

Observer Staff
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THE NHAS OBSERVER

Newsletter of the New Hampshire Astronomical Society



Volume 2000 No. 9

"All the news that fits"

September 2000

The NHAS Observatory

President's Message

This month, **Larry Lopez** will update us on the progress of the NHAS observatory at YFOS (Young's Farm Observing Site) in Hillsborough, NH. The observatory is the largest project ever attempted by NHAS, but you'd never know it, given how smoothly it has gone due to the expert efforts of **Joe Derek, Larry Lopez, Chase McNiss**, and many others. Come to the next meeting and hear about this great new addition to NHAS.

Note: The CCD talk, to be given by John Blackwell and David Speltz, has been moved to the Oct 13 meeting at CMP due to a scheduling conflict.

★ Ed Ting

Public Observing Highlights

It's Skywatch Season!

It's September, and the kids are back in school. This means one thing to NHAS members: it's Skywatch Season!

For those of you who are new at this, the club puts on skywatches for local schools (after sunset, of course) in cooperation with teachers and parents. These events are usually very well-received and a lot of fun. Check our web page at <http://www.nhastro.com> once in a while to see if there's one in your area that you'd like to attend.

An e-mail goes out to the membership one day before the event, announcing the event, location, time, contact person, and directions.

Generally, a second e-mail goes out by noon on the day of the event, announcing a go/no-go decision. If the second e-mail does not appear, you can assume the event is a "go."

Some general rules apply:

* Get there early. Ideally, you want to be set up just before the kids start arriving. Setting up during the middle of an event can be hectic; since as soon as the kids see you bringing out equipment, they will swarm around you.

* Some of these events are quite crowded. Teachers usually do a great job of keeping order, but keep in mind the kids are generally very excited and tend to be a little hyperactive.

* Keep it simple. If Saturn, Jupiter, or the moon are up, stay with these objects. NGCxxx or "Otto Struve Double xy" may be fascinating to us, but the kids may not agree (yet!)

* If you have more than one telescope, bring the less expensive one. Leave your \$300 eyepieces at home.

* If you have a Newtonian, remind the crowd once every few minutes where you are supposed to look. This keeps kids from scraping the ground as they try to look through the back of your scope.

* If you must use a stepstool or ladder, ask the kid to put his/her hand on your shoulder while they look, or gently steady them with your hands. Kids have a tendency to topple over while up in the air with one or both eyes closed.

Remember, these are your events. The kids and teachers look to you for guidance and supervision. Many people remark that these skywatches are the most rewarding parts of being an NHAS member (there is nothing like hearing the excitement of a kid seeing Saturn for the first time.) We need your telescopes and your expertise, so brush up on your finding skills and I'll see you out there!

★ Ed Ting

Stellafane Deja-Vu Again

Before the memories fade and the leaves fall on the fields of Breezy Hill, let's take one more look at Stellafane 2000 and the NHAS members who partook of that congenial convention. All photos are courtesy of **Bert Bingel**.

Members camped in about the same spot as in years past, but had a fine tent for shelter from the heat of the day.

New Tent on the Old Spot



NHAS members swarmed over the goodies for sale at the swap tables. Early birds got the best selection.

Drooling over Optics for Sale



(Cont'd. on page 2)

Feature Story

NHAS on the Radio.....Page 2

Stellafane Deja-Vu

(cont'd. from page 1)

Lots of NHAS members clustered together for photo-ops. Here's one of **Larry and Linda Lopez, Ed Ting, and Joel Harris.**

Larry, Linda, Ed, and Joel



Bert Bingel came across a former NHAS member during the event.

Roger Leighton AKA Willie Nelson



Andy Jaffe offered a photo-op with a telescope, but we're not sure whose scope.

Andy Jaffe with a Big Dob



ATM True Grit

The Merry Mirror Makers met on Aug. 13 and 20 to work on their projects. Ed Dougherty showed up with his brand new Focus Wagon! The next meeting is tentatively on Sep. 24.

★ Larry Lopez

NHAS on the Radio

Jeff DeTray is to be on WBZ radio. He writes: "I am scheduled to be a guest on WBZ radio's Jordan Rich show during the 1 am hour of Saturday, September 17. Jordan has invited me to discuss amateur astronomy and astronomy in general. He has at least a mild interest in the subject and has occasionally discussed astronomy on his show.

"Fortunately, the Moon, Saturn, and Jupiter will be nicely lined up in the eastern sky on the 17th, so that's a convenient sky sight to talk about. And since many people are unaware that the Moon is visible in the daytime, I will point out that you'll be able to see it in broad daylight Saturday morning if you look to the west. I hope it's clear somewhere in WBZ's 38-state listening area!

"I have a number of ideas for topics to discuss, but I would appreciate your suggestions about where to lead the discussion, assuming I'll have any say in the matter."

YFOS Observatory

Larry Lopez reported that more work has been completed this month on the club observatory roof, soffits, and siding. He reports that we can thank the following people for their helping hands:

Chase McNiss, Joe Derek, Gerald Le Bourdais & Son, Rick Hedrick, Renato Salvador, Paul Norris, Bob Sletten, John McLean, and Larry Lopez.

At the Aug. 20 work session, we had our first accident when **Herbert Bubert** managed to get a nail in his foot. He then went to Peterborough for a Tetanus shot. He came back (with his telescope mind you) to help us clean up.

Another work session was planned for Saturday, Sep. 9.

★ Larry Lopez

Photography in Focus

The Photography Comm. will meet again on Sep. 22 at YFOS in Hillsborough. During the meeting, I will show my initial attempts to do video photography. After the meeting, if it is clear, we will do some observing and astrophotography.

Everyone is welcome to join us. Hope to see you there.

