



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. 12, No. 6 June 2001

This Month's Meeting...

Thursday, June 14th, 2001, at 8:00 PM
Phillips Auditorium, Harvard-Smithsonian
Center for Astrophysics

This Month's Speaker...

OUR SPEAKER will be club member GERALD JAY SUSSMAN. Last summer Gerry and his wife Julie participated in the design and construction of a small part of a great new astronomical instrument, the Magellan I 6.5-meter telescope, now in operation at the Las Campanas Observatory in Chile. The site is situated at an altitude of 8000 feet, halfway between the sea and the backbone of the Andes mountain range. The telescope itself is of monstrous proportions, yet it is of almost molecular precision.

Gerry's talk will be entitled "The Magellan I Guider-Probe Controller". He will show what part they made and how it fits into the overall system. Gerry will tell of the difficulties and give a feeling for the high points of their adventure.

Join our most excellent speaker and us for dinner at 5:45 PM at the Changsho Restaurant located at 1712 Mass Ave. in our fair city, Cambridge.

President's Message...

THIS HAS been a difficult month for observing. I can't wait for the clouds and rain to clear so I can observe Mars. Hopefully I'll have a chance to see Mars at Stellafane using their Schupmann Telescope. Does anyone know if it remains the world's largest Schupmann telescope ever made? Stellafane is held in Springfield, VT, and is scheduled for August 17-18, 2001. Don't forget to mail in your reservations early. For more details see the convention web page at www.stellafane.com.

I would like all members of the ATMob to bring their home made telescopes to Stellafane and pose for a group picture on the hill near the pink clubhouse on Saturday at 1:00 P.M. This would make a great photo to display at our clubhouse and to include in September's issue of *Star Fields*. If you don't have a telescope or didn't bring one, please join us anyway and be included in a fun

picture.

No one has volunteered to set up and run the swap table Saturday morning at Stellafane (including me). So if you think you would enjoy helping out our club in this way please let me know.

Keeping with last year's tradition, July's meeting will be a warm up for Stellafane. It will feature you, our members. It will be a combination of show-and-tell and swap meet. So if you would like to show an interesting project or give a talk, please let me know. Please bring items you would like to sell. Last but not least, let's get creative with the food menu for our July 12th meeting! I'll be taking suggestions.

-Bob Collara, President-

Annual Meeting Announcement...

THE ANNUAL meeting of the Amateur Telescope Makers of Boston, Inc. will be June 14, 2001. The election of the 2001-2002 Executive Board will take place at the meeting.

May's Minutes...

PRESIDENT BOB COLLARA opened the 737th meeting of the Amateur Telescope Makers of Boston, including the Bond Astronomical Club. Our guest speaker was JOHN W. BRIGGS, who spoke about the life and work of George E. Hale. When Hale was still a teenager, he found the book "Castle's Book of Sports and Pastimes". It had a description of how to build a spectroscope. First using a prism from a chandelier, and later making a prism from some chemicals, Hale realized that with spectroscopy he could dissect sunlight and starlight. Not much was being done in that area in the 1880's. Hale became interested, and later while volunteering at Harvard Observatory on Saturdays, invented the spectroheliograph.

At the business meeting club officers gave their reports. MARIO MOTTA offered for the club's new Honor Roll the names of 25 individuals who have been prominent in the club since it began in 1934. GARY WALKER, chairman of the Nominating Committee, presented the slate of officers for 2001-2002. DICK KOOLISH showed the photos he took on Astronomy Day at the Boston Museum of Science.

-Eileen Myers, Secretary-

Candidates for 2001-2002...

THE NOMINATING Committee is offering the following slate as offices for the club for the fiscal year 2001-2002:

President	Robert Collara
Vice-President	Steven Herzberg
Secretary	Eileen Myers
Treasurer	Bernard Volz
Membership Secretary	John Small
Member-at-Large	Bruce Berger
Member-at-Large	Steven Clougherty

There will also be three past presidents serving on the executive board: Joseph Rothchild, Peter Bealo, and Mario Motta.

Members have the right to offer additional nominations from the floor during the annual meeting. A written notice containing the name(s) of the person(s) to be nominated, along with the signatures of at least seven members, needs to be filed with the club secretary not less than ten (10) days prior to the date of the annual meeting. The annual meeting will be on June 14th.

