



STAR FIELDS

Newsletter of the Amateur Telescope Makers of Boston
Including the Bond Astronomical Club
Established in 1934
in the Interest of Telescope Making & Using

Vol. 10, No. 12

January 2000

This Month's Meeting...

Thursday, January 13th, 1999, at 8:00 PM
Phillips Auditorium, Harvard-Smithsonian
Center for Astrophysics

THIS MONTH our meeting's presentation will be a member show-and-tell. We have a very full program. MARIO MOTTA will demonstrate his homemade filter wheel, in addition to showing his deep sky astro-photography. BOB COLLARA will show slides of the fabrication of a 12-inch flat. LEW GRAMER will present his experiences watching the Leonid meteor shower in Florida. PETER BRUCKNER will show plans for the new ATMoB roll-off observatory. Finally, DAVID AUCOIN will showcase his new low profile 13" Dobsonian. (There is time for one additional presentation - contact Joseph Rothchild if interested.)

Join us for dinner at 5:45 PM at the Chang Sho Restaurant located at 1712 Mass Ave. in our fair city, Cambridge.

President's Message...

OUR LIST of speakers this month again demonstrates the breadth of activities in our club. Our members have so many interests and talents, from building telescopes, observatories, and optics, to visual observations and CCD work. There is surely a place for any astronomical interest in ATMoB, which probably helps explain our rapidly growing membership as our membership secretary John Small's statistics have indicated. Hopefully, this month's meeting can help spur members on to more new projects.

As I write this message, the astronauts on the shuttle have just begun their first repairs of the Hubble Space Telescope. During the uncertainties of the recent 6 week hiatus of

observations, I have appreciated even more what a treasure Hubble has been for astronomers, both amateur and professional. The number of spectacular images that we have enjoyed over these last 10 years is astounding, from the Hubble Deep Field to the Eagle Nebula to the heart of the Orion Nebula to wonderful images of Jupiter, Saturn, and Mars. Hopefully, by the time of our meeting this month, the telescope will again be repaired and capable for the next 10 years of its anticipated lifetime.

-Joseph Rothchild-

December's Minutes...

THE MEETING of the Amateur Telescope Makers of Boston, including the Bond Astronomical Club, was opened by President JOSEPH ROTHCHILD. Joseph immediately introduced TAL MENTALL, who, while wearing a red stocking cap, initiated the holiday season for all of us with his annual recitation of the words from "A Visit From St. Nicholas" by Clement Clarke Moore: "Twas the night before Christmas,..." Tal added an extra story of a darker Christmas, "The Night I Cremated Sam Magee" by Robert Service. Next BOB COLLARA retold a Hindu fable, "The Blind Man and the Elephant", followed by "The Ballad of Blasphemous Bill", a poem about a gold digger in the Yukon, also written by Robert Service.

Our guest speakers participated in an open forum on light pollution. Mike Brown worked on a committee to evaluate the street lighting needs for his town of Townsend, MA. By January all of existing mercury vapor street lights in the town will have been replaced with more efficient full cutoff high-pressure sodium vapor lights. The "Street lighting study" paper prepared by the committee gives costs and lighting details. Paul Lutkevich, a professional lighting engineer, talked about sports lighting and lights with internal and external louvers being promoted for sports fields. He explained that they are not always functional and do not always meet the claims made for them as being able to eliminate light pollution. There are also no criteria yet for how much spill light is allowable (light above the horizontal). Light can bounce or reflect off of ground surfaces and cause glare and scatter as well. The typical flat shoebox shaped cutoff fixture is often misinstalled and is tipped, allowing light trespass. In most cases a full cutoff fixture should be installed higher since the eye adjusts to whatever the brightest thing is in the field of view. We learned that all of the lighting to be installed for the Big Dig will be full cutoff. J. Kelly Beatty of *Sky & Telescope* will consider allowing some free ads for full cutoff lighting fixtures for residential use to companies offering them. Massachusetts Representative James Marzilli, an amateur astronomer himself, began filing Dark Sky legislation in 1992-3 with hopes to create a rational outdoor lighting policy and begin "changing the face of the planet" by creating darker night skies. He informed us that telephoning legislators is more effective than writing letters or sending email messages. Bob Crelin of Branford, CT amused us by saying that the more he researched, the more he was able to understand about lighting and how it works, the more he realized that it made no sense. His town now has light pollution

regulations. Also discussing the issues were Robert Wylie (retired lighting engineer with Sylvania), Peter Talmage of Kennebunkport, ME (worked to get legislation passed in Maine), and ATMob member MARIO MOTTA. Dan Green, professor of astronomy at the CFA and founder of NELPAG (New England Light Pollution Advisory Group) led the discussion. There were many different handouts on light pollution legislation. Copies will be brought to the next meeting or can be obtained from Eileen Myers, the club secretary.

