

The NHAS Observer

Special Edition



A Tribute to Ed Ting

Newsletter of the New Hampshire Astronomical Society

Vol. 2005 No. 11

"All the news that fits in print"

November 2005

Radio Astronomy

President's Message

By now, you will have noticed the delay in the newsletter being published until after the meeting. At the October meeting, we covertly planned a tribute to **Ed Ting** this month and as a result, Rich was asked to hold off publishing till after the meeting. So, when you read this the meeting has occurred and hopefully was a great surprise to Ed, which was the intention. The meeting also treated us to a wonderful presentation by **Rob & Nan Veilleux** on their experiences on site at Chaco Canyon. This is the follow-up to the October DvD movie. Look for a complete report in the December Newsletter. Clear Skies!

* Matthew Marulla
NHAS President 2005

Highlights for this Month

This month features a tribute to **Ed Ting** for his years as service to NHAS as Public Observing Coordinator. I found this picture while browsing the black forest website for a previous article



Ed Ting at BFSP – Taken from www.bfsp.org

appearing in a previous newsletter. Read the full story on [Page 2](#) Our Astrophotography zealots have also been in action hard at work getting some wonderful pictures. See what latest results have yielded by reading the full story on [Page 4](#) YFOS is winterized and ready for everyone's enjoyment. Thanks to **Larry Lopez** for taking the lead on what a lot of us take for granted. Read his report on [Page 6](#). Our monthly contributor **Law Gramer** has his monthly Deep Sky Object on [Page 4](#). The minutes from our October meeting can be read on [Page 5](#). Finally, I have provided a section and the end giving you insight to what is planned for next month.

* Rich DeMidio
NHAS Secretary 2005

Radio Astronomy

Editor's Note: We welcome this newly formed group, which will take it's place in the newsletter along side other popular committees. I am including it here this month for advertising purposes. Please submit any articles to me relating to this topic. Welcome aboard radio Astronomy Enthusiasts!



Picture courtesy of www.naic.edu
The Radio Astronomy Committee is just getting started. We are currently communicating via the new **Rad Astro** forum on the club web site. It is open to all club members. If you have ideas or are just curious, join in. There have

been a number of suggestions on things we might consider or do as a group. But mostly there have been questions so we should start with basic learning and information exchange. We will also try to set up a tour of a local radio-observing site in the next month or so. It is a busy time of year with weather issues possible also, but we'll try. *Question: How does weather affect Radio Astronomy? Signals go through the clouds and precipitation?*



Bob Sletten – Radio Astronomy Chair
Photo taken by Chase McNiss

*Bob Sletten

Elections Next Month

Nominations are being done at the November meeting for 2006 officers. Please try to make the December meeting to vote. The nomination results will be sent out to the membership prior to the meeting.

*Rich DeMidio

A Tribute to Ed Ting

Editor's Note: After eight years of dedicated and exemplary service to this organization, Ed Ting has decided to step down from his public observing position. This month, we pay tribute to Ed by publishing several articles written by folks honoring Ed and his countless contributions to NHAS.

Who is this Ed Ting guy anyway?



Ed Ting - Photo by Chase McNiss

Looking back it's hard to remember exactly when I first met Ed Ting. It seems like I have known him as long as I have been involved in Astronomy, yet an exact date or event just doesn't come to mind. What does come to mind and probably a more appropriate way to research the past would be to recount the telescopes I had at the time. If I remember correctly one was a Chinese made blue tubed 4" achromatic refractor imported by Tele Hoon and the other was an 8" f6, Meade DOB. What makes this method of jogging my memory so appropriate is that it was Ed's passion for different telescopes, their optical platforms and his unquenchable thirst for personally looking through every scope that was pointed at the sky that makes this attempt to remember such details all the more accurate. But Ed's optical addiction, if I may call it that didn't stop with just looking through the telescopes and it was inevitable that Scope Reviews Dot Com would be born.



Ed always looking at new Optical Equipment - Photo by Chase McNiss

This is when things really got out of hand. When I say out of hand, you have to understand that this was a contagious addiction and before I knew it I was looking forward to Ed's call or e-mail saying that he had some new scopes to review and the skies looked clear. Looking back I have to admit that there was a certain thrill and fascination with having one of your scopes reviewed and featured on Ed's website and it was hard not to consider buying a scope just so Ed could review it. Before I met Ed Ting I doubt if I knew what a good star test looked like and what significance it had in the final scheme of optical performance. After I met Ed it was impossible not to look at or through a telescope without wanting to rack out the focuser and check out the stars diffraction rings to determine the quality of the optics. Looking back I will admit that much of what I came to know about optics is result of my association with Ed, his Scope Reviews website and his enthusiasm for the hobby. While Scope Reviews Dot Com is still read by amateur astronomers worldwide and probably by many of the manufacturers as well, this is not the most important contribution Ed Ting has made to the NHAS, its members and the public.



