



# STAR FIELDS

NEWSLETTER OF THE AMATEUR TELESCOPE MAKERS OF BOSTON, INC.

Vol. 2, No. 8

October 1991

## OUR OCTOBER MEETING...

Thursday, October 10, 1991, 8 p.m.  
Phillips Auditorium, Harvard-Smithsonian  
Center for Astrophysics

STARS AROUND THE CAMPFIRE is this month's talk by Jack Megas. This will be a look at astronomy as a tool for early man's survival and as a way of getting us to where we are now. Jack's main interests are in cultural astronomy. He has introduced many to astronomy through his popular lectures. He is the founder of The Conjunction. This late summer, annual convention held in Northfield, MA will celebrate its 10th anniversary in 1992.

Jack has served as president of the Naturalist's Club and was the driving force behind "Whale of a Day"--one of the largest save the whale campaigns in the country. He has gotten the Right Whale named as Massachusetts' State Marine Animal. When not looking through the eyepiece of his telescope, he's looking through the eyepiece of his microscope in one of Springfield's hospital labs. Jack is a member of the Springfield Stars Club and the Amherst Area Amateur Astronomers Association.

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Join us for a 5:45 p.m. pre-meeting dinner with our speaker at the Changsho Restaurant, 1712 Mass. Ave., Cambridge, MA.

## SEPTEMBER MEETING HIGHLIGHTS...

There was a very large turnout for the September meeting with some 90 individuals in attendance. After the usual executive reports, the president announced that there would be an Executive meeting at the clubhouse on Sept. 28 at 7:30 p.m. She also reviewed upcoming events. John Reed and Bernie Volz gave final ALCON '91 reports and thanked all those who took part. Although the financial report is not yet final, Bernie estimated that the ATMob share of the proceeds should be about \$400. Marion Hochuli read a letter from the Harvard CfA thanking the ATMob for their efforts in restoring the Great Refractor's observing chair. Mario Motta announced that the George East family has a new member in the form of a healthy baby boy, Mathew John East. John Reed announced BU's observing and public lecture nights (see details on page 2). Phil Rounseville asked for volunteers on Oct.

19 to prepare clubhouse facilities for mirror grinding classes. Ed Wallner also called for volunteers to help out in a Astronomy and Space Travel project for 5th graders in a Reading school. Monique Reed surprised her husband John with a birthday cake which we all enjoyed as we celebrated both John's and Greg Chase's birthday.

The next best thing to personally observing the July solar eclipse would have been to attend our September meeting. Some 13 members gave presentations that highlighted the sights and crowd sounds via slides, video, and audio tapes. Some items that caught my attention: Mario Motta's and Phil Rounseville's beautiful shots of totality...Bernie Volz's capturing the entire eclipse on single slide...Ed Dougherty's video of the eclipse with a music background...Joseph Rothchild's photo of the eclipsed sun along with Mercury, Jupiter, Mars and Venus...Ken Laurie's photos taken with an improvised telescope support since his tripod failed to arrive...Ed Wallner's guts in driving from LA to the line of totality despite all official warnings...the presentations of John Stansfield, John Reed, and Mike Brown who were partially to totally clouded out in Hawaii.

## ATMoB BAXTER STATE PARK TRIP...

John Samolyk

The 1991 Baxter State Park Trip (last week in Aug. through 1st week of Sept.), has become an annual affair when ATM'ers journey to Maine in search of dark skies. This year's sojourn was a great adventure for all who attended. MIKE JEAN (of the Springfield Stars) was the first to arrive and had to hold down the fort for a day. PAUL CICHETTI, JOHN REED, PHIL ROUNSEVILLE, TIM SOLINSKI, AL & THOMAS STERN, and GEORGE TUCKER joined Mike the following day.

By the time I arrived four days later, John's kitchen was churning out meals better than I usually eat at home. In fact, when I arrived John was in the middle of baking a cake and Bruce, our ranger, had gone into town to buy ice cream for dessert. Bruce had also provided a very large piece of plastic to help keep the kitchen and dining area dry even though it poured. SAI VALLABHA, MARGARITA DROZDOFF, and MITCH FEUER also arrived that day. The following day, GREG CHASE and JOHN HOLMES arrived in time for John's last feast (after that we had to improvise with things like fresh blueberry/red raspberry pancakes, Sai's chicken soup, and barbecued chicken and steak).

