

Total Lunar Eclipse

President's Message

Coming up are two exiting events for us, the first is a Lunar Eclipse Public Observing event held in conjunction with CMP on Wednesday February 20th, beginning at 8:30 PM just before the start of the eclipse. Totality begins around 10 PM and ends a little under an hour later. We don't get another total lunar eclipse here in North America until December 21, 2010.

The other event is our annual Messier Marathon which will be held at the Lopez home in New Boston, NH. The dates are Friday, March 7th with Saturday the 8th as a cloud out date. In the event both nights are clouded out the MM will be rescheduled for April 4th and 5th. **Larry and Linda** have once again graciously opened their home to invasion by the enthusiastic hordes of NHAS Marathoners. The food is always wonderful *and* plentiful as some special items make their annual appearance for only this event. Larry had posted two years ago a Messier Marathon thread in the Member pages section of the Forums on the NHAS website with directions and other details. Nothing has changed that I know of but of course substitute this year's dates for the 2006 ones.

For beginners the MM can be a great chance to observe with the more experienced members present, who are always willing to help others in their search for Messier's 110 deep sky objects. The variety of instruments there is always a treat, some use binoculars to MM and others refractors both

short and long and of course there are usually several large (18"+) reflectors present also. In my opinion the 8-10" dobsonian is the ideal marathon scope as it is a good balance between light grasp and ease of setup and use. The 8" user enjoys plenty of aperture to easily find those fainter galaxies, globular and open clusters and nebulae, but not so much that hopping through the Virgo galaxy cluster becomes frustrating because you are seeing *too deep!*

Hope to see you there and Happy Marathoning!

★ Gardner Gerry
NHAS President 2008

Highlights for this Month

Not all that much news this month, unfortunately, as skies have been very poor, although the annual Freeze Your Buns coffee house night did take place.

Gardner has already described the upcoming Messier Marathon—one of our club's biggest annual events—where you can attempt to view all 110 deep-sky objects in the Messier catalogue in a single evening. Or follow your own observing program for the evening. Or just come to socialize.

Our last total lunar eclipse for a while occurs on the 20th.

The Astro 101 and 201 series of talks on things astronomical continues this month with presentations on spectroscopy and stellar evolution.

★ Paul Winalski
NHAS Secretary 2008

In the Sky This Month

Feb 16: Mars will be 1.6 degrees south of the Moon at 3:00 PM EST. The Moon will certainly be visible in broad daylight, and in a telescope Mars might be, too. See if you can spot it.

Feb 19: The Moon will pass very close to the open cluster M44 (the Beehive) in Cancer. At 3:00 PM it will be only 0.3 degrees (less than a full Moon width) away.

Feb 20: The Moon will be 1.1 degrees north of Regulus in Leo. South America and Antarctica get to see an occultation. We have to content ourselves with a total lunar eclipse (see below).

Feb 24: Saturn is at opposition, magnitude 0.2 and apparent size 20.1 arc seconds.

★ Paul Winalski

Total Lunar Eclipse

This month's Full Moon, known as the Snow Moon, Hunger Moon, or Storm Moon, will experience a total lunar eclipse. This is the last such event visible in North America until late 2010, so don't miss it! The Moon enters the penumbra of the Earth's shadow at 8:43 PM. Totality begins around 10 PM. NHAS will hold a special sky watch at Christa McAuliffe Planetarium for this event.

★ Paul Winalski

Membership and Astro 101/201

On the Membership front: We have three new members: **Stanley Sempolski** of Exeter, **Ted Blank** of

Hampton and **Bob Gillette** of Ossipee. Please welcome these new members when you see them at meetings or skywatches.

Astro 101 and 201 Presentations are ongoing. Courses currently scheduled include:

Astro 101:

February 15th: "History of Spectroscopy" will be presented by **R. P. Hale** at CMP following the NHAS Business Meeting.

Astro 201:

February 22nd: "Stellar Evolution" will be presented by **John Blackwell** at 7:00 PM, Grainger Observatory at Exeter Academy. This course has limited seating and 7 seats are currently available. Registration is required by email to acshirey@comcast.net.

Astro 101:

March 14th: "Stars" will be presented by **Paul Winalski** at 7:00 PM at YFOS, clear skies or not. Observing to follow, sky conditions permitting

Astro 101:

April 11th: "Collimation" will be presented by **John Bishop** at 7:00 PM at YFOS. John would like clear skies for this hands-on course so registration is required as we may need to alert you to a reschedule.