Ed at CMP - Photo by Rich DeMidio

As the Public Skywatch Coordinator for the past 8 years Ed has probably been our most important ambassador and the one member who has touched more young minds than any other member in a long time. All one has to do is watch Ed Ting in action and you can't help but be motivated to reach out and share your hobby, your passion and your knowledge of astronomy with anybody you come in contact with. Ed has set the standard that all amateur astronomers should strive toward when it comes to reaching out and influencing young minds. I know the NHAS is a better organization because

of Ed's association. He will be missed at the Public Skywatch Coordinator, but if I know Ed he will not be able to stay away too long. Having said this I wanted to share a story involving Ed and just how far his influence has spread. It was February of 2003 and Dan Smith and I had gone down to the Winter Star Party in the Florida Keys.



Winter Star Party - Photo from www.scas.org/wsp2004.html

Dan and I both were wearing our NHAS T-shirts and another astronomer came up to us and asked if we were members of the Ed Ting Astronomy Club. We told him we were members of the same club that Ed belonged to but now that I think about it we probably could have said we were members of the Ed Ting club and it would have been true in at least one sense. Well Ed, just want to say thanks and don't be a stranger.....

* Chase McNiss

With the changing of the guard of the public observing committee, I thought I would take a moment to share my first personal experience with the position that is in so many ways the "Face of NHAS" to the public. Back during the winter of 2002, I had the desire to get into amateur astronomy. My father had planted the seed during my youth by periodically setting up an old spotting scope stored in the coat closet and trained it on the moon for my brothers and I to see. It was now some 25 years later and I wanted to get a scope of my own. I set off on the task of researching the subject, mostly via the internet. I quickly found myself swimming in options that fell into my "budget". As we all know, this can be an intimidating reality for the beginner, so much so that one might not make a decision at all let alone deciding on the wrong scope for a fledgling astronomer. In hindsight, I now believe there is a "sweet spot" that is important to end up in. Not so cheap a scope that it just doesn't perform, and not so expensive

(and complicated) that you can't get it to perform, either way, killing the desire. I did, however, heed the "which scope should I buy" advice peppered throughout all of the most helpful web pages. That advice said to seek out a local astronomy club and drop in on one of their public events.



Ed Ting and Nils Wygant at the MM – Photo by Chase McNiss

Well, this is what I did. As it turned out, there was a sky watch scheduled at a school in Massachusetts not too far from my home. This information was easily found on the NHAS event calendar maintained on the website. I asked a friend from work to go with me and he and I dropped in on the sky watch, hopeful to gain some useful advice as to which of the rigs I should spend my hard earned money on. I was prepared to spend thousands on my first scope. As you might be thinking, yes, I did need help. While at the school event, I met Ed Ting. It was a sobering experience for me. He was manning two 6 inch Dobbs and the same time, bouncing back and forth between the scopes, keeping the lines of children and parents happy and flowing, periodically pointing to the sky with a most wonderful green laser device. He was VERY busy. I was inspired. I introduced myself briefly as Ed was moving from one scope to the other. It was amazing to see him work so proficiently in this manor and still find a spare moment to give me the guidance that I so desperately needed. Suffice it to say that I got some great advice. I had no idea at the time just how fortunate I was to have received scope-buying tips from the author of scopereviews.com. He gave me exactly what I needed. I ended up spending a very reasonable amount of money on a scope that was perfect for me as a beginner. I credit much of my enjoyment of this hobby though the past 3 years to Ed and his helping me into the "right scope" for me. Thanks

Ed, for giving NHAS such a great "face" to the public these past years. I am sure my story had been repeated many times prior and many times since thanks to you

* Nils Wygant

I first knew of Ed through his telescope reviews on the Internet. I remember how awed I was to meet the famous Ed Ting of scope review fame at my first NHAS meeting. I've since participated in a lot of the public sky watches that Ed's organized. Weather permitting; they've all gone off without a hitch due to his superb organization of the events. One regret that I have is that I've always been out in the field setting up a scope and bracing myself for the crowd, so I've never seen one of Ed's lectures to the crowd before they're let loose on the scopes. As I said in email to Ed when he announced his retirement at committee chairman, his shoes will be very hard to fill.

* Paul Winalski

When I first joined NHAS, I had some of the normal jitters you might expect when it comes to meeting new people. One of first people that I met was Ed. I remember being impressed at listening to him describe the public observing events NHAS performs. It sounded like a lot of fun and opportunity to help teach Astronomy to the public.



