



## President's Message

As we have experienced a downturn in the global economy and gas prices were at an all time high the intrepid corps of NHAS volunteers attended public and school sky watches alike. In fact, a new committee was organized in this time to expand this outreach to schools and community, and asked even more of NHAS members, who took to the task with enthusiasm. I am proud to be a part of this tremendous spirit of giving. Well done NHAS volunteers!

★ Gardner Gerry  
NHAS President 2008

## Highlights for this Month

NHAS conducted its first organized Fall Messier Marathon. The event was perfect, except for the weather. Observing reports for the MM itself, and for some (more successful, observing-wise) practice sessions appear in this newsletter.

The new Educational Outreach Committee continues to move forward in getting us more organized regarding our public education mission.

Several public sky watches were scheduled, and the weather actually cooperated for some of them.

★ Paul Winalski  
NHAS Secretary 2008

## Nominations for 2009 NHAS Officers

At the October business meeting these nominations for 2009 club officers were made and seconded:

Vice President: **Mike Townsend**  
Treasurer: **Ken Charles**

Secretary: **Paul Winalski**  
Director: **John Rose**

**Gardner Gerry** is finishing his second term as club President and the club constitution prohibits his serving a third consecutive term. So we need a new nominee for 2009 President.

The floor will be open for further nominations at the November and December business meetings. Voting for 2009 officers and the 2009 Director (three-year term) will take place at the December NHAS Business Meeting.

★ Paul Winalski

## RIP Jerry LeBourdais

Here is a copy of an e-mail we received from a current member's wife:

Hi, I am Jerry LeBourdais wife and I just want to let you know that he died of a sudden accident at were he was working part time. He may not have known as much as all you guys, but he really loved Astronomy. He played around with it here in AZ. He also missed NH. I loved him very much and he would have wanted me to email you. He got on John's web page everyday and looked at his pictures. God Bless you all.

Joan LeBourdais

Jerry was active in the club when he still lived in this area. Jerry helped prepare the YFOS site by blasting out the big boulders that blocked the driveway. Jerry also helped build the warming hut. Jerry was a member of the Photo Committee until he moved to Arizona.

I told Jerry's wife Joan that I liked seeing Jerry's membership dues come in because I then knew he was still interested in astronomy and of course his support of the club was greatly appreciated. Of course I also gave her my sympathy as did **Larry Lopez**.

★ Chase McNiss

## Astro Photons

No meetings are planned at the present time. There have been new images posted in the forums and I urge members to go there and see what NHAS imagers have been up to.

★ Gardner Gerry

## Membership and Astro 101 and 201 Update

NHAS has two new members since last meeting:

**Lon Henderson**, Sugar Hill, NH  
**Rowland Smith**, Laconia, NH

No courses are currently scheduled for Astro 101 and 201. The course descriptions remain on the Resources Website. Scheduling will be driven by membership interest going forward. Interest has been expressed in the following courses:

Titan Mount (2)  
Planetary Observing (1)

With two people interested I will work to schedule a Titan Mount course soon.

★ Alan Shirey

## Educational Outreach

Meeting date: 8 November.

We discussed the web site layout and design. **Mike O'Shaughnessy**

is willing to implement a trial new web site, and to develop new web site sections, including links to resources and PowerPoint presentations.

There was discussion on how to get the public to more events. There was discussion of the observers.org site. Also, should we open the club forums to the public? Should we open the pictures forum to the public? Concern was expressed about protecting members' intellectual property rights.

The mechanics of running NHAS sky watches was discussed:

- Using a web form to request a sky watch
- Linking "what's in the sky" to the date request
- Making sure that each sky watch has someone assigned to do the site field work and to make the go/no-go decision.
- Make sure there is a sign-in sheet for NHAS members and for the guests
- More consistency in the email updates for a sky watch reschedule
- Can we establish a local resource as a scope setup guru

**Marc Stowbridge** is in contact with his local library concerning a club donated telescope to be a library loan resource. If we do this, there should be a local NHAS member to provide support to the library. The library should provide a local apprentice for the site to teach library staff about the scope.