Humbly submitted by the Nominating Committee,
Chairman Gary Walker, Bruce Berger, and Charlie McDonald

Treasurer's Report...

FOR THE month of April, we had \$279.39 in revenue and \$619.14 in expenses for a net loss of \$339.75 for the month.

As of April 30th, 2001 our assets were:

Checking Account	\$ 18,102.69
CD Investment	\$ 19,006.66
Total Assets	\$ 37,109.35

Of the total, \$2,311.51 is in the Land Fund and \$160.00 is for clubhouse key deposits.

-Bernie Volz, Treasurer-

Membership Report...

I WOULD like to warmly welcome two new members to the club this month: TIMOTHY GREENWOOD from Westford and ROBERT SMITH from Marlboro.

We sent a membership invoice with this month's newsletter. Please fill it out and send it back as soon as possible. This will keep your magazine subscriptions from running out and make my life easier. Please do not wait for your *Astronomy* and *S&T* renewal cards to mail in your dues. The magazine will simply add 12 issues to your current subscription. If members would check their subscription number on the renewal form or add it if it is missing, it will help me out a lot. Thanks.

-John Small, Membership Secretary-

Clubhouse Report...

SATURDAY OPEN CLUBHOUSE SCHEDULE

June 2	Eric Johansson	Al Mazurka
June 9	OPEN	Work Party #5
June 9	Jack Drobot	Phil Rounseville
June 16	Henry Hopkinson	Art Swedlow
June 23	Lew Gramer	John Reed
June 30	Dan Feldkhun	Steve Herzberg
July 7	OPEN	Work Party #6
July 7	David Prowten	John Small
July 14	John Panaswich	David Richardson
July 21		Conjunction
July 21	Steve Herzberg	Peter Psyhos
July 28	Paul Cicchetti	Jim Suslowicz

THERE were a number of astronomy conventions in May so there was only a small amount of work activity at the clubhouse. Memorial Day weekend JOHN REED, DAVE PROWTEN and I got together. While Dave installed two new screen doors, one on the front and one on the side door, John and I cleaned one of the compartments to the carousel of the one holer. Amazingly enough, this task was not as unpleasant as it might seem. The system indeed does compost the material into a dry soil-like state after several years. Once this was done, the "cleaned" section was rotated for use.

MIT had not yet started mowing the observing field. Armed with both an electric and gas mower (donated BY STEVE CLOUGHERTY), we cut the field and surrounding grass areas.

Please come to the June 9th work party. If the weather holds

for that day, Dave will be continuing the observatory construction and we will resume the stripping and re-shingling of the remaining barn roof. ED KNIGHT has started the new furnace project with the go ahead from President BOB COLLARA on May 30th. Stay tuned.

-Paul Cicchetti, Clubhouse Director-

Star Party Thank You Notes...

CHARLIE MCDONALD recently organized star parties for two schools in Reading, MA. Quite a few of our members helped with telescopic observations and lectures.

At the Killam School, I gave slide presentations as Charlie enjoyed the company of his neighbor, Ray Tamasch and ATMobers DAVE AUCCOIN, TED CARLMAN, BOB COHEN, JACK DROBOT, ED LOS, PETER PSYHOS, and BILL TOOMEY. Reading resident Kay Clark lectured on the night sky.

BILL TOOMEY gave some excellent lectures at the event held at the Birch Meadow School. Charlie, BOB COHEN, ED LOS, MARIO MOTTA, PETER PSYHOS, and JOHN REED wowed the students and their parents with fantastic views of the Moon, Jupiter and Saturn!

At the Fruitlands Museum "Under Starry Skies" program in the town of Harvard, EILEEN MYERS was helped by JOHN HOPKINS, PETER PSYHOS, MIKE SCHEXNAYDRE, AL TAKEDA, ANDREW WARNER, and Joe Caruso of Oak Ridge Observatory. Museum members viewed sunspots until the Sun disappeared below the horizon. Jupiter and Mercury continued the show until the stars came out. Joe had everyone splitting double stars while Al led a galaxy search. John patiently gave detailed explanations to each visitor about what they were observing and about astronomy in general. The last club members stayed to observe until midnight! John commented that the gourmet appetizers and wines made this the finest feast ever served at a star party. Lastly, a Very Big Thank You to all of the ATMobers who tried desperately to get to the museum but were thwarted in their efforts by an accident which caused a major traffic jam and kept them stuck on the highway for almost two hours.

