the library scopes are capable of.

Once the weather cleared, I had my 85mm TeleVue refractor focused on the same object.



Observing the church steeple clock tower through the TeleVue 85mm Refractor.



**Soulshine is happier uncovered, and viewing a distant flagpole, once the rain stopped.**

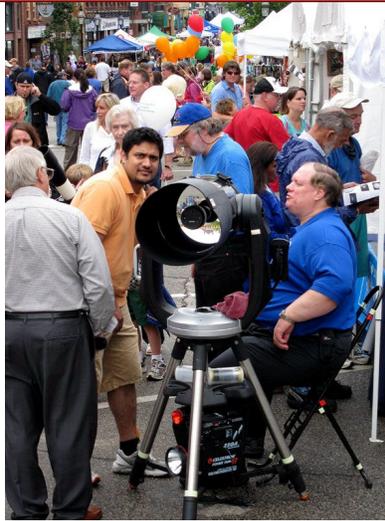


**Anyone for NGC 457 (Lobster Cluster)? A restaurant mascot enjoys the view through Soulshine.**

Ken Charles had his scope Soulshine focused initially on an image of Saturn that we had pasted onto a distant lamppost. Unfortunately, bystanders got in the way, so he focused instead on the Post Office flagpole several blocks distant—we were showing stars, albeit on a flag.



**One of the passers-by avails herself of our literature on solar observing.**



**Ken offering a “mystery view”—try to guess what the scope is focused on!**



**Ted Blank explains the Library Telescope Program. Newington Library scope is focused on the church tower.**

It's too bad we couldn't do any solar observing, but we were able to wow the passers-by with telescopic views, and we got the message out to hundreds of people.

★ Paul Winalski

### **Comet C2009/R1 McNaught, Hampton Beach NH, 15 June**

At about 2:45 I set up with binoculars and the XT10 on Hampton Beach just south of the where the walkway ends. There was a construction trailer providing shade from the beach lights.

I searched for about fifteen minutes in Perseus before admitting I would never find the comet without the copy of the *Sky & Telescope* map I had foolishly left on my desk at home. So I left the scope set up and drove back home to grab the map.

With that aid I was able to trace out Perseus and note that the comet would be close to  $\delta$  Per tonight. After that it took only a moment or two scanning around with the 35mm Panoptic to find the comet.

My first impression was "green!" It was just obviously green, which was very surprising—I did not expect to see color, but I guess ten inches of aperture helps. The nucleus was a tiny bright spot with diffuse illumination all around, no sign of a tail. I switched to the 19mm Panoptic for 63X and the color vanished but I was able to get more differentiation between the bright nucleus and the diffuse coma. The last bump I tried was using a TMB 7mm planetary, for 171X. There was no additional detail visible, but by now it was 3:45 and the sun was clearly coming up almost right below the comet.

I ended the night/morning with a quick look at Jupiter. After several months of observing Saturn in a 600mm refractor, my first impression of Jupiter in the 1200mm reflector was “holy cr\*p, that's sure a lot bigger than Saturn!” It's easy to forget the relative sizes when the two planets are on opposite sides of the Sun.

I may try again tomorrow if it's clear, from a darker place farther north on the coast, now that I'm fairly confident I can find my way around the brighter stars in Perseus. Maybe from a darker location, and a bit earlier before sunrise, I might just see a tail. Maps are good—don't leave them home!

★ Ted Blank

### **Random Acts of Observing: Hampton Beach NH, 31 May**

Fireworks or Saturn? This little girl had no trouble making the choice.

Hampton Beach boardwalk,  
Memorial Day weekend.



★ Ted Blank

## NHAS at NEAF 2010

The 19<sup>th</sup> annual Northeast Astronomy Forum (NEAF) took place on 17 and 18 April at Rockland Community College in Suffern, New York. This is one of (if not **the**) premier trade shows and symposia for amateur astronomy in the USA.

Every year several NHAS members make the trek to Suffern, usually returning with heavier cars and lighter wallets. Our own **Marc Stowbridge** is one of the official presenters of the daytime solar observing session that accompanies the event.

In the spirit of “better late than never”, here are some photos taken by **Ted Blank** of NHAS participation at this event.



**Is Marc explaining an annalemma, or directing the choir?**



**Marc Stowbridge on the solar observing field.**



**Mike Townsend does his bit to help the economy. But will it all fit in the car?**

★ Ted Blank

## NHAS May 2010 Business Meeting

Our Vice President, **Mike Townsend**, presided in the absence of president **Rich DeMidio**.

### President's Report

Public Facing: Astrofest 2010 was a big success. Regarding the sky watch notification process, we had a few slip-ups and need to improve. We continue to have lots of requests for both public and private events.

Internal: The Q2 officer meeting was held on 8 May. We are preparing to go live with the new website. Administrator training needs to be done—we are working out options between the officers and the webmaster. Preparation for Stellafane, our next big internal event this summer, is underway.

Officer Meeting Summary: We will be restricting our email distribution

list to members only next year. There will be a grace period for those non-members currently on the list to rejoin.

NHAS attire: Members are encouraged to pool orders to reduce cost.

\$200 towards the purchase of mementos of appreciation for our guest speakers was approved.

NHAS on Facebook: There was a discussion on its value and the privacy issues. The web team will draw up policies and mechanisms and will report back to the officers.

Astronomy League membership is being considered for next year. A report will follow later.

### Board of Directors

The cataloguing of assets is completed. The next step is to bring them online. The Board is working with the Webmaster on how to bring the asset database online.

### Public Observing

The committee will be expanding from one individual (**Marc Stowbridge**) to three. **Paul Winalski** has joined the Public Observing Committee.