The business meeting began with club officers giving their reports. An announcement was made again for the club's New Years Eve Star Party. The Royal Astronomical Society of Canada's *Observer's Handbook* was available for \$16 from Mario. JOHN REED gave a quick book review of a new book, "The Star Of Bethlehem: The Legacy of the Magi" by Dr. Michael R. Molnar, astronomer, physicist, and former teacher at Rutgers University. Dr. Molnar argues that the image of Aries on an ancient Roman coin makes him believe that the Star of Bethlehem was actually the planet Jupiter, seen in the constellation Aries the ram. It was mentioned that half of Jupiter's southern equatorial belt is "missing" - the half is diminishing. We were reminded to observe the full moon which is at its 133 year perigee on the solstice. 14% brighter, we were told that on this same full moon in 1866 the Sioux led an ambush on soldiers in the Wyoming territory. John announced the passing of long time club friend Anna Knight. For many years Anna made all of the goodies for all of the club's meetings. -Eileen Myers-

Membership Report...

IT HAS been a busy year this year. We have added 66 new members since January. Usually we drop about 50 to 60 members at the end of the year. However this year we only lost 38 members after the December renewal cutoff date. We are starting the Year 2000 with over 307 members. I think this may be an all time high. We may very well have more than 400 members in the year 2000.

We have received close to \$2,700 in donations from our membership this year: Clubhouse \$65, Land Fund \$135, General \$2500. I will be sending out acknowledgments for these donations in early January of 2000.

Many of the new members have found us from our web page, so I think our Webmaster BREWSTER LAMACCHIA deserves a lot of credit there.

We welcome the following new members: GEORGE STYLIANOPOULOS, Needham; DAVID SCHUH, Nashua; NITIN SONAWANE, Nashua; SHILPA LAWANDE, Nashua; MICHAEL JASPER, Newton. -John Small-

Treasurer's Report...

REVENUE FOR November was \$250.18, expenses were \$266.85. Net loss of 16.67 for the month.

Assets as of 30-Nov-1999:

Checking Account	\$15,125.80
Investments	\$18,553.21
Total Assets	\$33,679.01

Of this total, \$1,784.81 is in the Land Fund and \$145.00 in the Clubhouse Key Deposit account. -Bernie Volz-

Clubhouse Report...

SATURDAY OPEN CLUBHOUSE SCHEDULE

January 8	Dave Richardson	Jim Suslowicz
January 15	John Small	Gary Walker
January 22	CLOSED	WORK PARTY #1
January 29	Eric Johansson	Alan Mazurka
February 5	Steve Clougherty	Phil Rounseville
February 12	Dave Prowten	Art Swedlow
February 19	CLOSED	WORK PARTY #2
February 26	Dan Feldkhun	Eileen Myers

DUE TO the December holidays, work activity at the clubhouse was slow. The main thing that did happen was the New Year's Eve Star Party 2000. This event was attended by over 25 ATMob members, family, and guests, and proved to be quite an enjoyable time. A lot of food was shared along with friendship and astronomical tall tales. Several people present expressed considerable interest in helping with the cosmetic restoration of the clubhouse interior. Several scopes were set outside in the Dennis Milon observing field, along with the club's 17". The skies were clear and the seeing was excellent. Everyone who went outside was treated to his or her favorite wonders, along with Jupiter and Saturn. But much to our dismay the lights did not go out one second after midnight as the Y2K naysayers predicted. As the party broke after 2am, clouds appeared in the East.

Now it is time to mark your calendars for two upcoming January events at the clubhouse. The first is the total eclipse of the Moon on January 20/21. Since this is a normal mirror grinding night, we plan to extend the hours so that members can come up and view the eclipse. JOHN REED has volunteered to keep the clubhouse open. If any other club member can stay with him, it would be appreciated. Two days later we will hold the January work party. We will continue the work started on several projects, and if enough people volunteer, we can start others.

-Paul Cicchetti-

Astronomy Day Speakers Needed....

NOREEN GRICE is once again looking for speakers (including any bilingual ones) for Astronomy Day, Saturday April 8 at the Boston Museum of Science. Noreen needs short 15-20 minute talks, but she needs the speakers' names and topics by January 14. Talks can be on almost any astronomy-related subject: observing techniques, eclipses, aurora, making a telescope, or whatever interests you. Please contact her by email

at ngrice@mos.org. This is an opportunity to share for 15-minutes your knowledge and love of astronomy with others.

-Rich Nugent-

January Star Parties...

