Observer Staff
Editor & Publisher:
Paul Winalski

The NHAS Observer

Newsletter of the New Hampshire Astronomical Society

Vol. 2007 No. 8 "All the news that fits in print" August 2007

Clear Skies at Stellafane

President's Message

This year's Stellafane convention was punctuated by ups and downs, the downs being the near tragedy Thursday evening at the NHAS canopy and the incredible number of people who decided they needed to drive around the place after dark with their headlights on!!! The ups were the spectacular skies Friday and Saturday night, the collection of large aperture scopes on the observing field, winning one of the raffle prizes and the wonderful NHAS members that I got to hang out with for 3 days and nights! This was my second Stellafane, I had a great time and I am planning on going to many more.

Our public observing will be heating up soon with schools opening up again in just a few weeks. I am sure the membership will support these events as the always do with lots of enthusiasm and good numbers of scopes available for the kids.

,,/ Gardner Gerry
NHAS President 2007

Highlights for this Month

A good number of NHAS members made the annual trek to Stellafane. Full report is on page 2.

Club members participated in several public sky watches.

Members continue to post wonderful images in the Photography forum on the website, and again received accolades in the Astroimaging Challenge.

,,/ Paul Winalski
NHAS Secretary 2007

By-laws Change Passes

The proposal to strike from the Club By-laws the requirement that the Treasurer and Secretary annually produce laminated membership cards for each member has passed by a vote of 75-4. A simple majority of the 148 NHAS members was required for passage.

On behalf of the NHAS officers and directors, my thanks to those who took the time to let their will on this issue be known.

,,/ Paul Winalski

Membership and Astro 101

The next Astro 101 Presentation will be on Lunar Observing by **Chase McNiss**. The class session will run double duty as the September Presentation at the Business Meeting. The following evening we will assemble at YFOS for some lunar observing. Please register in advance at acshirey@comcast.net to help with the handout count.

Over the next few weeks I will broadcast, by email, the Fall and early Winter offering for Astro 101 and 201.

We have six new members since the last report (actually Peter joined during last month's meeting) Please welcome them when you see them at NHAS events:

Sharon Comerford (Keene)
Daren McAndrew (Tyngsboro)
Eugene Struckhoff (Lebanon)
Rocky Cavender (Washington)
David S MacEachran (Goffstown)
Peter Girard (Hookset)

,,/ Alan Shirey

Astro Photons

We still have not met as a group lately, I'd like to change that in September. Please check the AP forum for a poll of dates we could meet. As always I urge you to check out the wonderful work being posted in the Picture forum by the members who are not actually looking through their scopes. There are deep sky wide field pictures of up to 3° across and narrow field of views of details of the moon and everything in between.

,,/ Gardner Gerry

The Astroimaging Challenge is a worldwide astrophotography competition on the Internet (http://appstar.astronight.com). Each month's challenge consists of three objects, one easy, one moderate, and one hard. Competitors submit their images, and an award goes to the best image in the Novice category for the easy and moderate objects, and in the Experienced category for the moderate and hard objects.

In July's competition, **Nils Wygant** won the Novice competition for his image of the month's moderate object: the Swan Nebula (M17). **John Buonomo** won the Experienced competition for the same object, and came in second for the hard object: the Cocoon Nebula (IC 5146).

The winning images can be seen on the aforementioned website, as well as in the Photography section of the member forums on the NHAS website.

,,/ Paul Winalski

Stellafane 2007

There were an amazingly large number of newbies apparently brought out by the fine weather.

Part of the Stellafane crowd (Joe Derek photo)

Weather was astonishing. No tents floated away. No bugs bit Larry. Gardner did not have as much luck. We apparently were a wasp magnet. And a car magnet.

