



The Celestial Observer

*Newsletter of the North Shore
Amateur Astronomy Club*

Summer, 2009

From the President

I would like to remind NSAAC members that we do not have a business meeting in July. The next regular business meeting is Friday August 7, 8 PM at Veasey.

Vice President Tom Rauschenback resigned at the June Business meeting. Please join me in wishing Tom well in his future pursuits and thanking him for his service. If you are interested in the position of Vice President contact a NSAAC board member. A qualified NSAAC member will be appointed by the Board, by a two thirds vote, to serve out the term.

Updating our website was discussed again at the June business meeting. This project is in need of champion, i.e., a member with HTML programming experience that is willing to lead the effort to update our site. I keep bring this subject up because the website is an important way for people to find us and learn more about our club. The basic concept of the website design update is to keep the current look and add data base driven options. So, the website would be available to members to use for membership renewal, contact information, star party sign-ups, etc. As usual, contact a Board member if you are interested in this project.

Entertainment for the June meeting was an overview of the software program Sky Tools3. The club received one free copy, which is available upon request to members. This program is specifically designed to generate observation (photography) lists. It also indicates when is the best time to observe the object nightly and yearly, so that the observer can make the most use of valuable observation time. The club gets a discount of 25% for an order of 2 to 9, 40% for 10 to 25 and 50% for more than 25.

On or around all new moon weekends for the summer, members are invited to observe at Dark Park, Veasey and

Starport. Fridays closest to the first quarter moon are reserved for Youth Night. Look for announcements on the club list sever for when and where people are observing.

Enjoy the summer. I hope to see you at a club observation session and the picnic (July 11 – rain date July 12).

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

*James Foy,
President*

NSAAC Annual Picnic – DATE HAS BEEN CHANGED TO JULY 11

Due to a scheduling conflict, the date of the 2009 club picnic has been moved up one week. The 2009 Annual Club Picnic will be held at Kevin Ackert's house in Billerica on Saturday, July 11, rain date Sunday, July 12 . 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. There'll be solar observing from the driveway and games in the back yard. I'll need to know about a week before the date how many will be attending.

Kevin Ackert

Minutes of the NSAAC Business Meeting, June 5th, 2009

President Foy called the June Business Meeting of the NSAAC to order at 8:08PM. There were 7 members present plus 5 Board members. Since there was no quorum, the meeting was an information meeting only.

Secretary: No report

Treasurer:

Treasurer gave an abbreviated report. We are solvent.

Membership:

There were 12 membership renewals since the last business meeting. There are currently 89 members in good standing.

Early Meeting Announcements:

Open forum on the agenda after New Business

Committee Reports:

Young Astronomers Program:

The next scheduled youth night will be July 3rd. Jim Foy will be there. He will prepare list of objects for the youngsters and post it to the list server.

Merrimack College:

There were two clear nights this month with several attendees.

Salem State:

Until Dennis hears back from the college, the observatory is closed until further notice. Glen Driscoll is currently helping Dennis at the observatory.

Star Party Committee:

The upcoming star parties are:

Friday, June 19, Rescheduled Methuen Elementary School at the Islamic Academy of Peace, Methuen, MA

Monday, July 27th, Langley-Adams Library, Groveland, MA

Monday, August 6th, Peabody Institute Library, Danvers, MA

Thursday, October 15th, Hamilton-Wenham Public Library, Hamilton, MA

Telescope Clinic:

No activity

News, Correspondence and Upcoming Activities:

No information

Old Business:

New Business:

There are new parking rules for VMP. Club members are now not allowed to park up by the main building. This is parking only for officials, visitors, and handicapped. There are two guest spots in the upper lot.

The GAAC club has invited club members to attend their meeting Friday June 12, when Robert Naeye, editor of Sky and Telescope, will give a presentation on the Mars Spirit Rover.