★ Bill Steele

## Bicentennial School Sky Watch, Nashua NH

The sky watch took place on 23 October in the paved playground area behind the school. NHAS members participating: **Gardner Gerry, Bill Steele, Keith Benson, Mike Townsend, John Rose, Joe Derek, Ken Charles.** About 70 students, parents, and siblings were there to view a wide variety of objects, including NGC 457, M31/32/110, M57, and various double stars. **Paul Winalski** cut short his indoor presentation so that

the public could enjoy a very fine Iridium flare.

Our hosts, Aaron and Tanya, were very pleased and said they would like to have us back. The site is quite dark for Nashua, except for a few school building floodlights.

★ Paul Winalski and Bill Steele

## Jaffrey Boy Scouts

I presented a talk to the Jaffrey Scouts on Monday October 20<sup>th</sup>. About 10 scouts and 6 adults were in attendance and **Gardner Gerry** was ready with his scope.

Gardner brought his TV102 and I brought an 80mm refractor, 6" reflector and an ETX90, the latter three for display.

The organizer from the scouts, John Zimardo, and a few of the boys asked several really good questions. Unfortunately, by the time we went outside (as usual recently), the sky had clouded over.

★ Rich Schueller

## Messier Marathon Practice Sessions

### Greenfield, 17 October:

Having never really done an MM before, as last Spring didn't go quite as well as planned, I thought perhaps this n00b should actually *practice* hitting targets in some predefined sequence. Since Friday was a pretty darned clear night, at least here in Greenfield, I went out then.

I decided to set up on a Vixen Super Polaris that **Steve Forbes** dropped off, instead of my own mount, which consumed considerable time whilst I noodled out how to assemble it all. In the end things didn't go quite as planned because the power cord on the clock drive didn't match anything I had. (pout) However this is the first time I've ever had the pleasure of a polar alignment scope. MAN that was sweet!!

So I left the clutches undogged and went at **Ed Ting's** MM file that came over the list a short time ago. Since I have NO clue where MM objects really are, except "up", I

used Carte du Ciel's "find" function to show them to me.

In true engineering fashion I started with the first item, which was set. So were the next 10 items. I got tired of "finding" things I couldn't see, so I skipped objects by constellation until I found item 32, M28. was in fact still above the horizon. Woo-hoo!!

With CduC it's pretty darned simple to star-hop to things, I have to say, even when they're low on the horizon in the muck. Despite that ease it's been so long since I actually was able to observe that it took quite a bit of floundering around to find that first one, and the next couple, M21 & M22. M55 was pretty easy, though.

I saw that M24 & M25 were in fact up but I'd missed them, so I add them to the list, a little slower than I would have liked, but not too long.

About here I noticed how things were grouped on the screen and decided to re-order a bit to "sweep" objects instead of jumping around like the list showed. Starting with number 36 in Scutum, which took a long time to find, I quickly progressed through M17, M18, M16, M11, and M26, at least quickly for *me*. (grin) That was pretty fun and a real confidence booster about using the list and CduC as a star chart to locate objects.

Ursa Major was behind the trees, so I skipped M40 and M106. With my new-found confidence I fairly quickly motored through the next eight objects: M75, M13 (personal fav), M92, M57, M56, M27, M71, and M2. I averaged two minutes per object, which I didn't think was too shabby.

Then my nemesis. M72. The haze was pretty thick to the south, and Capricornus was half-set and practically invisible through the muck. I'd found M75 ok earlier, though, in similar conditions. Not this guy. I spent the next half hour, well after the Moon was up, vainly scanning the sky for M72 and failed abysmally. I was thinking the haze was simply too much, with the

increasing light, to see a mag 9.4 object that close to the horizon.

By this time I could read a book by the moonlight so I decided to pack it in. Guess what? The OTA was dewed up something fierce! I'd have trouble seeing Jupiter with all that crud on the corrector. D'oh!!! I need to remember to *check* that once in a while!

Still and all it was a very nice evening of pre-MM trial, with nineteen objects bagged in an hour and a half. The vast majority were things I've never seen before, so that made it extra-special.