★ Chase McNiss

NHAS Observer (E-mail Version) Update

By now, most of you are receiving the online version of the *NHAS Observer* newsletter. If so, we hope you're enjoying it! If not, you don't know what you've been missing. The e-mail version has color photos and live links, and you get it sooner than the p-mailed issues. It also helps us out (less time spent on copying, folding and stapling, less cost for postage).

We are transitioning the membership to the e-mail newsletter. Note that starting January, 2001, all members will be on the e-mail version, unless you specify otherwise. If you must have a printed newsletter, please let the Editor know, by e-mail, printed mail, or phone.

Requirements: Internet/e-mail access, Adobe Acrobat reader (version 3.0 and higher.) The reader is free for download off Adobe's web site at www.adobe.com. Also, I will have a copy on a Zip disk for people to borrow. The file size is expected to be between 200K-400K for each month's issue.

★ Ed Ting

Donations

NHAS thanks the following new members for their financial support:

John Reid \$20
Tom Jacobs \$42.50
Joan Hamilton Cass \$10

The Bottom Line

The 2-foot x 16-foot observatory nears completion without any additional expense, thanks to **John McLean** for donating the metal roof. So far this year we have spent about \$3800 on observatory materials.

The costs are low because of the dedication of the staff building it. **Joe Derek, Larry Lopez, Chase McNiss, Joel Harris, Renato Salvador** and a faithful few others have moved the building from a pile of wood to a split-level roll-off roof observatory for our 16-in. reflector. When you see them, thank those that gave up their summer Saturdays to this project.

Our Treasury remains at about \$5500, and there we no major transactions last month. Our membership has soared to 173.

2001 Dues Are Due

The new member year is just a month away, so we will be collecting year 2001 dues at the September and October meetings.

You can also renew by sending a check to: NHAS, P.O. Box 1001, Manchester, NH 03105. Make all dues checks to NHAS. Dues are unchanged at \$15 a year.

For magazine subscription renewals make the check directly to the publisher. For *Sky and Telescope* it is Sky Publishing, and the rate is still \$29.95, for *Astronomy* magazine it is Kalmbach Publishing, and the rate is still \$29.00.

★ Mike Stebbins

Looking Back at Last Month

Opening Remarks. Ed Ting circulated various fliers and newsletters, then took names for the e-mail newsletter. He also welcomed new members and let them introduce themselves.

Book of the Month. **Larry Lopez** brought in *Star Lore*, a book about origins of star names and legends.

Scope of the Month. Ed displayed the Celestron scope donated in memory of **David M. Sallies** and noted that it was in excellent condition. He also showed the 8-in. f/6 Dobsonian that Michael Neece, recently of CMP, donated. It needed a secondary mirror. The original one had

fallen and chipped the primary. Larry was to determine the repairs needed. Ed also brought in a Pentax 76 mm f/6.7 apochromatic refractor obtained for a telescope review. It offered very good optics but was expensive at about \$1500.

Committees. **ATMs:** Larry Lopez said they were to meet on Aug. 13 and continue work on their mirrors.

Photo Comm: **Chase McNiss** said that several members met at YFOS but it rained. The next meeting was to be there on Aug. 18.

Web: Back issues of newsletters were now being posted to the web site.

Membership: **John Pappas** asked for suggestions for projects.

YFOS. A work session was planned for Sat. Aug. 12.

Stellafane. Chase reported that they had great observing on Friday night and Saturday was good until it rained. **Jeff Carter, Joel Harris, and Barbara O'Connell** helped with the club canopy, Joel was a great cook, and **Joe Derek** received awards for his scope.

Public Observing. Ed Ting reported that it was a quiet month with just one public session at Stellafane. The CMP Skywatch suffered from poor seeing.

Treasury. **Mike Stebbins** put our account balance at \$5500 with \$3800 spent on the observatory. The books have been audited. Member renewals were due in October and donations were still coming in. He polled members about the e-mail newsletter and response was all positive.

Evening Program. **Mal Cameron**, Education Director at CMP was the guest speaker. He explained several programs at CMP including a new Space Shuttle mock-up.

At one point he mentioned a few cautions that he used for public audiences, like don't take flash photos of the dome, at which point **Bob Sletten** took a flash photo of the dome. Bob!!



Mal then presented the planetarium's program "Through the Eyes of Hubble" about NASA's Space Telescope. The program began with an interactive multimedia quiz and then proceeded to a very impressive multimedia presentation on the Hubble Telescope and its discoveries and accomplishments over the past 10 years.

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>>DEADLINE FOR October 2000 ISSUE: 5 PM Oct. 6<<

E-mail articles to Editor. Call to schedule late submissions.

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Write to us:

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Attn: Treasurer

Send Email to:

Treasurer@nhastro.com

Use our web site:

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

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NHAS Upcoming Events

NHAS Observatory, Sep. 15, St. Anselm's

Event	Date	Time	Location
VA Skywatch	Sep. 11	7:30 pm	Veteran's Admin. Bldg., Manchester, NH
Sep. Club Meeting	Sep. 15	7:30 pm	St. Anselm's College, Goffstown, NH
Photo Comm.	Sep. 22	7:30 pm	YFOS, Hillsborough, NH
ATM Comm.	Sep. 24?	3 pm	Lopez Grindorium, New Boston, NH
Loudon Skywatch	Sep. 26	7:30 pm	Loudon Elementary School, Loudon, NH
Coffee House	Sep. 29	Dusk	YFOS, Hillsborough, NH
Rundlett Skywatch	Oct. 2	7:30 pm	Rundlett Middle School, S. Concord, NH
CMP Skywatch	Oct. 6	7:30 pm	Planetarium, Concord, NH
Oct. Club Meeting	Oct. 13	7:30 pm	Planetarium, Concord, NH