On Friday morning, Bruce's "Daily Astronomer Count" reached it's maximum of fourteen and then we lost six to The Conjunction convention in Northfield, MA. Not to worry though, we had replacements waiting in the wings. BRUNO NARDELLI showed up with one thing on his mind...MT. KATAHDIN! TONY BADESSA JR. & SR. showed up and it looked as if they had done this before. BOB COLLARA & friend DONNA PRESTON rolled into camp with his VW camper after we had all turned in the night before the Mt. Katahdin climb.

Up until this point the clouds and the moon had put a damper on any real deep sky observing, but a cold front had gone through and a great day for hiking was followed by a great night of observing! It was clear, dark and cold. If it wasn't for all the people waiting for a look through our scopes, I probably would have collapsed and wasted one of the three good observing nights. I had heard about the Baxter dew and was prepared to give my heater rope dew busting system a trial run, and it didn't let me down! Tony Jr. made an impromptu dew cap for his C-8 from some cardboard and some "Baxter Brown" paint courtesy of Bruce, and Sai made a dew shield for his Telrad out of a paper plate. I easily found a few objects which I had never seen before such as M33 and the North American Nebula.

Astronomical activities took a back seat to the hiking which offered many fine views for those who ventured out of camp...and almost everybody did to some extent. Double Top, North Brother, Travalier, the Owl, and OJI were some of the other peaks attained by the astronomers turned hikers. Mount Katahdin was just spectacular...pictures, words, and descriptions I heard before hand just couldn't describe what I experienced.

I would like to extend many thanks to those who went to Baxter...I had a great time! I have already picked the date I'd like to go back next year. Hope to see you there.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS...

BU's PUBLIC ASTRONOMY NIGHTS. The Judson Boardman Coit Observatory of BU's Dept. of Astronomy is open for public observing every clear Wednesday night at 8 p.m. Call 617-353-2630, after 5:30 p.m. for more information and to check on viewing conditions. Every second Wednesday of the month, the observing session will be preceded by a lecture. See Coming Events... on page 4.

A SCIENCE DAY FOR KIDS will be held Saturday, Oct. 26, from noon to 5 p.m. (rain or shine) at Harvard's CfA, 60 Garden St., Cambridge. No tickets or reservations are needed. The event aims to interest fifth through ninth graders, but all ages are welcome. Adults, though, must be accompanied by a child. Activities will include solar observing, close-up views of Moon rocks and meteorites, tours, demonstrations, and projects that help explain the nature of light--astronomers' key to understanding the universe.

"LAND, SEA, AND SKY: Maps in Contemporary Art" is an offbeat show at the DeCordova Museum, Lincoln, MA through Nov. 17. It features map related work by 23 New England artists. Among the most lyrical works are Neecee Regis' star charts in hydrocal, a stone-like material she uses in a big gray slab, with tiny white craters representing stars. --Richard Koolish

A CCD CAMERA with a 5-inch monitor and modified for astronomical use is again available in limited supply from Ed Dougherty. These units are suitable for viewing the sun, moon, and brighter planets on the monitor or recording the images using a VCR. Price: \$295. Contact Ed at our meetings or at 508-458-8857.

TELESCOPES EQUIPPED FOR SOLAR OBSERVING are needed at the 'For Spacious Skies' fund raising event for the Blue Hills Trailside Museum on October 12 & 13. If you can help out call Frank Masciulli, President of the South Shore Astronomical Society, immediately at 617-447-2802.

ITA TOUR CANCELLATIONS. Anyone who cancelled all or part of the ITA tour to LaPaz and has'nt received a refund or promised service should supply Ed Wallner with the details (dates, amounts, services, etc.). Contact him at 32 Barney Hill Rd., Wayland, MA 01778-3602. Phone: 508-358-7938.

