



STAR FIELDS

NEWSLETTER OF THE AMATEUR TELESCOPE MAKERS OF BOSTON, INC.

OUR APRIL MEETING...

Thursday, April 11, 1991, 8 p.m.
Phillips Auditorium, Harvard-Smithsonian
Center for Astrophysics

A SHOW & TELL is the central activity of April's meeting, and is planned as a follow-up to last July's eclipse panel discussion. Describe what you have designed or built for the upcoming July 91 solar eclipse. Although the Show and Tell will give top billing to talks on plans or preparations for the eclipse, presentations on other subjects are also welcome.

Please phone President Marion Hochull a least 3 days before the meeting so that she can plan the time allotments. Lets make this month's Show & Tell as active, informative, and fun as those in the past.

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Although a pre-meeting dinner is not scheduled this month, you may still want to gather at 5:45 p.m. at the Changsho Restaurant, located at 1712 Mass Ave. in Cambridge, near Linnean St.

MARCH'S MEETING HIGHLIGHTS...

Ten members attended the pre-meeting dinner with our speaker, and later the March meeting was convened with 55 members in attendance. Treasurer, Tony Costanzo, announced that the club's finances are now being handled by his computer's Quicken program and "that we are in good shape." The president announced the passing away of a long time member, James Gagan, and read an obituary (see page 3) written by William Knight. Tal Mentall announced that the star party at the Waltham Middle School was held on the 13th. He, Marion Hochull and David Emerson introduced about 100 young people to telescopic observing. Greg Chase reported that a group of ATMer's observed a bright aurora at the clubhouse on the 9th. John Reed reported sighting using his T-scanner a large prominence on a very active sun. He also announced that a Space Astronomy conference is to be held on April 18 in Waltham. Bernie Volz announced that planning for the ATMoB/ALCON 91 is going well. He asked that members send him "calendar columns" from their local newspapers so that he can begin promoting ATMoB meetings in these media. Ron Tanguay announced the formation of a new amateur observing group, the Association of Binary Star Observers (ABSO) (see below). Gary Walker showed a commemorative Patriot Missile T-Shirt that he can obtain for interested people for \$8. Vladimir Vudler announced that he had become a Questar dealer and is offering member discounts. Marion reported that Leo Jennings was in the hospital. She also indicated that

thanks to Ed Knight and a team of others, the restoration of observing chair of Harvard's great refractor is proceeding well. Finally, our speaker, Richard Lynch, gave us a great insight into the Leslie Peltier, his wife, home, and accomplishments.

ASTRONOMY DAY PROGRAM BOSTON MUSEUM OF SCIENCE SATURDAY, APRIL 20...

The ATMoB with other groups are cooperating with the Hayden Planetarium in celebrating Astronomy Day. According to John Reed (617-861-8031), our coordinator for this event, ATMoB participation is particularly need this year, because of the serious cutback in the museum staff. The ATMoB schedule for the day is as follows:

- 8 - 8:30 a.m. Unloading of ATMoB stuff at the BMOS Atrium door off the front drive of the museum.
- 9 - 5 p.m. ATMoB Exhibit of telescopes, mirror making, and video astronomy in the Atrium.
- 11 a.m. "The Great Sky Show: An Amateur Astronomer Introduces the Players" by Ted Poulos, Wright Theater.
- 12 p.m. "Aurora Photography" by Bernie Volz, Wright Theater.
- 1 p.m. "Backyard Pictures of Stars" by Margarita Drozdoff and John Reed.
- 8 - 11 p.m. Star Party for the public on the roof of the BMOS garage. Bring your scope and image a bit of the sky for others to enjoy. See Noreen Grice of the Planetarium staff for free parking ticket validation.

ANNOUNCEMENTS...

DOUBLE STAR OBSERVING by amateurs can now become a serious scientific pursuit with the formation of the new Association of Binary Star Observers (ABSO) with its headquarters in Saugus, MA. The purpose of the organization is to provide amateurs with:

- Info on double star work and how to make measurements.
- Measurement methods and resources.
- Info on how amateur measurements can be used by professional astronomers.
- Ways for amateur double star observers to become

acquainted with one another.

