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# The Celestial Observer

*Newsletter of the North Shore  
Amateur Astronomy Club*

**October, 2008**

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## **From the President**

Thanks to the four members that volunteered for the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary sub-committee. The first sub-committee meeting is September 23, 2008 at Veasey Memorial Park at 7pm. All members are encouraged to participate in discussions at business meetings and the sub-committee. Ideas for the April 9, 2009 gala so far:

- The club will foot the bill
- Have a catered dinner at VMP and use the kitchen
- Members and their families are invited
- 20 year member Bob Seibel is a stand-up comic; He has agreed to entertain us.
- Have a disc jockey
- Door prizes
- Service awards

Sound like fun? Mark April 9, 2009 on your calendar and plan to attend. Look for details as they are discussed and approved by club members.

The Teaching Company's DVD set *Understanding the Universe: An Introduction to Astronomy, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition* has been purchased. A total of 96, 30 minute lectures, taught by Alex Filipenko was discussed and approved at the September business meeting. After that meeting, the set was purchased for \$190 plus \$25 for shipping and handling. This set will be used for entertainment after business meetings when no other entertainment as been scheduled.

Salem State Observatory opens in September and Dennis Gudsevich continues to volunteer to open the observatory to the public on Mondays. He has been doing this for several years, without help. Last year the school decided to provide more support. Students have volunteered to help run the observatory and the school is planning to purchase a new

telescope. Things are looking up at Salem State Observatory.

If you have questions or comments email me: [jefoy at comcast.net](mailto:jefoy@comcast.net)

*James Foy,  
President*

## **NSAAC Welcomes Our New Members:**

Three new members:

Phillip Lindstrom of Georgetown, MA  
Russell MacDonald of Wilmington, MA  
Amy Brown of Lynn, MA

And one returning member:

Richard Amirault of Malden, MA

*Theresa Earle,  
Membership Director*

## **Minutes of the NSAAC Business Meeting, September 5th, 2008**

President Foy called the September Business Meeting of the NSAAC to order at 8:10 PM. There were two new members at the meeting: Amy Brown and Ted Blank. There were 12 members present plus 5 Board members. There was an official quorum.

Secretary: The minutes of the June and August business meeting were approved by acclamation.

### Treasurer:

We are solvent. Treasurer paid the third quarter rent to the VMP.

### Membership:

There were 3 new members since the last business meeting,

### Early Meeting Announcements:

Open forum on the agenda after New Business

### Committee Reports:

#### Young Astronomers Program:

Kevin will be sending out the YAP packages to the schools.

#### Merrimack College:

Bill Drown and Kevin had good nights during the month.

### Salem State:

Dennis Gudzevich reported that the observatory will be starting up this month. He indicated that the college is considering purchasing a new telescope.

### Entertainment Report:

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

Jim Foy contacted ATMOB club and has gotten four members who will give talks this coming year. We would like to involve Russ and the Astronomy Dept and have a few talks at the College. We can have separate meeting with some of these speakers at another time.

### Star Party Committee:

The following is a list of upcoming star parties for this year:  
Saturday, September 20<sup>th</sup>, Maudslay State Park, Newburyport, MA

Thursday, September 25<sup>th</sup>, Essex National Heritage Commission, Trails and Sails Events, Bradley Palmer State Park.

Friday, September 26<sup>th</sup>, Essex National Heritage Commission, Trails and Sails Program at Veasey Memorial Park.

Saturday September 27<sup>th</sup>, IRWS, Topsfield, MA

Monday October 6<sup>th</sup>, rain date Oct 7<sup>th</sup>, Friends of Fort Hill Park, Lowell, MA

Thursday, October 30<sup>th</sup>, Proctor School, Topsfield, MA

### Telescope Clinic:

There was one request for help before this evening meeting from Sandra Smyth of Medford.

### News, Correspondence and Upcoming Activities:

Nothing new

### Old Business:

We currently have 100 members in good standing,

Dark Park: There have been two events already this year at Dark Park. Reminder to members to send any photos that anyone may have take at these events to Leor Zolman ([newsletter at nsaac.org](mailto:newsletter@nsaac.org)) for inclusion in the newsletter., Discussed again the option of leaving one key at the observing site in case the key at the gate has been removed accidentally. Kevin has had 5 additional keys made for distribution and back-up. The board will discuss the options and propose some action at the next business meeting.

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 add a star party website page.

President discussed purchases of the DVDs on Astronomy from the Learning Company. A motion was made and seconded for the club to spend up to \$200.00 for the purchase of Learning Company's Astronomy DVD's. The motion was approved.

President brought up having a 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary event commemorating the forming of the NSAAC. It has been suggested that we could have a catered event at Veasey. The President asked for volunteers to be on the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary committee. Kevin Ackert, Jim Foy, Jim Koerth, and Ray Ferland volunteered. They have scheduled a committee meeting for Tuesday, Sept 23, 8 PM at VMP.

Entertainment for the evening was watching a DVD on Cosmology.

Board meeting is scheduled for Monday Sept 15<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 PM

Meeting adjourned at 9:05 PM.

