

## Nantucket Star Party

### President's Message

September marks the time for back to school and the end of summer, but it also marks the beginning of fall observing season. This is something to really get excited about and for me, my favorite time of the year. It starts to get dark earlier, it is not terribly cold, and most of all, the bugs are gone! As an added bonus, if you are able to drive to YFOS during daytime hours, you should see some great fall foliage along the way. For our new members, now is the time to plan your trips. The calendar calls out some monthly events but on any given weekend, be sure to check your email since it is very typical for members be going. In fact, I have been to YFOS three times within the last ten days. It is now prime time observing!

Speaking of events, plans are underway for our fall Messier Marathon. I would like to extend my thanks to **The Wickets** (Scott, Sue, and Ben) for hosting this wonderful event. **Larry Lopez** is our organizer and he has posted information within the forums. Finally, the evening program at the September meeting will be preparation for the Fall Messier Marathon.

We are rapidly closing in on the completion of Q3. I will be having an officer meeting in October to discuss any remaining issues for closing out 2010 business along with planning for 2011. One item that I did want to mention is the Astronomy League. We will be offering optional membership but because of the way AL does them,

we will need to hold off until April 2011. **Ken Charles** will be providing a briefing to the membership that explains it all.

I wanted to remind everyone about Ken's recent NHAS membership renewal message. Dues will need to be collected in October with a grace period to January 2011. Recall that we will implementing the new email distribution list policy in January 2011 so it is imperative that members have their dues paid up before then.

Clear Skies,

★ Rich DeMidio  
NHAS President 2010

### Highlights for This Month

There was a period of clear skies that led to a lot of observing activity at YFOS this month. The club also held a Star Party on Nantucket Island.

The Educational Outreach Committee held an important review and planning session for our participation in Astronomy Day/AeroSpaceFest.

On 18 September we will celebrate International Observe the Moon Night in conjunction with the McAuliffe-Shepard Discovery Center. Hope to see you there!

★ Paul Winalski  
NHAS Secretary 2010

### Sidewalk Astronomy, 20 August, Rockport MA

As some of you are aware, I missed the business meeting last night.

I'm going for my Advanced Open Water certification and last night was the night dive portion. Three

students, one instructor, one dive mater (second instructor) and one guy (instructor) from the shop who never passes up a night dive.

But Wait!

The title of the article is Sidewalk astronomy!

What's up?

Well, after the dive and getting all my gear stowed (*i.e.*, put away in the trunk), I set up my TeleVue 76 on a tripod for the divers to catch a glimpse of the sky. It wasn't too great in Rockport—lots of overhead lights (which are common where you find the public) but I managed to show them Jupiter and the four moons. I was using a 25mm University Koenig 2 in the 76 giving about 19x. One of the guys, Jason said he had a telescope once. Al (instructor) hadn't seen Jupiter before. He asked if the moons were once used to tell time. I hadn't heard of this before. You would of course need a telescope to see them.

Then I put in the 2x powermate and brought out the Northern Equatorial Band. At 38x most could see it, one guy could see a hint of it.

I then moved over to M31, not much to look at when one might expect a galaxy to have dust lanes and all but none the less, looking 2.3 million light years away always brings a Whoa!

Having spent an hour underwater covering 200 yards, we were all pretty tired. It was about 10:45 when we surfaced and with an hour drive home, I put away the scope.

There was a group of residents down the street I could have called over but....Zzzzz.

So there you have it, another session of public outreach.

P.S. the underwater bioluminescence was cool too! Lots of “stars” with a wave of your hand.

★ Rich Schueller

## YFOS Observing, 6 September

**Rich DeMidio, Chase McNiss, Dan Smith, Herb Bubert,** and I had nice time tonight. Dan, Herb, and Rich were there when I left about 11:25, but Rich was packing up. Dew was just murderous by then ... one of my eyepieces fogged on the *inside*, which I've never seen before.

Dan was making his way through the Barnard catalog and actually logging objects. I was quite impressed with his diligence, since I'm about as *ad hoc* as one could imagine when I'm viewing, and have yet to really create what I'd consider a log. I've done an observing report here and there, but that's not really logging. Not like Dan. As dad would say., “He's going at it like he meant it.” Well done!

Herb was imaging The Veil ... again! ☺ Once he was set up he helped us play with our scopes. He also had a set of 7x50 binoculars that were very, very nice. Sagittarius was like a jewelry store, there were so many baubles so easily found within.

Chase had the club 16" newt out. I don't recall all he did, but I did see a nice view of M92 through that instrument.

