

## Get In Your Vote

### President's Message

Been out observing lately? If you have you've probably noticed how cold it's getting, and winter isn't even officially here yet! If you have been having a hard time staying warm while observing maybe you should read **Chase McNiss's** article "Dressing for Cold Weather Observing" in the Articles and Learning Resources section of our web site. I know I mentioned this article a couple of months ago, but it's a good idea to go over the basics again. Stay warm while out in the cold and enjoy the long winter nights and the wonderful objects only available in the colder months.

I also need to remind everyone about our annual elections to be held at our next meeting, which is at CMP on December 21<sup>st</sup>. We will be voting for President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer and the Jr. Board of Directors member. Nominations remain open until just before the vote.

I would like to thank outgoing Board Director **Don Ware** for the outstanding job he has done the past 3 years which included the difficult task of cataloging and photographing the club's inventory among other projects. Thanks Don!

★ Gardner Gerry  
NHAS President 2007

### Highlights for this Month

Usually the public sky watch calendar goes into winter hibernation around mid November as the weather turns cold and the holiday season approaches. Not so this year—we had 3 public sky watches in late November/early December.

Gardner mentioned the nomination and election of 2008 officers and director.

There will also be a very important vote on the motion to acquire property insurance. Please let your vote be counted on this important issue, either in person or by proxy.

On behalf of the 2007 Officers and Directors, I'd like to thank the membership for making this such a successful year for NHAS. Happy holidays and clear skies to you all!



**NHAS 2007 Officers (left to right): Mike Townsend (Vice President), Chase McNiss (Treasurer), Paul Winalski (Secretary), Gardner Gerry (President). Photo by Dave Weaver.**



**NHAS 2007 Board of Directors (left to right): Nils Wygant, Don Ware (Chairman), Mike O'Shaughnessy. Photo by Dave Weaver.**

★ Paul Winalski  
NHAS Secretary 2007

### Vote on Property Insurance

At the 16 November NHAS Business Meeting, it was moved and seconded that we secure property insurance. A description of the measure is in the update to the November issue of the Observer. The vote on the measure was inconclusive because a quorum of the membership was not present. Since the meeting, we have solicited proxies, either by paper or e-mail, from those members who cannot cast their vote in person.

Those who voted in person at the November meeting have their votes recorded and need not fill out a proxy (unless they wish to change their vote).

We will hold a vote on this motion again at the December NHAS Business Meeting. Please help us decide this important issue by voting either in person at the meeting or by proxy.

★ Paul Winalski  
NHAS Secretary 2007

### Election of 2008 Officers

Nominations were taken at the November Business Meeting for 2008 NHAS Officers (1-year term) and a Member of the Board of Directors (3-year term). The nominees so far are:

President	Gardner Gerry
Vice President	Mike Townsend
Secretary	Paul Winalski
Treasurer	Chase McNiss
Director	John Bishop John Rose

At the December Business Meeting, the floor will be open for further nominations, then we shall hold the vote.

★ Paul Winalski

## Membership and Astro 101

Often overlooked by new members (and existing members) is that the NHAS membership is a very accessible and helpful bunch. If you need answers, direction or advice please take advantage of this under-advertised benefit. If you cannot make it to a club meeting or coffeehouse please visit the NHAS forums and pose your questions for direction or advice.

Several Members have joined since last meeting: **Jason Spencer**, Derry, NH; **Jeff Eitreim**, Hopkinton, NH; **Joseph Henry**, Westford, MA; **David Getchell**, Salem, NH.

Please welcome them when you see them at club events.

If you are interested in the new Astro 101 member education series please check your e-mails over the holidays for the course schedule announcement.

Best Wishes for the Holidays and may your skies be clear, dark and steady.

★ Alan Shirey

## Astro Photons

There has not been a meeting of the AP committee lately, so if there is demand for one (e-mail Gardner at the Astrophotography Chair's address on the "Contacts" page of the website) we will put one on the schedule. The usual suspects and a few new ones continue to show new work in the forums on the club's website, the focus lately naturally being Comet 17P/Holmes. Please go check out the Pictures forum to see what's happening.

★ Gardner Gerry

## YFOS

We need people to remove the snow on the ramps and stairs whenever they go to YFOS so it doesn't build up.

The garbage can full of sand is behind the warming room and that could be moved to the driveway or a 5 gallon bucket could be filled from it and placed at the driveway. I'm not thinking the garbage can is going to fun to move.