I know for a fact I did find one object near/in Ursa Major, but there's no time listed in my copy of Ed's list. I remember it quite clearly because I bagged it *through* the trees, in a tiny little hole between the now-leafless branches, and I was very proud of myself for it. But alas, no time, no count. (sniffle) So one could say I hit twenty objects if this is taken into account.

VERY good pre-MM, I say.

★ David Gilmore

### YFOS, 18 October:

I went to YFOS Saturday night, mainly to do some imaging (I shot the Double Cluster with the Moon up), but I brought my 11" Starmaster with me to do a practice run. I got there a little too late to set up in time to bag M4 & M80 and I made the same mistake as **Rich DeMidio**, spending time in Ophiuchus and Sagittarius when I should have jumped over to Ursa Major to try and get M51, M97, M108 & M109. I also missed M5 which was in the trees before I thought to go for it. Even with the tactical error I was able to get 36 objects before I started imaging:

M12, 10, 14, 9, 23, 8, 20, 21, 28, 22, 25, 24, 18, 17, 16, 26, 11, 81, 82, 101, 103, 52, 76, 45, 31, 32, 110, 33, 13, 92, 71, 27, 56, 57, 29, & 39.

I need to check Starry Night to see when things are setting in the West next week but I plan to go for M4 & M80 first, then try M107 & M5 and then jump over to Ursa Major.

★ Herb Bubert

### YFOS, 19 October:

About 8 of us were there. I arrived late and left early. It was a good time for me. I was popping around to different peoples telescopes looking at double stars, carbon stars, Messier Objects, and other cool stuff.

I eventually gave up on following a schedule and just picked off the easiest 4 objects and called it a night. This early in the winter season it's colder than what you are used to rather than warmer than what you are used to.

Being 6 months out of phase from what I'm used to it was a bit disconcerting. I trundled on anyway.

★ Larry Lopez

I went there intending to take advantage of the clear skies but not intending to do MM practice. I wish I'd dressed more warmly. By 9 PM we had frost setting in. Skies were pretty steady. It was a good night for double stars, and **Mike Townsend** was in top form tracking down close splits in his long-focus refractor.

I did score first Messier blood by bagging M57 in evening twilight.

**Rich DeMidio** was kind enough to let me enjoy his new 8mm TeleVue Ethos eyepiece, getting me spectacular views of a variety of objects, including M11, M13, M92, and M15. The view of M11 in particular has to be seen to be believed.

**Dan Smith** showed me how to find the Cat's Eye planetary nebula in Draco. In the 14" TScope, it has that characteristic blue-green O-III color. It is definitely lenticular and eye-shaped. The intensely blue central star blinks in and out depending on whether you're using direct or averted vision, although the nebula itself remains steady. This is one I'm adding to my permanent repertoire.

In the early part of the evening, the background was very dark and clear. Mirak's Ghost (NGC 404) and the Blue Snowball were really

sharp and clear. I got a glimpse of the California Nebula with a H-beta filter even though Perseus was rising out of the Concord light dome. NGC 7006 (the distant globular in Delphinus) and NGC 6712 in Scutum (a dim glob) were easy objects, a testimonial to the dark skies.

Carbon star report:

T Lyrae very red and seemingly brightening vs. last time I viewed it.

V Aquilae as usual orange-red and an easy find.

S Scuti was moderate brightness and copper colored.

S Cephei was very dim, but also extremely red.

M31 was visible out to about 5 degrees width, with a few dark lanes, and visible glow completely surrounding M32. A very impressive sight.

We all packed it in around 10 PM, as the Moon was rising. A most satisfying observing session.

★ Paul Winalski

The goal of this session was to become acclimated with objects that will need to be detected within the first 2 to 3 hours of the Marathon. This represented the bulk of the weak areas that I struggle with during the Spring Marathon. Another goal was to get familiar with my maps and utilization of my scope and chair. Fatigue will become a factor so I was trying to also get accustomed to the ergonomic aspects such as posture, positioning, and scope height. Efficiency at this will be a must to make it through the entire marathon. I used my TV102 and Nagler 31mm eyepiece exclusively. This would give me about a 2.7 degree FOV. I also had my Sky and Telescope pocket guide and Blackberry with Microsky installed.

