



## LTP Goes International

### President's Message

One interesting side-effect of my interest in science is that I am aware of bigger problems than I would be if I didn't follow the science news. I know that the Yellowstone hot-spot has the ability to cover the Midwest in lava and bury much of North America in volcanic ash—and we are overdue for an eruption. I know the Earth's magnetic field has reversed in the past and that during the reversal we'll get very uncomfortable amounts of radiation—and a reversal is overdue. I know that the Earth gets hit by various kinds of space junk and about once a century gets a big hit like Tunguska, and once a millennium a really big one—and we're overdue for a big one. I know that vast epidemics are an expected and natural result of how the world works—and we're overdue.

Yet somehow, knowing all these things, I feel less worried rather than more worried! I suspect I'm not alone in this apparently paradoxical result of knowledge of possible disasters. I think that is partly because we also know that many of the issues are "overdue" only on a geological time-scale rather than on a human time-scale, or because we not only know about the possible disaster but also know the limits of how bad it could be. But I believe that I feel unworried mostly because knowing is better than not knowing.

Knowledge is power not just in the sense that you know how to do something. It is power in the sense that you can be more confident and less worried; power over one's

reactions and thus power over one's self. That's not the only reason to like science, but it's a good reason!

✧ John Bishop  
NHAS President 2012

### Highlights for This Month

**Marc Stowbridge** gives us an extended report on the Library Telescope Program, which has spread across the globe as far as New Zealand!

There are also reports from several successful public sky watches and a report on observations of some Winter Messier objects.

✧ Paul Winalski  
NHAS Secretary 2012

### Library Telescope Program Update

The club continues to place the scopes donated by Oceanside Photo & Telescope (OPT) to waiting libraries in NH, as well as placing scopes funded by individuals and library "friends". There are 39 or more telescopes in NH as of 2/5, with more going out every week. All the OPT scopes have been finished and Rich is handling the distribution and logistics.

Some updates about the LTP from around the globe:

✧ The LTP close at hand...  
(Maine)

"January 18, 2012

"Dear Marc,

"Galileo once said, 'You cannot teach a man anything; you can only help him discover it himself'. The Library Telescope Program epitomizes this notion. The simple

*act of 'checking out' a telescope, like a book, communicates just how easy and how close we are to connecting with the natural world around us. For Cornerstones of Science, empowering our librarians to help facilitate the daily re-discovery of our universe allows them, and their libraries, to provide compelling pathways of exploration to their communities.*

*"On behalf of Cornerstones of Science, I want to thank Marc Stowbridge and the NH Astronomical Society for helping non-profits, such as ours, discover that telescopes are more than just a machine to look at stars but rather, as instruments that link us to our community and the world around us.*

*Sincerely,*

*Cynthia L. Randall  
Executive Director*

✧ We had a meeting in Portland at the Public Library on Feb 2:



### Librarians check out the LTP scopes (Marc Stowbridge photo)

**Purpose:** To introduce staff to the telescopes, and to brainstorm ways to promote the Library Telescope Program in Maine through our pilot locations in Portland, Brunswick and Raymond.

**Library Partners:** Linda Oliver, Curtis Memorial Library; Barbara Thorpe, Raymond Library and

Linda Putnam, Portland Public Library; plus additional staff

**Speaker/trainer:** Marc Stowbridge, New Hampshire Astronomical Society

**Special Guests:** Rob Burgess, Southern Maine Astronomical Society, and Bill Nave, Program Evaluator

**Facilitators:** Cynthia Randall and Susan Ryan, Cornerstones of Science

Also present: the PPL director, and Lee Grodzins, (who works with Rich S) Founder of CoC. We went out on the roof of the PPL to try out the scopes. The librarians were very pleased and excited!

The ASNNE folks are also on board. My wife and I placed a telescope in Kennebunkport's Graves Library during the last week of January. An ASNNE member is caretaking it, and was very enthusiastic about the program. I suspect others will follow his lead.

So, there are presently 4 libraries with telescopes in Maine, and 20 more ready to start. Some more updates about the LTP from around the globe:

✧ Stephen B. Forbes is modifying five Star Blast 4.5 scopes for a program that is being developed by the North West Florida Astronomy Association.

(<http://www.nwfastro.org/>) Steve continues to be a great help with the documentation.

