



STAR FIELDS

NEWSLETTER OF THE AMATEUR TELESCOPE MAKERS OF BOSTON, INC.

Vol. 2, No. 7

September 1991

OUR SEPTEMBER MEETING...

Thursday, September 12, 1991, 8 p.m.,
Phillips Auditorium, Harvard-Smithsonian
Center for Astrophysics

AN ECLIPSE SHOWCASE is the main event at our September meeting. All members who were within the line of totality are encouraged to show their eclipse photos and slides. Photos of colorful, unusual, or otherwise interesting eclipse related events are also welcome. Please keep your presentations short (max. 5 min.), rapidly paced, and interesting. Show only those photos that are the most exciting, instructive, or different in some way.

A pre-meeting dinner is not planned this month, but you may still want to gather at 5:45 p.m. at the Changsho Restaurant, 1712 Mass Ave., Cambridge.

JUNE MEETING HIGHLIGHTS...

Our June meeting was attended by about 68 individuals. A rundown on the ATMoB/Alcon '91 schedule of activities was presented by Bernie Volz. John Reed reviewed the summer schedule of events and mentioned that members of Skyscrapers of RI will visit the clubhouse on June 15. He also asked for volunteers for Space Day, July 24, at the BMOS and for the evening star party on the roof. Ed Knight reviewed the Harvard 15-inch refractor ATMoB refurbishing project that he and Ed Dougherty have spearheaded. The observing chair is now finished and operational. The dome still needs some work. Scott Milligan reported that a concrete mounting pier for the 13-inch Schupmann at Stellafane was poured in November and that a 20 x 40 ft. roll-off roof observatory will be built this summer and fall. He and Phil Rounseville are putting finishing touches on the optics. The ITT representative and Mario Motta gave some last minute info and hints for those going to LaPaz. Later in the meeting, Mario also showed slides from an earlier trip to LaPaz. The annual club election of officers was held. Bernie Volz and John Reed, nominated from the floor, were elected Vice President and Member at Large. Voting was by paper ballot (refer to the back panel of STAR FIELDS for the list of current officers). Finally, the main event of the meeting was our annual auction of astronomical and related stuff conducted by Tony Costanzo with the competent help of Ken Laurie and Tim Solinski. The club netted about \$600 from this year's auction.

WE PULLED IT OFF...

ALCON '91 turned out a winner from the point of view of its organization, program, facilities, and great weather with clear skies. This is not only our estimation, but the assessment of many of the 145 people that attended. The ATMoB owe JOHN REED and BERNIE VOLZ and the entire ALCON '91 committee praise and gratitude for their Herculean efforts over the past months. Thanks to... JOAN COYNE and PAUL CICCETTI for the ALCON banner with the "o" represented as the eclipsed sun...MARION HOCHULI for chairing the first day's program and GARY WALKER for chairing the next day, judging the eclipse photo contest, and taking part in the "how to sessions"...BOB COLLARA for running the "how to sessions" and showing live Foucault test patterns on a video monitor...MARIO MOTTA for providing lunch time solar observing, delivering a great talk, and making sign supports...GEORGE KAVANAGH for assiduously manning audio-visual equipment...TIM SOLINSKI and for his constant attention to the video taping of the speakers...GREG CHASE for handling the details of the registration desk...JOHN SAMOLYK for conducting the raffles and handling vendors/exhibitors relations...BERNIE VOLZ and TED POULOS for putting together the printed program, RICH BURRIER for cartoons, and S&T for designing and printing its cover...TED KOCHANSKI for providing the signs used around the campus...DAVID AUCCIN for obtaining the donation of the grand prize of 10 x 80 binoculars from Swift Instruments, Inc....and MANY OF THE ABOVE for helping out with other tasks at the convention. We are also grateful to the Amherst Area Amateur Astronomer's Association and the Springfield Stars for their members help in conducting the observing sessions at the observatory.

ATMoB ECLIPSE TRIP... Mario Motta

The solar eclipse expedition to LaPaz was a huge success. On arrival, we were treated to a first class hotel with a private beach, water sports center, pool, etc. The only mix-up was that Ken Laurie's tripod never arrived, but with some ingenuity and local equipment he got his telescope up and working.

