



## 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. 13, No. 9    October 2002

## This Month's Meeting...

Thursday, October 10<sup>th</sup>, 2002 at 8:00 PM

Phillips Auditorium  
Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics

THIS MONTH'S meeting will feature Leonard L. Amburgey, whose talk will be entitled "Discovery of NEO 2000NM By An Amateur Observer". An amateur observer since late 1960's, Dr. Amburgey has maintained a small observatory (designated Minor Planet Center #823) at his home in Fitchburg, MA for the past 20 years. In cooperation with the Minor Planet Center, he has been involved in serious asteroid work since 1996, focusing on follow up work for previously discovered objects. He is the second individual to receive the Benson Award, which was established in 1997 by Space Development Corporation founder James W. Benson. This award gives a cash prize of \$500 for the first 10 discoveries of near-Earth asteroids by amateurs. Dr. Amburgey teaches in the Leominster Public Schools and at Fitchburg State College.

Please join our most excellent speaker for dinner at 5:45 PM at the Changsho Restaurant, located at 1712 Massachusetts Ave. in our fair city, Cambridge.

## President's Message...

OVER THE years, the Amateur Telescope Makers of Boston has benefited from the unselfish contributions of many of its members. ED KNIGHT has devoted over 50 years of service to the club, as a club officer, making innumerable shop and clubhouse repairs and improvements, mirror and telescope making, helping at star parties, meetings, conventions, and much, much more. At the club picnic on Saturday, September 14<sup>th</sup> we dedicated our new observatory to him. Here are Ed's words of appreciation spoken at the dedication.

## Ed Knight's Thank You Speech...

I received a telephone call from Eileen Myers the other evening and she wanted to confirm that I will be here. I inquired if a speech will be required and she advised that I keep quiet and just put on a broad smile.

However, I do have a few words to say. First I must express my appreciation to everyone directly responsible for associating my name with this observatory, especially since other dedications have been made posthumously.

Incidentally, I have not been involved with the conception of this observatory nor its architecture, design, or construction except for the procurement of the materials and machining the pieces for the spring buffers at the ends of the tracks.

As a member of the club, I appreciate the hundreds of hours expended by Dave Prowten, John Reed, Bruce Gerhard, Mario Motta, and many other dedicated volunteers who designed the structure, procured the materials, mixed the concrete and built the project. All of these people should be duly recognized.

I only wish that my wife Anna were here to share in this honor. She as you know attended literally hundreds of monthly meetings with me at the Phillips Library where for many years she attended to the refreshments. She also served at the registration desk each year at Stellafane and other conventions.

This club has been a very important part of my life for a long time. After making this telescope 50 years ago (editor's note: Ed brought his homemade telescope to the dedication) I enjoyed the camaraderie so much that I worked on the shop committee for several years where many life-long friendships were made. This club has been one of my greatest sources of mental and physical recreation and I thank you members who are the club for having done so much for me. **-Ed Knight-**



## September Meeting Minutes. . .

EILEEN MYERS opened the 751<sup>st</sup> meeting of the Amateur Telescope Makers of Boston with a new historical theme, reciting a few words from the club history. This will be a new feature of each meeting while she is President of the ATMs. We were then treated to a very interesting and informative talk by Dr. George Rickter from MIT about Gamma Ray Burst research and the research satellites he has worked on. He gave a great primer on GRBs, including the history of the research beginning with the Vela – 5 Satellite in 1967 on through the Hete-1 and Hete-2 missions, the second of which has resulted in the most precise localization of a GRB source to date. Hete-2 has also provided other valuable results that have led to a promising model in which GRBs signal the birth of a black hole much as super nova event signals the birth of a neutron star. He referred to the event as a “hyper nova”. Hete-2 is part of a burst alert network with 12 equatorial ground stations that allow for rapid notification of GRB events to the scientific community to facilitate optical correlation and localization. There have been 23 precise localizations to date with 6 optical correlations. This is certainly leading edge science.

