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# The Celestial Observer

*Newsletter of the North Shore  
Amateur Astronomy Club*

**Summer, 2008**

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## **From the President**

In case you have not already downloaded the free program "WorldWide Telescope" (WWT) from the following website, <http://www.worldwidetelescope.org> (after the home page loads, select "Experience It" to download), I highly recommend it. This is a program created by Microsoft that uses their Visual Experience Engine. The program has four categories of objects to view: sky, earth, planets and panoramas. My favorite is the tours, which are educational multimedia presentations from astronomers covering a variety of topics. The multimedia tours are integrated into the WWT such that you get a tour around the sky to the various objects that are the subject of the program and then you are zoomed into high resolution images in a number of wavelengths from the various telescopes. The program also contains multimedia authoring framework that allows amateur astronomers to make their own tours.

In the next two to three months the club website will be updated to include general information about star parties and the Young Astronomers Program.

The date for the annual club picnic at Kevin Ackert's house is July 19 (rain date July 20). Look for announcements on the club list server and please send Kevin an email if you plan to attend. There will be hamburgers, hotdogs, etc and swimming. A good time was had by all.

There is no business meeting in July. The next business meeting is Friday August 1, 2008. On or around all new moon weekends for the summer, members are invited to observe at Dark Park and Starport. Look for announcements on the club list sever.

Enjoy the summer. I hope to see you at a club observation session and the picnic.

If you have questions or comments email me: [jefoy\\_at\\_comcast.net](mailto:jefoy_at_comcast.net)

*James Foy,  
President*

## **NSAAC Welcomes Our New Member:**

Isaac Schreiber of Andover, MA

*Theresa Earle,  
Membership Director*

## **Astronomy Events**

- June 17 StarConn: Wesleyan University, Middletown, CT  
(<http://www.asgh.org/starconn/index.html>)
- Jul 25 - Aug 3 Rockland Summer Star Party: Savoy, MA  
(<http://www.rocklandastronomy.com>)
- Jul 31 -Aug 3 Stellaphane: Springfield, VT  
(<http://www.stellafane.com>)

## **Minutes of the NSAAC Business Meeting, June 6th, 2008**

President Foy called the June Business Meeting of the NSAAC to order at 8:15 PM. There were 9 members present plus 5 Board members. There was an official quorum.

Secretary: The minutes of the May business meeting as amended were accepted by acclamation.

Treasurer:  
We are solvent. Club donated \$100 to the International Dark-Sky Association and \$52 to the Clear Sky Chart for VMP. Treasurer paid the quarterly rent to VMP.

Membership:  
There was 1 new members since the last business meeting.

Early Meeting Announcements:  
Open forum on the agenda after New Business

Committee Reports:

#### Young Astronomers Program:

The Treasurer is about ready to mail out the YAP package to the schools. The package includes a cover letter and a description of the program. The package was sent out to 48 schools. Program is open to 4<sup>th</sup> through the 8<sup>th</sup> grade. Kevin also suggested that we advertise on the website that there is a family membership available for those who have a young person under the age of 16 years who wants to participate in the club.

#### Merrimack College:

Dick Drown had a good turnout one night.

#### Salem State:

Dennis Gudzevich reported that the observatory is closed for the summer.

#### Entertainment Report:

Kevin plans to do another constellation conversation this year and would like for more members to be doing these.

Jim Foy will be contacting ATMOB club to get information on how they get their speakers.

David Leclerc will do an outdoor presentation on star hopping on a clear business meeting night in the coming months.

#### Star Party Committee:

There is a star party requested for Oct. at the Proctor School in Topsfield. The Essex National Heritage Commission, Salem, MA has requested a star party for either late summer or early fall.

#### Telescope Clinic:

We had one customer tonight, Isaac Schreiber, who brought an 8" DOB for collimation and setup of the red dot finder.

#### News, Correspondence and Upcoming Activities:

Microsoft sponsored program: World Wide Telescope: Website:

<http://www.worldwidetelescope.org/experiencelt/Experiencelt.aspx?exp=true>

#### Old Business:

Marc O'Connor has presented some of his ideas for the improved club logo. There was favorable discussion of some of his ideas and he would like to attend a board meeting and present his ideas for the board discussion.

There are currently 14 members who have not renewed and they have been removed from the roster and the list server.

Dark Park—There are currently five dark park sponsors in the club: Alan Peters, Bill Drown, Kevin Ackert, Jim Foy,

and John Hobbs. The sponsors have worked out an arraignment for getting members into and out of dark park. Please contact the list server or one of the sponsors for access instructions.

The President asked if anyone was interested in becoming the membership director. See Jim Foy if interested.

#### New Business:

President is going to order another 1000 club business cards.

The president is working with Michael Deneen to update the web page with new board members and contact information. Plan to add a star party website page. He will also try to repair astro photos that do not open.

Barrie Sawyer has given the club a standing invitation for Starport for the summer. However, this month's new moon has been clouded out and the weather is not cooperating. Contact Barrie if you plan to go to Starport.