Date	Rain Date	School	Town
Mon Jan 10 7-9 pm Contact: Charlie McDonald at 781-944-6140 or Rich Nugent	Tues Jan 11	Eliot School	Marblehead MA
Wed Jan 12 7-9pm Contact: Charlie McDonald at 781-944-6140 or Rich Nugent	Tues Jan 18	Killam School	Reading MA
Wed Jan 12 7-9pm Contact: Lou Cohen (louiscohen@mediaone.net) or Rich Nugent	Fri Jan 14	Cummings School	Somerville MA
Wed Jan 12 7-9pm Contact: Steve Sargent (sargescs222@aol.com) or Rich Nugent	Thurs Jan 13	Holliston High School	Holliston MA

(978) 671-8578 (w) nugentrp@nenlifesci.com

(508) 879-3498 (h) nugentrp@aol.com -Rich Nugent-

Remembrances of Anna Knight...

Ed, these are for you.

ANNA KNIGHT, along with her husband Ed, represent the "soul" of the ATM's of Boston. As we have many new members, and Anna has not been around much lately due to illness and advancing age, it is important to remember her as the wonderful and kind person she was. When I first joined the club back in 1967, wanting to grind a mirror for a high school project, Ed and Anna were among the first to greet me and welcome me into a new family of like minded amateurs. I was made to feel welcome and "adopted" by all in the club in those years, but especially by Anna Knight. She would come to every meeting in those days, and would always bring refreshments for all for after the meeting. This is where our tradition of having meeting refreshments actually began. It is no small measure of how much work she did, that now it takes many volunteers and coordination to continue this tradition. She came to the clubhouse frequently. Back then it was in Arlington. She always gave advice and comfort, and made all feel welcome. People like Anna and Ed have made me a loyal lifelong member. She was always there for others in both encouragement and support. An organization is only as good as the people that make it up. Anna was one of our stars, and will be missed by all. -Mario Motta-

I FIRST met Anna Knight the day at Stellafane when I brought my completed 6-inch Newtonian for the judging. That day started out as a misty day with drizzly weather. Well, I decided that I should park my car and carried the scope up the abandoned driveway to Stellafane. That is the one that is now on the side of the Christmas tree farm, where people camped and parked their cars. Ed Knight offered to help carry the mount and I carried the tube. As we reached the middle and were ascending the last hill the mount tube became unbalanced, because with two raincoats hanging off the tube and waving in the wind and rain it was becoming increasingly heavier. Anna Knight, walking in the middle, grabbed the end and held it as we went merrily on our way. Anna was always there to lend a hand and would always be there when the refreshments were being served. After I decided I had far too much to do in the club. Anna Knight took over the refreshments all by herself. We shared the same first name, and when she came to the meetings. I would say, "Hi, Anna" and she'd say "Hi, Anna" and we both would just look and laugh because it was our own private joke. -Anna Hillier-

Ed, my condolences to you on your loss. I have experienced the loss of my wife three years ago and her memory is a blessing and our forty year relationship was a gift from G-d. They are in the heavens! -Al Delman-

Many members of the ATMob paid their respects at the Sunday wake. Marion Hochuli, and John and Monique Reed represented the club at the funeral. An arrangement of flowers was sent by the club.

Other News...

ATMOB FRIEND Sarah Bulger at Sky Publishing, who administers the "Club Plan" for all astronomy clubs who offer *Sky & Telescope* through their clubs, has celebrated her 40th anniversary with Sky Publishing. -John Small-

For Sale...

FOR SALE: Takahashi Epsilon 300 (12-inch, f3.7 Astrograph), with or without mount. Also an 8-inch, f4 version, a Quantum 4, Meade 80 mm, Dob Drive II, and many accessories, guide scope holders, etc. (Sorry the LX200's are gone, but some accessories remain). Selling everything to pay for new scope. Call Gary Walker at 508-653-7930.

ATTENTION

FEBRUARY *Star Fields* deadline SUNDAY, JANUARY 30
email articles to club secretary Eileen Myers at
starleen@ma.ultranet.com
Articles from members are always welcome.

Amateur Telescope Makers of Boston, Inc.
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FIRST CLASS

EXECUTIVE BOARD 1999-2000

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	Steven Clougherty	(781) 784-3024
HISTORIAN:	Anna Hillier	(781) 861-8338
OBSERVING:	Richard Nugent	(508) 879-3498

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. For INCLEMENT WEATHER cancellation listen to: WBZ (1030 AM)

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 left side of the road. Clubhouse attendance varies with the weather. It is wise to call in advance. (978) 692-8708.

OUR WEB PAGE IS www.atmob.org

Heads Up for January...

The Milky Way crosses diagonally from SE to NW. Rich in bright individual stars, it is the thinnest band - we are looking into the middle of our spiral arm of the Galaxy, and then beyond that to the Galaxy's edge.

Tues Jan 4 - Quadrantid meteors before dawn.
Thurs - Fri, Jan 20-21 Total lunar eclipse - max 11:44pm Jan 20, total phase ends at 12:22 am Jan 21. Beehive cluster M44 will be about 8° from the Moon.
Sat Jan 22 - 5pm - Double shadow transits on Jupiter.