The main heater was rechecked a couple of weeks ago and was working fine.

★ Larry Lopez

## Amateur Telescope Making

I have an old Mead equatorial which the club owns and is considered surplus property. Get hold of me after the holidays if you are interested.

★ Larry Lopez

## Public Observing

I will have to rely upon folks who were at the events this past month, as I have not been able to get to any. We have some requests for the winter in the planning stages. I will post them as soon as they firm up. I have been working with the Sidewalk Astronomy people about developing some handouts and "how to do it" articles regarding random acts of astronomy. I particularly like Solar sidewalk astronomy, as one tends to meet lots of people, you can do it almost anywhere, and dark skies are definitely not needed! My daughter, Jen, set up 3 scopes at her college with H-A and white-light filters. Over 100 people stopped by to take a look, including entire sports teams on their way to their fields.

Between Thanksgiving and Christmas, I volunteer for the re-enactment of the Polar Express in North Conway. This program uses the Conway Scenic Railroad and a special building to host about 1200 children a night. The proceeds go to literacy programs in the area. Between the two trips, I have been taking the elves outside to look at the Comet, Mars and whatever else is up and bright. Each night that is clear, about 25 people group around the green laser to take a look. The response has been wonderful. I have brought binoculars a few times, but mostly it has been without equipment. I rather like the minimalist approach to this sort of outreach, as people can simply do it themselves. Many of the people said they went home and took the family outside and repeated what they had learned. That's nice.

Thanks to everyone who has worked so hard this year to bring astronomy to the public. You are very special people.

★ Marc Stowbridge

## Public Sky Watches

**30 November, Elm Brook Park, Hopkinton NH:** This was organized

by **Jeff Eitreim**, who was impressed enough by our performance to join NHAS (welcome aboard, Jeff!). The venue is the parking lot by the beach in Elm Brook Park. It has superb horizon visibility and low light pollution (though there are light domes from Concord and Pat's Peak). We had about 50 people and half a dozen or so astronomers.

I was really worried when I arrived at 5 PM and it was mostly overcast. Fortunately the Clear Sky Clock predictions turned out to be true and we got very good skies for most of the evening. The upper atmosphere was pretty turbulent and that meant bad viewing near the horizon, and a difficult time with double stars, but there was plenty of other stuff to show off in the sky tonight. I think collectively we managed to find examples of everything--double stars, carbon stars, diffuse nebulae, planetary nebulae, supernova remnants, open star clusters, globular star clusters, Milky Way star fields, external galaxies, close planets, far planets, and even two comets.

**6 December, Broken Ground Middle School, Concord, NH:** The sky watch actually took place at White Farm. Thanks to **Ed Ting** for organizing this one, and for spending his day giving talks to the 5<sup>th</sup> grade classes at the school. About 50 souls braved the cold and snow to look through the 5 or so scopes present. One of the evening's highlights was a very fine pass of the International Space Station.

**10 December, Boy Scout Troop 159, Salem, NH.** The sky watch took place in the parking lot of Pleasant Street Methodist Church. **Dave Getchell** (who has now joined NHAS) was the organizer. The venue is quite dark for an urban area. We were just one part of the troop's "Operation Night Light" open house, and light from Coleman lamps and the smoke from the bonfire interfered significantly with the observing. Skies were hazy, too, and so I spent most of the time showing off double stars and helping scouts with aspects of their Astronomy merit badges. About 8 scopes in all were present, and 30 or more scouts, leaders, and parents stopped by to look through them.

One major bit of excitement occurred at 7:00 PM, when a very large and bright comet-like object appeared between Cygnus and Cassiopeia. In the telescope it had a most unusual appearance—a bright, stellar point of light and a long, narrow, cone-shaped glow at some distance from the light. This odd object gradually drifted toward Cassiopeia. When near zenith, a very bright yellow (mag -3 or so) second point of light appeared near the first one, drifted away from it, then suddenly winked out. What we saw turned out to be the upper stage fuel dump from a spy satellite launched at 5:00 PM at Cape Canaveral. I think the second point of light was the deployment of the satellite itself.

★ Paul Winalski

## Frigid Observing

I done done it. I toted the OTA out at 5 or so to let it get good and cold (thanks, **Paul Cezanne**), then did some eyeball observation until I was sure Mars was up over the very tall pines to the east. When it was I donned the ski wear and set up.

