

# **STAR FIELDS**

NEWSLETTER OF THE AMATEUR  
TELESCOPE MAKERS OF BOSTON

Vol. 4, No. 8

September 1993

## **Our September Meeting...**

Thursday, September 9, 1993  
Phillips Auditorium, Harvard-Smithsonian  
Center for Astrophysics

THE GREAT Copernicus Chase is the title of this month's talk by Dr. Owen Gingerich, Professor of Astronomy and Science History at the CFA. Please join us at 5:45 p.m. at pre-meeting dinner at the Changsho Restaurant, 1712 Mass. Avenue, Cambridge.

## **July Meeting Highlights...**

CLUB MEMBERS spoke at this month's meeting. Tal Mentall showed a video tape of the "Frontline" news show that interviewed him at the ATMoB clubhouse. Gary Walker gave an informative presentation on what can and can't be done with a CCD camera coupled with various aperture telescopes. Ed Dougherty rounded the evening off with a short discussion on pixel and film resolution.

Subjects raised during the business session of the meeting included; a request from Marion Hochuli for the club to investigate a member discount for the magazine "Observatory Techniques", Vladimir Vudler informed members of a new lithium AA battery on the market. They have a longer life than alkalines and are available at most department stores.

## **President's Message...**

I'D LIKE to take this opportunity to thank those that included a tax deductible contribution with their membership renewals. Individual contributions varied all the way up to \$100.00. Thanks! The contribution level is a very positive indication that you value the club and feel it is a worth while investment.

The clubhouse activity has been very high during the summer and there are many telescope projects in progress. In order to keep better records of what activities are being done, I'd like to have reports in Star Fields by those working on telescopes. Please provide Steve Beckwith with information as to what you are building or planning to build and, if you like, periodic updates. Please notify Steve when the project is completed. Also, don't forget to log all activities in the Clubhouse log book.

## **Annual ATMoB Picnic...**

PLEASE JOIN us Saturday, September 18th at the clubhouse for the ATMoB picnic. The picnic begins at 3:00 pm and continues through the evening. Bring your telescope, food and drinks (grills will be available) and join other members for an afternoon and evening of fun. This is an excellent opportunity to see all the work that has been done at the clubhouse. Please call Bernie Volz at 508-881-3614 with any questions.

## **A Letter to Sky & Telescope...**

THE FOLLOWING is a letter sent from ATMoB member Ed Los, to Sky Publishing.

After twenty-four years of reading your magazine, I have decided not to renew my subscription when it expires this year. Instead, I am spending extra money on a technical membership in the Astronomical Society of the Pacific. I am hoping that their publications will be at a much higher technical level than your magazine.

I believe the continued vitality of amateur and professional astronomy in this country depends on closer collaboration between these two groups. I

see signs of such collaborations in Europe, but my recent attendance at the AAS meeting in California underscores the fact that professionals in this country speak a different language and have different concerns from amateurs.

The "essential" magazine in astronomy that I am looking for will encourage more bridges between amateurs and professionals and will seek to further the technical education that many amateurs already possess. A magazine that glorifies meteorite bandits or romances between astronomers does not meet these goals. I encourage you to rethink your editorial policies and restore "Sky and Telescope" to the technical reputation that it enjoyed in the past.

## An Invitation to the ATMoB...

DR. ALEXANDER Tikhonovich Basilevsky, planetary scientist for the former Soviet Union, will be speaking at the September 3rd, monthly meeting of Skyscrapers, Inc. at the Seagrave Observatory at 8:00 pm.

Basilevsky is currently a participating planetary geologist on the Magellan mission at Brown University. He received his Ph.D. in Geochemistry in 1969 and his Doctor of Science in Geochemistry and Planetary Sciences in 1986, both from the Vernadsky Institute in Moscow.

Past accomplishments include involvement in the selection of lunar landing sites for the Lunokhod and Luna missions, and eight other space missions.

Presently, he is the Chief of the Laboratory of Comparative Planetary Sciences of the Vernadsky Institute of the Russian Academy of Sciences, has very large business cards, and is involved in the selection of landing sites for future Mars missions.

Skyscrapers Inc., has invited ATMoB members to their Friday, September 3rd meeting to listen to this unique speaker. Seagrave Observatory is located on 47 Peep Toad Road in North Scituate RI. The meeting begins at 8:00 pm.

## ATMoB at Space Day...

SPACE DAY, sponsored by the Hayden Planetarium on July 24, was celebrated by the ATMoB with a display table and evening star party at the Science Museum. Our participation in the event was organized by John Reed and was very successful thanks to the participation of ATMers Art Sedlow, Ken Fye, Ed Los, Ted Poulos, Peter Bruckner, and Phil Rounsville. Ken showed astro-photos and videos and prepared handouts of a computer printout of a moon photo showing the six Apollo landing sites and dates. Peter showed a newly prepared video of the ATMoB Clubhouse and its activities. Art, John, and Ed displayed telescopes. The display area was dressed up with astro posters and two large video monitors supplied by the museum. Literature was passed out to the public and John, Peter, Ken, Ed and Phil took part in the evening star party on the garage roof.

- Ted Poulos

## Meteor Madness...

IN RESPONSE to local media coverage of the Perseid meteor shower, an estimated two hundred and fifty visitors flocked to the ATMoB clubhouse in Westford, MA. to observe the annual event on August 11.

Ted Poulos, one of twelve ATMoB members in attendance, observed twenty two meteors between 9:30 and 11:30 p.m.. They were bright and left persistent trails. Ed Dougherty described the event as "Slightly better than a typical Perseid shower."

