

THE NHAS OBSERVER

Newsletter of the New Hampshire Astronomical Society



Volume 2000 No. 11

"All the news that fits"

November 2000

An Eyeful of Eyepieces

President's Message

A Guide to Selecting Eyepieces for Your Telescope



This month I will be giving a talk on selecting eyepieces. A complete survey of the current market will be presented, with a discussion of the advantages and disadvantages of each design.

The market has changed drastically since the last time this talk was presented, so come and see the updates!

★ Ed Ting

Public Observing Highlights

On October 23rd, several NHAS club members showed up at Mountain View Middle School in Goffstown, NH. Attendance was estimated at around 150 kids and parents.

Teacher Sue Bracy would like to extend her thanks to the enthusiastic and knowledgeable NHASers who showed the fall objects to the children. A number of people stayed the entire evening, going from scope to scope.

Late in the evening, Saturn and Jupiter rose over the rooftop of the school. Images of the planets were considered watery and wavy to the experienced observers among us, but the crowd loved the views, especially that of Saturn.

Two days later on Oct. 25, our largest school-based skywatch of the year occurred at Reed's Ferry in Merrimack, NH. As expected, attendance was very high, estimated at near 350 people.

Luckily, NHAS member turnout was very high as well – at the peak, I counted 18 (yes, eighteen!) NHAS telescopes set up in the field. This, coupled with the excellent organization and crowd control measures used by the Reed's Ferry staff, never made any of us feel crowded or rushed.

Club member **David Speltz** bravely brought his 20-in. Obsession Dobsonian to the skywatch, effectively drawing most of the crowds away from our itty-bitty 8-to-10-in. telescopes down in the grass. As with Mountain View, several visitors stayed late to watch Saturn and Jupiter rise over the treetops in the field.

A wonderful time was had by all. Teacher **Barb DeVore** wished to express her gratitude to NHAS, and especially those members who showed up that evening.

On Thursday, Nov. 2nd, four NHAS members made the trek up to Colby Sawyer College in New London, NH for a skywatch presented to **Lee Wilder's** Earth Science class. As a bonus, several townspeople had found out about the event and showed up as well. Total attendance was about 40-45 people.

Again, **Dave Speltz's** 20-in. Obsession was a big hit, although we had to remove the scope's shroud to keep the wind from blowing it around. The highlight of this evening was watching **Larry Lopez** actually admit he was cold (I believe the exact quote was "I am having trouble generating bodily warmth") standing in the windy field wearing shorts and a T-shirt in 30 degree F weather!

A skywatch scheduled for Thursday Nov. 9 was called off due to rain.

★ Ed Ting

Thanks from Mountain View

The following note of thanks came from Sue Bracy, a teacher at the Mountain View Middle School in Goffstown.

"Please send this to all your members who attended the skywatch at Mountain View Middle School in Goffstown on October 23.

"We thank you so much for your expertise and adventure in being at our school for the *perfect* night to see stars, constellations, Venus, Jupiter, Saturn, and other grand items! You people are definitely one of a kind, devoted to educating the public about 'what's out there,' bringing your equipment, manning them, and then giving us the info about it all.

"The kids and adults who were there gained tremendously on your behalf! We thank you so much for your evening out with us!"

Feature Story

Election for 2001.....Page 2

Election for 2001

It's that time of the year again. Nominations for the 2001 officer corps will be taken at the November and December meetings. The election will be held at the December meeting. If you would like to run for office (or know someone who would), please let us know. Here are the positions you can run for:

President

Vice President

Secretary

Treasurer

Board Member

The Board Member position is a 3-year seat, the others are for one year.

Details will be presented at the meeting. If you would like to take a more active role in NHAS, here is your chance!

[If you are easily confused or don't know how to read a ballot, there are some people in Florida who would like to talk to you.

