



## and Changes for 2005

Newsletter of the New Hampshire Astronomical Society

Vol. 2005 No. 1

"All the news that fits in print"

January 2005

# Astronomy in IRAQ

## President's Message

Just about every family that has purchased a shiny new department store telescope has said to themselves: "OK, it's out of the box... So, now what?" That's roughly how I feel. No one was more surprised than I at your support for the position of president, especially since I've only been a member of the club for about 6 months! So let me just say at the outset, if at times it seems like I have absolutely no clue what is going on, don't worry, it's only because I actually have no clue as to what's going on.

I am no fan of change, just for the sake of change, so I am in no hurry to do anything differently than is currently working well. Some areas in which I would like to see some progress are, in no particular order:

- **Chase McNiss, Larry Lopez,** others and I have been discussing the installation of bookshelves in the warming hut to host all or part of the club's book and magazine collection. We need to think about ways to prevent books from wandering off on their own, but I think getting the collection more accessible and better used is a higher priority.
- I know the club installed a concrete pad at YFOS some time ago and it didn't come out exactly as desired – maybe it will be time this summer to re-tackle that issue.
- I would really like to see some victories in the war on

mosquitoes! It's a shame that a club with weather this harsh in winter has an observatory that can barely be used in the summer!

- I've heard there is a "shadow" web site that has been in the re-design phase for as long as I've been a member. I'd like to see this brought to conclusion and maybe appoint a single webmaster to manage it. The current web site is often woefully out of date and when you surf through the various club web sites out there, ours is a bit of an ugly duckling. It's time for it to become a swan.

I am putting together something on Comet Machholtz and invite everyone to bring photos they wish to share at our meeting this Friday.

That's all that comes to mind right now, but I'm sure there are as many ideas for improving the club as there are members. Just don't keep them a secret!

\* Mathew Marulla  
NHAS President 2005

## Public Observing Highlights

On December 14 2004, several NHAS members put on a sky watch for Broken Ground Elementary School in Concord. The school selected a dark site off Clinton St in Concord and about 80 students, parents, and teachers were there. We looked at Albireo, the Double Cluster, M31, the comet, and (later) Saturn. According to the teachers, the kids couldn't stop talking about it!

\* Ed Ting

## IRAQ Update

Several months ago, NHAS members packed up and shipped a telescope to Iraq for a member of ours to observe. **Chase McNiss** reported a few weeks ago in an email that Sky and Telescope has a wonderful write-up on page 116 of the February issue. The report is about our own **Mike Pelletier**, donated scope and all.

## Pictures Galore

We have a lot of Astrophotography talent. As a sample, here is one of M31 taken at a recent YFOS session by **Nils Wygant**. It's just a representation of the amazing capability that people have in this club. More pictures can be viewed in the NHAS, NHAS Photo, and Website area.



Photo by Nils Wygant

## Messier Marathon

It's not that far off and the officers have been discussing the possible dates. Expect a discussion about this at the next club meeting. Last year, several of us did a practice run at YFOS the week before.

**Noteworthy News**  
Officers for 2005.....Page 2

## Officers for 2005

At our last business meeting on December 17<sup>th</sup>, 2004 we elected officers and a new board member.



Photo by Bob Sletten

From left to right, **Don Ware** (new board member), **Rich DeMidio** (Secretary), **Barbara O'Connell** (Treasurer), **John Bishop** (Vice President), and **Mathew Marulla** (President).

## Editor's Note

Last month, Mike Frascinella stepped down from many years of outstanding service as Secretary for this organization. As a member, I would look forward to the publication of the newsletter each month. The content and aesthetically pleasing structure of the publication was always a monthly highlight. As the newly elected Secretary, I will do my best to continue to maintain the high quality newsletter that we have all enjoyed. I also believe that I speak for all in thanking Mike for all the years of service he provided to us.