The lower than expected number of meteors did not dampen the crowd's enthusiasm as they covered the lawn and looked at the sky.

DENNIS MILON reports "thirty per hour" was the best meteor rate seen from Gary Walker's dark site observatory in Rumford, N.H. According to Gary, most of the meteors were first magnitude or brighter.

Near by at Mario Motta's observatory, a fear of clouds drove a group of Perseid observers

to points North in an attempt to find greener observing grass...

## Membership Renewals...

IF YOU haven't renewed your membership, please do so NOW. See the June issue of Star Fields for the membership renewal form, or, contact membership secretary, John Samolyk (617-881-3614).

## Clubhouse News...

ONE OF the year's hottest days found AT-MoB members scraping paint at the July 10th clubhouse workday. The scraping and other odds and ends were accomplished by Bill McDonald, Ed Wallner, Greg Chase, John Reed, Bernie Volz, Ed Dougherty and others.

THE NEXT work session is schedule for Saturday, September 25th at 1:00 pm. There is painting and projects to be done. Please come by and lend a hand in the Clubhouse face lift.

SPECIAL THANKS to Tal Mentall for donating an air conditioner and Dave Aucoin for arranging the donations of several chairs to the clubhouse.

A HEARTY well done to Ed Knight, Paul Cicchetti, John Reed, Ed Dougherty and Bill McDonald for their efforts at the Clubhouse last July and August.

## Stellafane...

IN A reoccurring theme of recent years, Saturday afternoon clouds gave way to clear skies in the early evening, at the 58th annual Stellafane Convention held August 13 and 14 in Springfield, Vt.

The clearing took place during the Key Note address of famed Association of Lunar and Planetary Observer (ALPO) member and planetary observer Donald Parker.

Walter Scott Houston, the evening's first speaker, stressed the importance of individual members to a club. He took the audience on a trip back in Springfield Telescope Makers history to speak on the contributions of past heralded and, in particular, unheralded members.

Parker's presentation centered on the importance of amateur contributions to planetary astronomy. A CCD zealot, he extolled and illustrated the technology by contrasting astrophotographs with CCD images of the same objects.

The talk, sprinkled with wit and humor, encouraged all amateurs with a desire to make contributions to planetary astronomy, to become involved with ALPO. Regular observations and recordings whether CCD, photographic or drawings are a valued resources funneled to the professional community via ALPO.

ROBERT ROYCE'S six inch, achromatic, f/15 refractor took first place honors in the compound telescope category of optical competition at this year's Stellafane convention. Royce is an ATMOb member from Northford, CT.

## Summer and Fall Events...

STARCONN '93. September 11, Wesleyan University, Middletown, CT. This one day event is conducted by The Astronomical Society of Greater Hartford and will feature Donald Parker, amateur planetary observer, as this year's keynote speaker. Other events include: exhibitors, vendors, swap tables and a star party. For more information, write: Starconn '93, P.O. Box 2271, Hartford CT 06145.

CONNECTICUT STAR PARTY. September 17, 18, 19, Colebrook, CT. Conducted by the Astronomical Society of New Haven, Inc. The star party takes place at a dark sky site location on a private campground and features speakers, vendors, swap tables, on-site camping and food concessions. Camping space is limited, so pre-registering is encouraged. Call (203)-874-4816 for additional information.

**ASTRO-ASSEMBLY.** October 1 & 2. Sea-grave Memorial Observatory, 47 Peepoad Rd., North Scituate, RI. Sponsored by Skyscrapers, Inc. This annual event features: talks, swap tables, a lunch grill, a unique Astro-Bake-Off, and a featured evening speaker followed by observing.

### OCTOBER STAR FIELDS DEADLINE

September 20th is the deadline for items to be included in the October issue of Star Fields. Mail or phone your contributions to: Steve Beckwith, 195 Wilder Road, Bolton MA. 01740

### Market Place...

**FOR SALE,** 10", f/10 Galaxy mirror with enhanced coating and Novak Cell, 2.25" Cervit diagonal, curved spider diagonal holder, 2" short Novak R&P focuser. Lot price, \$500. Steve Mock, 617-625-5870.

### How to Find Us...

**MEETINGS:** Held the second Thursday of each month (September to July) at 8:00 p.m. in Phillips Auditorium, Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics, 60 Garden St. Cambridge MA.

### Coming Events...

- Sept. 15 **EXECUTIVE BOARD** meeting, 7:00 pm at Mario Motta's house.
- Sept. 18 **ANNUAL PICNIC** at the Clubhouse (See page 1).
- Sept. 25 **CLUBHOUSE WORKDAY,** 1:00 pm.

**CLUBHOUSE:** The Tom Britton Clubhouse is 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 Rt. 495 to exit 33 and proceed West on Rt. 40 for five miles. Turn right at the MIT Lincoln Lab, Haystack Observatory at the Groton town line. Proceed to the farm house on the left side of the road. Since clubhouse attendance varies with the weather, it is wise to call in advance: 508-692- 8708.

### Executive Board 1993-94...

**PRESIDENT:** Bernard Volz , 508-881-3614  
**VICE PRES.:** Mario Motta, 617-334-3648  
**SECRETARY:** Steve Beckwith, 508-779-5227  
**MEMBERSHIP:** John Samolyk, 617-391-9290  
**TREASURER:** Anthony Costanza, 508-521-5382  
**MEMBERS AT LARGE:** Peter Bealo, 603-382-7039  
Anna Hillier, 617-861-8388

**FIRST CLASS**



AMATEUR TELESCOPE MAKERS OF BOSTON  
c/o John Samolyk