Astro 101:

May 2nd: "How to use your New Telescope" will be presented by **Alan Shirey** at 8:00 PM at CMP coincident with our CMP Skywatch. This course is aimed at the public who have stored their telescopes due to frustration. I am looking for volunteers to help show attendees how to use the various scopes brought to CMP.

Astro 201:

May 16th: "Measurement of Astronomical Distances" will be presented by **John Bishop** at 8:30 PM following the NHAS Business meeting at St Anselem.

★ Alan Shirey

Astro Photons

The photography committee had a meeting at YFOS on Jan. 26th. In

attendance were myself, **Herb Bubert** and "Rags" **Gilmore**. Herb and I answered Rags' questions and demonstrated some basic and not so basic digital processing examples. We made good use of the club's new NEC NP60 projector.

Unfortunately the weather did not cooperate for us to stay and image and probably kept more folks from showing up. Another meeting is not scheduled at this time.

★ Gardner Gerry

Freeze Your Buns!

Well, I had already written off FYB '08 for this year having looked at the weather forecast previously in the week but on Friday, during my daily visit to the NHAS website (my default), I just happened to notice some blue in the YFOS sky clock. Upon further examination it actually looked darn good so I decided to poll the club to see who might be going. **Gardner** responded and we decided to drive up together and enjoy each other's company if Observing did not take place. Besides, it was a good idea to check on YFOS given the recent weather.

When we arrived around 7:15 PM **Herb Bubert** was already there setting up the C14 for some imaging work. **Ken Charles**, **Bill Steele**, and **Rags** also showed up and we all eagerly discussed the faith in the sky clock and the chance for some observing. When I left my house, clearing was predicted at 8 PM but Herb mentioned that it changed to 9 PM. It was also at that time we found out that Herb never tried to get into the warming hut. Turns out there were several inches of ice preventing the door from opening so we got creative and chipped away until the door opened. Gardner and I reminisced about how we did not have to break in this time with **Nils** but that is another story .

After chatting and getting to know some of the new folks that I had not met or seen in a while, it was time to set up. As per usual, the sky clock did not let us down and around 8:45 PM the skies cleared to make perfect timing after coffee and

some food. I had Obby setup and ready to go by 9 PM.

I chose to leave the laptop and podium back home and decided to focus on my memory and look at some favorite objects using my new Ethos and my favorite eyepiece the holy hand grenade (31mm Nagler). While having Obby's mirror re-coated over the summer and fall, I was able to get a really good appreciation for low power Astronomy with my Pronto and several eyepieces. I find myself liking to use the 31mm even more now with Obby on several objects (documented below). I've really learned that it is not always aperture that rules but it does help a lot. Context is everything so I spent most of the evening using the 31 and Ethos and comparing the results. The skies were clear with below average transparency, and poor seeing conditions (according to the sky clock).

The evening was wonderful and even better sharing it with others in the club. With a small group, all of us were able to share the views in various scopes and chat away. I was really happy to meet some of the newer members and observe with them. Looking forward to more events with them and others. In between breaks, I shared a lot of stories from past events including the Messier Marathon and how that is the super bowl for NHAS. I was also reminded that it's time to start making my dried beef for Larry as the annual offering for the MM.

★ Rich DeMidio

First Observation of Saturn

We're still pretty new to this, my two sons and I, but I had to share this.

Tonight is the first clear night in a while so we set the telescope out before I left for a meeting tonight. of course, I forgot to set out the binoculars, the powermate, or many eyepieces. No matter.

When I got back, my 12 year old son Carter and I went out to try out the new (to us) powermate. First

we looked at the Orion nebula. Then we tried to find Saturn. I thought I had spotted it in the east. Carter lined it up and we looked. Focused. Nope, a star. The low eastern horizon here is through the trees, and I was suspicious. So we found the Big Dipper, then Polaris, then pointed right, then looked up midway. Nothing, other than several bright stars and an especially bright one at the bottom, that has to be a constellation, I thought. We went to the end of the driveway. No luck, so we went back inside and consulted *Sky & Telescope*. Carter was convinced we were looking in the right spot. I thought he might be right. Memorizing the star pairs in Leo, we went back out. I grabbed the binocs. That bottom star sure looked flat and oblong, but I couldn't hold the image still enough. Carter lined up again. "Wow", he said. I looked. "Cool," I said. There it was, rings and all, and white. We refocused and looked some more. Awesome, we said.

It's time to try the 10mm eyepiece (120x). Wow. We could see space between the rings and the planet. Let's try the powermate (2.5x), pushing the limit of our 6" telescope. Bigger, but no clearer. No more features. Still, wow. We watched it dance across the field of view a few times. About 30 seconds. "Know what that was?" I asked. "The rotation of the earth?" he asked. Yah. Wow.