## NASA Mission Updates

Just this past week, the Huygens probe successfully descended and landed on Titan. Many pictures and results have already been sent back to earth. Read the full story at <http://saturn.jpl.nasa.gov/home/index.cfm>

Spirit and Opportunity continue to perform well beyond their expected lifespan. Read more at <http://marsrovers.jpl.nasa.gov/home/index.html>

## The Sky

Winter is wonderful time for observing for those of us to like to venture into the cold. I was just browsing several issues of Sky and Tel during my recent business trip and have several sessions planned for double star observations. There were also some excellent articles about exploring the Orion area, the comet, and several deep sky objects. This is definitely something that I will certainly do when the weather permits.

## New Toys

The New Year also brings a lot of new toys on the market. I recently saw something from Meade that piqued my attention. A deep sky imager used in the same manner as a webcam. More information is available at <http://www.meade.com/dsi/index.html>

Future issues of this newsletter can incorporate feedback from anyone who has tried one.

## Far Out Object of the Month

### M83 (Galaxy)

**Lew Gramer**, a contributing author to our newsletter is sharing this month with us an observing log that will help us all during the Messier Marathon.

A fairly difficult find below the easternmost "kink" of Hydra the Serpent. I finally found two yellowish magnitude 4 stars, 1 & 2 Cen, to be good pointers. This galaxy, which seems so wan and subtle from further north, was from here in the Keys a startlingly beautiful, bright, obviously barred

object. Outer details in the bright halo were best seen with a 12mm (55x). The strong bar was seen to stretch some 3-4' to either side of the small, knobby core, and was especially complex to the S. At this power, the third arm of the spiral roiled off of the S end of the bar, stretching many minutes in a wide arc to N and E of the core, finally reaching a trio of magnitude 9-11 stars 8' to the S. Interestingly the addition of the Deep Sky Filter strongly enhanced the bar, in particular near the now almost stellar core. However, it correspondingly weakened the arms, showing in a fascinating amateur view where emission (and thus the most star formation) is probably going on in this graceful spiral. What a surprise to see such details in this Southern Gem of the Messiers!

## AstroPhotons

At the time of this publication, there was a photo group meeting that took place on January 15th, 2004 but I was out of town on business. I will file a report form that meeting will in the next newsletter.

The group also met last December in which lengthy demonstrations were provided of Photoshop. **Matt Marulla** facilitated the session with several other members adding their knowledge. We have many people who are skilled with this tool and are willing to share their knowledge with others.

## The Bottom Line

|   |            |
|---|------------|
| Starting Balance:                                   | \$4,048.65 |
| December Deposits:                                  | \$693.84   |
| (Calendar sales, Membership dues, donations)        |            |
| December A/P:                                       | \$135.75   |
| (Insurance first payment of year)                   |            |
| Net Balance:  | \$4,606.74 |
| Cash Balance:                                       | \$4,606.74 |
| Note: Includes +\$30 correction in previous balance |            |
| Membership:   | 94         |
| No new members                                      |            |

\* Barbara O'Connell

**Looking Back at Last Month**

**Opening.** Joel Harris opened the last meeting of the year by reviewing the officer positions for the election.

**Committees. Membership:** **Bob Sletten** was looking for instructors for the upcoming Astro Lab course.  
**Photo:** **Chase McNiss** said 8-10 people attended the Dec. committee meeting. They discussed the use of workflow methods for astrophotos in PhotoShop. Next meeting was to be Jan. 11, 2005.  
**Web:** **Barbara O'Connell** reported a temporary outage of the online calendar but not much else.

**Treasurer:** **Barbara O'Connell** said the balance was \$4048.65 and mentioned the newest members (listed in the Dec. newsletter).