✧ Mike Cook of the Kalamazoo Astronomy Society <http://www.kasonline.org> reports:

*I wanted to give you a little update on the Kalamazoo Astronomical Society's progress on the Library Telescope Program. First and foremost, I wanted to thank you for all the guidance you've given us in starting this program. We only hope that it takes off here as well as it has in New Hampshire.*

*One regret from here in Michigan, I wish we had the dark skies here that you do ☺ That said, we'll accomplish what we can. Your club has a beautiful program, and has offered it to any club that is willing.*

*The program is made easy, since all documentation and steps needed are on your website. What a gift!*

*The program has been presented and accepted by our board, and is awaiting the finishing touches on the proposal to our first library. Our board has agreed upon the purchasing of two telescopes, which will be placed in separate libraries. The board loved the idea, and some of the board members signed up on the spot to either help out or become foster parents! It was great!*

*Personally, finding out about the program and working on proposals has been an absolute joy! The potential for this is truly exciting, which makes the entire process so much fun. When you're doing what you love, you don't work a day in your life!*

*Our plan is to approach each library with our proposal within the next two weeks, followed by the purchasing and modifying of the telescopes. All it will depend on is which libraries accept, which is hopefully all of them! I appreciate your time, and wish you continued success on your library program as well!*

*Sincerely,*

*Mike Cook  
Kalamazoo Astronomical Society  
Michigan*

An update: "The first library has accepted the offer, and we're currently waiting word on the second library. Hopefully we'll hear soon, there's going to have to be a modification party after waiting to receive the scopes" Portage Lake District Library is, I think, the first library on their list.

✧ The University Lowbrow Astronomers of Ann Arbor, MI are working on their own LTP and have been coordinating with us.

✧ Mathew J. Wedel says, "Our efforts to start a library telescope program here in Claremont (Ca) are moving forward." I've been in touch with him about details about our LTP.

✧ From Canada:

Please see the attached message sent out by the Sheep River Library (which is located in Turner Valley, Alberta) regarding the Library Telescope Program. It was a very successful evening. We will be presenting the second telescope to the Olds Municipal Library on October 21<sup>st</sup>. If all goes well, and it looks very promising, more libraries will be commencing the program over the winter.

Regards,

Katherine

*The Launch of the first Library Telescope Project in Canada, by the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada, was held at Sheep River Library last Friday. Katherine Peterson presented the telescope to the library and explained how the concept started in New Hampshire several years ago. Subsequently, many libraries across the States have adopted this learning project.*

*Having been recognized provincially for innovative programming and the SRL mission of being a lifelong learning centre for the community, the society thought this project would be a perfect fit for the Diamond Valley communities.*

*Following a demonstration to a large crowd on how to use the telescope, a talk was given on "the Night Sky". Several telescopes were set up in the park so that attendees could see various stars. Many of the youth in attendance were pretty excited to see Jupiter with three moons on one side and one on the other. Line-ups at the various telescopes lasted for quite some time and many families have signed up to borrow the telescope. The lending period is one week.*

*Astronomy enthusiasts might want to take out some of the new books related to this subject.*

✧ Sandy, who lives in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan, has started modifications on a telescope for her local library. She is not affiliated with an astronomy club, I think, but thought it was a good idea and started off on her own! I sent her

some of the harder to find bits and pieces.

✧ The Levin Stargazers in New Zealand have placed their first telescope!

<http://www.levinstargazers.org.nz>

There are many more participating clubs and libraries out there. I'll keep you posted. The NHAS is getting to have quite an impact on world astronomy. Who'd a thunk it?!

✧ Marc Stowbridge

### Discovery Center Sky Watch, Concord NH, 3 February 2012

Our "first Friday of the month" sky watch and telescope clinic for the McAuliffe-Shepard Discovery Center took place as scheduled on 3 February. Lots of NHAS members present at the event: **John Bishop, Ted Blank, Stijn Brand, Gardner Gerry, John Rose, Bob St. Pierre, Mike Townsend, Paul Winalski.**

✧ Paul Winalski

### Peabody Mill Environmental Center Sky Watch, Amherst NH, 4 February 2012

The sky watch took place as scheduled, starting more or less at sunset, when the only objects visible were the Moon and Venus, later joined by Jupiter. Many families stopped by as they were leaving the daytime activities at the P MEC event.

We had trouble during the first hour with clouds, but it cleared up very nicely later on. We set up in the parking lot outside the Environmental Center. It was decently dark except for one floodlight, which fortunately was pointed at the building and therefore wasn't much of an issue. Tall trees make for a horizon visibility problem. Over the course of the evening I showed the Moon, Venus, Jupiter, Polaris, M42, Sigma Orionis, Castor, W Orionis, NGC 457, and the Pleiades. It was an early evening—we were packing up by 7 PM.

NHAS members participating: **Don Byrne, Melinda Byrne, Gardner Gerry, Ed Ting, Mike Townsend, Paul Winalski.**

Aisha Mitchell was very pleased with how it went and wants to schedule another sky watch for later in the year. She is looking for a more wide open field for us to set up in.