The annual club picnic has been set for July 19 with a rain date of the 20<sup>th</sup> at Kevin Ackert's house. Please e-mail Kevin Ackert if you plan to attend.

The evening entertainment was presented by Jim Foy and was video of the Chandra telescope and some of its unique images.

Board meeting is scheduled for Monday June 16<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 PM.

Meeting adjourned at 9:02 PM.

*Respectively submitted,  
John Hobbs, Secretary NSAAC*

#### **Star Party News**

This year's round of school star parties is over and the Star Party Committee thanks all our members who take the time to support these activities. This is an important outreach activity for the club and is an excellent way to get that one special kid interested in astronomy. In this past season's star parties, some 600 or more students and adults looked through our telescopes at the splendors in the sky. If we motivated at least one person to revisit astronomy, we as a club have fulfilled one of our goals. Let's keep up the good work for next year. Special thanks go out to our program presenters for a job well done: Jim Foy, Brewster LaMacchia and Fred Sammartino. If anyone else is interested in giving a presentation at a star party, contact John Hobbs, the star party coordinator.

Star parties scheduled for the coming year are the Essex National Heritage Commission, Salem, MA, sometime either in the late Summer or early Fall. The annual Proctor School star party in Topsfield, MA has been scheduled for Oct 22, 2008.

*John Hobbs,  
Star Party Coordinator*

## Astrotalk

by Barrie Sawyer

### Another Way of Looking

I love living in the foothills of New Hampshire. However, I am in the wrong part of the country for my hobby. Like most of you, clear nights when the Moon is not washing everything else out are rare events. And I am guessing, like most of you, when I do get the chance to go out and observe, I look at as many different objects as time will allow. However, there is another way to enjoy observing. Steven James O'Meara in his book *Hidden Treasures* often notes how he will spend up to an hour looking at one object with his TeleVue 4" refractor. He has, on occasion, spent the whole night looking just one star cluster or nebula. I remember reading that well known amateur Barbara Wilson spending the whole night looking at galaxy M87 through a 36" scope in order to study its jet.

Now, it may be too much to ask that we follow their example when observing time is so precious. But, once and awhile when the opportunity presents itself to observe two (or three!) nights in a row, or at least more than once during a week, you may want to pause in your rush to get in as much as possible to study a few things in depth. I suggest you pick two to five objects of interest. Start by reading details about them in observing guides like the ones O'Meara writes or in such standbys as *Burnham's Celestial Handbook* and the *Night Sky Observer's Guide*. Mark the pages for later reference in the field. After you get set up, take some time to observe the way you do normally. When you are ready, go to the first object on your list. Time yourself. Spend at least a half and hour on it. Try various eyepieces and if appropriate, several filters. Look for patterns and details. Try to see the things mentioned in the guides. Draw what you see in a notebook. Even though I am the son of a professional artist, I have little talent for drawing. However, I gave it a go and was pleasantly surprised how well the drawings matched what I saw when I looked at the object on a different night. If you do the above, drop me a line to let know about it.

Clear skies,  
Barrie  
[barrie\\_sawyer at yahoo.com](mailto:barrie_sawyer@yahoo.com)

### NSAAC Annual Picnic

The 2008 Annual Club Picnic will be held a Kevin Ackert's house in Billerica on Saturday, July 19, rain date Sunday, July 20. Bring towel and bathing trunks if you want to jump in the pool. We'll have burgers, hot dogs, salads and non-alcohol drinks. Feel free to bring something if you'd like. Solar observing from the driveway and games in the back yard. I'll need a head count to estimate how much food and drink should be purchased, so please let me know as soon as you know if you're coming.

Kevin Ackert

### Summer Observing at Starport and Beyond!

Information about summer observing at Starport was posted in the June newsletter <http://www.nsaac.org/newslet/2008-06.htm> Please post to the list server if you have any questions about Starport.

### Getting to Veasey Memorial Park

From Interstate 95 north, take the Route 133 west (54B) exit, and follow it into Georgetown Center. Go straight through the light, now on Route 97N. Go about 1.5 miles and take a left onto Salem Street (Tea Garden Restaurant at this intersection). Stay on Salem Street and turn left onto Washington Street. VMP is down a bit on the right.

Directions to all of the NSAAC observing sites are available on our web site's "About" page at:  
<http://www.nsaac.org/about.htm>

### Contact Information

For more information about the club and its activities, contact Therese Earle, Membership Director, email: [membership at nsaac.org](mailto:membership@nsaac.org) or contact Jim Foy, President, e-mail [president at nsaac.org](mailto:president@nsaac.org).

Our club web site is: <http://www.nsaac.org>.

The *Celestial Observer* is edited by Leor Zolman. Feedback, and member contributions are welcome. Contact: [newsletter at nsaac.org](mailto:newsletter@nsaac.org).

Suggestions regarding the content of the NSAAC web site are always welcome; Please email [webmaster at nsaac.org](mailto:webmaster@nsaac.org) with your ideas.