



## STAR FIELDS

NEWSLETTER OF THE AMATEUR  
TELESCOPE MAKERS OF BOSTON

Vol. 6, No. 9

October 1995

### This Month's Meeting...

Thursday, October 12th, 1995  
Phillips Auditorium, Harvard-Smithsonian  
Center for Astrophysics

OUR OCTOBER meeting will feature Dr. Rudy Schild, whose talk is titled "The Universe is my Telescope: Gravitational Lenses and Microlensing".

Dr Schild received his BS, MS, and PhD degrees from the University of Chicago/ Yerkes Observatory. After three years of post doctorate work at Mt. Wilson-Mt Palomar, he moved to the CFA where he has remained since, studying stellar and extra-galactic spectra, and deep quasar images. He has numerous CCD images published in various astronomy magazines including *Sky & Telescope*. He is on the advisory board of *CCD Astronomy* magazine as well.

Dr Schild's research on gravitational lenses and microlensing is well known to the ATMoB as he last spoke to us in 1993 on this subject, and generated much discussion and controversy. With his ideas and principal results becoming increasingly accepted, he promises to be less controversial but no less interesting in his presentation.

Please join us for a pre-meeting dinner at Changsho's restaurant at 6:00 pm on 1712 Mass. Ave. in Cambridge.

### Our September Meeting...

THE MEETING was opened by President Mario Motta. There was no Secretary's report, and a partial treasurer's report was given by Bernie Volz, who reported he is still in transition with outgoing treasurer Tony Costanzo.

Anna Hillier gave the first Club Historian report, thanking Barbara Welther of the Center for Astrophysics for her help. She reported her expenses to date, including \$26 spent to get four Xerox copies of a preliminary club history.

There was a brief discussion about getting more copies made for interested members to purchase. Membership

Secretary Mark Bruckner reported 119 renewals so far out of last year's over 260 members.

Mario discussed the possibility of extending the November *Sky & Telescope* renewal date to January next year. Since the magazine is now sent out earlier, many members start getting "your subscription is about to end" notices before they get a chance to renew their ATM membership.

Several upcoming star parties were discussed by Mario, Peter Bealo and others. Mario also mentioned that A. Walter Everest (Jr.) is considering a donation of his father's 12 1/2" scope to the club. His father was a pioneer telescope maker, and the telescope was brought to the first Stellafane, and was tested by Porter, who said it had a 1/40th wave figure. He also has a 20" f4.5 mirror in the fine grinding phase that Mario thought might be donated to the Springfield Telescope Makers. This mirror was one of the test pours for the Palomar 200".

Mario recently met with the new director of the Maria Mitchell Observatory, who said she is having trouble with their drive corrector. Anyone who has one available to donate should contact Mario. He also described his view of Saturn's ring edge-on on August 11, saying it was barely visible. Tal Mentall reported seeing three moons near Saturn, and Joe Rothchild reported trying but being unable to see comet Hale-Bopp.

Mario announced an Executive Board meeting at his house for Sunday, September 24. Under "Old Business", Ed Dougherty reported an error in a listing of a clubhouse payment (he didn't get it), and Steve Mock described the annual Baxter State Park dark sky trip as having good transparency but bad seeing.

Ed Los described an upcoming Boy Scout Jamboree star party that could have as many as 3000 attendees, a September 23 Gunstock mountain star party was mentioned, and Tanya Vudler announced an October 17 (rain date October 24) star party to be held in Lexington.

Vladimir Vudler described a spectacular solar prominence recently seen, and showed some extremely bright phosphorescent material.

Ed Dougherty proposed that the club consider selling him the evaporator, since he feels that there isn't as much telescope and CCD camera making as there once was at the clubhouse.

Dick Koolish showed slides of the clubhouse porch reconstruction, and Paul Ciccetti described the process of rebuilding, and thanked the helpers.

In the "Members Showcase" part of the meeting, Mario showed slides of his observatory and 32" telescope, as well as a number of deep sky objects taken with the scope, including the elusive Stephan's Quintet.

Bernie Volz showed some photos taken piggyback on the scope, and photos of the MIR and Space Shuttle rendezvous.

Our featured speaker, Dr Heidi Hamel of MIT gave an enthusiastic and entertaining description of the Comet Shoemaker-Levy Jupiter encounter.

### TREASURER'S REPORT

For the period from July 1st to September 28, we have \$175.67 in income and \$1,090.62 in expenses (over \$600 of which was for the clubhouse). We presently have \$3,714.36 in the checking account and \$5,800 in a CD account, for a total of \$9,514.36. This does NOT include membership renewal dues and donations which have been paid to the Membership Secretary for this year.

