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# The Celestial Observer

*Newsletter of the North Shore  
Amateur Astronomy Club*

**April, 2010**

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## **From the President**

According to NSAAC bylaws, a quorum of at least 10% of the members must be present at a business meeting to hold any vote. The March business meeting did not have a quorum, so elections of NSAAC Board members for 2010 did not occur. The current NSAAC Board Members will remain in office until an official election is held.

NSAAC has only had one quorum present at a business meeting in the last five months. I suspect this is because of emails on the list server strongly urging members to attend and vote on the YAP proposal to spend up to \$2,000. So, I will once again send out emails urging NSAAC members to attend the April meeting so that we can get a quorum and re-elect the current Board Members.

The issue facing NSAAC is how to get members to attend more business meetings. Starting in May, the NSAAC monthly business meeting will begin with dinner at 6:30 PM at the China Blossom Restaurant (Route 125, 946 Osgood St, North Andover) for those NSAAC members that chose to attend. Next, will be an astronomy related presentation from 8 to 9 PM. A brief business meeting of about 15 minutes will be held after the presentation. To date, three speakers have volunteered and two have been scheduled for the September and October meetings. You can find the latest schedule at the link titled "Monthly Meeting Speakers and Topics" at the following web browser link: <http://nsaac.org/joomla/> .

I am in the process of getting additional speakers. If you know anyone that is interested in giving an astronomy related presentation to NSAAC, please contact me.

Our use permit for Dark Park has been renewed for 2010. This year we are allowed to observe all nights that the weather permits.

Look for announcements on the club list server and website for an inter-club (GAAAC and NSAAC) public star party in April. This star party is a continuation of the International Year of Astronomy 2009 public outreach program into 2010.

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

*James Foy,  
President*

## **2010 Membership Dues**

Membership dues for 2010 are now due. If you have not yet paid your dues, please sent them in now. Dues can also be paid on line via our website and the PayPal system. If you are currently unemployed or under serious financial stress please contact any board member and tell them your situation.

- Membership dues for 2010 are \$20.00
- If you joined the club after October 31, 2009, your dues are not due until March of 2011. If you are unsure of when you joined and whether you owe, check with me before paying.
- **If none of your information or club options have changed, you do not need to include a renewal form with payment.** If your information has changed, please download a renewal form from our website.
- If you pay with cash at the meeting, attach a note to your check with your name on it, or, write your name on the bill. Cash payments with no name attached will not be accepted.
- If you send your payment via US Mail, the address is NSAAC, c/o Veasey Memorial Park, 201 Washington St., Groveland, MA 01834-2007
- Members who have not paid dues may not vote in the April election.
- Please lower the workload of your club treasurer by paying your dues in a timely manner. We have a grace period for unpaid members. Members who have not paid their dues in March receive reminders until the grace period ends at which time membership privileges are lost.
- Questions about your dues can be sent to [treasurer@nsaac.org](mailto:treasurer@nsaac.org)

*Kevin Ackert,  
Treasurer*

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

Michael Saporito of Peabody, MA

*Jim Bastable,  
Membership Director*

## **Meetings Matter**

The March business meeting didn't have a quorum. We could not officially hold the election. That's not happened in all my years in the club. March meetings were always well attended, probably the best of the year. It is the beginning of our new fiscal year, elections are held, dues are due, and the excitement of galaxy season is in the air! But alas this year we only had six members in attendance. An official quorum is nine members and four board members.

President Jim Foy has done a great job fulfilling the role of providing entertainment. In the four years I was president I can tell you that the hardest part of the job was coming up with entertainment for the meetings every month. Jim filled a void by providing us with the astronomy videos we've enjoyed over the past year. This year, he is attempting to use his influence in high places to bring us the ultimate in astronomy business meeting entertainment, live noteworthy speakers.

During our discussion of this at the March meeting, Jim asked for comments, and I chirped in that my biggest concern was that we'd attract a notable speaker and produce a tiny audience. How embarrassing would that be?

At the April business meeting we'll have an election, discuss astronomy, put together the three YAP telescopes, collimate them, test them (maybe), and have lots of astronomical conversations and fun doing it! Oh, and did I mention the caliber of our refreshments has gone to the Moon since Dan Smoody took over stewardship of it!

Meetings are at the core of any good and successful club. The more the merrier really applies here. Please try an upcoming NSAAC meeting this Spring, you may find a lot of enjoyment for a little bit of effort.

*Kevin Ackert*

## **Minutes of the NSAAC Business Meeting, March 5th, 2010**

President Foy called the March Business Meeting of the NSAAC to order at 8:17 PM. There were 6 members

present plus 7 Board members. There was not an official quorum. This is an Information Only meeting.

### Secretary:

No report.

### Treasurer:

The treasurer gave a summary report on income and expenses since the last business meeting.