The night before the eclipse we carefully set up our equipment in a private roped off area guarded by hotel security. Some of us (e.g. Ed Dougherty) managed to bring nearly a complete observatory! Eclipse day brought perfectly clear skies. Prior to the eclipse, solar

observations showed a very active sun with large prominences and many sunspots. A general feeling of excitement and anticipation arose as 1st contact approached and the moon began to cover the sun. Twenty minutes before totality there was an anxious moment when some high clouds began to form directly above us! Famous Chief, Gino Cugno, did his "cloud dance" and miraculously the clouds dissipated about 3 minutes before totality.

We watched a huge circular shadow approach from the west over the bay, and the sky darkened. Moments before totality, shadow bands were seen. Mr. Doolittle recorded a 20° F. temperature drop. Then...magic happened!! No words can describe the exhilaration of seeing the diamond ring followed by the most brilliant and awe-inspiring corona that any of the eclipse chasers have ever seen. This eclipse lived up to its belong as "the great one."

The sun appeared as an intense black hole surrounded by two huge ruby red prominences emerged in an intense white corona with streamers that extended 5-8 solar diameters on either side of the sun (5-8° from top-to-tip!). The sky, interestingly turned gray, but not black due to the very bright corona. Many 2-4 sec. exposures even show earthshine on the dark side of the moon during the eclipse. Observing this was as much an emotional as an intellectual experience, and even now I get a twinge of excitement remembering that special moment.

The remainder of the week was also well spent. We were all spellbound by the incredibly steady air and dark skies of La Huerta (our dark observing site 12 miles south of town). Mike Mattel, an experienced planetary observer, stated the observations of Saturn were the best he has ever seen (Cassini, Enke's, crepe ring, surface bands, multiple moons, and a "photograph" quality to the rings). The Milky Way was incredible; the dark "pipe" nebula was naked eye!

Non-astronomical activities included scuba diving with seals, boat rides, deep sea fishing, a visit by orca whales, and a trip to Cabo San Lucas. A real sense of friendship and closeness among all those attending had quickly developed, and I hope will not soon fade. All in all, the "great one" fully lived up to its prior claim!

HAPPENINGS AT STELLAFANE 91...

Tony Costanzo, who spent the entire week at Stellafane, reports that the 56th convention began with a terribly wet Friday night, but ended with clear, dry weather. ATMob members ED DOUGHERTY (attending his 39th Stellafane convention), GARY WALKER, and GEORGE EAST opened the "talks under the tent" with a session on CCD imaging. Tony's son, Michael, was awarded 1st place in the Junior Exhibit for his 6-inch Dobsonian. Last year this same scope won 2nd place in optical judging. PHIL ROUNSEVILLE gave a talk describing his solar eclipse photos on Friday night, and the following day tied for 1st place in optical excellence

for his 6-inch Gregorian. Tony says one of the most unusual scopes at the convention was one made from a watermelon that had a cucumber as a diagonal support! Some ATMobers gathered in the Pine Island area for Saturday dinner and were treated to Elk steak provided by Tony. Also, for the first time, Stellafane was brought "on line" with CompuServ by S&T's Steve Dobson. The ATMob swap table, under the care of GREG CHASE, earned the club about \$500.

A STELLAR WEDDING...

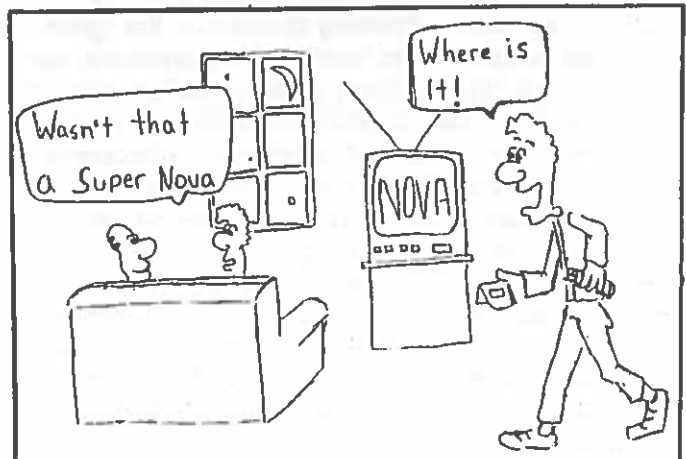
Congratulations and the very best wishes to Scott Milligan and Liza Cacoulidis, who first met at the ATMob clubhouse, became man and wife on September 7 atop Stellafane's Breezy Hill.