International Year of Astronomy is taking place in 2009 and is a global event initiated by the International Astronomical Union and UNESCO to help the citizens of the world to rediscover their place in the universe. For more information see the website: <http://www.astronomy2009.org/>. The club needs to make some effort for this event and any ideas are welcome and should be sent to President Jim Foy. Jim Foy would like to have a party at Dark Park with the combined NSAAC and the GAAC club. The club will also set up star parties for the public at our other venues. Jim Foy is going to contact State Parks and where we do our usual observations, to plan

for public outreach sometime in the fall. Look for information from Jim on the list server

Tom Rauschenbach, current Vice President of the club has resigned. Anyone interested in filling this position contact any board member.

Jim Foy will send out a Messier club information packet on the list server.

Jim Foy is currently working on starting the Astrophotography workshops.

Barrie Sawyer is opening Starport Father's day weekend. He also will be there both the week before and after. Contact Barrie if you plan to attend.

Entertainment for the evening was video presented by Jim Foy showing how to use Skytools 3.

The Club Picnic has been moved back to July 11th with a rain date of July 12th. Kevin Ackert, the host of the picnic at his house will send out more information to the list server. Please let Kevin know if you are planning to attend so he can provide enough food and drink.

Board meeting is scheduled for Tuesday June 16th at 7:30 PM.

Meeting adjourned at 9:00 PM.

Respectively submitted,

John Hobbs, Secretary NSAAC

2009 Membership Dues and Status Report

Members who have not yet paid their 2009 dues are now Former members and this newsletter is the last one they will receive. At this time, the club has 89 members in good standing. The number of members leaving the club is 22. To those members leaving the club, we thank you for the time spent with us and for supporting our cause.

Of the members leaving, one is a founding member with 20 years in the club, one has 17 years and one 13 years. There are nine leaving that have between 3 and 9 years. The rest of them (11) had only 1 year.

Former members wishing to re-instate their membership should contact me at [treasurer at nsaac.org](mailto:treasurer@nsaac.org) and send in their dues payment of \$20.00.

*Kevin Ackert,
Treasurer*

Star Party News

The star party scheduled for the Oakland Park Elementary School on May 28th has been rescheduled to Friday, June 19th.

Using Registax to Process a Web Cam Movie Part 2

The star party at the Marblehead Charter Elementary School was preceded by dinner for those members who came early. There were about 75+ students and despite bad lights and clouds, members were able to show views of Saturn and the moon. Jim Foy gave the program and scopes were provided by Jim Foy, Jim Koerth, and Ted Blank.

See the minutes of the business meeting in this newsletter for the list of upcoming star parties.

The Star Party Committee would like to thank all the members who have supported our star party effort and look forward to your continued participation in the coming months.

*John Hobbs,
Star Party Coordinator*

Young Astronomer Program

April and May presented me with an overwhelming amount of work, personal, and family issues which impeded me from getting a "follow up" mailing out to the schools in our YAP database. I'm planning on having a mailing prepared for the fall which will include the follow up information for last year's participants, and information for the 2010 program.

For the YAP program to grow, its database must grow. We have approximately fifty schools in the database. Most of these are schools that were mined from the internet, or ones we do star parties for. I would like to double the number of schools for next year, which would require adding an additional fifty schools or so. Of course, one could go to the internet and acquire the names and address of fifty schools, but that would be a LOT of work for ONE to do. If fifty people went to the internet and acquired one school, the database could double in size with about ten minutes of work per person.

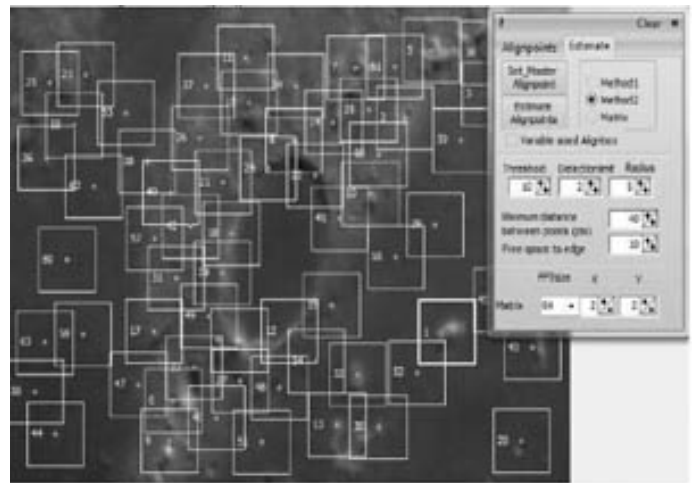
I am asking each member to please donate ten minutes of your time this summer to help the YAP program by providing information on one elementary or middle school in our geographic area. We need the school name, address, and principal or science teacher's name. Phone number and/or email is very helpful, but not necessary.