A DISCOUNT ON BOOKS purchased from Sky Publishing Corp. is an ATMoB membership privilege. The actual discount depends upon the book and can be determined from a price list in the ATMoB Reference Book always available on the rear table at our meetings. To qualify for the discount, you must be a paid up member and you must order the book(s) by

## CARTOON...

Courtesy of Tal Mental



using a special order form obtained from our Secretary or Membership Secretary. If you need a form and discount price and are unable to attend a meeting, request them by mail from the Secretary. Please include a SSAE for the reply.

### **ATMoB ACTIVITIES...**

A CLUBHOUSE WORK SESSION is being coordinated by Phil Rounseville on Saturday, Oct. 19 from noon on. We need as many members as possible to help prepare facilities for a mirror making class to be conducted by Phil.

STELLANFANE'S BREEZY HILL was the observation site for several ATM'ers the night of Scott and Liza's wedding. A beautifully clear night allowed magnificent views of Saturn and the Owl cluster by STEVE BECKWITH, JOHN SAMOLYK, SAI VALLABHA, PHIL ROUNSEVILLE, JOHN REED, and GREG CHASE.

STARCONN '91, an annual convention, sponsored by the Astronomical Society of Greater Hartford, was attended by ATMoB members: GARY WALKER, JOHN SAMOLYK, KEN FYE, MIKE MROZ, JOHN REED, and JOHN STANSFIELD. Speakers included: Al Nagler, Steve O'Meara, the venerable Walter Scott Houston and others. The keynote speaker, Stephan J. Edberg of JPL, gave an overview of the exploration of the Solar System and played some great videos created from the radar mapping of Venus and Mars.— John Samolyk

### **NEW ATMoB MEMBERS...**

We want to extend a hearty welcome to the following new club members:

|                 |                |
|-----------------|----------------|
| Richard Ayache  | Roslindale, MA |
| John E. Briggs  | Waltham, MA    |
| Robert Richie   | Lexington, MA  |
| Ird Sabran      | Groton, MA     |
| Steven Sistare  | Somerville, MA |
| Tom Sullivan    | Beverly, MA    |
| Jeffrey Wallens | Groton, MA     |
| Jane Wolf       | Melrose, MA    |

### **DON'T LET YOUR MEMBERSHIP LAPSE...**

If you haven't renewed your ATMoB membership, please do so immediately if you want to continue to receive STAR FIELDS and S&T. Send a check for \$35 (\$20 for students under 21) and your S&T renewal card, if you have it, to Ed Los, 7 Cheyenne Dr., Nashua, NH 03083.

### **THE HORRID CURSE IS LIFTED...**

Club member and LaPaz trip planner, Mario Motta, has the reputation (deserved or not) of attracting great, gray clouds to astronomical outings. The following "Ode to Mario", written by Steve Mock on the back of an airline barf bag during the return trip from LaPaz, celebrates the end of this curse or does it?

### **Ode to Mario**

You pulled it off. You're really gifted.  
At last the horrid curse is lifted.  
With tripod and six inch refractor  
from this date on have no detractor.

With contact one and "on our way"  
'Twas contact two that made our day.  
Fourfold corona: cloud, and beer,  
and outer solar atmosphere.  
And diamond ring a brilliant flash  
You pulled it off with great panache!  
When shadow bands crawled 'pon my pillow.  
No clouds up in the sky did billow.

The friendly staff were really pips.  
And made it quite a fun eclipse.

The weather really was behaved and  
Providence your fate has saved  
UNLESS... with sense of fun depraved.  
FOR ONE DAY ONLY THE CURSE WAS WAIVED!

### **CLUBHOUSE STORE...**

The following items are available for sale to ATMoB members with all proceeds going to the club:

GALAXIES by Timothy Ferris, original large hardcover edition that sold for \$75. Obtain your copy for a donation of \$15 to \$20. Contact Steve Mock 617-625-5870.

MIRROR MAKING KITS for 6,8,10, and 12-inch mirrors are available at discount prices. Kits include a full thickness fine annealed pyrex mirror blank, a tool blank, all required grinding grits, polishing pitch, and cerium oxide polishing agent. Contact our Workshop Committee Chairman, Greg Chase at the clubhouse or by phone at 617-272-9394.