ATMOB ACTIVITIES...

ED DOUGHERTY, our newly appointed Observing Committee chairman, was the main speaker at the Skyscrapers meeting in June. He conveyed his experiences with video astronomy. STAN WALLNER reportedly has another hobby that of measuring the height of tides. The Aurora Hotline was in full swing in early June when a number of auroras were observed and photographed. MAREK KOZUBAL, one of our youngest members, displayed some of his aurora photos at the June meeting. MARION HOCHULI and MARIO MOTTA showed great photos of the sun when it sported a huge sunspot grouping during the week of June 3. TIM SOLINSKI's 10-inch scope has been converted from equatorial mount to a new Dobsonian one. He appreciates the help he received from other ATMob members: GARY WALKER, STEVE MOCK, and JOHN REED. Thanks to DR. AGHASSI, STEVE MOCK and JOHN REED, the VERNONscope auction netted the club about \$1296. TONY COSTANZO worked as the observing assistant for Phillips Academy's 6-week astronomy summer session for youth. MARION HOCHULI gave a talk on solar eclipses at the July CfA Monthly Observing Nights. ATMobers ED LOS, ED DOUGHERTY, JOHN REED, STEVE MOCK, DAVID AUCOIN, MAREK KOZUBAL, and TED POULOS took

ASTRO-NOT

by Rich Burrier



part in SPACEDAY at the BMOS. Some of these individuals along with HARRY GOLD, TAL MENTALL, and ED BUDREAU also helped out at the evening Star Party on the roof. NOREEN GRICE, of the Hayden Planetarium, sent us a note of appreciation for our help. On July 28, a second 'Solar Orgy' was held at ED DOUGHERTY's home with some 23 ATM'ers attending along with their 7 T-Scanners, and 3 Hydrogen Alpha equipped scopes. MARION HOCHULI used the opportunity to test out her new Lumicon solar filter, and it performed as well as the others. The Perseids meteor shower drew a crowd of some 35-40 people at the clubhouse on August 12 according to ED DOUGHERTY. He reports that although many meteors (and some 13 satellites) were observed, there were not many bright ones. The following day, a new DayStar Calcium solar filter loaned to VLADIMIR VUDLER was evaluated at the clubhouse by MARION HOCHULI, ED DOUGHERTY, STEVE MOCK and VLADIMIR. Although no visual solar image could be seen, ED's CCD camera gave a video image.

INFORMATION NEEDED...

Tom Lucia (508-372-5807) wants to know if anyone has tried mirror grinding using a non-motorized potter's wheel. If you have any thoughts on this, please call him.

Occasionally I have been asked for the name of a local company that can aluminize a mirror. Anyone have such info? Ted Poulos (617-566-5127).

NEW ATMoB MEMBERS...

We extend a cordial welcome to the following new members:

Ishan Anand	Chelmsford, MA
Bob Beckley	Bedford, MA
Jack Cole	Wrentham, MA
Barry DeCristofano	Franklin, MA
Chein-Shiu Kuo	Brookline, MA
Dan Lapp	Foxboro, MA
Michael McKenna	Cambridge, MA
Alan D. Pisano	Revere, MA
Gardner Roberts	Haverhill, MA

RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP NOW...

If you haven't renewed your ATMoB membership, you are late and should immediately 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 03063.

ATMoB MEMBER PROFILE...

ANNA HILLIER, a 33 year ATMoB member who regularly attends our meetings, remembers how she became interested in astronomy. One day back in 1958, while reading the Boston Globe, she came across an article by Margaret Mayall, then AAVSO director, extolling the virtues of amateur astronomy. She contacted Mrs. Mayall who referred her to the ATMoB.