A special thanks from our President to the twenty-three NHAS members who volunteered for Aerospacefest 2010. We had a full weekend format this time around. The Friday sky watch and Saturday daytime event were busy. The Sunday crowd was more sparse.

### Educational Outreach

**Ted Blank** reported that the new website is in the testing phase. Website training for the officers has taken place. Google Calendar and the other new features worked well.

**Rich Schueller** is doing a write-up on the Library Telescope Program for *Astronomy* magazine.

Nashua High School South has a planetarium that is not being used. They are looking for pointers on how to use it. **Matt Amar** will be contacting them.

The EOC meetings are switching back to Thursday.

**Membership**

**Bill Steele** reported that he's putting together a schedule of member training. Feedback from the membership is that YFOS is not a convenient place to hold Astro 101/201 training sessions. He is looking for other places to hold the training.

**Amateur Telescope Making**

**Larry Lopez** reported that about five years ago he brought a 5" refractor to Stellafane with a **Joe Derek** tripod. He would love having it at Stellafane or the fall Messier Marathon.

**YFOS**

**Larry Lopez** reported that orders for propane tank refilling and portapotty pumping have been phoned in.

**Astrophotography**

**Gardner Gerry** showed a video from **Tim Printy** of an ISS transit of the Moon. Gardner is organizing a training session for novice imagers soon.

**Web Site**

**Matt Marulla** has the new website ready to go, pending setting up admin accounts and officer training. We need new text for the front page; the new text will be taken from the brochure.

**Book of the Month**

**John Bishop** presented Sue French's Celestial Sampler. This is a collection of articles from her columns in *Sky & Telescope*. It is aimed at smaller scopes, but it's a good guide for bigger scopes, too. There are good selections of objects, many "off the beaten path".

**Scope of the Month**

**Mike Townsend** presented an APM 107mm APO refractor, 695mm focal length (f/6.5). LZOS (a Russian firm) makes the lenses. It has a sliding dew shield and all lens surfaces are multi-coated. It has a 10:1 dual-speed 3" crayford focuser. There are sleeves to accept 2" or 1-1/4" accessories. The focuser has 5" travel. The scope star tests very well. On the downside, it is heavy for a 4" telescope, and the triplet lens takes a long time to cool off.

**Miscellaneous Business**

We are still working on guest speakers for the rest of the year. **R. P. Hale** will speak on the "2012 Fraud" at our June meeting. **Rich DeMidio** will speak on his observing trip to Australia at the July meeting.

Tim Printy's video of the ISS transit of the Moon was front page at spaceweather.com and was on WBZ-TV's morning news.

Teaching Tool of the Month: **Ted Blank** presented the Moon gazer's wheel (see www.bobcrelin.com).

**Evening Presentation**

**Bob Vellieux** presented his extensive meteorite collection, and gave an in-depth talk on the types of meteorites, where they're found, and tips for the meteorite collector.

**The Bottom Line**

<b>Starting Balance:</b>	<b>\$7018.81</b>
<b>Deposits/Credits:</b>	
Membership:	210.00
Donations:	94.90
Bank interest:	1.48
Aeorspacefest	235.55
Total :	541.93
<b>Accounts/Paid:</b>	
Tom Cocchiaro:	219.98
(posters & mailing)	
PRO-Portsmouth	185.00
PRO-Portsmouth deposit	75.00
Total:	479.98
<b>Net Account Balance:</b>	<b>\$7080.76</b>
<b>Petty cash drawer:</b>	\$100.00
<b>Cash Balance:</b>	<b>\$7180.76</b>

**Membership:** 132

**Donations:**

**Mike O'Shaughnessy** (\$84.98)

**Astrofest Prize Donations:**

**Ted Blank**

**Tom Cocchiaro**

**Chase McNiss**

**Dan Smith**

**Mike Townsend**

**New Members:**

Stijn Brand, Concord NH

Nathan Carle, New Boston NH

Jon Pounds, Center Harbor NH

Kagen Robertson, Greenland NH

Steven Tosi, Derrington NH

Rik Yeames, Epsom NH

★ Ken Charles  
NHAS Treasurer 2010



**2010 Officers**  
 President: Rich DeMidio  
 Vice President: Mike Townsend  
 Treasurer: Ken Charles  
 Secretary: Paul Winalski

**DEADLINE July 2010 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](mailto:info@nhastro.com)

**Use our web site:**

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

**This month's contributors:**

Rich DeMidio, Ted Blank, Tom Cocchiario, Ken Charles

**New Hampshire Astronomical Society**  
**P.O. Box 5823**  
**Manchester, NH 03108-5823**



## NHAS Upcoming Events

Event	Date	Time	Location
NHAS Business Meeting	June 18	7:30 PM	McAuliffe-Shepard Discovery Center, Concord NH
Astro 101: Beginning Astrophotography	June 19	6:00 PM	YFOS
Goffstown Library Sky Watch	June 30	7:00 PM	Goffstown, NH
Discovery Center Sky Watch	July 2	7:00 PM	McAuliffe-Shepard Discovery Center, Concord NH
NHAS Coffee House Night	July 9	5:00 PM	YFOS
Educational Outreach Committee Meeting	July 15	6:30 PM	22 Bridge Street, Concord NH
NHAS Business Meeting	July 23	7:30 PM	St. Anselm College, Manchester NH
Discovery Center Sky Watch	August 6	7:00 PM	McAuliffe-Shepard Discovery Center, Concord NH
Madison Old Home Week Sky Watch	August 11	8:00 PM	Burke Field, Madison NH
Nichols Memorial Library Sky Watch	August 12	8:00 PM	169 Main St, Kingston NH
NHAS Coffee House Night	August 13	5:00 PM	YFOS
NHAS Business Meeting	August 20	7:30 PM	McAuliffe-Shepard Discovery Center, Concord NH