The NHAS tent (Tom Cocchiaro photo)

A Volvo gathering no moss took out 2 canopy poles, **Andy Jaffe's** tent, and almost took out **Joe Derek**. Not in that order. (The order was one pole, one Derek, one Laptop, a second pole, a tent). Curiously the only things that were damaged were the poles and the tent. The Canopy was fine before and after the two poles were taken out. Andy Jaffe got a new tent (by way of the owner of the Volvo). The powers that be at Stellfane added a bunch of 6x6 posts to prevent it from happening again. **Larry** and **Linda Lopez** played forensics expert and came to the conclusion that Joe was just lucky; it took three tries to get our Subarau to roll.

PS: Andy parked his tent directly below a tree.

Joe kept smiling while looking up hill. Smart people.

Roger Greenwood provided a fine new banner for the canopy which also was lucky. Thank you.

Chase McNiss deserves special thanks for taking care of all the site details.

Many, many people provided all sorts of things just in time, such as Gardner.

The Stellafane permanent building (Tom Cocciaro photo)

And finally last and most important **Ken Charles** provided the grill, gas, hot dogs, hamburgers, bratwurst and beef brisket cooked in his smoker over night. Chase served as sous chef.

Chef Ken Charles cooks (Joe Derek photo)

I was somewhat concerned that my total lack of planning would somehow impact things. There were a few rough spots but everything worked our really, really well.

I'm sure the weather helped.

Larry Lopez

Norm Fullum with his scope (Mike Frascinella photo)

What it's all about (Tom Cocchiaro photo)

At the usual location of the NHAS canopy on the hill below the observing field I was able to pick up a wireless internet connection with my laptop. So we can now check the clear sky clock for Stellafane while actually at the convention!

Larry Lopez studies a very tricked-out Obsession (Mike Frascinella photo)

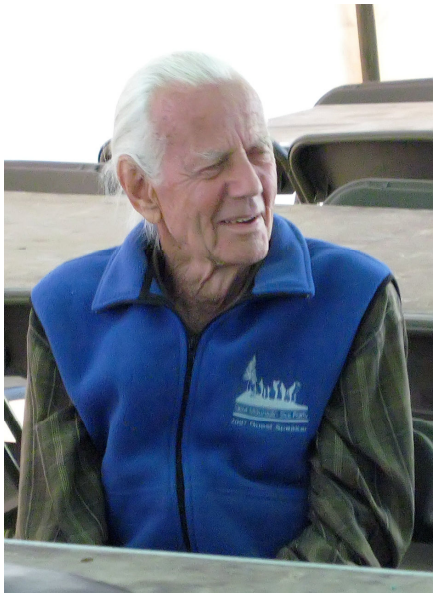
Speaking of the clear sky clock, I met Allan Rahill of the Canadian Meteorological Center who's data is used to generate the CSC. He explained the lengthy recent outage of the transparency forecast as being near the full moon and he was on vacation and didn't feel the need to rush home to fix it. It did take 15 hours of work to get it back online once home. Allan had his own home made 28" scope entered in the competition.

The skies were clear for two of the three nights and we were able to observe with our own scopes and the

multitude of scopes on the observing fields. I waited in the lines at some of the larger aperture scopes (28" and 32") and also got a peek through the new Tele Vue Ethos eyepiece in Al's NP127. I can say that I am much more impressed with this eyepiece under the stars than pointed at a wall at the NEAF show. The contrast is high and the star images are pinpoint, and I cannot see the entire field without panning around. Truly a porthole into space view!

,,/ Gardner Gerry

Allan Rahill's 28" dob (Gardner Gerry photo)



John Dobson at Stellafane 2007 (Tom Cocchiaro photo)

Let's not forget that out president, **Gardner Gerry** was a raffle winner, coming away with 4 new Nagler eyepieces and a Televue filter.

