



The Celestial Observer

*Newsletter of the North Shore
Amateur Astronomy Club*

March, 2012

From the Vice-President

Greetings! I would like to thank everyone who attended our February monthly meeting and the Scope Clinic that preceded the meeting. I wish the sky had been clear so that we could have done some stargazing.

Planetary conjunctions are rare, but right now Uranus, the 7th planet, is right near Venus, the second planet. This provides an easy opportunity to find and observe Uranus, which can at times be difficult because it is at the limit of naked eye visibility.

I hope that many of you will be able to attend the March meeting so we have the quorum that is needed to elect our slate of officers for the upcoming year.

Clear Skies,
Bryan Stone,
Vice-President

Annual Elections for BoD

Our annual elections for the Board of Directors will be held at the next General meeting, Friday, March 2 at 8 PM at VMP. All members are encouraged to participate actively in the club and run for a board position if you are interested. You can announce your intention to run at the meeting.

The current slate for the election is:

President – Bryan Stone
Vice-President – Bill Drown
Treasurer – Kevin Ackert
Secretary - John Hobbs
Membership Director – Kevin Hocker
Members at Large – Ron Sampson and Edward Burke

Please note that in order to vote, members should be present and “be of good standing” with their dues paid for 2012. Renew today! Membership renewals will also be accepted before the meeting.

Kevin Ackert

2012 Membership Dues

Membership dues for 2012 are now due. If you have not yet paid your dues please send 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.

Please note the following concerning dues payments:

- Membership dues for 2012 are \$20.00
- If you joined the club after October 31, 2011, your dues are not due until March of 2013. 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.
- **Payments can be made via PayPal.** After clicking this link <http://www.nsaac.org/renew.shtml> click the PayPal link on that page to take you to the payment page.
- If you send your payment via US Mail, the address is NSAAC, c/o Veasey Memorial Park, 201 Washington St., Groveland, MA 01834-2007
- 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.
- Questions about your dues can be sent to treasurer@nsaac.org

Kevin Ackert,
Treasurer

NSAAC Welcomes Our New Members:

John Brucker of Amesbury, MA.

Bryan Stone,
Membership Director

Minutes of the NSAAC Business Meeting, February 3rd, 2012

President Drown called the February Business Meeting of the NSAAC to order at 8:08 PM. There were 10 members present plus 6 Board members. There was a quorum. Meeting was official.

Secretary:

The minutes of the January business meetings were approved by acclamation.

Treasurer:

Fiscal year ends March. Treasurer Kevin Ackert will submit the year end compilation after the March elections.

Membership:

Kevin Ackert announced that we have 105 paid members in good standing of which 11 are family and 2 are honorary.

Early Meeting Announcements:

Open forum on the agenda after New Business.

Committee Reports:

Merrimack College:

Kevin said Merrimack was clear on Jan 25th. Weather looked iffy, but 27 people hit the observatory website so he opened the observatory. Only object that could be seen was Jupiter and it was poor image. The scouts that attended told Kevin that this was the best event that the scouts have attended recently.

Salem State:

Dennis Gudzevich opened the observatory twice in Jan. On the 9th he had no visitors. He had 34 guests on the 30th which were mostly Pack 11 scouts from Marblehead and their parents.

Star Party Committee:

The upcoming star parties are:

- Tuesday, February 14th, Marblehead Charter School
- Thursday, February 16th, Andover Scouts
- Friday, March 23, North Reading Cub Scouts at Merrimack

Telescope Clinic:

John Brucker brought his Celestron 114 AST on a light-weight German Equatorial Mount. When switched to a more stable mount provided by Bryan Stone and some nice views were obtained.

News, Correspondence and Upcoming Activities:

No information

Old Business:

Ed Burke gave an update of the new website. There will be a demo probably in March. He expects maybe to switch over to the new website around April 1st. When ready he will run the finished product by the board before implementing the new website.

We now have keys to the two new lights at VMP and we have special keys for the switch boxes. See Ron Sampson if you would like a key for the lights. The last person leaving must turn the lights back on; especially the walkway lights.

Dark Park permit has been renewed by John Tulick, but has not been received yet. Kevin will re-contact John and get a copy.

New Business:

Kevin Ackert indicated that the YAP budget needs to be increased from the original amount which did not expenses other than the telescopes. Kevin entered a motion to raise the YAP budget by \$450. Motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

Kevin also announced that club dues are due March 1.

Secretary was asked by Kevin Ackert to reserve the Chapel room at Veasey for the YAP awards on Saturday April 28th.

There is a new light installed at Veasey in the parking lot next to the garage near the main building. It does not require a key as there is a switch on the pole.

Board Meeting will be Monday February 13th at 7:30 PM at Veasey.

Meeting adjourned at 8:45 PM

Respectfully submitted,

John Hobbs, Secretary NSAAC

Young Astronomer Program

Since the mailing in early January the YAP web page has received over 100 hits with about 25 being return visitors. That's a fair amount of activity compared to prior years. The program is really getting established.

This year we'll be awarding six telescopes and five pair of binoculars to eleven young astronomers. The awards date is April 28th at VMP. The deadline for essays to be mailed is March 31. Members are encouraged to inform potential young astronomers they may know about our program and direct them to our website for the materials.

The final YAP budget amendment was approved at the February meeting and all the goods have been purchased. Members would like to assist with the program on April 28th should contact me. We meet at 9 am, assemble the telescopes, have pizza, then the event is between 1 and 3.

Kevin Ackert

Star Party News

There have been no star parties in January. There are three parties scheduled for February. Fred Sammartino entertained 20 cub scouts from Methuen at the Merrimack observatory February 7th.

For a list of upcoming star parties, see this month's minutes.

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>

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 Bryan Stone, Membership Director, email: [membership at nsaac.org](mailto:membership@nsaac.org) or Bill Drown, 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.