



The Celestial Observer

*Newsletter of the North Shore
Amateur Astronomy Club*

Summer, 2010

From the President

NSAAC does not have a business meeting in July. So, our next business meeting is August. The August business meeting will start with an equipment and book swap from 8 to 9 PM. Bring books and astronomy equipment that you would like to show others or swap with other NSAAC members. After the book and equipment swap, we will hold a short business meeting from 9 to 9:30 PM followed by refreshments.

Veasey recently installed two high intensity lights. One is at the lower end of the parking lot we use for observations (bottom of the hill near the road). The second light is closer to the main building and garage area. It is not possible to observe with the light next to the parking lot turned on. This light was installed with a box that provides a way to shut off the light with a special key. The plan is to duplicate this key and distribute copies to all NSAAC Board members. Unfortunately, the second light was not installed with a box that can be easily accessed to turn it off. I have to work with the Veasey Board to resolve this issue. The second light will limit views in the sky area above it (southwest area). The top of the park lot (highest point) suffers from an unobstructed view of the bright sodium vapor light.

From now on, additional planning is needed in order for NSAAC members to observe at Veasey. So, if you want to observe at Veasey, send an email to list server announcing your intent. Then, get confirmation that a key holder is available to turn off the light and is also available to turn the light back on after the last person leaves. If you don't have access to the club list server, please call Jim Foy at cell phone number 978-886-3233 or send an email to jefoy@comcast.net.

In general, light pollution at Veasey is increasing. NSAAC was not consulted or even informed of the new lights. We only discovered them when members wanted to observe. It

is getting time to actively start looking for other locations where the observing is better and that are in the same geographical area (Haverhill, Groveland, Boxford). I plan to initiate this process and will ask for volunteers to form a committee to seek other sites for the monthly meetings or observations.

Enjoy the summer and I hope to see you at an observation session.

If you have questions or comments email me: jefoy@comcast.net.

*James Foy,
President*

Proposed By-Law Change

The club has not had a By-Law change since 2003, but your board of directors is proposing one now. At issue is the definition of an official quorum. As the by-laws are now written, this is the definition of a quorum:

“A quorum, consisting of ten percent of the active membership, excluding the Board members, is required to conduct a vote on any and all items brought up during/entered into a Business Meeting. This ten percent of the active membership must have signed the attendance list prior to any vote. In the event that ten percent of the active membership are not present the Business Meeting shall be conducted for informational purposes only.”

The problem is, what is the definition of an “active” member? I believe that our founders intended to say “member in good standing.” Our membership on February 28 could be at 100 in good standing, and then at the April meeting it could be that only 50 members have paid their dues. What number does the board then use to determine a quorum? Counting members who are in good standing would allow a quorum of 5, where if we counted the unpaid members the quorum would be 10. We lose about 10 to 20 members a year, so we don't really have an accurate count until late June when unpaid members are dropped.

Another issue is the increasing number of family members via the YAP program. These are Young Astronomers under the age of eighteen who have free membership in the club. Many of these youngsters don't attend business meetings and may not have interest in business issues at hand. Should they be calculated in the quorum?

Below is a proposed change to the language. This is just a proposal and is open to discussion at upcoming business meetings.

“A member will be considered active if that member is not an Honorary, Associate, or Family member, and is currently in good standing with dues paid. A quorum, consisting of ten percent of the active membership, excluding the Board members, is required to conduct a vote on any and all items brought up during/entered into a Business Meeting. This ten percent of the active membership must have signed the attendance list prior to any vote. In the event that ten percent of the active membership is not present the Business Meeting shall be conducted for informational purposes only.”

Kevin Ackert

Minutes of the NSAAC Business Meeting, June 4th, 2010

President Foy called the May Business Meeting of the NSAAC to order at 9:00 PM. There were 8 members present plus 7 Board members. There was one visitor: new member Ed Dicroce. There was an official quorum.

Secretary:

The minutes of April and May business meeting were approved by acclamation.

Treasurer:

Treasurer gave an abbreviated report.

Membership:

No new members. Kevin sent out reminders to the unpaid members. Next month he will remove the unpaid members from the list server privileges.

Early Meeting Announcements:

Open forum on the agenda after New Business

Committee Reports:

Young Astronomers Program:

The YAP program was over budget by \$386.83. This amount will be put on the list server and published in the Celestial Observer and will be voted on by the membership at the August business meeting

Merrimack College:

Merrimack had two good days. A school group of 23 opened the observatory one evening and 30 people came a second night. No change in the lock situation; the security police have been very good about coming quickly to lock up.

Salem State:

Dennis had visitors on May 2nd and May 10th. The Salem observatory is closed for the summer.

Star Party Committee:

The upcoming star parties are:

Thursday, June 17th, Chelmsford Land trust, observing only

Saturday, June 19th, IRWS, Topsfield, MA, astronomy campout for kids, rain date, June 26th.

Tuesday, June 29th, Wenham, MA Public Library, rain date, Thursday, July 1. Brewster will give the presentation and several scopes will be needed

Friday and Saturday, September 17th and 18th, Essex Heritage Trust

Friday and Saturday, September 24th and 25th, Essex Heritage Trust

Saturday, October 2nd, Amesbury School

Saturday, October 16th, IRWS Topsfield, MA, Fall Program

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.

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

Board is suggesting a change in the bylaws to redefine the definition of an active member. Kevin Ackert is writing a draft of the definition to circulate to the Board for comment. The final version will be put on the list server and be published in the Celestial Observer. This will be discussed at the August meeting and voted on at the September business meeting.

Kevin has sent in the E-postcard to the IRS confirming our nonprofit status. This is required every three years.

Jim Foy has been given a suggestion that an active calendar be added to the website. Jim Foy says there is an active calendar, but not in the form one would expect and he will look into making it more visible.

The entertainment for the evening was a very enlightening presentation by Nanette Benoit of the ATMobS and GAAC clubs on the WISE mission which is the Wide Infrared Survey Explorer. Present for the presentation was Nanette's brother who worked on the optical system and answered many questions..

Board Meeting is set for Monday June May 14, 7:30 PM. at VMP

Meeting adjourned at 9:42 PM.

*Respectively submitted,
John Hobbs, Secretary NSAAC*

Young Astronomer Program

Following the most successful YAP event in its six year history, we find ourselves over budget for 2010 and in need of outside funding for 2011. We went over budget by \$386.83. Members will be asked to approve this expense at the next business meeting that has a quorum, hopefully in August.

As the program has now grown beyond our means, we will be seeking outside funding in the form of a grant for the 2011 program. Jim Foy and I will be working on this. Although neither of us have experience with grant writing, both of our wives do and will be in counsel. Any members with first hand experience with grant writing who'd like to assist are more than welcome.

Kevin Ackert

Treasurer Report

At the time of this printing we have only twenty-two members who have not renewed their NSAAC membership. Our active membership stands at eighty-eight. Thank you to everyone who has renewed their membership, and a special thank you to those who used the new PayPal system to make their payment.

Between the last two YAP programs and the 20th Anniversary Party we've managed to spend down our assets to a more appropriate level for a club of our size. The ebb and flow of our membership has been consistent over the past several years. With outside funding of the YAP program hopefully in our future, the state of our club is quite stable right now.

Members will be asked to approve an over budget YAP expense of \$386.83 at the next meeting with a quorum.

*Kevin Ackert,
Treasurer*

Star Party News

Star parties for schools are winding down, but star parties for organizations are increasing.

There were no star parties this month.

See the minutes of the May 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*

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 James Bastable, Membership Director, email: [membership at nsaac.org](mailto:membership@nsaac.org) or 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.