Ed in a typical teaching role at the MM – Photo by Rich DeMidio

At the break, I introduced myself and explained how I would enjoy helping, but was not sure if I knew enough or had a good enough scope to participate. Ed's reaction was one of appreciation and he eagerly encouraged me to participate. He did not make me feel like a mental midget ☺ I started attending public viewing sessions right away with my Celestron. Ed guided me on what I should cover and what to expect from the crowds. He is always appreciative of the time people take to serve the public. Ed's gratefulness is a trait he exhibits constantly wanting to

seek recognition for the people that help and make NHAS successful. Here, he is presenting an award for outstanding contribution.



Public Observing Award presented by Ed to Gardner Gerry – Photo by Chase McNiss

Ed would go out of his way to make sure everyone was thanked for helping at many public sky watches. Chase mentioned earlier about Ed being an ambassador. He nailed it and Ed performed this role with perfection. That position represents to the public what NHAS is as an organization. It is their first contact and you do not get a 2nd chance at first impressions. I would argue that it is the most important position in NHAS even above the President. Ed did this job with perfection, persistence, and dedication. Others have mentioned utilizing Ed's talents for getting the right scope. When I reengaged in the hobby, I got aperture fever but was smart enough to talk to Ed before buying. After chatting and Ed forcing me to describe my needs and desires with Astronomy, he invited me to his home to view through a large dobsonian reflector.



Obby on the Right – Photo taken from Ed's Website

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

After that session and more thinking, I settled on the scope we all know as Obby. Four years later, loving every second of viewing through it. However, I don't remember Ed asking if he could review it for his website as the first question posed, but is the 2nd one ☺ We all have seen Ed's passion for optics

and improving eye vision for observing. During one MM, Ed came with a new device to test as shown below.



Ed MM – Photo by Chase McNiss

Ed will taunt folks a lot about just coming to an event and never bring a scope. Why? Because he can just look through ours letting everyone do the hard work of setting up and tearing down. Now, why have I never thought of that? But sometimes, even Ed surprises us so here is a rare photo of Ed actually bringing a scope to an event and yes, he did complete setting it up and observing!



Ed at MM – Photo by Rich DeMidio

All joking aside, Ed has done a wonderful job and has certainly set the bar when it comes to public observing. Having said this, whoever takes over will enjoy the foundation that Ed has established. The good news is that Ed can not hide from us and now he might get an actual chance to view with us. It is time to relax and enjoy the heavens more with the rest of your club mates. Well done my friend and thank you for your years of service!

* Rich DeMidio

Astro Photons

Herb Bubert continued his great work with Mars and provided this updated image. No stats provided so assuming they are classified ☺



Photo by Herb Bubert

Chase McNiss took this picture of Sinus Iridium from 11-12-05, seeing was 3/5 good transparency, 320 frames out of 595 stacked from TouCam on 8" f5.9 Newtonian, w/ 2.5x Powermate



Photo by Chase McNiss

Finally, **Nils Wygant, Gardner Gerry, and I** got my C8 going again with a good configuration. This was taken with my C8 with the f6.3 focal reducer using Nils Stiletto focuser (mine had a problem). I stacked 12 images with Registax.



Photo by Rich DeMidio

Since we were on a roll, we used Nils PowerMate and prime focus on my C8.

taking off the focal reducer to make it an f10. This picture is 24 stacked images.



Photo taken by Rich DeMidio using Nils PowerMate and Stiletto focuser.

Both pictures were taken with my Nikon D100 in the mirror lockup mode to reduce camera shake. According to Nils, the D70 does not have feature. Finally, thanks to **Matt Marulla** for the collimation technique discussed in the recent astro lab for Schmidt Cassegrain telescopes. It worked like a charm and Celeste is happy again.

Deep Sky Object of the Month

Observer: Lew Gramer
 Your skills: Intermediate
 Date and UT of Observation: 1996-06-16, 06:15 UT
 Location: Bath, ME, USA (44N)
 Site classification: rural
 Limiting magnitude: 7.1
 Seeing: 3 - medium
 Moon up: no
 Instrument: Reflector 12.5" f/4.8
 Magnification: 55x, 85x
 Filters used: none
 Object: M32
 Category: Elliptical galaxy
 Constellation: And
 Data: mag 8.1 size 8'x6'
 RA/DE: 00h43m +40o52m
 Description: A nice, slightly oblong blob with a clear concentration of 20" dia at it's center, and some less bright, slightly oval concentration outside that. Would be a pretty object in its own right, if not eclipsed by the monster in the same field of view (M31).

