



LTP Gets Grant

President's Message

When we present the sky at sky watches, we spend most of our time telling people about things that are known. This is like most science instruction in the schools, where students are taught things that are already known. Based on their personal experienced, students naturally tend to think that most things are known, and that if there are any bits of fact which aren't known, those facts are unimportant or trivial: undiscovered bugs in the Amazon and the exact composition of asteroids.

But this is not the case. Our "known world" may be large, but it's surrounded by a vast number of important (but discoverable) unknown facts. I think schools do a disservice to students when they don't show them the edges of knowledge and let them realize that many current scientists are engaged in trying to push the border of the known a little further out, that scientific progress is going on today, right now, at a tremendous pace.

For example, I've recently seen several news items about the current solar cycle. There are fewer sun-spots than expected and they are smaller than expected. The solar atmosphere is unusually inactive. Some scientists wonder whether we are about to experience another long period of an inactive Sun like the Maunder Minimum of 1645 to 1715. Perhaps this will mean unusually cold weather, if the cold weather of that period was caused by the lack of activity in the Sun.

We don't know exactly how the Sun works. We don't know what the underlying mechanism is for the 22-year "normal" cycle we see and we don't know if there are other, longer cycles. We don't know whether a new minimum has started. We don't know how the Sun drives climate beyond the crudest approximations. We don't know what a visually quiet Sun means in terms of heat production and we don't know the implications for global climate of a quiet Sun.

While it's uncomfortable to not know what the future holds, it's something we can explain to our "customers" at daytime sky watches: here is this huge, vital thing called "Sun" on which our very lives depend but how it works is mostly unknown. Science is the process which lets us figure this out, and science starts with looking at the Sun and seeing what's there to see. Then we can show them a sun-spot or a prominence and it'll mean something to them.

★ John Bishop
NHAS President 2011

\$8000 Grant for Library Telescope Program



Craig Weatherwax presents the check to NHAS Treasurer Ken Charles (OPT photo)

I first met Craig Weatherwax (the "Boss" of OPT, Oceanside Photo & Telescope) at the NorthEast Astronomy Forum (NEAF) in 2010, and *briefly* told him about the Library Telescope Program we had developed. He was quite interested, and in spite of being very busy, he took the time to talk. He asked me to send him some information, as he was sometimes inclined to help programs involved with supporting astronomy. In August, I sent him copies of articles from various town newspapers, and directed him to our new web site where we shared the "DIY" information to help other clubs develop their own programs. He responded with:

"This is just the kind of thing our new organization AOF (Astronomy Outreach Foundation) wants to get involved in. We are a nonprofit organization which has been formed by several of the leaders in our industry (Stellarvue, Orion, OPT, PlaneWave, Astronomy Magazine, Vixen as founding board members, and Meade, Celestron and Woodland Hills Telescopes and Hands on Optics as sponsoring members) with the avowed purpose of Expanding Astronomy Awareness.....you are already there in spades!"

"I have taken the liberty of copying our members on your email, I hope you don't mind. Perhaps we can use your model within our organization and spread the word to a wider audience."

Craig also offered to help with some cleaning supplies for the optics and some lasers to keep the telescopes

adjusted by the program's "foster parents".

During the 2010 NEAF, I also spoke with the folks at the Orion Telescope & Binocular exhibit. We have been using their Starblast 4.5 telescope, and I wanted to let them know about the program. In particular, I was hoping they would be pleased by our rewriting their instruction manual to suit our target audience. (I *really, really* didn't want them to sue us!) Far from being upset with our blatant copying, though we did credit them throughout, the Orion staff was excited and we traded contact information. Orion published an article about the program in their winter catalogue that fall. Orion has continued to be very supportive of our program.

Sky & Telescope magazine ran a full page article about the LTP in their January, 2011 edition, and the AOF put copies on their web site. S&T is also a member of the AOF.

I met again with Craig at the 2011 NEAF. While there, I picked up an early edition of the May issue of *Astronomy* magazine, with a letter to the editor I had written about the program. Craig seemed pleased that the program was gaining such exposure, and he didn't seem to mind that I had mentioned how supportive OPT had been.

In mid May, Craig wrote that the NHAS LTP had been selected to receive the proceeds from the Southern California Astronomy Exposition (SCAE) raffle. (Last year, the recipient was *The Friends of Palomar* and I was thrilled that we had been placed in the same room as the supporters of the historic Hale Telescope!)