Rich helped guide me around Sagittarius, an area I know none too well. He showed me that I did in fact not see the Trifid Nebula as reported a few weeks ago, though it's so close to The Lagoon I don't know how I could have missed it. He also showed me The Swan in Obby, and allowed as how the first time he saw that it reminded him of the planet eater from Star Trek episode *Doomsday Machine*. Not sure I can look at that nebula the same way any more! ☺

Herb helped me around the upper part of Sagittarius, explaining how to find things and where they are in relation to each other. Hope that all sticks!

I had all three of my scopes with me, but only set up the newt and the refractor. Since I started setting them both up I find I really like having the pair at the ready. They seem to complement each other nicely, mainly due to the different focal lengths. The cat and the newt are rather similar, but the refractor is considerably shorter, and wider field, and a lot of things are simply better looking in it. I'm sure most know that already, but I'm just learning how nice it is.

Firsts for me (in my telescope): M69, M11, the Trifid Nebula, the Swan Nebula, the Eagle Nebula.

Also saw (in my telescope): M54, M70, M28, M22, M18, a few NGC in Sagittarius that I haven't looked up, M81, M82, the Double Cluster, M31, M33, Jupiter

★ David Gilmore

## Educational Outreach Committee Meeting, 9 September

Attendees: **Matt Amar, Ted Blank, Dave McDonald, Gardner Gerry, Rich Schueller, Marc Stowbridge.** The topic was NHAS's celebration of Astronomy Day as part of the McAuliffe-Shepard Discovery Center's AeroSpaceFest weekend.

MSDC's mission statement: “To educate, incite, and entertain learners of all ages in the sciences and humanities by actively engaging them in the exploration of Astronomy, Aviation, Earth and Space Science.” MSDC's goal is an AeroSpaceFest brand covering all these areas. It was good that the MSDC poster had a section for the NHAS activities.

Should MSDC do one poster or separate posters for each of their core mission areas? This is an open question. If NHAS makes its own poster, make it directed toward our activities without a competing brand.

MSDC is likely interested in asking **Tom Cocchiaro** to design their poster and in supporting the costs. Dave McDonald will check with Jeanne about the poster elements.

Follow-up from the 2010 event:

- Gather expense info from all who spent/donated.
- Have an assistant to the coordinator who becomes coordinator the next year.
- The second floor location was fine. Put the raffle items outside the door to the observatory
- The outside location was perfect.
- Members enjoyed helping out in the observatory dome. It might be a good idea to schedule training before the weekend (Matt A. offered to handle this).

Our major events at AeroSpaceFest: Outdoor—solar observing and educational posters. Indoor—raffle, Astronomy Bowl prized, assisting in Observatory, educational tables.

New ideas for 2011:

The sandwich boards need to include “public welcome” or similar verbiage.

The Friday night sky watch needs new signs that say “Sky Watch and Scope Clinic” and the calendar entry should say “Scope Clinic”.

We need new signs pointing to our solar observing area (get Tom to design).

Include some appropriate books as a package with raffled telescopes.

Remind members working outdoors to bring sunscreen and hats.

Someone has to be in charge of food and water/refreshments/sunscreen.

Start to solicit raffle prizes earlier, also allow monetary donations from our members.

Indoor static displays (library scope program, “see Saturn”, cut-away dob) got a lot of people to stop and talk to us.

NHAS backdrop display needs our name on it.

Need a checklist of outdoor items making up the entire outdoor display.

Review the state of the big tent and make needed repairs.

Early definition and communication of any raffles, awards, etc.

Follow-ups for 2011:

MSDC would like some dates in November when we can meet.

Get appropriation estimate by Q4 officer's meeting in October.

We need a list of items the new officers need to approve (e.g., one-year membership for a prize).

We need a "complimentary membership" form that does not ask for money to use as "prize memberships". We must also follow up with the 2010 free membership recipients.

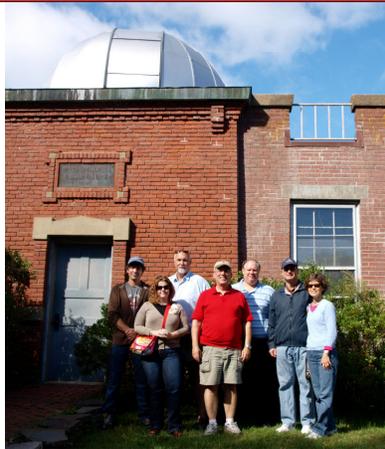
We need some small prizes for event assistants such as the little girl who drew tickets for the raffle.