✧ Paul Winalski

### Messier Objects

On Saturday February 4<sup>th</sup> I had a quick observing session in my driveway with my 100mm Orion Astroview refractor. I had only three Messier objects as my targets. My driveway has a lot of light pollution, so I was not sure what to expect. I used a 32mm TV plossl (19X, 2.7 degrees field of view) to locate objects and then observed them with a 12mm Radian (50X, 1.2 degrees field of view).

**M47:** I had seen this object before through my 8 inch dobsonian, but the view through the smaller refractor with the wider field of view did not disappoint. A nice open cluster with a nice double star, with stars of about equal brightness in the middle. If I looked it up correctly, the double star is Struve 1121, which is separated by 7 arcseconds.

**M46:** Not much here compared to views in the 8 inch. Either the refractor is too small to see much in this object, or the light pollution was too much. I could see a few faint stars, but not much else. More interesting was another pretty double star that I accidentally caught nearby: Struve 1138. These stars are close to the same brightness and are separated by 17 arcseconds.

**M50:** This was a new one for me. A faint little cluster, but a pretty one. It is well described in the book 'Turn Left at Orion' as having a flat Y-shape. Maybe 15-20 stars were visible.

✧ Stijn Brand

### Dunbarton Public Library Sky Watch, Dunbarton NH, 7 February 2012

About thirty people showed up for this event. As the Clear Sky Chart predicted, the early clouds dissipated and we had clear skies during the second half of the sky watch. Even during the cloudy period we were able to show Jupiter and Venus. I had the TeleVue 85mm refractor displaying a 20X view through a Guan Sheng wide-angle eyepiece for the entire evening. In the 14" TScope I showed M42, R Leporis, M35, and the Perseus Double Cluster. The site was quite dark (thanks to a neighbor for cooperating and turning off their porch light), but with the full Moon it wasn't possible to see any of the dimmer deep-sky objects. The Dunbarton Library Telescope was on the field as well.

✧ Paul Winalski

I showed Jupiter, Venus, Luna, Castor and a high magnification view of the Trapezium with the E star showing nicely. Telescope was the Takahashi FSQ-106N @ f/8.

✧ Gardner Gerry

### Gilmanton School Sky Watch, Gilmanton NH, 10 February 2012

The sky gods seem to have had it in for this event, which was originally scheduled for December.

The skies defeated us again—almost. Those who arrived early were able to catch Jupiter in the clouds—it was too overcast for the Galilean moons to be visible, but they at least did get to see the planet. **Rich DeMidio** gave an extended version of the indoor presentation to an audience of about thirty.

I hope we get asked back so that we can show them what a real sky watch is like.

✧ Paul Winalski

### NHAS January 2012 Business Meeting

The January business meeting was held at St. Anselm College on 13

January 2012, our President, **John Bishop**, presiding.

### President's Report

Every year we say, "We should have started earlier on this..."

So it's time to start planning for this year's big activities:

- NEFAF
- MSDC's AeroSpaceFest
- Library Telescopes
- Officers' Quarterly meetings
- "How to buy a scope" before Christmas

### Board of Directors

Thanks to **John Rose** for a good job on the Board over the past three years. There will be a board meeting in the first quarter of 2012. **Joe Derek** has not gotten back to the Board about the YFOS condition study.

### Educational Outreach

**Rich Schueller** reported that he, **Gardner Gerry**, and **Scott McCartney** attended the latest EOC meeting.

Rey Center update:

- A sign will be posted in Waterville Valley about the sky watch.
- We only have primary astronomers for the first four months. We need back-ups for all of them.
- The events need to be put on the NHAS website calendar.
- **Matt Amar** is now coordinating the Rey Center sky watches.
- Emphasis is on getting the word out!

AeroSpaceFest 2012 is on May 5. We need volunteers to help coordinate events.

NEFAF will be this fall. Money is tight. We need volunteers (and money). We will have a tent, solar observing, a sky watch, and maybe vendors.

Library Telescope Program Update: We have a design for the plaque on the scopes donated by Oceanside Photo and Telescope (OPT).

**Marc Stowbridge** said that we have lots of extra parts from the LTP. Please take home the eyepiece

containers and various screws from the scopes.

### Pubic Observing

**Paul Winalski** reports that the Alton Central School sky watch was very well attended—100+ people. Paul was the only NHAS member present, and showed Jupiter and M45.

Our First Night event in Portsmouth was a big success.

We have a lot of public sky watches scheduled for February and March!

### Membership

**Bill Steele** was not present, but John relayed his message that if you have a workshop you'd like to present, or would like NHAS to present, let him know.

### Astrophotography

**Gardner Gerry** reported that there has been bad weather, so not much is going on. See the Pictures forum at the NHAS website.