★ Marc Stowbridge

The raffle at SCAE netted \$8000! **Ken Charles**, our Treasurer, was vacationing in Southern California at the time and was present at SCAE to accept the donation on behalf of NHAS. We have decided to take the donation in the form of the equipment needed to produce twenty-five library telescopes. The scopes recently arrived from OPT

and Ted Blank is warehousing them for us.



The scopes have arrived from OPT (Ted Blank photo)

Expect an announcement soon of a Modification Party where we assemble and modify the scopes to make them library-ready.

★ Paul Winalski

YFOS Update

We need mowers. Contact **Larry Lopez** if you can help. The warming room also needs a cleanup. Is anyone interested in a work session on a Saturday or Sunday?

★ Larry Lopez

NHAS June 2011 Business Meeting

The June business meeting was held at the McAuliffe-Shepard Discovery Center on 17 June 2011, our President, **John Bishop**, presiding.

President's Report

We are working on improving our processes for delivering sky watches and other outreach programs. We have a small cadre of very dedicated and involved people, and it's important that we avoid burn-out. Ideas for getting involvement in our outreach activities from less active members are welcome. There are opportunities contribute in Library Telescope Program, Sky Watches, and elsewhere. If you see somewhere you can contribute, please step up.

Board of Directors

John Rose reports that the Board has a collection of eyepieces that originally came with the library telescopes and have been replaced by the single zoom eyepiece. The

extra eyepieces will be sold, either to club members or at Stellafane.

Membership

Bill Steele has scheduled some Astro 101/201 workshops. They will be given at YFOS on coffee house nights. Check the club calendar.

Six members attended the *Intro to YFOS Astro 101* workshop.

The next scheduled workshop is *Astro 101: Navigating the Night Sky*, at YFOS on June 24.

Webmaster

No report.

Public Observing

Marc Stowbridge and **Paul Winalski** reported that there have been a few near misses recently—sky watch events where only one NHAS member showed up, completely by chance. It is also sometimes not clear who is in charge of making the go/no-go decision for an event, should it be in doubt.

To help solve this problem, the Public Observing Committee is going to be a bit more formal on setting up sky watches. Each sky watch must have a NHAS Coordinator, who is our primary contact with the event's hosts and is responsible for communicating the go/no-go decision. The coordinator is also responsible for insuring that at least one NHAS astronomer has committed to showing up, and that a speaker is committed to giving the indoor presentation, if there is to be one. Also, each event will have a topic in the Skywatches Forum on the NHAS website. All of the contact information will be there.

Rich Schueller suggested that we set up a talk for members on how to give sky watch presentations. We will try to get this set up as the evening presentation for the July business meeting.

Astrophotography

Gardner Gerry reports that there is not much new. As always, see the "Pictures" forum on the website for amazing images.

Educational Outreach

Matt Amar reports that the EOC needs more member involvement in its many activities.

Regular meetings have resumed, typically Thursday the week before the business meeting, from 6:30-8:30 PM.

New England Astronomy Weekend

This is the semi-official name for our fall Astronomy Day. **Tom Cocchiario** is taking the lead on the planning, in conjunction with the University of New Hampshire. UNH is very excited about it. The plan is for a Friday night / Saturday / Saturday night event October 14-15 near the UNH Observatory.

Rey Center

Rich Schueller reports that we have committed to sky watches at Curious George Cottage through the end of the year, on the Saturday nearest New Moon. We have primary astronomers for July and August. We are looking for four more volunteers, and for six back-up astronomers.

To Do List

EOC is creating a list of things they are working on. The Committee needs members to do specific tasks. This would be a great way to help increase membership involvement.

Funding News

Oceanside Photo and Telescope (OPT) holds a raffle annually and gives the proceeds to a good cause. This year's proceeds are coming to our Library Telescope Program. [see the article on this elsewhere in this issue – Ed.] About 12-15 telescopes are expected to be received. Please send email or discuss at the next EOC meeting if you have ideas on how we can best take advantage of this gift. EOC is especially interested on input on whether we should accept cash vs. taking delivery of the scopes themselves. After delivery there will be a "modification party" where we assemble and modify the scopes. We need to start thinking about where the inventory will reside.