### Membership:

No new members

### Early Meeting Announcements:

Open forum on the agenda after New Business

### Committee Reports:

#### Young Astronomers Program:

The four telescopes have been purchased and we will assemble them at the April business meeting.

#### Merrimack College:

No report. Weather not cooperating.

#### Salem State:

Dennis Gudzevich reported that more students have been attending observing session than in the past.

#### Star Party Committee:

The upcoming star parties are:

Thursday, March 11<sup>th</sup>, Science night Bowditch School, Salem, MA

Thursday, March 11<sup>th</sup>, A.B. Bruce Elementary School, Lawrence, MA

Tuesday, June 29<sup>th</sup>, Wenham Public Library, Wenham, MA, rain date Thursday, July 1<sup>st</sup>

Planning one for Trahan School in June

Request from Chelmsford Land Trust for star party in June

#### Telescope Clinic:

No involvement.

#### News, Correspondence and Upcoming Activities:

No information

#### Old Business:

John Tulick has renewed the clubs permit to use the dark park for the coming year. He has sent an electronic copy to Jim Foy. Members that would like to use the dark park should request a permit from Jim Foy or Kevin Ackert via email.

#### New Business:

President Foy indicated that he has put two young astronomers nights on the calendar due to the bad Weather so that we can have alternate dates. He will use the list server to indicate whether or not the event will take place.

Astronomy day is April 24<sup>th</sup> and it is up to the club to see if they want to do something for the event. Jim Foy will head this up and send something on the list server.

President asked for more pictures to be sent in for the newsletter and the website.

President talked about revamping the business meeting. He is going to try to line up speakers for specific dates and list these in the newsletter and on the list server. These will include outside speakers and club member speakers. A schedule will be setup in advance and there will be a dinner at the China Blossom Restaurant where the speakers cost will be covered by the club. Club members are welcome to attend the dinner at their own expense. The business meeting will follow the dinner with a change in the order of business. The meeting will start off with the speaker's presentation and will be followed by a very brief business meeting. Hopefully this will get more club members involved in the meetings.

Due to the lack of a quorum, the election of officers has been postponed until there is a quorum at the business meeting.

Because of the excellent weather for a change the entertainment for the evening was outdoor observing.

Board Meeting is set for Monday March 15<sup>th</sup> 7:30 PM.

Meeting adjourned at 8:40 PM.

*Respectively submitted,  
John Hobbs, Secretary NSAAC*

#### **Star Party News**

Star Party season is in full swing with schools calling to set up events. The star party for the A. B. Bruce School in Lawrence was postponed to the rain date due to clouds. The rain date is Monday March 15<sup>th</sup>, but the weather is not going to be very good and it may be postponed to a later date. Jim Foy attended the Salem Science night at the

Bowditch School in Salem where he had a scope indoors to look at astronomy objects.

See the minutes of the March business meeting for the list of up coming 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**

The YAP page has received 107 unique hits since January 1, half of which have been in the past thirty days. There have been no telephone inquiries, but we have received a couple star party requests from the mailing. The Telescopes are purchased and we will be assembling them at the April meeting. We will also have the YAP contest entries at the April meeting. YAP awards day is April 24<sup>th</sup>.

Let me remind members again that the contest is open to ALL youths grades 5 through 8 and that YAP entry packages can be downloaded from our website at [www.nsaac.org/yap.html](http://www.nsaac.org/yap.html). The entry deadline date is March 27<sup>th</sup>.

*Kevin Ackert*

## **DSLR Astrophotography**

by Jim Foy

#### **Ideas for Scenic Photos**

If you are interested in taking astronomy related photos with your digital camera, I recommend that you read this book: *A Guide to Astrophotography With Digital SLR Cameras* by Jerry Lodriguss. The book is packed with useful information and techniques for capturing good photographs of astronomy objects.

This month, I would like to start with some ideas from this book for taking scenic astronomy shots. The basic concept is to use as astronomy object such as the moon, a constellation, planetary alignment, star trails, etc. as the background for the picture. Then, select a scenic foreground such as a reflection in a lake, interesting building, landmark

or star party as the foreground. The following photos are some examples of “scenic” astronomy related photos.



Photo reference: <http://www.astropix.com>



Photo reference: “A Guide to Astrophotography With Digital SLR Cameras”, Jerry Lodriguss  
DSLR camera settings: Focal length 35 mm,  
ISO 1600, 30 sec exposure, F/2.8

Equipment needed is a tripod to hold the camera steady and a DSLR camera. Generally, the photos should be shorter than 30 sec so that stars appear round rather than egg shaped. The moon, planets and brightest constellations work well for this type of astrophotography. Shrinking the origin photo to a smaller size makes egg shaped stars less noticeable

## 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>

## 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>

## Contact Information

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

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