- A quarterly journal, Binary Star.

Membership dues in \$15 a year. For more information contact Ronald C. Tanguay, ABSO, 306 Reynolds Dr., Saugus, MA 01906, 617-231-1558.

A NEW HAMPSHIRE ASTRONOMY DAY Star Party will be conducted by ATMob member, Peter Bealo, on Saturday, April 20 from 6 to 10:30 p.m. at the Plaistow, NH town park. Peter needs the help of 2 or 3 other amateurs, with or without scopes. Call him if you can help and for other info and directions: 603-382-7039. Cloudy date will be the 21st.

THE ASTRONOMERS, a new TV series from PBS that cost \$5.2 million, begins airing on Boston's Ch 2 on successive Monday nights, beginning April 15 at 8 p.m. Each of the series six episodes concentrates on a frontier problem in modern astronomy. A complete set of six one-hour VHS tapes are available from several sources including ASP and Sky Publishing. The price varies from \$109.95 to \$129.95. A companion book by Donald Goldsmith is also available for \$24.95. Does anyone want to make a tax deductible donation of a set of these tapes to the ATMob?

AN OPEN HOUSE at the Northeast Regional Planetary Data Center of Brown University will be held on Saturday, April 13 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. The location is the Lincoln Field Bldg. (corner of Thayer & George streets), RM 216 on the Brown campus in Providence, RI. Five topics will be covered:

- New Magellan Results
- New Views of the Moon from Galileo
- Future Explorations
- Discussion of the Planets
- Demonstration of the Mac II Image Processing System

For more information contact Deborah Galvin, 401-863-3243.

--John Reed

REACH OUT WITH A FRIENDLY HANDSHAKE, smile, and introduce yourself to meeting or clubhouse visitors. Tell them about the ATMob and make sure they get a copy of our promotional brochure available near the telephone at the clubhouse and on the rear table at our meetings. Ask them if they would like a complimentary copy of the next issue of Star Fields. Give their name and address to Ed Los or Ted Poulos if they do. Likewise, new members should introduce themselves to the president and other officers. If you have special interests or need some help, they may be able to point you in the right direction. --Executive board

HUBBLE SPACE TELESCOPE MODEL kit is now available from Space Craft International. The single kit price is \$14, but a group purchase of 10 or more kits lowers the price to \$8.50. David Aucoin (617-899-5315) will be taking orders at the April meeting. If you want to

pay by check, make the check payable to Space Craft International.

A ATMob CLUB SUPPER is being considered for Saturday night at Stellafane in Pine Island. Following the afternoon talks, members and their friends can assemble with their own food (or purchased chicken dinners), grills, and tables & chairs under a couple of dining canopies set up in Pine Island. This would enable club members, scattered throughout Stellafane East, to dine and chat with fellow ATM'ers. Rain or shine, of course. The more dining canopies we have, the dryer we might be! Any comments or suggestions? -- Marion Hochuli

ATMoB/ALCON 91 UPDATE... By Bernie Volz

A new info/registration form will appear in the May Reflector, and a letter promoting ATMob/ALCON 91 with maps will be mailed shortly to all clubs that are members of the Astronomical League. The convention speakers will include:

- Dr. David Crawford, Kitt Peak National Observatory, executive director and co-founder of the International Dark-Sky Association.
- Dr. Rudolph Schild, Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics.
- Dr. John Strong, Prof. Emeritus (John Hopkins and UMass).
- Richard Berry, Editor-in-Chief, Astronomy.
- J. Kelly Beatty, Senior Editor, Sky & Telescope.
- Stephen J. O'Meara, Associate Editor, Sky & Telescope.
- Daniel E.E. Green, Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics.
- Jack Bordon, For Spacious Skies.
- David Levy, comet discoverer.
- John Bortle, comet observing expert.
- Ronald Tanguay, Association of Binary Star Observers. Gerald Dyck, AAVSO.
- Phil Harrington, author and columnist.

