



President's Message

I write this message fresh off my trip to Australia having attended the Deepest South Texas Star Safari trying to settle back into reality. It was a trip of a lifetime and I will write a report for a future newsletter. I wanted to thank **Mike Townsend** for leading the March meeting during my absence.

With the arrival of spring, activity is picking up for our club. There are many upcoming sky watches with more requests coming in on a regular basis. Please monitor the email threads and check the club calendar for details regarding each event. Recent activities have resulted in great attendance with even NHAS recognized publicly by the press for some of them.

You have also noticed by now the banner on the website advertising "Astrofest 2010" hosted by the McAuliffe-Shepard Discovery Center. This is a huge event with a significant NHAS contribution. At last year's event, NHAS had over thirty people participate in our inside and outside areas. This year, **Ted Blank** is leading our effort with he and his team defining several tasks that will need people to take charge of. Please monitor the email threads for ways to contribute. Ted will also have one last briefing at the April business meeting, which occurs just before this event. Even if no specific area appeals to you, we will always need rovers to help cover folks who need to take breaks. Bottom line is that if you wish to participate but do not know how, please see Ted or a member of his team. They will find a way for you to contribute.

The Board of Directors recently met with an action of eliciting ideas for a club wish list. Thank you to everyone who has responded with creative ideas for us to consider. Keep the ideas flowing, as they will be discussed at the next officer meeting in late April. We will report back action items in May. Other key topics for discussion will include a review of ideas submitted for collaboration, status of asset database, and planning out remaining events for the second portion of the year. If anyone has specific items that they wish the officers to address, please let me know and I will make sure it gets brought up for discussion.

The March Messier Marathon did not occur due to poor weather but Larry and Linda Lopez have graciously offered to try again on April 9th with April 10th as the backup date. Please refer to the calendar and emails from Larry on details. It's just a few short weeks away so I need to get my dried beef done or Larry will refuse me entry to his homestead ☺

Recently, **Steve Forbes** and family relocated to Florida. I wanted to take this moment to thank Steve for his years of contribution to NHAS and his time spent in helping to monitor activity and maintain YFOS. On behalf of NHAS, we wish the Forbes family good fortune on their new endeavor.

Finally, I wanted to remind folks that we have guest speakers lined up for our April and May meetings. Please refer to the calendar for details.

Clear skies,

★ Rich DeMidio
NHAS President 2010

AstroFest 2010

NHAS celebrates Astronomy Day each year, for the last several years in conjunction with the McAuliffe-Shepard Discovery Center's "Spacetacular Saturday" in early May. This year MSDC is expanding the event from one day to the full weekend and has rechristened it **AreoSpaceFest 2010**. We will be expanding our participation, too, and calling our portion of the event **AstroFest 2010**.

The kick-off will be a public sky watch on Friday, 30 April starting at 7:00 PM (backup date in case of overcast skies is Saturday, 1 May).

On Saturday and Sunday we will have displays both indoors and (weather permitting) outdoors. Indoors we will have displays on telescopes and astrophotography, slide shows, and a raffle in support of the NHAS educational programs. Outdoors we will be demonstrating telescopes, magnification, solar viewing in both white light and H α , and daytime viewing of Venus. We will also provide assistance to visitors who need help setting up their own telescopes.

We need volunteers to man the various exhibits and to provide the telescopes. **Ted Blank** is the coordinator for AstroFest 2010. He has sign-up sheets for all of the various activities during the weekend. Please contact Ted if you wish to volunteer.

Here is the time line for the AstroFest weekend:

Friday night's activities run from 5-10 PM. Set up for the main indoor

table starts at 4 PM. The sky watch itself starts at dusk and runs officially until 10 PM (or until everyone packs up and goes home).

On Saturday and Sunday, we will operate in three shifts: 9 AM-12 PM, 12-3 PM, and 3-6 PM. The first shift will be responsible for outdoor setup; third shift is responsible for cleanup and pack-up. We will have a main table indoors and also an outdoor table. Planned outdoor activities are:

Solar observing
Magnification display
Static scope display
Binocular astronomy

We also need “floaters” to wander between the exhibits, directing the public, answering questions, and generally helping out and filling in as needed.