Have a dark, healthy, and safe summer!

Kevin Ackert

Last month's article focused on the Registax Interface. This month continues with the Import, Align and Optimize options of the software.

In general I recommend using software default options, until you become more familiar with the program. Step1 is to Import your webcam movie (or images) using the **SELECT – button**. A dialog box will pop-up that guides you through finding the movie (images) on your computer an importing it. The software supports several different file types. Step-2 is to set Alignment. Before you start the Alignment, select the "good" frame from your movie that is better than average. Then go to the **ALIGNMENT METHOD dialog box** and select **Multi** followed by the **Alignmentbox Size** and select **64**. Let Registax estimate the alignment points. See example below for how it looks so far.



Step-3 is Alignment. To start simple alignment, which is the default, **ALIGN button** in the TABPAGE-CONTROLS. A good alignment is important stage of the processing sequence than will make the work load for the optimizer smaller. When alignment is finished the users has to select the number of frames to keep. You choose the number of images to keep by dragging the slider below the previewimage to the number you want. It is better to select more images and generally greater than 200 produce a better final image. Press the **Limit button**.

Next month will cover Optimizing and Stacking.

Summer Starport Schedule

Barrie Sawyer will be hosting star parties at Starport for NSAAC members, their friends, and family on all New Moon weekends this summer. Starport (for those who don't know) is Barrie's mountaintop residence in Groton, NH (12 miles from Plymouth, NH). Starport is 102 miles from the intersection of I-93 and I-495. There is a very large cleared field with a road and a paved area. The dark skies there are some of the best in New England.

Accommodations include a house with a few bedrooms, a couch, lots of floor space, a garage with floor space, a pop-up camper that sleeps two, and plenty of room to pitch a tent or camper. There are also some motels a few miles away. The house will be available all night for bathrooms and breaks from observing, and of course coffee. Hose accommodations are on a first come, first serve basis. Community meals on Friday and Saturday are typical. A tip jar is available for those wishing to thank Barrie for the meals.

Godzilla, the monster 36 inch Dobsonian reflector, will be there seeking out galaxy clusters millions of light years away. You are welcome to bring any instrument of your own, or just come along and mooch views from someone else!

Amateur astronomers, please come and take advantage of this wonderful venue! You are very welcome even if we've never met you!

*Danni and Barrie Sawyer
(Written by Kevin Ackert)*

Appalachian Mountain Club (AMC) Hike to the Stars: Backpacking & Astronomy Extravaganza!

Date: 08/22/2009 - 08/23/2009

Join AMC on this unique overnight coupled with a summit star party lead by astronomers from two local groups equipped with portable telescopes...on a moonless night! We'll take the Old Crawford Path (the oldest maintained trail in America) and set up at the Nauman Tent platforms by the Mizpah Hut. In the afternoon we'll hike the AT over to bag Mt. Jackson (4,052') before returning to camp for a restful dinner. Then, it's up to Mt. Pierce (4,310') by starlight to an open summit in view of Mts. Eisenhower and Washington.

Observing highlights will include Jupiter & its moons, the globular cluster M13, and Andromeda. Headlamps required,

binoculars encouraged. We'll visit a waterfall on the way down on Sunday. \$8 campsite fee.

For further information, please contact activity leader Robert Freed, email: [w-r-freed at comcast.net](mailto:w-r-freed@comcast.net)

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>