*Respectively submitted,  
John Hobbs, Secretary NSAAC*

## **Young Astronomer Program**

The main package for the teachers will be mailed by the end of September. It's not too late to include a school in your town, or any town on the North Shore. If you're not sure if we already have a school in the database, just submit it anyway. The program is open to grades 4 through 8. If you submit a school, please include: Principal or science teacher's name, schools mailing address, phone number and/or email if available. Send your submissions to [YAP@nsaac.org](mailto:YAP@nsaac.org), or directly to me.

*Kevin Ackert*

## **Star Party News**

The star party season has begun. The first star party of the season was Saturday, August 30<sup>th</sup>, Fife and Drum Camp, Rebecca Nurse Homestead, Danvers, MA. Fred Sammartino gave the presentation and scopes were provided by Bill Drown, Jim Bastable, and potential new member Sandra Smyth.

The star party schedule for the future is the following:  
 Saturday, September 20<sup>th</sup>, Maudslay State Park, Newburyport, MA  
 Thursday, September 25<sup>th</sup>, Essex National Heritage Commission, Trails and Sails Events, Bradley Palmer State Park.  
 Friday, September 26<sup>th</sup>, Essex National Heritage Commission, Trails and Sails Program at Veasey Memorial Park.  
 Saturday September 27<sup>th</sup>, IRWS, Topsfield, MA  
 Monday October 6<sup>th</sup>, rain date Oct 7<sup>th</sup>, Friends of Fort Hill Park, Lowell, MA  
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The star party at Bradley Palmer State Park is a kickoff event for the Essex National Heritage Commission Trails and Sails Event for this year. This is a two month event where people are encouraged to get out and do outdoor things. The kickoff meeting is a paid, catered, event so sponsors can show what events are going to take place. There may be 50-100 people at this event and the following one on Friday night at Veasey. We would like to have as many scopes as possible for the events. Please keep these dates in mind and try to support them if possible.

*John Hobbs,  
 Star Party Coordinator*



by Barrie Sawyer

***Deep-Sky Companions: Hidden Treasures***  
**By Stephen James O'Meara**

*Hidden Treasures* is the third in a series of observing guides by famous stargazer and author; Stephen James O'Meara that include *Deep-Sky Companions: The Messier Objects* and *The Caldwell Objects*.

Let me say from the outset that I really wanted to like this book more than I do. I own a copy of *The Caldwell Objects* and did not have as many misgivings with it as this latest Companion. Perhaps, since I have seen most of the objects in the Caldwell list many times, I did not give the companion book as much scrutiny as *Hidden Treasures*. This book, however, includes many objects I've either never look at before or only once or twice. I decided for this review to select about a dozen objects and observe them through my 94mm Brandon refractor since O'Meara chose objects based on observations with his 102mm Televue refractor.

The first problem is that while I think Starport is a really good observing site (when it isn't cloudy, windy, etc.) it can't compare to O'Meara's site in Hawaii. The second problem is I am not Stephen James O'Meara. Remember, he is the first guy who spotted the spokes in Saturn's ring and Halley's Comet on its last return visit. Most of objects with the exception of the star clusters are just too faint to see any significant detail. The finder charts are helpful, but I still ended up using my own charts. I also would have appreciated more sketches from observations done with other scopes. My last quibble is O'Meara's inclusion of many historical observations by the likes of Thomas Webb and Lord Rosse and a whole chapter on Caroline Herschel. I am not as personally interested in the history of these objects as much as in our current understanding of them. And did I mention the retail price of \$45.00?

Except for the price, this book is still a good resource despite my caveats. It offers a guide for exploring off the beaten path.. I am looking forward to going back with my 15" reflector to observe most if not all the hidden treasures.

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

**2009 Calendar Ordering**

Astronomy Calendars, RASC Calendars, and RASC Observer Handbooks are now on sale. We are requesting that you pre-pay for your order. Please mail your check to the club, or bring it to a meeting. Cash will be accepted at the meetings. The Astronomy Calendars are the same price no matter how many we buy. The RASC products have a minimum order of ten for us to sell them at the price listed below. We will accept payments for RASC products at the price below, but if we fail to sell at least ten we will ask you for more money, or give you a refund.

Astronomy Calendars	\$10.00 ea.
RASC Calendars	\$13.00 ea.
RASC Observer Handbooks	\$22.00 ea.

**Help Wanted**

Below is a list of positions which need to be filled in our club. Please consider volunteering for one of these positions if you have the means. Please contact any Board member with questions about these positions

**Membership Director:** Theresa Earle is filling in while we find someone to fill this position. Please consider serving the club by volunteering to fill this important position.

**Star Party Volunteers:** Please check the Star Party schedule and help out if you are able.

### 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.

### E-Mail Listserve

If you have email access and are an NSAAC member in good standing, you may want to subscribe to the email notification system that Lew Gramer established for the Club in 1996. This is a "members only" system that places you in contact with other members for late breaking news concerning spontaneous observing activities, outings, tech talk, etc. You can subscribe by emailing your request to the address below. Your message should look like this:

To: majordomo at nsaac.org

Subject: Email list (you can put anything here)

Body: subscribe NSAAC *Full-Name* <*email-address*>

To remove yourself from the email list, or to temporarily suspend delivery from the list or access your other options, please use our "Subscriber Settings" Web page:

<http://lists.nsaac.org/mailman/listinfo/nsaac#subscribers>



Something new at Starport: Barrie Sawyer has windmills!