

THE NHAS OBSERVER

Newsletter of the New Hampshire Astronomical Society



Volume 2001 No. 6

"All the news that fits in print"

June 2001

ASTRONOMY DAY RECAP

President's Message

I want to again thank all of the members who participated in this year's Astronomy Day! Although the crowd was smaller than in past years, the weather held for most of the day and it seemed everyone had an enjoyable time. We have a number of left-over Astronomy Day t-shirts. They will be available at the next meeting if anyone is interested.

The evening program for the June 8th meeting was not available at press time. We are working on several possibilities.

Here is what is in the sky this month. Venus reaches greatest western elongation on the morning of June 8th. Mars reaches opposition on June 13th. However due to its orbit, the closest approach for this apparition will occur on June 21st. For those that are early risers, Saturn makes it return to morning sky during the last part of the month. The first solar eclipse of the new millennium occurs on June 21st. Sadly for us, this is a southern hemisphere event. The path of totality passes through southern portions of Africa.

★ John Pappas

Public Observing Highlights

The weather has been spectacularly uncooperative lately. Public observing has been limited to partly cloudy CMP skywatches and Coffee Houses.

At Astronomy Day, four NHAS members waited out the afternoon storm, to find clear skies at night. However, the public didn't stick around for the most part, and only a few people got a look through club members' scopes.

Summertime has traditionally been the slow season for Public Observing. Schools are on vacation, which leaves



only the occasional Boy Scout/Girl Scout type events. Watch the NHAS web site for details.

Keep in mind that our CMP Skywatches are now starting at 9 pm through the Aug. 3rd event. Starting in Sept., we revert back to 7 pm starting times.

A late breaking evening skywatch was scheduled for June 2nd at Wasserman Park in Merrimack, NH (rain-or-shine). Expected attendance was about 70 children and adults.

★ Ed Ting



Photos by Bob Sletten

NHAS Astronomy Day 2001

Saturday May 12 was a warm, partly sunny day and the CMP lawns were peppered with telescopes. The NHAS tent held its ground next to the rocket launching pad. Several unguided missiles (see photo), having spent their charge, descended into our midst several times, carried by the wind.



The Sun put on a good show with numerous sunspot groups and solar prominences.

Feature Story

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ATM True Grit

The ATMs met on Sunday May 20. **Ed Dougherty, Donald Ware, Dave Davenport, Paul Norris, Mike Stebbins, Larry and Linda Lopez** were present and working on their mirrors.



Dave started his mirror at 80 grit. Paul is almost through 120 grit. Mike's mirror is at the final figuring stage and getting closer to the right shape.

The Ronchi/Foucault tester is being rebuilt in the small again. Larry will fix the LED intensity control. Larry and Linda did some support but not much glass pushing.



The next meeting was to be on Sunday, June 3rd from 11 am to 2 pm.

★ Larry Lopez

ATM Photos by Mike Stebbins

Web Downloads

The Northeast Regional Star Party Show is to be held at the Cheshire Fairgrounds, Rt. 12, Keene, N.H on June 8-9. The event offers workshops, a guest speaker

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from NASA, demos, and door prizes. Several NHAS members were going. Go to this web site for details:

<http://www.telescopes-earth.com/StarParty/index.html>

★ Barbara O'Connell

YFOS

On Saturday, May 19. **Joel Harris, Larry Lopez, Bruce Alexander, and Chase McNiss** worked on site.

Joel brought his red, stress-skin roof opener (stress-skin is the type of construction, red is the color of the paint) which Joel, Chase, and Larry installed.

We did some road work, cleaned up the warming room, and mowed the lawn.

We left at 8:15 pm.

Joel Harris returned on May 26 to attach roof braces and chain anchors, and to prepare for attaching the roof chain.



YFOS in Spring, Photo by Chase McNiss

NOTE: We need volunteers to cut the grass every 2 weeks.

The next YFOS work session was set for Saturday June 2 at noon.

★ Larry Lopez

More Astronomy Day

The following photos are from the set submitted by Mike Stebbins.