We promise to conduct a quick and fair election. It's quick and fair because we don't usually get more than one person running for each office, so it's fairly quick to figure out who to vote for on the first ballot. – MAF]

Telescope First Light

I finished my telescope on the evening/morning of Nov 7/8, while waiting for the election returns to come in. The scope moves very smoothly on both axes and can be tracked up through about 150X with little difficulty. The mirror is slightly undercorrected and has a tiny "hill" in the middle, but these do not adversely affect image quality.

Ed Ting's Latest Telescope



So, this six-month project has come to an end for me for now. I'm already looking at upgrading to an aluminum tube, but this will wait. For now, I'll take the scope to star parties and show people what can be done with you own two hands.

★ Ed Ting

ATM True Grit

We had a good turnout at the latest mirror making session. **Dan Smoody** made his pitch lap. He polished for about 15 minutes and, after testing, determined that it had a turned-up edge. This is the same as **Larry Lopez'** mirror. **Mike Stebbins'** mirror had a turned-down edge and he will polish for a while longer.

Ed Dougherty and Dave Shelton

provided technical advice. The new Ronchi grating tester worked like a charm.

Ed Ting came to show off his new scope (which looked really nice). **Brent Sadler** came for general building information and moral support.

★ Larry Lopez

Photography in Focus

There will be no meeting of the NHAS Photo Committee for the months of November and December. The next meeting of the group will take place on January 19th at the New Boston, Whipple Free Library. The meeting will start at 7:30 PM and all NHAS members are invited to attend.

See you next year,

★ Chase McNiss

YFOS Observatory

The YFOS CeeBees have reported more progress on the site. The telescope pier now has a one-inch thick aluminum plate on which several people can dance without loss of karma.

The door was installed (oops who has the keys?). A trench was dug for power and communications cables between the warming hut and the observatory. The cables were buried and internal wiring was begun.

Joel Harris's lock-down mechanism for the roof is installed and the siding was finished by moonlight! **Bob Sletten**

installed the new heater and it seems to work just fine.

Many thanks to **John McLean, Joe Derek, Joel Harris, Paul Norris, Renato Salvador, Gerry LeBourdais, Chase McNiss, Bob Sletten, and Marc Stowbridge.**

★ Larry Lopez

Donations

NHAS thanks the following members for their donations and financial support. Whether large or small, they are greatly appreciated.

David Michaud \$100

Andy Jaffe \$25

David DeSimone \$100

Gregory Bakos \$5

David Davenport \$20

Marc Stowbridge donated the internal wire and electrical boxes, outlets and switches.

Larry Lopez donated the wire and conduit between the observatory and warming room.

John Blackwell has donated the following to the club library:

Mars at Last by Mark Washburn

New Horizons in Astronomy by Brandt/Marian

The Amateur Astronomer's Handbook by James Murden

The Story of Astronomy (New Edition) (1977!) by Patrick Moore

Exploring the Universe by Mitchell Beazley

Black Holes - the Edge of Space, the Edge of Time by Walter Sullivan

Atlas of the Heavens by Antonin Becvar, spiral binding removed

Sky Atlas 2000 Laminated Desk Edition by Wil Tirion

Reminder: E-Mail Observer

This is the final reminder that, starting with the January 2001 newsletter, you will get the *NHAS Observer* via e-mail unless you request a printed version.

We realize that some members do not have Internet access or the means to download attachments, or simply prefer to receive the printed version.

(Cont'd. on page 3)

Reminder (cont'd. from page 2)

We are willing to comply with such requests and do not want to inconvenience any member from receiving a copy of the monthly newsletter.

The reasons for the transition (as stated months ago) have been multiple: to reduce or eliminate the monthly burden on volunteers who had been copying and assembling the printed copies, to reduce the monthly cost of printing and mailing to the club, and to provide a high-quality newsletter via high-speed internet delivery for online viewing and personal printing.