The possibility of overnight storage of scopes and gear at the Discovery Center is being investigated.

This is a very big event—to fill all slots on all days we need over thirty volunteers! So please sign up for all jobs and slots that you can.

Donations of books, scopes, eyepieces, planispheres, meteorites, binoculars, flashlights, etc. for the raffle will be greatly appreciated.

Again, contact Ted Blank to volunteer, or if you have any questions or suggestions.

This is always a fun and rewarding event and, with the expanded format, promises to be even more so this year. See you there!

★ Paul Winalski
Ted Blank

2010 Messier Marathon Postponed to April

Cloudy weather has forced the postponement of this year’s club Messier Marathon event. It has been rescheduled for the evening of Friday, 9-10 April, with Saturday, 10-11 April as a backup date.

Once a year in the March/April time frame, the Sun is positioned such that it is possible from mid Northern latitudes to observe all 110 deep-sky objects in Charles Messier’s famous catalog in a single evening, literally

from dusk to dawn. Attempting to do this is called “running the Messier Marathon”. Here in New Hampshire we’re a little too far north to get all 110 objects, but we can see nearly all of them (my personal best is 104).

Linda and Larry Lopez have again agreed to host the club’s annual Messier Marathon at their home in dark-skied New Boston. The event starts at 3:00 PM and runs through the following morning.

This is one of NHAS’s major social events of the year. Come whether you plan to run the Marathon, just do some random observing of your own, or simply want to hang out and socialize. Whether or not you bring a scope, this is a great opportunity to learn the sky and to see a lot of nifty deep-sky objects. And there is always plenty of good food. Be sure to mark this on your calendar!

★ Paul Winalski

Sidewalk Astronomy, Portsmouth, 21 February



This little girl spent at least 10 minutes tracking the moon. She couldn’t get enough of it! (photos by Ted Blank)

The “Guerilla Astronomers” had a very nice time in Portsmouth in Market Square on Sunday evening starting at about 6:30. The wind started out blowing a bit but calmed down. Probably 50+ visitors over 2.5 hours, including lots of kids. Several people came back to bring friends and children once they saw what was going on. Attending with scopes or binos were **Ted Blank, Herb Bubert, Tim Mauro, Jim Moe, and Tom Cocchiaro**. I think we had four scopes and two sets of

binos on tripods. We spent a lot of



This guy came back to Herb’s scope three times.

time on the moon (perfect, first quarter, lots of detail), M42, the Pleiades (which was almost totally washed out by the Moon being within a degree or two—both visible in the same bino field of view, which was cool). Mars was poor due to seeing but Herb managed to coax the polar cap out later in the evening.



Tom Cocchiaro shows off M42 in the 152mm refractor.

★ Ted Blank

NHAS February 2010 Business Meeting

The meeting took place on 19 February at the McAuliffe-Shepard Discovery Center.

President’s Report

Rich DeMidio reported on two aspects of NHAS’s public face:

Our annual Astronomy Day activities in conjunction with MSDC will take place over the May 1 weekend, and have been rechristened “AstroFest 2010” (see the article elsewhere in this issue of the *Observer*). Planning is underway.

Marc Stowbridge was interviewed in a 24 January article at boston.com on amateur observing activities in New England. Our

monthly sky watches at MSDC were described. A beautiful image of M42 by **Herb Bubert** heads up the article.

Internal to the club, Rich pointed out that the NHAS Attire page at the website is now operational. Also, Messier Marathon planning is underway. The event is scheduled to take place on 12 March at the Lopez residence in New Boston.

Board of Directors Report

The Board met on 15 January. They reviewed the CDROM record of club assets. They sorted through a large tub of club materials, discarding duplicates and unwanted items, and sorting out materials of interest to the various committee chairs.

The Board also reviewed folders on NHAS historical data; they are interested in finding a club historian (any volunteers?). For now the historical data has been given to **Paul Winalski**, who has added it to the historical data he received from previous club secretaries.

Astrofest 2010

This is the name for this year's Astronomy Day festivities. **Ted Blank**, Astrofest Coordinator, gave a presentation on our plans for the event. See the article elsewhere in this *Observer*.