,,/ Chase McNiss

Public Observing

This past month had a number of fun outings: Biggest was, of course, the Goffstown Public Library sky watch. We moved it ahead by a week after somebody bought new equipment… Many club members came and we had quite a crowd of people, with just a few mosquitoes. **Paul Winalski** had a successful time at the Merrimack YMCA Camp Sargent day program on 7/5 from 9am-12 noon, and again on 8/3. Campers got to view the Sun in white light through a TV 85, and in Hα through a Coronado PST.

We also had the "Second Annual" Skywatch at Madison Old Home Week in Madison, NH on August 8. What fun!

We met Kevin Ackert, President, North Shore Amateur Astronomy Club. He was staying in Madison and brought his scope. We also met Michael Muracco who hosts the Astronomy In Mt. Washington Valley web site: http://www.mwvastronomy.com/index.php

Also, I met two fellow NHAS people at the Conjunction in Northfield Ma. http://www.philharrington.net/astroconjunction/con07.htm

What a wonderful program! Please check out the web site. The speakers were top folks and great speakers. I went home inspired!

Whilst there, my younger daughter, Jen, and I made an 8 foot long analemma on the front lawn of the visitor center. We used my LX90 with a laser pointer in the back to look at the Sun's position for 24 dates throughout the year, as well as the equinoxes and summer and winter solstice. It was perfect. I spoke with some folks from the Northeast Astronomy Forum & Telescope Show and they would like me to come as part of their Solar Observing group, and make an analemma at Rockland Community College. What fun! If I am able to do so, I would like to put the gnomon on the roof of the gym. That would allow us to make a large analemma, suitable for a walking tour of the seasons.

Upcoming events:

On Friday, August 31 (rain date Saturday), I will be hosting a sky watch for the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of the Eastern Slopes. http://www.uufes.org/ I have been asked to give a talk during the service on the next Sunday about astronomy, and thought that a little experience would help. The event will be held at the Tamworth Learning Circle School, about dusk. They have recently built a small observatory with a rebuilt C-11, and have hosted sky watches for the Tamworth Library over the past few years. (Maps and details will be posted on the calendar).

,,/ Marc Stowbridge

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Astro Photons

There have been no meetings of the Astrophotography committee since our last business meeting. There is an Astro 101: Introduction to Astrophotography scheduled for Friday, May 25th at 7:30 presented by John Blackwell and being held at Phillips Exeter Academy. John is an excellent teacher so I am sure new imagers will benefit greatly from this program.

,,/ Gardner Gerry

NHAS July 2007 Business Meeting

ATM

No report. Stellafane is coming up.

YFOS

Larry Lopez reports that the lawn was thatched by **Herb Bubert**. The Mosquito Magnet is still acting up; we need other suggestions for getting rid of mosquitoes. The stain for the warming hut and observatory was provided by Concord Sherwin-Williams at their cost.

The Titan mount won't slew faster than 800. It might be just the mass of the C14 and its counterweights. If you attach a smaller scope, you might try to slew it faster in RA.

Membership

Alan Shirey reported seven new members since the last newsletter. **Chase McNiss** gave an Astro 101 class in July on Polar Alignment. There will be no classes in August due to Stellafane. Upcoming talks in the series will be on Lunar Observing, Collimation, Solar Observing, and Deep Sky Observing. The first Astro 201 course, **John Blackwell** on Photometry, will be in November. **Don Ware** has lined up for several presentations.

Public Observing

A second daytime sky watch is scheduled in early August for the Merrimack YMCA Camp Sargent day camp.

Web Administration

Matt Marulla put up the latest Astro 101 courses, a merchandise database, and a Google Maps API for the skywatches.

Photography

Gardner Gerry reported that no meeting has been held recently and none are planned.

Radio Astronomy

Bob Sletten gave a brief talk on pulsars–fast-rotating supernova remnants that were discovered by radio telescopes.

Books of the Month

The Perfect Machine, a treatise on the history of the Palomare Hale Observatory, by Ronald Florence.

Collins Atlas of the Night Sky, published by the Smithsonian. Wil Tirion charts, along with an 88-piece discussion of constellations, along with an Antonin Rukl moon atlas, including image-reversed versions for those using refractors.