BACK ISSUES OF SKY & TELESCOPE, 1980-1990 \$1, 1970-1980 \$2, and 1960-1970 \$3. Contact Greg Chase.

DELUXE TIRION STAR ATLAS, two southern star charts missing, \$12. Contact Greg Chase.

T-SHIRTS, Alcon 91, La Paz, and ATMoB, \$10. Contact Greg Chase.

### **MARKETPLACE...**

FOR SALE 20-inch, f/8 Ritchey-Chretien made by OGS. Tested to 1/8 wave, freshly coated secondary, a Mathis drive with shaft encoders and CAT. Current OGS price, \$24,000. Asking \$17,500 with CAT or \$16,500 without. Vladimir Vudler, 617-891-4211.

FOR SALE 10-inch, f/6 Galaxy mirror with enhanced coating and Novak cell, 2-1/4" cervit glass diagonal, curved spider diagonal holder, 2" special short Novak R&P focuser. Lot price \$800. Steve Mock, 617-625-5870.

FOR SALE 1-1/4 R&P focuser. \$20. Steve Mock, 617-625-5870.

FOR SALE JMI Motofocus for Newtonian focuser. \$75. Steve Mock, 617-625-5870.

## COMING EVENTS...

- Oct. 12-13 FOR SPACIOUS SKIES two day celebration with Jack Borden at the Blue Hills Trailside Museum. For more info call 617-333-0690.
- Oct. 17 CfA MONTHLY OBSERVATORY NIGHTS, "Tuning in On Pulsars" by Ramesh Narayan, CfA, 8 P.M., Phillips Auditorium, CfA, Cambridge, MA. For more info call 617-495-7461.
- Oct. 26 SCIENCE DAY for kids at the CfA from noon to 5 p.m.
- Oct. 27 "THE PLANETS AND BEYOND" lecture by Dr. Edward Teller, 7:30 p.m. Museum of Science. Event is free, but reserved tickets are required by calling 617-589-0314.

## EXECUTIVE BOARD 1991-92...

- PRESIDENT: Marion Hochuli, 603-888-0141
- VICE PRESIDENT: Bernard Volz, 508-881-3614
- SECRETARY: Ted J. Poulos, 617-566-5127
- MEMBERSHIP SEC: Edward J. Los, 603-880-6219
- TREASURER: Anthony Costanzo, 508-521-4209
- MEMBERS AT LARGE: Mario Motta, 617-334-3648  
John Reed, 617-861-8031
- PAST PRESIDENTS: 1989-90 David Aucoin  
1987-89 Gary Walker  
1985-87 E. Talmadge Mentall

## COMMITTEES...

- OBSERVING: Ed Dougherty, 508-458-8857
- WORKSHOP: Greg Chase, 617-272-9394

## FIRST CLASS

- Nov. 13 BU's OPEN NIGHT AT THE OBSERVATORY, "Voyager's Grand Tour of the Outer Planets" by Dr. Christopher Paranicas. 8 p.m., Rm CLA 522, 7th floor, College of Liberal Arts, 725 Commonwealth Ave., Boston. For more info call 617-353-2630.

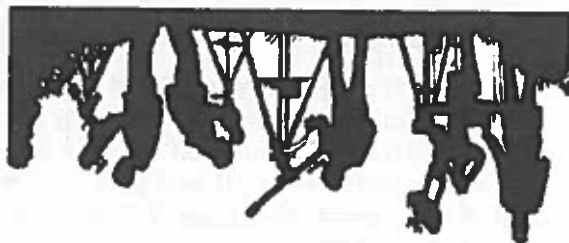
## NOVEMBER STAR FIELDS DEADLINE...

October 23rd is the deadline for items to be included in the November issue of *STAR FIELDS*. Mail or phone your contribution to Ted Poulos, 18 Cushing Rd., Brookline, MA. (617-566-5127)

## 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.



AMATEUR TELESCOPE MAKERS OF BOSTON, INC.  
c/o Edward J. Los  
7 Cheyenne Drive  
Nashua, NH 03063