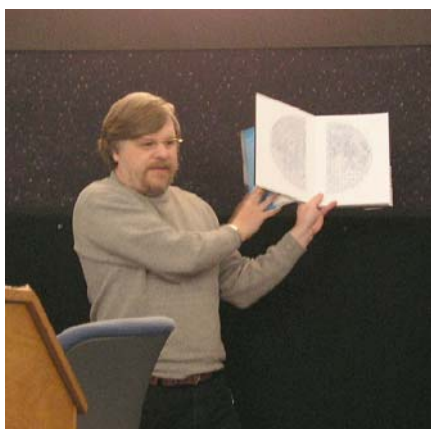
**Nominations for 2005.**

- President - Joel Harris, Matt Marulla
- VP - John Bishop, Matt Marulla
- Treasurer - Barbara O'Connell
- Secretary - Rich DeMidio, Joel Harris
- Board member - Don Ware, Michael Frascinella

Nominations were officially closed and paper ballots were handed out. **John Pappas** and **Dan St. Hilaire** tallied the votes.

The winners were **Matt Marulla** - President, **John Bishop** - VP, **Barbara O'Connell** - Treasurer (in a hotly contested race), **Rich DeMidio** - Secretary (hooray!), and **Don Ware** - Board Member.

**Book of the Month.** **Paul Winalski** praised the contents of Anton Rukl's "Atlas of the Moon."



Paul Winalski  
 Photo by Bob Sletten

It had good information on cartography and the second half consisted of finely detailed drawings of a section of the Moon with facing pages containing lists of features. In addition there are 50 photos of selected regions.

Matt Marulla spoke about "The Modern Moon" which he thought was the best book about the Moon. He had another book from the 1970s, "Geology of the Moon" by Thomas Mutch, spanning over 400 pages.

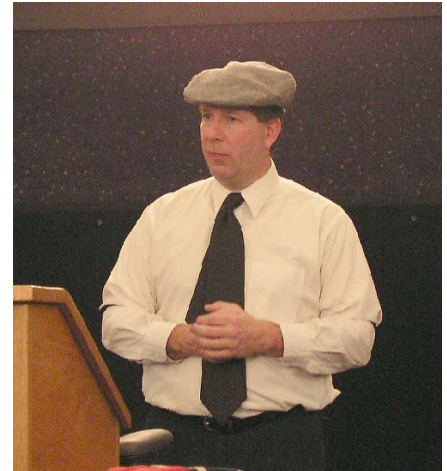
**Geology Note:** **Marion Hochuli** discussed a type o Earth rock that was recently found on Mars by one of the Rovers.



Marion Hochuli  
 Photo by Bob Sletten

**Astro-item of the Month.** **Joel Harris** displayed a broadband H-alpha filter that he is evaluating for nebula observing.

**Evening Program:** "A Visit from Wilbur Wright"



Paul Manning  
 Photo by Bob Sletten

Mr. Wright reviewed the past 100 years of flight since he and Orville made history. A propeller-driven toy inspired the brothers to experiment with flying machines. One key ingredient was when they learned that Kitty Haw, North Carolina was the best place to experiment. In a world with no airplanes, they had to invent or improvise everything: horizontal and vertical stabilizers, an engine, even a propeller. But on Dec. 17, 1903 Wilbur flew 120 feet for the first powered flight. **Paul Manning**, who does several historic personalities, and is a member of the ATMs of Boston, presented this excellent talk

\* Michael Frascinella

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## NASA Space Place

I am including some correspondence sent to us regarding the opportunities for teachers.

NASA's ISS EarthKAM Program Seeks Participants for February and April 2005 Missions

ISS EarthKAM is recruiting middle school educators who would like to involve their students in an innovative and exciting NASA education program that gives students the opportunity to take images of Earth from the International Space Station. ISS EarthKAM picture taking missions are scheduled for February 1-4, 2005 and late April 2005.

ISS EarthKAM (Earth Knowledge Acquired by Middle schools) is NASA's unique educational initiative that gives students direct access to, and control of, a digital camera mounted in an Earth viewing window of the International Space Station (ISS). Students participating in ISS EarthKAM identify places on Earth they want to photograph from space; use the ISS EarthKAM Web-based interface to calculate exactly when the ISS EarthKAM digital camera should take its pictures; submit their image requests to the ISS; track their image requests; and then analyze their images. The students' images of Earth can be downloaded for analysis and exploration within hours of being taken.