Other activities include: Solar Eclipse expedition reports and photo contest, Observing with the Amherst College 18-inch Clark Refractor, Workshops on observing and scope accessories, Swap tables, Commercial exhibits, Social hour, and Raffles and door prizes.

ALCON 91 planning meetings will be more frequent now that time is growing short. They will be about every 2 weeks at the clubhouse on Saturdays at 3 p.m. The next meeting will be Sunday, April 14 when we'll visit UMass. For more info phone Bernie (508-334-3648) or John (617-861-8031).

ATMOB ACTIVITIES...

The ASTRO-NOT cartoons that have appeared in Star Fields were created by Rich Burrier, the 13 year old son of ATMob members and frequent clubhouse attenders, Richard and Andrea Burrier of Groton. A big thanks goes to PAUL CALANTROPO for the donation of the rental truck that hauled items to VERNONscope for

their auction and to STEVE MOCK and JOHN REED for their help. Kudos to members who bring astronomy to young people. Current praise goes to TANJA VUDLER who gave a recent talk to 6 to 9th graders at the Lexington Montisori school and JOHN STANSFIELD who has become a scout consular for a troop in Merrimac, NH and has initiated an astronomy merit badge program. Also PHIL ROUNDSEVILLE must be mentioned for his continued efforts in helping young people at the clubhouse make their own telescope mirrors. LARRY SULLIVAN completed the 8-inch secondary mirror for the club's 20-inch. Using a continuous ring polisher of his employer, Northrup, he attained a surface to within 1/20 wave over the central 80-90% of the mirror. ED DOUGHERTY has completed the refurbishing of the C14 at Bentley College. The ATMoB restoration of the 13.5 ft. observing chair for Harvard's Great Refractor is progressing well thanks to hardwork and able leadership of ED KNIGHT and ED DOUGHERTY. The investment of a great deal of their time and effort in this project is most appreciated. Thanks is also extended to helpers: GREG CHASE, MARION HOCHULI, JOHN SAMOLYK, AL DELMAN, AND BRUNO NARDELLI. The refractor's 30 ft. dome now also rotates again thanks to the troubleshooting efforts of ED.

NEW ATMOb MEMBERS...

We extend a cordial welcome to the following new members:

Daniel Feldkhun	Newtonville, MA
Harvey Gold	Winthrop, MA
Mathew Kamholtz	Brookline, MA
Ronald Tanguay	Saugus, MA
Fred Ward	Arlington, MA

Any current members who feel that their membership starting date shown on the membership list is incorrect, should notify our Membership Secretary, Ed Los (603-880-8219). He should be informed of any change in your address or telephone.

AN EDITORIAL COMMENT...

New England observers have enough to contend with—cloudy and chilly nights, light pollution, dew—but those mosquitoes at the clubhouse are the WORST. With the state's Dept. of Public Health forecasting an outbreak of mosquito-borne Eastern equine encephalitis this summer at least as severe as last year's, those clubhouse pests could be life threatening! Help, we need a "storm'n norman" with a killer army of dragonflies. Maybe a couple of ATM'ers with masks and armed with a malathion sprayer is more realistic. But shouldn't we strike soon when these pests are still "little wiggles" because later when they grow up 'school's out'. Any experts out there? Let's plan to solve the problem this spring so that we can have a pleasant summer and fall.

--Ted Poulos

IN MEMORIAM

JAMES W. GAGAN, a 42 year member of the Amateur Telescope Makers of Boston, passed away on February 23, 1991 at the age of 86. Soon after beginning his association with the club in 1949, he became a prominent promoter of telescope making and popular astronomy. During his many years of service on the shop committee, he instructed dozens of amateurs in the arts of grinding and figuring, many of whom went on to become professionals.

When the annual Stellafane conference was indefinitely suspended after WW II, Jim was instrumental in arranging a meeting between representatives of the Springfield Telescope Makers and the ATMoB. This culminated in the 1954 reinstitution of the Stellafane event which continues to grow in attendance each year.