Since then she has constructed a pipe mount 6-inch Newtonian telescope which started out with a silvered mirror that was later aluminized by Max Truesch. One bleak year when ATMoB officers were at a premium, she found herself being our ALCOR, club Treasurer, and Treasurer of the Northeast Region of the Astronomical League all at the same time! She attended a myriad of meetings having to do with the incorporation of the club, and was instrumental in dividing the Secretary's job into the present recording and membership secretaries. "I was instructed by such greats as Jim Gagan, Ed Knight, and Sam Gardiner" reflects Anna. "I feel that the club and I have grown together, and that I have received much more than I have given the club."

DEEP SKY MUSINGS...

David Aucoin

This column makes light of the astronomical notations appearing in every atlas, sky chart, or uranometria you will ever use. Take, for example, the acronyms for the listings of deep sky objects: IC, NGC, RINGC, CGCG, MCG, UGC, HC and MC (not Hammer, but Messier). How did Herschel (not Walker, but William) and Messier ever get involved in these listings? You need the Yellow Pages just to understand them (ask me and I'll tell you sometime).

Then there's the galactic clusters (not peanut clusters) like Wilds and Zwicky's triplet; Stephans quintet, Seyferts Sextet. I'll add achromatic doublet and Barbershop Quartet to the list to make it complete! And what about the Hinds Variable Nebula (not Carl), Hubbles Variable Nebula (yup, the same namesake as the stupid HST), Barnards dark Nebula and Boks Dark Globules (kind of like Ernie Boch of auto fame). Then there's Brown Dwarfs, Red Dwarfs, and Dwarf galaxies, and the ever so popular Whirlpool galaxy (what if they renamed it Maytag to give the repairman something to do! How about the Saturn Nebula and Ghost of Jupiter, scary huh? Ever try looking for the Bug Nebula, squash that idea, too far South! And lastly, two other great individuals have globular clusters named after them Tombaugh and Palomar, but don't look for them they're because it can be frustrating.

MARKETPLACE...

FOR SALE EZ-COSMOS astronomy software, Ver 3.0, for the PC. Brand new, won at ALCON 91. Value \$69.95, asking \$55. Call Tim Solinski, 617-472-2698.

FOR SALE Celestron 8-inch Schmidt Camera with 35 mm film holder. Original price \$750. Asking price \$500. Call Dr. Badri Aghassi, 617-891-5707.

FOR SALE Meade 2045 4-inch Schmidt-Cassegrain, fork mount, setting circles, motor drive, slow motion control, equatorial wedge and tripod. Accessories include carrying case, 5x24 rt. angle finder, and 6 and 25 mm eyepieces. \$800 or best offer. Joseph Gallo, 617-846-9356.

COMING EVENTS...

- Sept. 14 Starconn '91 sponsored by the Astronomical Society of Greater Hartford at 150 Science Center Auditorium, Wesleyan University, Middletown, CT. Reg. \$12, Buffet dinner \$15.
- Sept. 19 CfA MONTHLY OBSERVATORY NIGHTS, "Signals From Space: Progress in the Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence" by David Latham, CfA, 8 P.M., Phillips Auditorium, CfA, Cambridge, MA. For more info call 617-495-7461.
- Oct. 4-5 Astro Assembly sponsored by Skyscrapers, Inc. at Seagrave Memorial Observatory, NorthScituate, RI. Contact Conrad Cardano, 401-828-0702 evenings.

Oct. 11-13 Connecticut Star Party, Astronomical Society of New Haven, at a private campground, Colebrook, CT. Pre-reg. by Sept. 20 necessary: \$8.50/adult, \$10/Vehicle & tent. Astro. Soc. of New Haven, Box 3005, New Haven, CT 06515.

OCTOBER STAR FIELDS DEADLINE...

September 25th is the deadline for items to be included in the October issue of *STAR FIELDS*. Mail or phone your contribution to Ted Poulos, 18 Cushing Rd. Brookline, MA 02146. (617-566-5127)

EXECUTIVE BOARD 1991-92...

PRESIDENT:	Marion Hochuli, 603-888-0141
VICE PRESIDENT:	Bernard Volz, 508-881-3614
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MEMBERSHIP SEC:	Edward J. Los, 603-880-8219
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COMMITTEES...

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

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: 508-892-8708.

FIRST CLASS

IF YOU HAVEN'T RENEWED YOUR
MEMBERSHIP, PLEASE DO IT NOW!

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