Scope of the Month

Canon 10x42 ED glass IS binoculars. Features include an electronic image stabilizer.

Miscellaneous Business

Stellafane planning: Chase will go on Thursday if the weather is good, and will set up the canopy in the usual NHAS spot. Stellafane opens up on Thursday this year. We need a volunteer cook.

Evening Program

Paul Winalski gave a talk on Stellar Evolution.

Paul Winalski

The Bottom Line

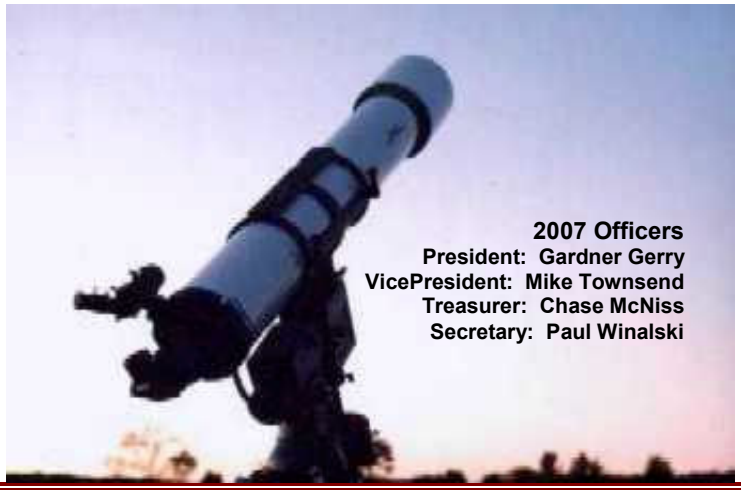
I want to acknowledge the donations of Sherwin-Williams of Concord for their donation (their cost) of the stain used at YFOS, as well as the time and equipment donation that **Matt Amar** made. I also want to mention the donation of 4 NHAS banners by **Roger Greenwood**.

Starting Balance:	**$4876.96**
Deposits/Credits:	22.50
(Membership)	
Accounts/Paid:	391.68
(Peerless, Handy House, Ken Charles–Stellafane cookout, YFOS stain)	
Net Account Balance:	**$4507.78**
Petty cash drawer:	$200.00
Cash Balance:	**$4707.78**

2007 Membership: 148

New members:
Peter Girard, Hookset, NH
David MacEachran, Goffstown, NH

Chase McNiss



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Secretary: Paul Winalski

DEADLINE September 2007 Issue: 5 PM September 13
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.

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NHAS
P.O. Box 5823
Manchester, NH 03108-5823
Attn: Treasurer

Send E-mail to:
info@nhastro.com

Use our web site:
http://www.nhastro.com/

This month's contributors:
Gardner Gerry, Alan Shirey, Larry Lopez, Joe Derek, Tom Cocciaro, Mike Frascinella, Chase McNiss, Marc Stowbridge, Paul Winalski

New Hampshire Astronomical Society
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NHAS Upcoming Events

Event	Date	Time	Location
UU Fellowship Sky Watch	Aug 31	7:30 PM	Tamworth Learning Circle School, Tamworth NH
CMP Public Sky Watch	Sep 1	7:00 PM	Christa McAuliffe Planetarium
Coffee House Night	Sep 14	5:00 PM	YFOS
September Business Meeting	Sep 21	7:30 PM	St. Anselm College
Astro 101: Lunar Observing	Sep 21	7:30 PM	evening presentation at Sept. Business Meeting
Astro 101: Practical Lunar Observing	Sep 22	7:30 PM	YFOS
CMP Public Sky Watch	Oct 5	7:00 PM	Christa McAuliffe Planetarium
Coffee House Night	Oct 12	5:00 PM	YFOS
October Business Meeting	Oct 19	7:30 PM	Chirsta McAuliffe Planetarium