The snow-devils had barely even started to fill in the spot I made with the snow blower, and the ground cover was hard and crunchy so even that little bit wasn't noticeable. The moon seemed very bright with all the white around to reflect it, so a light was only necessary to see the magic marker lines to position the OTA on the mount. Otherwise it was smooth setup.

One of the recent “upgrades” on the OTA was a strip of luan bolted to it like a plate for a guide scope, with the base of the Rigel fixed to that instead of relying on that frakking tape. Works be-au-ti-fully, now I clip on the Rigel and it's essentially already aligned, every time, and minor bumps don't faze it in the slightest. Sweet. There's space on there for that dew heater controller, assuming it's actually done some month. (senile drool)

Since Mars was patently simple to locate I quickly lined up on it and set to observing, even getting the 10mm to produce an usable view for about the second time since I bought this rig. Paul indicated one has to see Mars for some time to catch the little glimpses of steadiness in between the nice New

England gunky air, so I made sure the chair position was comfy and stared.

He's right, no big surprise there. I saw the south polar cap (it's on top, yes?) many, many times, only fleetingly yet bright, though the north one eluded me completely. Cartes du Ceil doesn't even show but one polar cap so it's possible I'd never find it this night. (grin)

Dark and light areas were clearly evident in all but the worst of the atmo effects, and often appeared almost sharp, though they often “wandered” around some as different parts of the planet become more or less visible than others. Wind sometimes was so bad Mars jumped and danced in the EP like a possessed marionette. Most times it seemed pretty darned stable.

After some time I started seeing a smiley face in the dark parts of Mars and figured perhaps I'd stared long enough. Also my 10mm started to dew or fog or something; a look at the corrector showed nothing there, but the view was quite clearly impeded in some fog-like fashion.

I went back to the 26mm but it didn't look as nice, at least not tonight. It was sharper, true, but the image was significantly smaller so the detail was harder to make out.

So I swung over to the Orion Nebula and gazed at it for a time. Man I **love** how that thing looks!! It's probably my favorite thing next to Jupiter. Nori came out and was suitably impressed as well, that being the first time she's ever seen it.

When I packed up and went in I discovered I'd been out there nearly an hour and half. First time I've been out that long and only looked at **two** things. Neat!

The ash tripod I got from **Steve Forbes** works like a champ, too. The new knobs allow the legs to be tightened up nicely, and it's noticeably more stable than that stamped aluminum POS I started with. I don't know if the old one would have stood up to the wind tonight at all; not that it would fall over or anything, but I doubt I'd have ever been able to use the 10mm with that creaky contraption. The ash one exhibited minimal motion even at x200

except when it really got to blowing like it meant it. Thanks Steve!

Other than my hands, and where my glasses touched, I didn't really get cold. Gloves might have helped but they were still wet from all the snow blowing on Sunday. I didn't miss them all that much, but I could have stayed out longer if I'd had something for my hands. Need to remember the ski hood next time I do this, too. Ears didn't really get cold but I could see where covering them better would be advantageous.

This is my first winter with a telescope, and I have to say my first winter observing in full snow, near-zero temps, some wind, and the whole nine yards, was a real blast. Doubt I'd have trekked to YFOS for the experience, but setting up 30 feet from the house sure made it worth the effort, and the stars showed surprisingly little visible scintillation.

Yeah!!

★ David Gilmore

## NHAS November 2007 Business Meeting



Nov. Business meeting @ St. Anselm (Dave Weaver photo)

### ATM

**Larry Lopez** reports that **Steve Forbes** has finished refurbishing the Mead EQ mount and it is available for loan. We also have an Orion 8” mirror that needs some work—recoating—and a scope to go around it.

### YFOS

**Larry Lopez** is working on a problem with the main heater leaking gas into the warming hut. For now use the catalytic heater. We need to get the sand out from behind the building before the ice comes up.



Steve Forbes stands next to the Meade EQ mount he refurbished. (Dave Weaver photo)

### Membership

Alan Shirey welcomed Cathy Stein to her first NHAS meeting. It was a busy November for training sessions: John Blackwell (Photometry); Paul Winalski (Deep Sky Observing); Chase McNiss, Don Ware, and Gardner Gerry (Titan Mount) all presented Astro 101 or 201 sessions.

### Photography

Gardner Gerry draws attention to the great images in the Photo forum on the NHAS website.

### Public Observing

Marc Stowbridge was not present, but Paul Winalski reported on the successful sky watches at Auburn and Derry.