Students use their images of Earth to study topics such as changes on Earth's surface, human land use patterns, and geologic processes. ISS EarthKAM is designed to enhance students' science, math, technology,

and geography knowledge. All of the ISS EarthKAM images, as well as various activities and educator guides keyed to national standards, are publicly available on the ISS EarthKAM Web site.

Teachers interested in involving their students in ISS EarthKAM can register through the ISS EarthKAM online registration system at <http://datasystem.earthkam.ucsd.edu/ekReg/ekRegistration.shtml>. The next ISS EarthKAM missions are scheduled for February 1-4, 2005 and late April 2005. Participation is free.

All of the existing (16,000 +) ISS EarthKAM images can be accessed through the Datasystem: <http://datasystem.earthkam.ucsd.edu/>

ISS EarthKAM Web site: <http://www.earthkam.ucsd.edu>

For additional information contact:  
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**DEADLINE for Feb. 2005 Issue: 5 PM Jan. 30**

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:**

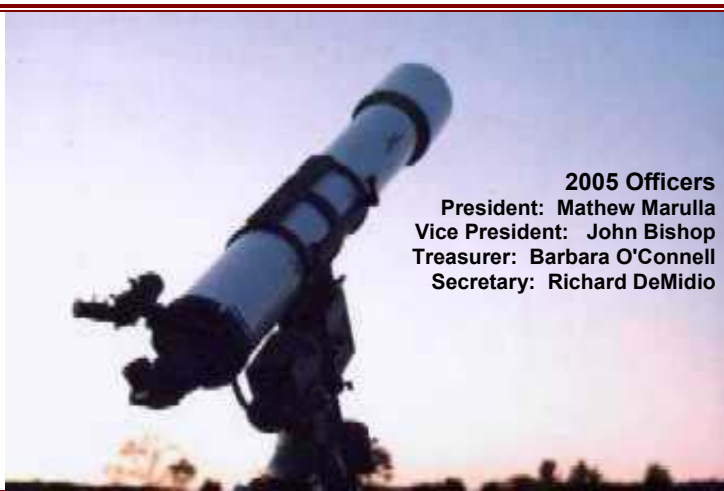
[info@nhastro.com](mailto:info@nhastro.com)

**Use our web site:**

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

**This month's contributors:**

Mathew Marulla, Ed Ting, Bob Sletten, Barbara O'Connell, Lew Gramer, Nils Wygant, Michael Frascinella



**2005 Officers**

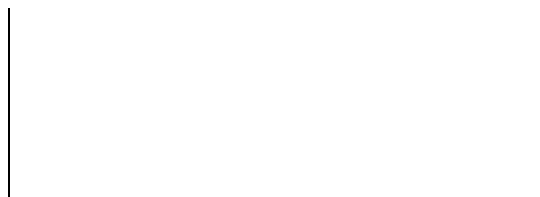
**President: Mathew Marulla**

**Vice President: John Bishop**

**Treasurer: Barbara O'Connell**

**Secretary: Richard DeMidio**

**New Hampshire Astronomical Society  
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Manchester, NH 03108-5823**



**Comet Machholtz, Jan. 21, St. Anselm's**

**NHAS Upcoming Events**

| Event                 | Date    | Time      | Location                            |
|-----------------------|---------|-----------|-------------------------------------|
| Jan. Business Meeting | Jan. 21 | 7:30 p.m. | St. Anselm's College, Goffstown, NH |
| CMP Skywatch          | Feb. 4  | 7:00 p.m. | Planetarium, Concord, NH            |
| Coffee House          | Feb 11  | Dusk.     | YFOS                                |
| Feb. Business Meeting | Feb.18  | 7:30 p.m. | Planetarium, Concord, NH            |
| CMP Skywatch          | Mar 4   | 7:00 p.m. | Planetarium, Concord, NH            |
| Mar. Business Meeting | Mar 18  | 7:30 p.m. | Planetarium, Concord, NH            |
| Messier Marathon      | TBD     |           | TBD                                 |