After getting set up, I tried to get things organized with Microsky. As I feared, reception was not strong enough at YFOS to use for online mode. I tried offline with the charts I saved previously. These proved useful but would be insufficient for use hunting objects. Microsky uses



restricted functionality in offline mode so I was not able to zoom and pan.

The backup plan was to use the S&T charts exclusively. I took Ed's list and in the warming hut, I looked up the chart numbers for the first two pages and wrote them down. I figured this would help save a tad of time while in the field.

I got my scope aligned on Jupiter during twilight. As it got darker, I tried to find M4 and M80, which were rated zero meaning little to know chance. Unfortunately, I could not find either in the trees at YFOS. However, several of us believe that if the horizon to the West is open on Friday, folks might have a chance. Will have to see if that pans out. I was also unable to locate the first 4 items on Ed's list, as they were also too low.

I made a tactical error for several objects in Ursa Major. Ed mentioned on Friday why UMa objects were listed early. I looked at the sky and felt there was enough time left to snag more objects in the Sco and Sgr areas, but that proved to be a bad idea. I did not realize how long that took me and as a result, several objects in the bowl went below tree line. I will follow the list diligently at the MM so as not to repeat this error.

In all, I bagged 22 objects from 6:45PM to 9:30PM. I purposely skipped over several that I am well accustomed to finding to save some time, otherwise I would have easily reached 30 objects.

We need to check No. 15 on the list. It correlates to M53, which is in Com. On S&T chart 45, this shows to be just above Virgo and there was no way at this time we could see it.

The objects I found, in order of discovery: M5, M81, M82, M101, M51, M12, M10, M23, M24, M25, M70, M54, M22, M16, M17, M11, M26, M2, M72, M73, M30, M15.

The evening was not just focused on MM hunting. **Mike Townsend** treated us to some wonderful double starts while **Dan Smith** and **Paul Winalski** had some great deep sky objects to share. We also tried the

8mm Ethos on some of our favorite objects. In Paul's dob, M92 and M13 just leaped out at you. It was quite a few to name a few.

Was a great night and now we all hope for clear skies on Friday. Please remember to bring plenty of clothing and dress in layers. Chase has an article on the website if you need advice here. It dropped below freezing at YFOS last night so it could easily be cold for the Marathon. BTW, first batch of dried beef should go in tomorrow evening.

★ Rich DeMidio

### Truro, MA, 20 October

Jupiter was out, then what I thought was Antares (but turned out to be Venus.) I tried to get the 1962 Edmund Scientific reflector on to Antares/Venus but the low pier height put it in the trees. I attached the Telrad with blue painter's tape and aligned that on Jupiter.

I use a set of home made light block screens when I observe from my yard in Truro, and they were really proving to be problem with Edmund—my artificial horizon was pretty high. And besides, I was familiar with most of the Sagittarius from my session at Pilgrim Heights, last month so I picked up the Canon 15×50 and started looking for one of my favorite binocular objects, M7.

I'd guess I looked for it for about 15-20 minutes before I finally grabbed it at 6:45pm (my notes say 7:45 but clearly that's wrong, it would have set by then). Stellarium says it was 9 degrees above the horizon then. It was low but I really just had to wait until the twilight deepened. M6—no don't worry, I'm not going to go into all of them, M object by M object—was hard, it took me 5 minutes before it popped out. I really needed to use my star chats to make sure it was correct.

Speaking of charts, I was using the Duchek Telrad Finder Charts, I wholeheartedly recommend them.

The next 3 in Sagittarius were also difficult. I then went to M55, not M5 by mistake!

The next 9 were blocked by the house, or by trees if I walked to the backyard.

I then set down to some work. I was not familiar with the objects in Ophiuchus so I needed to consult my Sky and Telescope's Pocket Sky Atlas also.

I failed to find M16, which is odd, I've seen it before with these same binoculars but I was feeling some time pressure. Not having done this before I was afraid that I was missing other objects so I gave up. In retrospect, this was silly, there was still plenty of time.

I tried using the Edmund for some of these but it was hopeless, or so I thought.