2010 expenses: Saturday lunch (\$75), posters (\$100), mailing and envelopes (\$75).

★ Ted Blank

## Nantucket Star Party, 10-12 September, Nantucket MA

The first-ever NHAS Nantucket Star Party was held on the weekend of September 10-12, 2010. Five hardy members (and their wives) made their way to Nantucket Island in the hope that clear weather would prevail for the Saturday evening sky watch for 35 Girl Scouts and their parents at the Nantucket Youth Hostel. **Andy and Nancy Jaffe, Ken and Sheila Charles, Tom and Annabelle Cocchiaro, and Tim and Karlina Mauro** arrived over the course of Friday and Saturday and stayed at **Ted Blank's** house in the Surfside area of Nantucket. (Unfortunately Ted's wife Tina could not make it due to work constraints.)



### The 2010 Nantucket Star Party Team (Ted Blank photos).

Bringing gear to Nantucket involves a ferry ride, so "grab 'n go" is the preferred style. Most brought an assortment of small refractors on alt-az mounts. An 8" Orion XTi that Ted keeps on the island was also available. However Ken Charles set the record for dogged determination by bringing *Soulshine*, his CPC11 (in its sturdy JMI case) to Hyannis, on the ferry, in a taxi along Nantucket's less-than-smooth roads, and finally to the Youth Hostel in Ted and Tina's van.



### Travelling astronomer gear.

The early arrivals had dinner on Friday night while Ted went out to deliver a previously-donated private star party for the Maria Mitchell Association on Nantucket. The MMA has three observatories on the island, and each summer they sponsor six undergraduate students as interns to perform original research, which the students later present via a poster session at the American Astronomical Society meeting. During the 2010 MMA fund raiser, the "private" star party was sold by silent auction to a family who lives on the island. Clouds on Friday night prevented

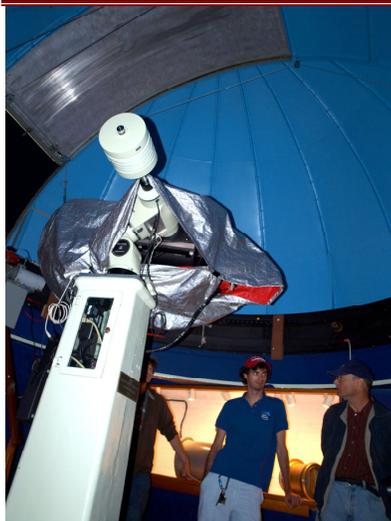
any observing but Ted reports that the indoor presentation went well for the winning family and several friends.

On Saturday afternoon the NHAS group was treated to a tour of the MMA Observatories and Library. Their host was Davis Sliski, a senior at U. Mass Amherst and a former MMA intern. David did his summer research on Nantucket in 2008 on the variable star V3798 Sgr, combining his own new observations with a thorough review of previous observations on glass plates at Harvard and Nantucket going back over 100 years. Among the many highlights of the tour was the opportunity to see the 5" mahogany Clarke refractor (fully restored) that Maria Mitchell used to discover a new comet in 1847. The observatory also has a 20" PlaneWave RC scope, a 24" SCT, and an 8" fully restored Clarke refractor used mostly for public nights.



### Loines Observatory's 8-inch Clarke Refractor.

Clouds covered the sky during the entire day Friday and Saturday, but the Clear Sky Chart and other weather sites kept hinting that things might clear around 7 PM or so on Saturday. Sure enough, at 7:30 a mass of cold, dry air pushed far enough South and it was as if a giant squeegee had cleared off a dirty windshield. After a short pause to observe a mag -3.6 ISS flyby everyone jumped in the van for the short trip to the Youth Hostel. The Milky Way was visible immediately and conditions were excellent (MMA intern David, who came for dinner and joined the star party, commented that the seeing that night was as good as Nantucket ever gets!)



### Vestral Street Observatory tour.

The group set up in a small parking lot just outside the Youth Hostel. The team who runs the Hostel was very helpful and went around removing outdoor light bulbs until the area was completely dark. Tom and Ted found some little battery powered "lightolier" candles which they placed in paper bags along the driveway to the observing site. These provided just enough light for the Girl Scouts to find their way. The parents and Scouts were all charmed and impressed by the views offered in the various scopes. The crescent moon set early, but everyone got a good look at Jupiter and its moons, along with dozens of star clusters, double stars and nebulae. Andromeda was easily visible naked eye as was the double cluster in Perseus, and in the scopes these objects were greatly enjoyed by all. The early views of Sagittarius were incredible. The event went on for over two hours and the feedback from the Hostel staff was very positive. However, Sunday morning dawned completely cloudy and it stayed cloudy for the rest of the weekend, so the Weather Gods definitely smiled on this outing!