Bob Sletten and friend at Magnification Demo

The NHAS Observer



Ed Dougherty and his hydrogen-alpha solar scope



Joe "T-Shirt" Derek and 12.5-in. Newtonian

The next photo and the one on page 3 top left are from John Blackwell's web site.



John Pappas and Larry Lopez at indoor exhibit

More Astronomy Day



Joel Harris at the Mirror Grinder

The Bottom Line

The club account balance is at about \$7,700. Astronomy Day t-shirt and coffee mug sales exceeded \$750!

Donations

NHAS thanks the following people:

- Ed Dougherty** \$1.05
- Taylor Cole** \$25.00
- Roger Greenwood** \$1.00

★ Jim Warendo

Looking Back at Last Month

Opening Remarks. John Pappas

welcomed our visitors who introduced themselves. Several members planned to go to the Northeast Astronomical Forum in Suffern, N.Y. on May 5-6.

Book of the Month. **Joe Malinowski** brought two donated books about John Glenn.

Committees. ATMs: **Ed Dougherty** said they had a good turnout. First use of the mirror tester gave excellent results.

Web Comm: **Barbara O'Connell** said the favorite Astronomy Web Sites are now available on nhastro.com.

Photo Comm: **Joe Malinowski** reported a good turnout at he last meeting, at which they compared test astrophotos. The next meeting was to be on May 25th at YFOS.

YFOS. **Jim McCarthy** reported that the Coffee House skies cleared at 10 pm with very good seeing. a work session was set for May 19.

Astronomy Day. Space in the technical school was still not available so we would need to set up outside. **Chase McNiss** would bring the club tent and **Joe Malinowski** would bring another one. Set up was at 9:30 am for the 11 am

This final set of three photos comes from Jim Warendo



Barbara O'Connell and John Pappas at the club tables



An impromptu meeting

to 5 pm event. **Rick Hedrick's** t-shirt design was circulated and orders were taken at the break. **John Pappas** prepared a sign-up sheet for the day's activities.

Treasury. **Jim Warendo** reported a balance of \$7400 and 136 members, and that the liability insurance has been paid.

Magazine subscriptions were about to expire for several members. He urged them to send him their renewals ASAP.

Scope of the Month. Roger Greenwood presented a Discovery 12.5-in. f/5 truss-frame Dobsonian reflector with a mirror rated at 1/10 wave. The mirror cell needed a shim to stop the mirror from shifting, mirror cool down was a few hours, and it had a few other annoying problems. He added a green laser pointer that casts a light beam visible in the dark.

Club Scope: Still with **Mike Pelletier**



John, Jim, and Chase discuss a solar filter

Evening Program. Guest Speaker **Rich DeMidio** presented a talk on "Digital Photography."

Interest was sparked by a photo in a recent S&T issue. It made him wonder if photography with a handheld digital camera was feasible.

He used an Olympus C2000-Z camera with 1/2 to 1/800th second exposures and no B setting for time exposures. (Some new cameras do offer 8 second exposures.) This limited his subject matter to the Moon and large planets.

Rich exhibited sample photos taken in the range of 1/500-1/250th sec. that showed decent detail. Low power eyepieces work best since they had the largest eye relief. Photos of Jupiter, Saturn, and the Moon were impressive for images taken with a handheld camera.

After the meeting many members stayed to discuss the idea further.

★ Michael Frascinella

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

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Notify the Treasurer. Include your full name and new street address. If changing an e-mail address, specify whether you want to add, modify, or delete an e-mail address.

How to Join N.H.A.S.

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NHAS Upcoming Events

Club Meeting, June 8, Planetarium

Event	Date	Time	Location
June meeting	June 8	7:30 pm	Planetarium, Concord, NH
Coffee House	June 22	dusk	YFOS site
ATM Meeting	TBA		Lopez Barn, New Boston, NH
Photo Comm.	TBA		YFOS site
CMP Skywatch	July 6	9:00 pm	Planetarium, Concord, NH
July Meeting	July 13	7:30 pm	St. Anselm, Goffstown, NH