* Lew Gramer

The Bottom Line

Starting Balance: \$2,958.71
September Deposits: \$ 290.00 (shirt sales and memberships)

October A/P: \$0.0

Net Balance: \$3,249.43

Cash Balance: \$3,249.43

Membership: 60

New members: Dave Charron (Nashua) Orion StarMax 102MM EQ
 Jim Miller (Hollis) Orion XT8 Dob
 John Buonomo (North Billerica) has lots of equipment
 Helen Gordon (Newport) Orion SkyQuest 8 Dob

Donations:

Dave Charron \$5.00

John Buonomo \$10.00

* Barbara O'Connell

Looking Back at Last Month

Editor's Note: Due to the lighting conditions in CMP that night, we were unable to collect any photos for this section of the Newsletter. The pictures contained here are hence others I have gathered that seemed appropriate.

Opening Matthew Marulla opened the meeting, reviewed the agenda. He referred folks to the missing object in the middle of the Planetarium and asked the audience how he was projecting this slides. It turns out that he was using the new projection system recently installed at CMP. Our treat would be a demo later in the meeting.



Photo by Chase McNiss

Scope of the Month John Bishop.

Unlike a standard Newtonian, the scope he showed was an off axis scope. The secondary is not centered and the mirror is not a full parabola. The idea is that you do not get some of the distortion. It appears to be competitive with other scopes. It is an f/10 92 mm mirror. Design also allows a long focal length eyepiece such as a 42mm eyepiece. Drawback is that it will not swing all the way in causing some

imbalance without counter weights. Easiest way to use is with a chair with sitting. With baffle and tub extension, it gets even darker.



John Bishop testing new Equipment at the MM – Photo by Chase McNiss

Public Observing. Matthew Marulla reported that Ed Ting was delivering a speech in another CMP room. As a result, several folks described the position for Public Observing. The worst part is getting directions to sites and the weather. Ed has accumulated a log of over eight years of maps and directions to give out. Club charter is that we are an educational institution and must provide this to the public for our non-profit status. This is a highly public position and really represents what NHAS to the public; hence, we need an ambitious, energetic, people skilled individual who would be the representative for us. Must be very well organized to quickly react to inquires and willingness to stick to decisions. Tough part is weather calls and keeping in contact with folks. Also, track places that like us versus places that were average. Ed has accumulated a good list of places where things went well and we were treated well. **Book of the Month.** None

Committees. Photo Club Chase McNiss reported that an informal meeting occurred at YFOS with some imaging. Herb presented many great shots of Mars. There was also a good mix of piggyback and prime focus with lots of information exchange. The next meeting will be at Nashua Public Library with focusing techniques the topic of discussion. Bring your techniques to share. Stay tuned to the email thread for lasted updates.



Photo by Rich DeMidio

Web: Matthew Marulla reported that the forums up and running. Fifteen people are currently signed up. Matt will send reminders each month regarding access to members area but if you forget how to gain access, please email Matt. We also now have the Blog section for observer's logs. Members can now post logs or other pertinent information that everyone can read. Officer's page is on hold since elections will be happening soon.

ATMs: Larry Lopez Lopez reported that the radios and transmitters have been installed on **Joe Derek's** scope. This is the ongoing upgrade to implement a wireless technology for tracking on his large dob. The goal is to remotely control the scope. Initial software has been developed and the next step will be some field testing.



Photo by Rich DeMidio

Membership: Bob Sletten reported that he is giving up the Membership chair to lead the Radio Astronomy Group within NHAS. The membership position has traditionally been nominated by officers. In the past, there have been at most three people whom have served in this capacity. The primary responsibility is to take suggestions from membership on what to do in the area of promoting and sharing knowledge. Recent examples include the Astro lab training and Astro

courses. It is not a high-energy job with much of the time devoted to coordinating training classes. The hard part is leveraging the strengths of the club and getting people to teach them. It has always been driven by membership proposed needs.

Barbara O'Connell reported that membership has dropped to only 47 members but that will change as the 2006 dues are processed. Two donations were made. What do we do about laminated membership cards? Discussion took place and a decision was made to make a formal motion to eliminate the production of membership card per year according to the bylaws. Once that is done, a do it yourself method will be provided. This will most likely be a copy on the website that can be downloaded. **YFOS**. **Larry Lopez** reported that the plowing has been worked out for this winter along with Porta Potty contract. **Don Ware** replaced the battery on the Gemini. Chase redid the polar alignment on the Titan and C14. A member suggested that we put this routine maintenance on the calendar future reference. Don commented that the model in the Titan can be downloaded to save the settings before replacing the battery. This would eliminate the need to realign when a new battery is installed. Larry reported that the heater is ready with a full tank of fuel. The backup heater is also working. The Mosquito magnet has been packed and is currently at Matt's house for winter. Matt also noted that the earlier problem has been resolved and the net will be good to go for next year and has been fixed for next year. Larry mentioned that a little bit of painting was done. He will come up with a list of major work to be attacked in the spring. As a reminder, please remember to log any work and visits to the site.