Public Observing

Marc Stowbridge noted the upcoming public sky watches on 4 March (Bow, Cub Scout Pack 75), 8 March (Bedford High School), and 15 March (North Hampton 3rd grade).

The Alton sky watch on 12 February attracted about ninety people. There were four telescopes, and lots of enthusiasm and interest.

New Hampshire TechFest is 15-19 March. NHAS participated in this event last year. If we're going to participate this year, we need to get planning underway now.

Library Telescope Program

Marc Stowbridge reported that the Samuel H. Wentworth Library in Sandwich got their telescope on 19 February. Dan Reidy of Moultonboro Central School will be

the foster parent. Sandwich Elementary School hosted a sky watch this past fall.

Pease Library in Plymouth has their telescope. There was a short article in this week's Plymouth Enterprise about it. **Barrie Sawyer** is the foster parent.



The Pease Library telescope (Marc Stowbridge photo)

Ossipee Public Library also received a telescope last month. **Bob Gillette** is the foster parent.

We have a telescope in need of a home. Madison and Conway have expressed interest. Contact Marc if you have other ideas for a library to house this scope.

Miscellaneous Business

The Membership Committee is looking into potential additions to our means of collaboration other than email.

Guest speakers for April and May have been confirmed.

Matt Marulla, our webmaster, gave a demonstration of the new NHAS website.

Book of the Month

Galaxy by Stuart Clark.

Rich DeMidio has donated a star chart, Sky Atlas 2000.0, deluxe laminated field edition, for check-out by club members.

Evening Presentation

Richard Woolf a Physics graduate student at the University of New Hampshire, gave a presentation on various End of the World scenarios such as asteroid and comet collisions and supernova explosions.

★ Paul Winalski

The Bottom Line

Starting Balance: \$8012.98

Deposits/Credits:

Membership: 360.00
 Donations: 15.80
 Bank interest: 1.84
 Total : 332.24

Accounts/Paid:

Insurance: 415.00
 Cynric Company, LLC: 462.00
 Postmaster: 140.00
 Total: 1017.00
Net Account Balance: \$7373.62
Petty cash drawer: \$100.00
Cash Balance: \$7473.62

Membership: 121

New Members:

- Don Byrne**, Bedford NH
- Melinde Sanborn**, Bedford NH
- Virgil Mehalek**, Dover NH
- Steve Rogers**, Nashua NH
- Keith Gartrett**, Wolfeboro NH
- Andrew DiGiovanni**, Goffstown NH

★ Ken Charles
 NHAS Treasurer 2010



2010 Officers
 President: Rich DeMidio
 Vice President: Mike Townsend
 Treasurer: Ken Charles
 Secretary: Paul Winalski

DEADLINE April 2010 Issue: 5 PM April 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:

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 P.O. Box 5823
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 Attn: Treasurer

Send E-mail to:

info@nhastro.com

Use our web site:

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

This month's contributors:

Rich DeMidio, Ted Blank, Ken Charles

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NHAS Upcoming Events

Event	Date	Time	Location
Discovery Center Public Sky Watch	April 2	7:00 PM	McAuliffe-Shepard Discovery Center, Concord NH
Bedford High School Public Sky Watch	April 6	7:00 PM	Joppa Hill Farm, Bedford NH
Messier Marathon	April 9-10	3:00 PM	Lopez residence, New Bedford, NH
Coffee House Night	April 9	5:00 PM	YFOS
Messier Marathon (backup date)	April 10-11	3:00 PM	Lopez residence, New Bedford, NH
New Searles School Astronomy Night	April 13	7:30 PM	New Searles School, Nashua, NH
Thorntons Ferry School Sky Watch	April 14	7:00 PM	Thorntons Ferry Elementary School, Merrimack, NH
NHAS Business Meeting	April 16	7:30 PM	McAuliffe-Shepard Discovery Center, Concord NH
Thorntons Ferry Sky Watch (backup date)	April 19	7:00 PM	Thorntons Ferry Elementary School, Merrimack NH
Langdon Library Sky watch	April 20	5:00 PM	Langdon Library, Newington NH
Astronomy Day/Aerospace Festival	April 30- May 2	7:00 PM	McAuliffe-Shepard Discovery Center, Concord NH