Jim's exceptional optical proficiency was demonstrated by his single handed polishing and figuring of the objective, prism, Mahgln mirror, and field lens of the folded 15-inch catadioptric refractor that was designed by Dr. James Baker. These optics, originally slated to replace those in the Harvard Observatory's 15-inch, were instead installed in New Mexico on the 26 ft. coronagraphic spar under the direction of Dr. Richard Dunn. In 1957, the American Astronomical Association, Inc. presented Jim with the Amateur Astronomer's Metal and certificate of merit in recognition of this contribution to astronomy.

Jim Gagan was the principle organizer and General Chairman of the Astronomical League convention held at the University of Maine in Orono during the solar eclipse of July 20, 1983. When the Russian Sputnik satellites were launched late in 1957, Jim was an avid observer and worked with Operation Moonwatch sponsored by the ATMoB at Harvard College Observatory.

-- William E. Knight

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LEO J. JENNINGS, a physics and chemistry teacher at Somerville High for five years and at the former Rindge Technical High School in Cambridge for more than 30 years until his retirement in 1971, died Sunday, March 23 in Cape Cod Hospital. He was 85 and lived in Belmont.

Born in Somerville, Leo Jennings graduated from Boston College in 1928 and received a master's degree there in 1929. He was a member of the Westford and MIT observatories and a 50 year member of the Amateur Telescope Makers of Boston. He spoke six languages other than English: Italian, Spanish, French, Russian, German, and Greek.

He leaves a daughter a daughter, three sisters, and four grandchildren. - Adapted from the Boston Globe, 3-28-91

MARKETPLACE...

FOR SALE Motofocus for Meade LX5, LX8 and Motodec for 2080/2120 and LX2-6. Both brand new in original boxes, never used. Originally \$175, yours for \$99. Call Eric Burwen, 508-682-7755.

FOR SALE 3.5-inch standard Questar (circa 1972) with cervit mirror, special coating, piggy-back mount, and fully loaded with accessories. Star tests excellent. Interferometric test showed an honest 1/20 wave figure. \$2200. Call Phil Roundseville, 508-250-0217.

FOR SALE Tele Vue alt-azimuth mount (for Genesis) with case and eyepiece tray. \$210. Call Joseph Rothchild at 617-964-6371.

FOR SALE Meade 6-inch f/5 reflector, Model 6600, with equatorial mount, finder, tripod, and 9 and 25 mm eyepieces. Like new. \$500. Call Mary Sedach, 508-682-5080 after 4 p.m.

EXECUTIVE BOARD 1990-91...

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COMMITTEES...

OBSERVING: John Reed 617-861-8031
WORKSHOP: Greg Chase 617-272-9394

FIRST CLASS

COMING EVENTS IN APRIL...

- Apr. 9 "We Are All Astronomers" by Donald Goldsmith, author of The Astronomers and the new PBS series, 12-2 p.m., Wright Theater, BMOS.
- Apr. 13 Northeast Regional Planetary Data Center Open House, see page 2.
- Apr. 18 CfA MONTHLY OBSERVATORY NIGHTS. "Ultraviolet Astronomy From Space: Lessons From Astro" by Barbara Whitney, CfA, 8 p.m Phillips Auditorium, CfA, Cambridge, MA. For more info call 617-495-7461.
- Apr. 20 ASTRONOMY DAY program and star party at the BMOS (see page 1).

HOW TO FIND US...

MEETINGS: Held the second Thursday of each month (September to July) at 8 p.m. In Phillips Auditorium, Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics, 60 Garden St., Cambridge, MA. Parking available on the grounds.

CLUBHOUSE: Open every Saturday from mid-afternoon to late evening. It is the white farmhouse on the grounds of MIT's Haystack Observatory in Westford, MA. Take Rt. 3 north from Rt. 128 or 495 to exit 33 and proceed west on Rt. 40 for 5 miles. Turn right at the MIT Lincoln Lab, Haystack Observatory sign at the Groton town line. Proceed to the farmhouse on the left side of the road. Since clubhouse attendance varies with the weather and other activities, it is wise to call ahead: 508-692-8708.