Ted and Tina have put their house on Nantucket up for sale, but the Youth Hostel has invited us back for 2011 and has plenty of beds. So let's hope for clear skies and another fun trip!

★ Ted Blank

The evening of 9/11, club members Ted Blank, Tom Cocchiario, Ken Charles, Tim Mauro, and Andy Jaffe showed thirty-five Girl Scouts and their parents the summer and fall sky over Nantucket. The Scouts had considered using Maria Mitchell Observatory staff, but most of them were away for a conference. The sky over Nantucket is about as dark as Stellafane, but the horizons are something else. One observing highlight was seeing M6 and M7 set into the ocean through binoculars. While not the NHAS norm, the only stretch of clear weather over the weekend was during the observing session.

Members' spouses also came and we stayed at Ted's house. He's a superb host, making sure we all had plenty to eat and ferrying us around the island. His house is a five minute walk to the beach. Ted also arranged for us to have a tour of the Maria Mitchell Observatory the afternoon before the star party. Beach walking, tourist sites, and the natural beauty of the island filled out the weekend.

While there are no firm plans for a repeat in 2011, the scouts were very enthusiastic and an invitation for next year is likely. If so, club members should definitely put this star party on their list of things to do.

★ Andy Jaffe

### NHAS August 2010 Business Meeting

The August business meeting was held at the McAuliffe-Shepard Discovery Center on 20 August, our President, **Rich DeMidio**, presiding.

#### President's Report

The annual financial review was conducted at the Q3 Officers Meeting. There will be no changes in dues for 2011.

In recognition of the considerable added value that participation in the NHAS membership list provides, it was decided at the Q3 officer's meeting to restrict, going forward, membership in the NHAS general discussion email list to NHAS paid-

up members in good standing. There will be an annual purge of the distribution list in January of each year. Details will follow in a separate correspondence to all current members of the distribution list.

The officer's meeting also decided to offer membership in the Astronomical League to NHAS members, at an optional fee to be added to the annual NHAS membership. The membership form will be updated to reflect these changes.

**Tom Cocchiario** suggested creating a separate email distribution list for outreach purposes. Rich responded that this is under conderation. **John Bishop** pointed out that we have one-way communication already via Facebook, Twitter, etc.

#### Board of Directors

John Bishop reported that the Board has started the process of verifying our list of assets. Thanks to our Webmaster, we now have the ability to modify the online asset list. Email was sent on 29 July to everyone listed as having a club asset. So far, we have only gotten responses from five people out of the eighteen we sent queries to.

#### Educational Outreach

**Matt Amar** reports that International Observe the Moon Night is to be celebrated on 18 September at MSDC and NHAS has been requested to assist. At the last EOC meeting, there was discussion of having event notification email.

**Chase McNiss** pointed out that we can't have all sky watches on the list, as some schools don't want the general public there. Rich DeMidio, Paul Winalski, and Matt Amar suggested that we have **Matt Marulla** take that radio button off the form.

There is a possibility that we may hold a second Astronomy Day event sometime in the fall, perhaps at Exeter Academy, or along the coast.

The September EOC meeting, scheduled for 9 September, will be devoted to pre-planning for NHAS participation in MSDC's AeroSpaceFest 2011, to avoid any

miscommunication as happened this past year. **Ted Blank** will meet with Jean from MSDC in November; in preparation we need to get our communications together.

**Rich Schueller** reported interest in our Library Telescope Program from southern Maine. There is great potential for the Library Program to expand beyond NH. We have just added a fourteenth library scope in the Conway Public Library. Contact has been made with Orion Telescope regarding possible publication of our library program. We are waiting to hear back.

Updates have been made to the modifications we make to the library scopes, based on lessons learned from the early placements. Libraries are calling us now—word is getting out! It would be important to go back to the ten or so scopes that are near off-the-shelf scopes and to make the needed modifications to them.

A how-to document on modifying scopes will be going onto our website.

### Website

**Matt Marulla** reports that the new NHAS website is up and running. Please send comments to Matt.

### Membership

**Bill Steele** was on vacation. He reported that he has requested Astro 101 and 201 presenters to pick a month to present their topics. The Membership Committee is looking for local libraries that can host members-only Astro 101/201 presentations. We would like contact names, phone number, and email addresses for local contacts.