### Web Administration

No report.

### Radio Astronomy

Bob Sletten was not present, but Gardner Gerry reports that we intend to have another go at listening to the upcoming Leonid meteor shower.

### Scope of the Month

Gardner Gerry brought his Garrett Optical Signature Series 15x70 binoculars. These are very nice for astronomy. They are heavy (use a tripod). \$329 + shipping gives you the binoculars, a case, strap, and tripod adapter.

### Nominations for 2008 Officers

See the report on the front page of this issue of the Observer.

### Miscellaneous Business

Don Ware described the recently completed inventory that the Board has done of significant club assets. There has been a problem with losing track of loaner equipment and other assets. Going forward, the Board will be requiring that borrowers sign a bailment form making it formal that they are taking responsibility for a club asset. This bailment will cover a quarter year period. A second type of bailment will be done for equipment held for the benefit of the club (these must be renewed on an annual basis).

### Property Insurance Proposal

On behalf of the Board of Directors, Don Ware moved that the Board seek property insurance for NHAS assets. A complete summary of the proposal and its discussion is in the "stop press" addendum to the November NHAS Observer. The proposal was seconded and voted on, but a quorum was not achieved so the issue could not be decided at the meeting. Proxies will be solicited and the issue will come to a vote again at the December meeting.

### Evening Program

Ed Ting gave us the talk on telescopes and binoculars that he presented earlier this year at the Black Forest Star Party.

★ Paul Winalski



Ed Ting holds the world's worst commercial telescope (Dave Weaver photo)

### The Bottom Line

Starting Balance:	\$5885.89
Deposits/Credits:	981.74
(Membership, Donations, Checking acct. interest)	
Accounts/Paid:	284.31
(Peerless Insurance, Rymes Propane)	
Net Account Balance:	\$6583.32
Petty cash drawer:	\$100.00
Cash Balance:	\$6683.32

New members:

Joseph Henry, Westford MA

Jason Spencer, Derry NH

David Getchell, Salem NH

Jeff Eitreim, Hopkinton NH

2008 Membership: 103

Donations:

Rich DeMidio 70.00

John Bishop 350.00

Mike Townsend 10.00

Dave Weaver 100.00

Paul Winalski LCD Projector

★ Chase McNiss

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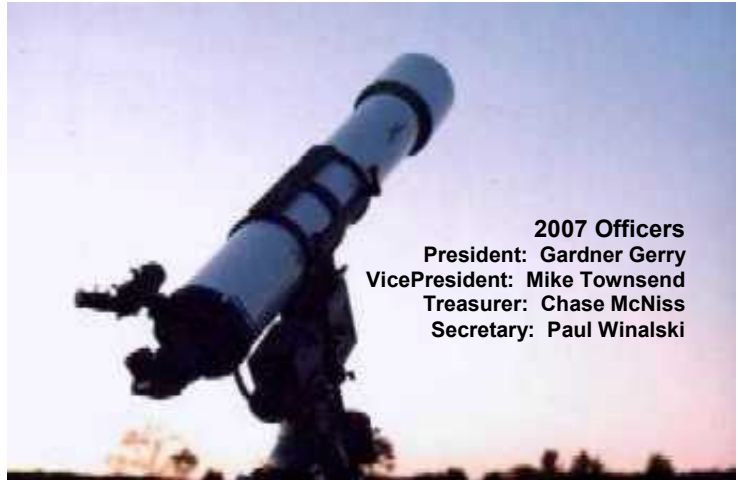
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**2007 Officers**  
President: Gardner Gerry  
VicePresident: Mike Townsend  
Treasurer: Chase McNiss  
Secretary: Paul Winalski

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**DEADLINE January 2008 Issue: 5 PM January 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.**

**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:**

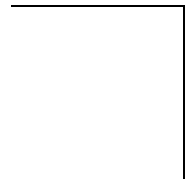
<http://www.nhastro.com/>

**This month's contributors:**

Gardner Gerry, Dave Weaver, Alan Shirey, Larry Lopez, Marc Stowbridge, David Gilmore, Chase McNiss, Paul Winalski

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



## NHAS Upcoming Events

Event	Date	Time	Location
NHAS Business Meeting	Dec 21	7:30 PM	Christa McAuliffe Planetarium
CMP Public Sky Watch	Jan 4	7:00 PM	Christa McAuliffe Planetarium
Coffee House Night	Jan 11	5:00 PM	YFOS