About 35 sixth grade students returned to the Fuller Middle School in Framingham to enjoy a bit of astronomy. I gave a short slide presentation while we waited for the skies to darken. Then we ventured outside for some telescopic observing. GEORGE ROBERTS set up his scale model of the solar system and gave tours for the students. On the observing field, ATMob members GARY HAMPEL, JOE HENRY, MIKE HILL, MIKE SCHEXNAYDRE and I set up scopes to view the Moon, Jupiter, M3 and the binary system of Mizar. Disappointingly, Saturn was hiding behind a cloud deck for the entire evening. The students and teachers were quite enthusiastic and had a great time! Thanks to everyone who helped!

As the school year draws to a close, I'd like to thank everyone for all of their help with the many star parties we run! The club could not bring astronomy to so many students and their families without the help of so many of YOU! Please keep up the great work. It honestly does make a difference!

Some of this year's events had to be postponed so star parties are already being scheduled for the fall. If you are new to the club or a veteran member looking for an exciting way to get involved, please consider joining us for evenings under the stars.

You'll be with the most enthusiastic audience you can imagine!
Thank you all again and Clear Skies!

-Rich Nugent, Observing Committee-

Upcoming Star Party...

I AM holding a June "Newbie Star Party" on Saturday, June 16th at Myles Standish State Park. It is intended to be a small informal event aimed at friends and family of ours who are interested in why we are out so late every clear night!

I work at the AAVSO and will show people how to make variable star estimates. LEW GRAMER will showcase meteors and take us on a deep sky tour. Still needed are double star and lunar observers. It would be great if anyone who has a large Dob could bring it to really wow these newbies. If you wish to attend please e-mail me at aaronp@shore.net ahead of time so I can let the park rangers know how many will be attending. We are planning on this being an all night affair, but some will obviously leave early. Extra binoculars, a small tent, flashlights, soda and junk food will be supplied. The goal for this night is to have fun and relax as opposed to serious observing. Feel free to invite anyone you want.

-Aaron Price-

American Association of Variable Star Observers www.aavso.org

Dear Club Members...

IN DECEMBER the Executive Board assigned me the task of developing the club's Honor Roll list. I solicited names from longtime club members, and 11 members submitted names for me to consider. I also searched through the club history. I have exercised some personal privilege in choosing names that have been prominent in the organization for the 34 years, which I have been, a club member. To get on the list the person named must have given unselfish and exemplary service to the organization for a sustained period of time, donated extensively of his or her knowledge and skills, sustained the organization in times of extreme need and deprivation, or been a national leader in amateur astronomy. I have made a decision that one need not have died to make the list, as many current members deserve recognition. There are many greats of the past that many of us may not know well, but will now be remembered for the great service they once gave. There are many that are active or former members who have given of themselves for many years, and many of these are personal heroes of mine who have made me proud to be a part of this organization. The following is the initial list of 25, to be voted on by the Executive Board. I propose that any member may submit a name, but it then must be voted on by the Executive Board as a repository of historical knowledge. If some of these names were not familiar, or unclear as to their contribution, I would hope that their contribution could be highlighted and relearned. Possibly a meeting in the future can be devoted to past greats and their contributions. I personally thank ANNA HILLIER and ED KNIGHT for their assistance in this task. I proudly present the following 25 names:

1. Dr. Harlow Shapley – founder of Bond Astronomical Club
2. Wagn Hargbol – 1st President of ATMob
3. Charles Avila - Boston Edison, worked on the 20"
4. Fred Pflug – kept shop open during WWII
5. Dr. James Baker – master of precise optical construction

6. George Russell Agassiz – benefactor to Harvard and ATMob
 7. Dr. Leon Campbell – Harvard Observatory, variable stars
 8. Chester Cook – shop teacher, made mechanical mounts
 9. James Gagnon – kept Stellafane alive
 10. Samuel Gardiner – optical foreman at ITEK
 11. Winifred Shattuck – wrote about history of ATMob
 12. Bernard Forrest – had ATMob shop in his home
 13. John Patterson – director of Hayden Planetarium
 14. Thelma Johnson- first ATMob secretary
 15. Fred Chellis - Stellafane
 16. Dennis Millon
 17. Tom Britton
 18. Michael Mattei
 19. Ed Knight – 50 years of membership and work
 20. Dennis DiCicco
 21. Paul Valleli – ATMob President, optical engineer
 22. John Reed
 23. George East
 24. Tal Mentall
 25. Gary Walker
- Respectfully submitted,

Mario Motta, MD

(Editor's Note: More information on each person to be honored will be provided at another time.)