### YFOS

**Larry Lopez** is out of town. There is a work session scheduled for 28 August to finish cleanup of the “thestral occupation” of the observatory and repair of the southwest folding panel of the observatory.

### Astrophotography

Be sure to check out the forums for the new images.

### Miscellaneous Business

Rich is working on lining up guest speakers for the second half of the year. So far, September is open (possibly it will be a briefing for the fall Messier Marathon). In October, **John Blackwell** will present “Adventures in Spectroscopy”. The November speaker’s slot is open. In December, we will have then NHAS social.

Regarding the fall Messier Marathon, the **Wickets** will be hosting this event over the evening of 5-6 November. **Larry Lopez** is the contact person. Email and forum entries will provide the details.

The 2010 NHAS Social will replace the December meeting’s evening program. It will be held in the MSDC function room and will be a pot luck meal. We will set up tables for equipment, books, and such. This is a chance to simply visit and chat about your favorite topics, and a nice way to end the year.

Chase suggested running a slide show in the background. **Gardner Gerry** said he would put one together.

### In the Sky

Check the website forums for Gardner’s images of the North America Nebula and **Dave Weaver’s** image of M20 (the Trifid Nebula).

### Book of the Month

Don presented Gary Seronid’s Binocular Highlights, published by *Sky & Telescope*, which is in four sections, one for each season.

### Scope of the Month

There were two of these:

Gardner Gerry presented his Takahashi FSQ-106 refractor.

Dave Weaver presented a Celestron 1100 Edge-HD. It comes with an Axiom LS eyepiece and finder scope. It is corrected for flat field edge to edge. There are added vent holes to assist in cooling the mirror. There is locking to help mitigate mirror flop.

### Evening Presentation

**Ed Ting** presented “Telescope Tales”—a review of some of the telescopes he’s encountered in his observing career. Ed has a knack for entertaining presentations, and this was no exception.

### The Bottom Line

<b>Starting Balance:</b>	<b>\$6879.38</b>
<b>Deposits/Credits:</b>	
Membership:	90.00
Donations:	55.00
Bank interest:	1.33
Logo’d Softwear Commission	52.17
Total :	198.50
<b>Accounts/Paid:</b>	
Laser Guy (laser pens)	247.52
Total:	247.52
<b>Net Account Balance:</b>	<b>\$6830.36</b>
<b>Petty cash drawer:</b>	\$100.00
<b>Cash Balance:</b>	<b>\$6930.36</b>

**Membership:** 146

### Donations:

<b>Steven Harris</b>	5.00
New Durham Library	50.00

### New Members:

**Craig Wofsy**, Salisbury, NH  
**Fred Sladen**, New London, NH  
**Joseph Haskell**, Bedford, NH  
**Rick and Mary Breton**, Danville NH

★ Ken Charles  
 NHAS Treasurer 2010



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

**DEADLINE October 2010 Issue: 5 PM October 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:**

Rich DeMidio, Rich Schueller, David Gilmore, Ted Blank, Andy Jaffe, Ken Charles

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



## NHAS Upcoming Events

Event	Date	Time	Location
Nichols Memorial Library Sky Watch	August 19	8:00 PM	169 Main St, Kingston NH
NHAS Business Meeting	August 20	7:30 PM	McAuliffe-Shepard Discovery Center, Concord NH
Discovery Center Sky Watch	September 3	7:00 PM	McAuliffe-Shepard Discovery Center, Concord NH
Educational Outreach Committee Meeting	September 9	6:30 PM	Ralph Pill Building, 22 Bridge Street, Concord NH
NHAS Coffee House Night	September 10	5:00 PM	YFOS
Nantucket Star Party	September 11	7:00 PM	Nantucket Island, MA
NHAS Business Meeting	September 17	7:30 PM	St. Anselm College, Manchester NH
International Observe the Moon Night	September 18	6:00 PM	McAuliffe-Shepard Discovery Center, Concord NH
Cub Scout Pack 610 Sky Watch	September 24	7:00 PM	35 Keyes Hill Road, Pelham NH
Discovery Center Sky Watch	October 1	7:00 PM	McAuliffe-Shepard Discovery Center, Concord NH
Nashua High School North Sky Watch	October 6	6:30 PM	10 Chuck Druding Road, Nashua NH
Educational Outreach Committee Meeting	October 7	6:30 PM	Ralph Pill Building, 22 Bridge Street, Concord NH