We watched it dance some more., then we went in to get your 9.7mm eyepiece. Pretty similar. Then we got Tanja out to see it. Her eyes were not dark adjusted, but she managed to find the eyepiece. "Isn't that something," she said. We agreed. It's 10:00, Carter, time for bed.

All the pretty pictures in the world do not equal seeing it, really seeing it, for the first time. We're still glowing.

★ Jeff Eitreim

NHAS January 2008 Business Meeting

ATM

No activity.

YFOS

Larry Lopez reports that snow has been removed from the roofs thanks to unknown gnomes. The CO detector in the warming hut needs a new 9V battery. There was some discussion about acquiring an AC-powered detector. For now we'll try new batteries for the current detector and see how it goes.

We need snow removal in preparation for Freeze Your Buns night.

Membership

Alan Shirey reports one new member. An Astro 101 talk (Optics) was held at YFOS. In February we will have Astro 101 on Spectroscopy, Astro 201 on Stellar Evolution.

Photography

Gardner Gerry reports that a committee meeting is scheduled for 26 January at YFOS.

Public Observing

A sky watch was recently held at Moultonboro. We have upcoming events at Mount Washington and CMP (for the total lunar eclipse).

Web Administration

No report.

Radio Astronomy

No report.

Poster of the Month

Todd Miller distributed several copies of this year's Chandra X-ray Observatory calendar.

Evening Program

We were treated to many fine astro images taken by club members, many of whom were in attendance to explain the details of how the images were obtained and processed. Many more images are in the Member's Area on the NHAS website.

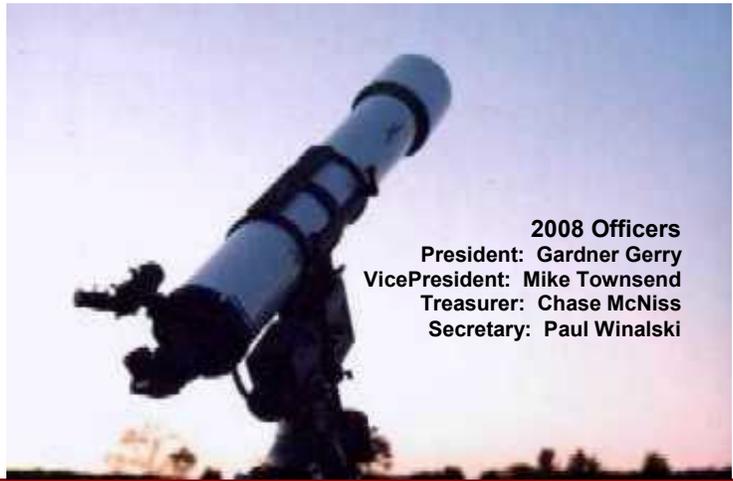
★ Paul Winalski

The Bottom Line

We have received confirmation from the insurance company that the new policy (including property insurance) is in effect, although we have not received the formal binder or the bill.

Starting Balance:	\$6501.65
Deposits/Credits:	30.00
(Membership)	
Accounts/Paid:	0.00
Net Account Balance:	\$6531.65
Petty cash drawer:	\$100.00
Cash Balance:	\$6531.65

2008 Membership:	114
	★ Chase McNiss



2008 Officers
President: Gardner Gerry
VicePresident: Mike Townsend
Treasurer: Chase McNiss
Secretary: Paul Winalski

DEADLINE February 2008 Issue: 5 PM March 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

Use our web site:

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

This month's contributors:

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NHAS Upcoming Events

Event	Date	Time	Location
NHAS Business Meeting	Feb 15	7:30 PM	Christa McAuliffe Planetarium
Astro 101: History of Spectroscopy	Feb 15	8:30 PM	Chirsta McAuliffe Planetarium
Total Lunar Eclipse Public Sky Watch	Feb 20	8:30 PM	Christa McAuliffe Planetarium
Astro 201: Stellar Evolution	Feb 22	7:00 PM	Grainger Observatory, Phillips Exeter Academy
Messier Marathon	Mar 7-8	12:00 PM	Lopez residence, New Boston
Coffee House Night	Mar 7	5:00 PM	YFOS
CMP Public Sky Watch	Mar 7	7:00 PM	Christa McAuliffe Planetarium
Astro 101: Stars	Mar 14	7:00 PM	YFOS
NHAS Business Meeting	Mar 21	7:30 PM	St. Anselm College