Library Telescope Program

Marc Stowbridge reports that we are getting pretty well known. At least six clubs currently have scopes in hand or deployed in a library, including Calgary in Canada. The LTP has placed twenty-four telescopes so far, and three more libraries are trying to sort out the funding. We are pretty well set on foster parents at present.

Miscellaneous Business

We still need speakers for the July and September business meetings.

Scope of the Month

None.

Book of the Month

Ken Charles presented Dr. Bryan Penprase's The Power of Stars—How Observations Have Shaped Civilization. This is a very comprehensive study of how observing the stars has impacted mythology and culture in societies all across the world.

Dave Gilmore presented Sue French's Celestial Sampler. This is a compendium of here Deep Sky Observing columns from *Sky & Telescope*.

Evening Presentation

Dr. Bryan Penprase gave a presentation on how quasar spectroscopy gives us insights on the structure of the early universe.

The Bottom Line

Starting Balance:	\$7522.10
Deposits/Credits:	
Membership:	60.00
Donations:	425.00
Bank Interest:	1.81
Total :	486.81
Accounts/Paid:	
Rackspace Cloud	22.12
Pro Portsmouth (refund)	75.00
Gardner Gerry (Lunt drive)	122.55
Total:	69.67
Net Account Balance:	\$7939.24
Petty cash drawer:	\$100.00
Cash Balance:	\$8039.24
EOC Share:	\$2252.01

Membership: 146

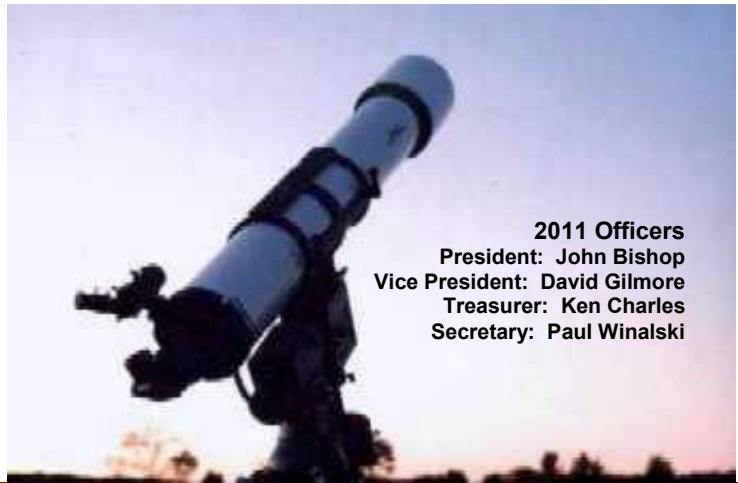
Donations:

Becky & Jason Dubrow 325.00
Highland Goffes Falls PTA 100.00

New Members:

Todd Witkum, Manchester NH

★ **Ken Charles**
 NHAS Treasurer 2011



2011 Officers
President: John Bishop
Vice President: David Gilmore
Treasurer: Ken Charles
Secretary: Paul Winalski

DEADLINE August 2011 Issue: 5 PM August 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:

John Bishop, Marc Stowbridge, Larry Lopez, Ken Charles

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NHAS Upcoming Events

Event	Date	Time	Location
Stephenson Library Sky Watch	July 22	9:00 PM	761 Forest Road, Greenfield NH
Goffstown Public Library Sky Watch	July 27	7:30 PM	Village Water Precinct, Goffstown NH
Coffee House Night	July 29	5:00 PM	YFOS
Astro 201: Using the Titan Mount	July 29	6:30 PM	YFOS
Rey Center Sky Watch	July 30	9:00 PM	Curious George Cottage, Waterville Valley NH
Discovery Center Sky Watch	August 5	7:00 PM	McAuliffe-Shepard Discovery Center, Concord NH
Sidewalk Astronomy	August 6	7:00 PM	Market Square, Portsmouth NH
Dunbarton Public Library Sky Watch	August 8	7:30 PM	Dunbarton Public Library, Dunbarton NH
Madison Old Home Week	August 10	8:00 PM	2069 Village Road, Madison NH
Educational Outreach Committee Meeting	August 11	6:30 PM	Manchester City Library, Manchester NH
Boy Scout Camporee Sky Watch	August 12	8:00 PM	Newtown Public School, Newtown NH
NHAS Business Meeting`	August 19	7:30 PM	McAuliffe-Shepard Discovery Center, Concord NH