From the unsolicited responses of various members over the past few months, all of these goals are being met. While there has been a member or two who has missed receiving an issue, we will do our best to make sure we have 100% coverage. Please do not hesitate to contact the Editor by e-mail or phone if you do not get your newsletter.

★ Michael Frascinella

The Bottom Line

As of Nov. 12, the Treasury stands at \$7450. Membership is now at 95! The only major transactions were some large donations to the Observatory fund.

Notice

I will be closing the year 2000 club books just before the December meeting in order to turn them over to the new Treasurer. Annual statements will be presented at the December meeting. After the books are closed for this year, any transactions done with NHAS will be dated after January 1, 2001. Please conclude all business that has to be done in this calendar year well before the December meeting, specifically any donations you might want to make in this tax year.

★ Mike Stebbins

Looking Back at Last Month

Opening Remarks. Ed Ting welcomed and introduced new members and reminded us about switching to the e-mail newsletter.

Book of the Month. Jim McCarthy mentioned the 2001 *Observer's Handbook* and offered a discount to NHAS through the Keene club.

Scope of the Month. Mike Townsend brought in a Takahashi FC 76 scope, a 76 mm f/8 with fluorite elements, on a Vixen Grand Polaris mount. It was very well color-corrected even on the Moon. The tube has six internal baffles and the tube assembly goes for around \$1375. The club scope went to Mike Pelletier.

Committees. ATMs: On May 14, six people started grinding mirrors. At their recent meeting, they poured pitch lap to begin the polishing phase. Ed Dougherty showed raw footage of Ed Ting slaving over a hot sticky polishing tool. Ed's web site explains all the details.

Photo Comm: Chase McNiss reported that six members were at the Sept. meeting and viewed his astro-video. The next session was to be Oct. 20.

Public Observing. Ed Ting reviewed the list of upcoming Skywatch dates and asked members to help out. Deep sky viewing was said to have been great at the last Coffee House. Astronomy Day at the Mall of NH was rescheduled to Jan. 20, 2001

Treasury. Mike Stebbins reported about \$6200 on hand and several donations this past month. He also took membership renewals.

Evening Program.

David Speltz was delayed on a plane flight so John Blackwell began with a brief introduction to CCD Astronomy.



This hobby is fairly technical and also fairly expensive to get started. In the long run, John felt that it was cheaper compared to the overall cost of film photography.

He then presented a series of beautiful images of various Messier objects and NGC galaxies and star clusters. He gave us several references to more information on CCD imaging. The program ended with an informal Q&A session.

★ Michael Frascinella

(Cont'd. on back page)

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for all of your astronomical product needs

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>>DEADLINE FOR December 2000 ISSUE: 4 PM Dec. 8<<

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

How to Join N.H.A.S.

Write to us:

NHAS
PO Box 1001
Manchester, NH 03105-1001
Attn: Treasurer

Send Email to:

Treasurer@nhastro.com

Use our web site:

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

2000 Officers

President:: Ed Ting President@nhastro.com

Vice Pres.: Barbara O'Connell VP@nhastro.com

Treasurer: Michael Stebbins Treasurer@nhastro.com

Secretary: Michael Frascinella Secretary@nhastro.com

New Hampshire Astronomical Society
PO Box 1001
Manchester, NH
03105-1001

NHAS Upcoming Events

Eyeful of Eyepieces, Nov. 17, St. Anselm's

Event	Date	Time	Location
Nov. Club Meeting	Nov. 17	7:30 pm	St. Anselm's College, Goffstown, NH
Coffee House	Nov. 24	Dusk	YFOS, Hillsborough, NH
ATM Comm.	Nov. 26	3 pm	Lopez Lapidary Lounge, New Boston, NH
CMP Skywatch	Dec. 1	7:30 pm	Planetarium, Concord, NH
Weare Skywatch	Dec. 5	7:00 pm	Weare Middle School, Weare, NH
Dec. Club Meeting	Dec. 15	7:30 pm	Planetarium, Concord, NH