Conjunction Convention...

THE WEEKEND of Saturday, July 20-21 will be the 19th Annual **Connecticut River Valley Astronomer's Conjunction**, held at Northfield Mountain Recreation & Environmental Center located on Route 63 in Northfield, MA. This weekend gathering of amateur astronomers includes slide presentations, talks, and dark sky viewing through telescopes of all shapes and sizes. Camping is available nearby. 800-859-2960 Jack Megas, Astronomy Conjunction, 311 Surrey Road, Springfield MA 01118 or email rsanderson@juno.com

Other News...

THANK YOU to everyone who has sent in editing changes and additions to the Club History. I will now begin editing changes to the History with guidance from its author, Club Historian ANNA HILLIER.

-Eileen Myers-

JOIN US for this year's bus trip to **visit the Hayden Planetarium and Museum of Natural History in NYC**. We will be going on Saturday, October 20th. Like last year, there will be a pickup in the town of Harvard, Billerica, and at the Riverside MBTA station. The cost will be under \$100 for the day, and will include busfare, breakfast and dinner, admission to the museums, tour of the Rose Center, and the Planetarium show. Individual arrangements can be made too. We are now working on choosing a restaurant for dinner. Email Eileen at starleen@ma.ultranet.com or call 978-456-3937.

-Eileen Myers-

July Star Fields deadline is SUNDAY, July 1st
Email articles to Star Fields Editor / ATMob Secretary
Eileen Myers at starleen@ma.ultranet.com
Articles from members are always welcome.

POSTMASTER NOTE: First Class Postage Mailed June 8, 2001

Amateur Telescope Makers of Boston, Inc.
c/o John Small, Membership Secretary
9 Bear Hill Terrace
Westford MA 01886-4225

FIRST CLASS

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OBSERVING:	Richard Nugent	(508) 879-3498

How to Find Us...Web Page www.atmob.org

MEETINGS: Held the second Thursday of each month (September to July) at 8:00PM in the Phillips Auditorium, Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics, 60 Garden St., Cambridge MA. For INCLEMENT WEATHER CANCELLATION listen to WBZ (1030 AM)

CLUBHOUSE: Latitude 42° 36.5' N Longitude 71° 29.8' W

The Tom Britton Clubhouse is open every Saturday from 7 p.m. 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 farmhouse on left side of the road. Clubhouse attendance varies with the weather. It is wise to call in advance: (978) 692-8708.

Heads Up For June...

Eastern Daylight (Savings) Time - Subtract 4 from UT to get EDT
Mars moved from Sagittarius to Ophiuchus. Mars rises near sunset in SE and sets near sunrise. Mars is at opposition on June 13th, nearly 180° from the Sun. Closest approach of Mars occurs on June 21, at a distance of 42 million miles. Mars is brighter, mag -2.4 by mid-month, than anytime since 1988. Mars low, climbing only 23°-24° above S horizon. Mars' south polar cap, just emerging from long winter, is near maximum extent. Syrtis Major, most prominent dark marking on Mars, is centered on Mars' disk June 9 at 1:05 am EDT, June 10 at 1:41 EDT.

For a complete website on Mars and on observing Mars see:
<http://www.uapress.arizona.edu/online.bks/mars/chap15.htm>

Saturn, in Taurus, emerges in the ENE dawn sky late in the month, rising 2h before the Sun by the end of the month.

Photo opportunities for planetary observers: pre-dawn hours of June 17th, 18th, and 19th – waning lunar crescent passes Venus and Saturn, near Pleiades.

Thur June 21 – 7:38 UT **Summer Solstice.**

Thur June 21 11:58UT – **Total Solar Eclipse** for those lucky enough to live in or travel to Angola, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, or Madagascar. For the rest of us, well, enjoy the New Moon!