Finally I got to M57, an object I knew I had no hope of getting with the Canons and an object that should be fairly easy to star hop to. I put the Celestron 30mm Plossl into the focuser and racked it in. It didn't give a very wide field, 41x @ 1.23 degrees, but it was all I had at the time. (I couldn't find my 40mm Scopetronix.)

I'll be frank, it took me a long time to find M57. Other objects, later in the evening also proved as hard, or even harder. I have a hard time using the Telrad and an even harder time with the narrow field of view.

I had just finished up M36, M37 and M38, easy easy grab with the Canons when I realized that the next object on my list, M35 had not yet risen. It was 11pm, I guess during a real marathon I'd eat or take a nap. Within a few minutes the sky had almost completely clouded up. This is common on Cape Cod so it was certainly time to pack it all up.

Final counts? (Note, the numbers don't add up since some object were seen twice)

- Naked Eye: 1 (M45, M31)
- Edmund Scientific 6" reflector: 12 (M57, M27, M71, M2, M72, M29, M15, M31, M110, M32, M103, M52)
- Canon 15×50IS: 31 (M6, M7, M69, M70, M54, M107, M12, M10, M8, M20, M21, M23, M24, M25, M18, M17, M28, M22, M55, M26, M11, M75,

M13, M92, M56, M27, M71, M39, M33, M34, M45, M38, M37, M36)

- Failed Edmund: 3 (M56, M73, M30, M74, M33)
- Failed Canon: 2 (M14, M16)
- Not Possible (McNish): 8
- Not Possible (Trees): 5
- Not Possible (House) 9
- Did not try: 2 (M77, M76)
- Opps: 1 (M5)
- Clouds: 36

That's 44 objects grabbed in 4 hours and 15 minutes. I'm looking forward to this coming weekend.

★ Paul Cezanne

## Fall NHAS Messier Marathon, 24 October

I would like to thank **Sue, Scott** and most of all **BEN Wickett** for a wonderful time.

I received only one report, that from **Ed Ting**. He bagged 5 objects.

The weather did not cooperate, but otherwise it went off without a hitch.

Magic happened everywhere. Power were needed. Smokers were away from the crowd (this was easier as the observing field was much bigger).

Food was great (I think Sue now understands the need to enforce the "If you bring it you take it home" rule).

We had a very good crowd. I can't think of anything that wasn't just right. Except for the weather.

I sometimes think we should only hold Messier Marathon Practice Sessions.

★ Larry Lopez

## NHAS October 2008 Business Meeting

### ATM

**Larry Lopez** has a 10" full thickness mirror blank for someone interested in finishing it.

### YFOS

**Larry Lopez** reported that the large propane tank needs filling. For now use only the small heater.

## Membership

There was one first time attendee at this meeting. **Alan Shirey** reported that **John Bishop** gave his Astro 101 talk on Collimation. Five members attended. Send your input on Astro 101/201 courses you'd like to attend to Alan. He will schedule a course when several people request it.

## Astrophotography

**Gardner Gerry** reports that he, **Bill Steele**, and **John Buonomo** participated in a virtual online meeting. John processed images as part of the meeting. As usual there are lots of amazing pictures on the website.

## Radio Astronomy

No report.

## Public Observing

**Marc Stowbridge** reported that we received kudos for our presentation at the Sargent Center. The next public sky watch is scheduled for 21 October at the Bicentennial School in Nashua.

## Educational Outreach

**Rich Schuller** and **Matt Amar** reported that the new committee has now had its second meeting. **Matt Ota** met with the Lebanon school district, who are looking forward to working with us. **Chase McNiss** has volunteered to handle Astronomy Day. **Tom Cocchiaro** is the committee's public relations and media person.

The committee is looking into revamping our connectivity to schools and others requesting sky watches. Also, revamping the website so that teachers and other groups can get better access to us.

It is agreed by the committee members that we can formalize our sky watch procedures a little better.

The committee is also looking into our planning for International Year of Astronomy activities.

## Webmaster

No report.

## Miscellaneous Business

**R. P. Hale** announced the inauguration of the show "Ice World" at Christa McAuliffe

Planetarium. Produced in conjunction with the University of New Hampshire, this is an Earth-oriented program. It discusses ice, the properties of liquid nitrogen, and so forth.