### Miscellaneous Business

We need guest speakers for all of 2012. Contact John Bishop if you have a prospective speaker.

**Larry Lopez** needs to organize the Messier Marathon.

### Scope of the Month

**Gardner Gerry** presented the Farpoint "Farsight" binocular mount. It is really sturdy metal, as opposed to the usual plastic.

### Book of the Month

**Melinde Byrne** presented Trasiting Exoplanets, by Carole A Haswell, and The Exoplanet Handbook, by Michael Perryman.

### Evening Presentation

**Ed Ting** gave an updated version of his presentation on webcam astrophotography.

### The Bottom Line

<b>Starting Balance:</b>	<b>\$13158.63</b>
<b>Deposits/Credits:</b>	
Membership:	540.00
Donations:	825.00
Bank interest:	0.99
Calendar sales:	35.00
Total :	1400.99
<b>Accounts/Paid:</b>	
Rackspace Cloud:	<b>21.92</b>

Total:	<b>21.92</b>
<b>Net Account Balance:</b>	<b>\$14537.70</b>
<b>Petty cash drawer:</b>	\$100.00
<b>Cash Balance:</b>	<b>\$14637.70</b>

**EOC Share:** **6622.43**

**Membership:** 108

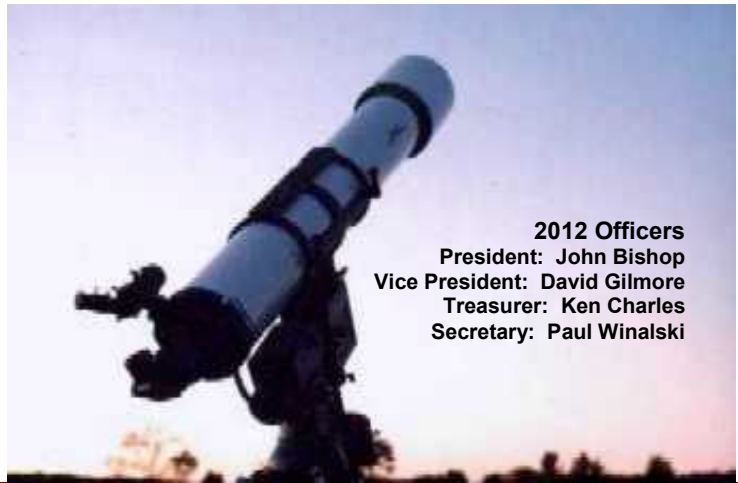
### New Members:

**Drew Shorey**, Meredith NH  
**Michael Pachomski**, Rochester NH  
**Sandra Woodbury Hicks**, Rochester NH  
**Carl Speltz**, Portsmouth NH  
**Robert St. Pierre**, Goffstown NH  
**Ramaswamy**, Nashua NH

### Donations:

Reeds Ferry PFA	100.00
Cornerstones of Science	325.00 LTP
Carroll County Altrusa Foundation	100.00 EOC
Bedford Public Library	300.00 LTP

\* Ken Charles  
 NHAS Treasurer 2012



**2012 Officers**  
**President: John Bishop**  
**Vice President: David Gilmore**  
**Treasurer: Ken Charles**  
**Secretary: Paul Winalski**

**DEADLINE March 2012 Issue: 5 PM March 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:**

[info@nhastro.com](mailto:info@nhastro.com)

**Use our web site:**

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

**This month's contributors:**

John Bishop, Marc Stowbridge, Gardner Gerry, Stijn Brand, Ken Charles

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## NHAS Upcoming Events

Event	Date	Time	Location
Rey Center Sky Watch	February 18	6:30 PM	Curious George Cottage, Waterville Valley NH
Antrim Elementary School Sky Watch	February 23	6:30 PM	Antrim Elementary School, Antrim NH
Coffee House Night	February 24	5:00 PM	YFOS
YFOS Orientation	February 25	6:30 PM	YFOS
Astro 201: Carbon Stars	February 25	7:30 PM	YFOS
Discovery Center Sky Watch	March 2	7:00 PM	McAuliffe-Shepard Discovery Center, Concord NH
Sidewalk Astronomy	March 3	6:00 PM	Market Square, Portsmouth NH
Highland-Goffe's Falls School Sky Watch	March 7	7:00 PM	2012 Goffs Falls Road, Manchester NH
Educational Outreach Committee Meeting	March 15	6:30 PM	Manchester City Library, Manchester NH
NHAS Business Meeting	March 16	7:30 PM	St. Anselm College, Manchester NH
Astro 201: Titan Mount	March 17	6:30 PM	YFOS
Telescope Mod Party, Part III	March 18	10:00 AM	McAuliffe-Shepard Discovery Center, Concord NH