Other Topics. **Matthew Marulla** The planetarium projector is gone and we can now use that equipment for PC hookup. **Dave McDonald** did a demo for us and spoke of it. It was a very impressive demonstration so future shows will be really more detailed and impressive. Club Officer Nominations will taken at the next meeting. Matt asked folks to describe what they do each month so that people can think. Barbara described the Treasurer's

position as being responsible for club money, picking up mail, and disseminate it to folks one or twice per month. There is also an email inbox as well for Treasurer. Insurance and expense reports are also produced for the board twice per year. The keeping of the ledger is what drives this task along with tracking expenses. Barbara mentioned that it was an easy transition for her when she took over for Jim because of the excellent records and organization. Her replacement will benefit from the same. Barbara would sit down for the first month with new person to show the ropes as a mentoring activity. She estimates two to three hours per week depending on how much mail is received. Being well versed in accounting is a benefit as it will make the job easier. It is also good way to interact with the membership. Contact Barb if you have questions. The Club ledger is an Access database with Excel macros for checkbook balancing. Finally, Matt showed an image taken by the Spitzer telescope in the Infrared spectrum.



Photo from

<http://www.spitzer.caltech.edu/Media/releases/ssc2005-20/index.shtml>

It shows only dust and no stars. It is not obvious in the image but there are two rings of dust on different planes. The thinking is that it was two rings of dust that perhaps interact with a satellite galaxy. More stunning pictures can be viewed at the web site url provided above.

Evening Program: A DVD movie of Chaco Canyon as shown

* Rich DeMidio

In the next Issue

Here are some articles being planned for the next newsletter. The complete report on the Chaco Canyon presentation including an in-depth

paper written by **Rob & Nan Veilleux**. Will also share some tips in using SCT scopes for Astrophotography from sessions with **Nils Wygant, Gardner Gerry, and I. John Bishop** contributes another technical article relating to "diffraction-limited field"; All of this plus the normal committee reports and perhaps a surprise or two.

* Rich DeMidio

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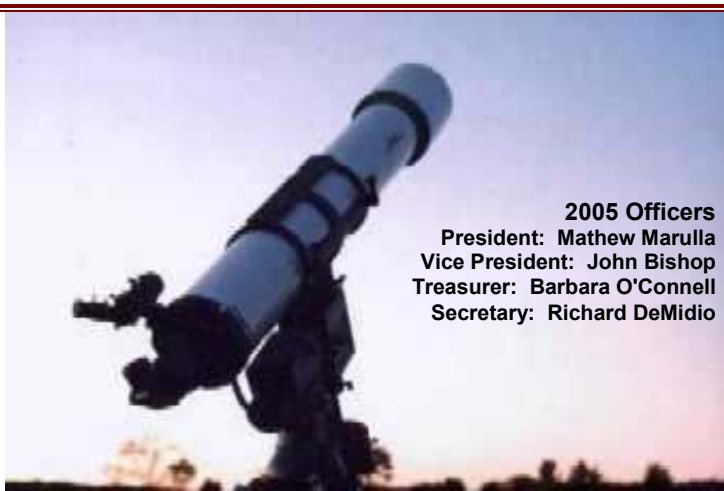
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Secretary: Richard DeMidio

This month's contributors:

Mathew Marulla, Larry Lopez, Barbara O'Connell, Chase McNiss, Bob Sletten, Lew Gramer, Herb Bubert, Rich DeMidio, Nils Wygant, Paul Winalski, Don Ware, Dave McDonald and Gardner Gerry

New Hampshire Astronomical Society
P.O. Box 5823
Manchester, NH 03108-5823



Chaco Canyon Part II, 11/18 St. Anslems

NHAS Upcoming Events

Event	Date	Time	Location
Nov Business Meeting	Nov 18	7:30 pm	St Anslems (Evening Program - Chaco Canyon Part II)
Coffeehouse	Dec 2		YFOS
CMP Skywatch	Dec 2	7:30 pm	Planetarium Concord, NH
Dec Business Meeting	Dec 16	7:30 pm	Planetarium Concord, NH (Elections)
CMP Skywatch	Jan 6	7:30 pm	Planetarium Concord, NH
Nov Business Meeting	Jan 20	7:30 pm	St Anslems