As part of the Educational Grant, we have placed an order for a Lunt solar telescope.

The Astronomy Magazine 2009 Calendar, normally priced \$12, is available through October to NHAS members for \$7. Order through **Chase McNiss**.

These nominations for 2009 club officers were made and seconded: Vice President: **Mike Townsend** Treasurer: **Ken Charles** Secretary: **Paul Winalski** Director: **John Rose**

## Book of the Month

**Ken Charles** presented The Year-round Messier Marathon Field Guide by Harvard C. Pennington (Willmann-Bell publisher).

## Scope of the Month

**Larry Lopez** presented Vixen 10x32 binoculars.

## Evening Program

**Ed Ting** gave a talk on preparing to run a Messier marathon in the fall.

★ Paul Winalski

## The Bottom Line

<b>Starting Balance:</b>	<b>\$5319.29</b>
<b>Deposits/Credits:</b>	1107.00
(membership, calendar sales)	
<b>Accounts/Paid:</b>	54.30
(Handy House [YFOS porta potty])	
<b>Net Account Balance:</b>	<b>\$6371.99</b>
<b>Petty cash drawer:</b>	\$100.00
<b>Cash Balance:</b>	<b>\$6471.99</b>

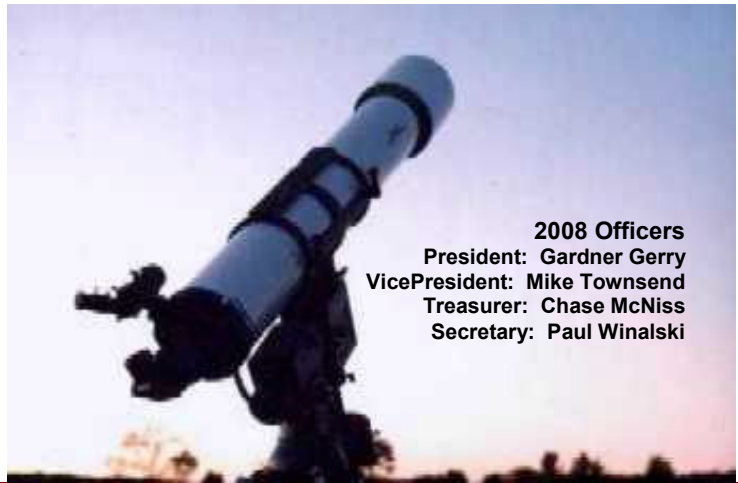
**2009 Membership:** 70

<b>Donations:</b>	<b>\$235.00</b>
( <b>Mike Townsend, Marc Stowbridge, Candy &amp; Alan Shirey, Gardner Gerry</b> , Friends of Brentwood Library)	
<b>Balance of Grant Funds</b>	<b>\$809.70</b>

## New Members:

**Lon Henderson**, Sugar Hill, NH  
**Rowland Smith**, Laconia, NH

★ Chase McNiss



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

**DEADLINE December 2008 Issue: 5 PM December 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, Chase McNiss, Alan Shirey, Bill Steele, Rich Schueller, David Gilmore, Herb Bubert, Larry Lopez, Rich DeMidio, Paul Cezanne

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



**NHAS Upcoming Events**

Event	Date	Time	Location
Reeds Ferry School Sky Watch	November 17	6:00 PM	Merrimack NH
East Kingston Library Sky Watch	November 21	7:00 PM	East Kingston NH
Coffee House Night	November 28	5:00 PM	YFOS
Astro 201: Titan Mount	November 28	7:00 PM	YFOS
Broken Ground School Sky Watch	December 2	6:00 PM	White Farm, Concord, NH
Auburn Village School Sky Watch	December 4	7:00 PM	Preston Field, Auburn, NH
CMP Public Sky Watch	December 5	7:00 PM	Christa McAuliffe Planetarium
NHAS Business Meeting	December 19	7:30 PM	Christa McAuliffe Planetarium
Coffee House Night	December 26	5:00 PM	YFOS