## Executive Board Meeting...

THE EXECUTIVE Board met at my home on September 24th and discussed a 16 point agenda, including clubhouse reports and finance. The following have been voted on and passed:

1. We have voted to create a web page for the ATM's A club member, Brewster LaMaccia has graciously donated computer space at his business to host our web page, and I have appointed Brewster the Sysop for this enterprise. By appending our name to his current domain space, this web page will not cost the club any funds in either registration fees or computer hardware. The "web page committee" will also include Dick Koolish, Peter Bealo, and myself (Mario Motta). We hope to have this fully operational by November 1st. Any ideas on what you would like on the web page, please notify us.

2. Bernie Volz (Treasurer) and I will meet with an accountant in October for our annual audit (required by bylaws).

3. Anna Hillier has published a preliminary draft of the club history, and it is a fine work. At the last meeting there was interest in by many members for copies. When Anna is finished, the club will publish the history and we will sell it to club members who want a copy for \$2.00 above publishing costs. (profits to the club).

4. A request has been made to sell club assets. The board has voted not to sell any club assets at this time. The clubhouse is completing a new inventory. If any materials or assets are found to be surplus, then a list of these items and fair market price will be published in starfields for members to purchase. Note that as a tax exempt organization, we cannot sell any item far below fair market value as this would jeopardize our tax status.

5. We will attempt to get our meetings listed in the Boston Globe (Calendar section) monthly. If any member wishes the same notice sent to their home newspaper and they are willing to publish it, send me the E-mail address of the publication.  
- Mario Motta

## ATMoB Activites...

GARY WALKER'S CCD image of the Horse Head Nebula he displayed at the July '95 meeting won second place for astrophotography/imaging competition at this

year's Astro Assembly in Smithfield, RI. The highly detailed image was generated in sixteen separate four-minute integrations. Astro Assembly is an annual Fall event sponsored by the Sky Scrapers of Rhode Island.

This year's event highlights included key note speaker Dan Green's talk on contributions amateurs can make to astronomy, afternoon talks of on-line astronomy via the internet swap tables and - for the first time in several years - clear skies for two evenings of observing.

KEN LAUNIE, Pete Bealo and Dick Koolish attended the Vernoscope auction on September 30th. Pete was disappointed in the auction noting that several items appeared to be over priced.

A STAR Party for the Hampstead, N.H. Library Summer Reading Program held October 2nd was a huge success according to coordinator Pete Bealo. Approximately twenty-five students enjoyed views of the Moon, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus and several Messier objects. Special thanks to ATMoB members Ed Los and Kevin McCarthy for their help in the event. A good time was had by all.

## Star Parties...

WE'VE NUMEROUS requests for club sponsored starparties. Please coordinate all starparties through Richard Nugent or myself so that we are not spread too thin for our volunteers.  
- Mario Motta

STARPARTY IN Marblehead, Monday, Oct 16 (7pm). About 60 people will attend. Contact Eric Reines to volunteer 617-631-5898.

STARPARTY IN Lynnfield - Tuesday, October 24th (rain date the 26th) 7pm (slide show in auditorium at 6 pm), 300 students and parents are expected to attend. We will need many volunteers. contact Mario 617-334-3648.

STARPARTY AT the Barrow's School in Reading. November 15th (November 16th rain date) 6:30pm - 8:00pm. Approximately 50 elementary school students will attend. Contact Charlie McDonald to volunteer (617-944-6140 (H), 1-800-490-2700 (W)).

## Announcements...

MANY MEMBERS received cancellation notices from *Sky & Telescope* this September because *Sky & Telescope* moved up their publication date a full month. (Thus even though most members' renewal date is the November issue, this gets sent at the end of September now, prompting cancellation notices).

In order to avoid this next year, in January members whose renewal date is November, will be urged to extend their subscription by 2 months, for a prorated \$2.00/issue (total \$4.00). A special renewal "extension" form will be sent in January. Thus club subscriptions will run January to December a calendar year, and no cancellation notices will be sent next year. I have worked this out with *Sky & Telescope*, please follow through to avoid the hassles next year! No member will lose an issue this year, one issue will just be a few weeks late.

CONGRATULATIONS TO Charlie McDonald. He has donated a years subscription of *Sky & Telescope* and *Astronomy* magazines in the name of the ATM's of Boston to the town Library of Reading. This will hopefully spark interest in astronomy and possibly entice new members. He proposes that other members "adopt" their local library as well.

MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY Mark Bruckner has the following new address and phone number: 283 Woburn St., Reading, MA 01867, phone 617-924-9246.

AT THE October meeting, you can purchase Astronomy's Exploring the Universe calendar for 1996 at a discounted price of \$7.00 (regular price is \$10.95). 25 copies of the calendar will be available. first come, first served. Please see Bernie Volz at the meeting and have \$7.00 per calendar (in cash or check - payable to ATMob).

Art Swedlow 508-486-4734

## Membership Renewals...

IF YOU have not renewed your club membership, please do so today. The back of the July '95 *Star Fields* has a renewal form or contact Membership Secretary, Mark Bruckner for one (his phone number is listed on the last page of *Star Fields*).

Please complete and return the form with your payment, as soon as possible to Mark.

## Balancing a Dob...

In the January, 1993 issue of *Astronomy* magazine, I suggested taping the vinyl dust cover of a Dobsonian telescope over the rear end to balance finders and/or heavy eye-pieces. The drawback of this technique is that the vinyl cover becomes stiff in cold weather.

Since then, we have seen the introduction of expensive Velcro strips and bean bags to accomplish the balancing act.

I now offer the simplest and least expensive solution. Strap on adjustable lap pack or fanny pack around the rear end of the telescope tube. Fill the zipper pockets with any

household objects necessary to balance the load. Tools or metal spoons work well. - Bryan Stone, MD, STG

## Clubhouse News...

SPECIAL THANKS to member Kevin Hines for donating some astronomy books, including the Burnham three volume to the club's library.

VOLUNTEERS ARE needed for the next "official" work party on October 14th, to be followed by a picnic at 4 PM, but help is always welcome at other times.

WOULD THE person who borrowed the club's 3-inch Celestron refractor from the clubhouse please return the instrument.

### CLUBHOUSE DUTY ROSTER

Oct. 7: Phil Rounsville 617-527-1080  
Art Swedlow 508-486-4734

Oct 14: Gary Walker 508-785-0352  
Dick Burrier 508-448-5059

Oct. 21: Al Mazurka 508-649-3695  
Bob Heller 508-433-6536

Oct 28: Fritz Ledford 603-386-7028  
Eric Johansson 508-667-0137

Nov. 4: John Reed 617-861-8031  
Paul Cicchetti 508-433-9215

## Renew Your Membership ...

THOSE WHO have not renewed by December will be removed from the club's roster. The June '94 *Star Fields* has a renewal form or contact Membership Secretary, Mark Bruckner for one (his address and phone number is on last page of *Star Fields*).

Please complete and return the form, with your payment, as soon as possible to Mark. Paul Cicchetti 508-433-9215

## For Sale ...

FUJINON BINOCULARS: 14x70, \$350.00. Contact Joseph Rothchild, 617-221-2609 (days).

OVER 100 primary and secondary mirror blanks for sale. Every conceivable size from two-inches to ten-inches. Ultra-low expansion glass. Thousands of other lenses too including large six-inch PCX. Lots more cheap! Contact Rick Burwen, 508-670-2913.

**EXECUTIVE BOARD 1994-95**

**PRESIDENT:** Mario Motta 617-334-3648  
**VICE PRESIDENT:** Peter Bealo 603-382-7039  
**SECRETARY:** Steve Beckwith 508-779-5227  
**MEMBERSHIP:** Mark Bruckner 617-942-9426  
**TREASURER:** Bernie Volz 508-881-3614  
**MEMBERS AT LARGE:** Gary Walker 508-785-0352  
Dick Koolish 617-646-6086  
Phil Rounseville 617-527-1080  
Anthony Costanzo 508-521-5382

**PAST PRESIDENTS:** 1993-94 Bernard Volz  
1990-92 Marion Hochuli

**COMMITTEES**

**CLUBHOUSE DIR.:** John Reed 617-861-8031  
Paul Cicchetti 508-433-9215  
**OBSERVING:** Richard Nugent 508-879-3498  
**HISTORIAN:** Anna Hillier 617-861-8338

*November STAR FIELDS DEADLINE*  
October 30th is the deadline for items to be included in the November issue of *Star Fields*. Mail or phone your contributions to: Steve Beckwith, 195 Wilder Road, Bolton MA. 01740 508-779-5227 e-mail: [Compuserver@71762.2513](mailto:Compuserver@71762.2513)

**How to Find Us...**

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

**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 Observing 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.

**Amateur Telescope Makers of Boston**

**FIRST CLASS**