The talk was followed by the business portion of the meeting. The club reports were presented by the committee members. JOHN REED and PAUL CICHETTI displayed the “mayonnaise jar” full of this years mosquito catch. This elucidated discussion of some sort of fund raising contest to guess the total count as well as the idea of a second mosquito magnet. We will continue to discuss this for now. Paul let it be known that, if as an observing committee member, you fail to show up for your assigned night of duty, he may put you on a 6 month probation period or drop you from the A-List entirely. You must check the schedule and make sure you are there. It makes it very difficult for the other member to do it alone. John presented a summary of the clubhouse usage including the names of those that have kindly volunteered their time to show up for the many work parties. He suggested a sign-in log be kept outside the clubhouse so that people that show up just to use the field can also sign in so we may track the usage of the facilities. CHARLIE MCDONALD asked that members who would like to act as local star party coordinaters please step forward and get involved. MARIO MOTTA presented an update to the troubled Dark Sky Bill, and the upcoming IDA meeting in October here in Cambridge. TAL MENTALL informed us that we should all check our November Sky and Telescope magazine for a special article highlighting Mario and all the great work he has been doing for so many years. The meeting concluded with many wonderful Aurora reports including some great pictures taken BY PAUL VALLELI up at the Stellafane clubhouse in Vermont. – *Michael Hill, Secretary-*

## Board Meeting Minutes

The Executive Board held a board meeting on September 30<sup>th</sup>. We only had 4 board members present – Eileen Myers, Bruce Berger, Bernie Volz and Mike Hill. Paul Cicchetti was also in attendance. Topics discussed included a second mosquito magnet. This decision has been deferred till next year. The new Field Work Observing Session coordinator Steve Clougherty will be needing a few helpers. He may ask you but if not feel free to be considered. The Membership survey was discussed. It was noted that there is sufficient interest in telescope building and modifications to warrant in increased emphasis on improving our shop capabilities. This will be pursued by the clubhouse committee members. Eileen has initiated the creation of a short video using donated time from a local filming company based around observations of mars. This is in anticipation of the upcoming close encounter with Mars and the public interest it is sure to evoke. This film could be used at star parties and other presentations as part of our public outreach efforts. – *Mike Hill, Secretary-*

## Treasurer's Report...

For the month of August, we had \$1,495.08 in revenue and \$397.27 in expenses for a net income of \$1,097.81 for the month. As of August 31st, 2002 our assets were:

Checking Account - Regular	\$ 16,374.54
Investments	\$ 26,704.36
Total Current Assets	\$ 43,078.90

Of this \$43,078.90, \$2,752.26 is in the Land Fund and \$155.00 is for clubhouse key deposits.

–*Bernie Volz, Treasurer-*

## Membership Report...

We have 8 new members this month. A warm ATMob welcome to JOHN CAMPTON of Charlestown, MA, MARY MCSHANE of Brookline, MA, DAVID MAERZ of Chelmsford, MA and STEVE SMITH of Newton, MA, THOMAS E. TOBIN of Weston, MA, TED BEATIE of Somerville, MA, JOE MCHUGH of Tewksbury, MA, and THOMAS D. SWEENEY of Falmouth, MA.

Membership renewals were due at the September meeting. A number of members have yet to renew. I will be sending out reminders soon. If you have misplaced your renewal form I can send you another one, or you can simply send me a check. I will be at the October meeting if you prefer paying me in person.

–*Peter Psyhos, Membership Secretary -*

## ATMoB Picnic September 14, 2002

It was a sunny day chock full of food, friends, surprises, memories and just plain fun, as the Amateur Telescope Makers of Boston celebrated ED KNIGHT'S 52 years of club membership and contributions at this years second Annual Club Picnic. Over 50 club members, friends and family joined in as we dedicated our new observatory to Ed with the unveiling of the plaque naming the William Edward Knight Observatory and celebrating completion of the outer shell and roll off roof.



**Dave Prowten Putting up the Finishing Touch**

Just moments before crowds began to arrive, DAVE PROWTEN mounted the engraved sign proclaiming honor on Ed and assuring all that his contributions will be remembered for decades to come. Surprising Ed on this occasion were his two daughters and son, and they looked on and listened as MARIO MOTTA spoke fond recollections of his first meetings at the club. Just a teenager then, Mario told stories of Ed's wife greeting him on his visits and how Ed made all of the new members feel comfortable.



**Mario Motta Delivering the Dedication Speech**

Ed has always been a 'do-er' and a fixer. Mario told us the story of when, shortly after moving to the current location, Ed engineered jacking up the entire house to rebuild the deteriorated foundation with the large blocks of granite that still do their job today.



**John Reed at 70 – Still Going Strong**

Adding to the festive event was a surprise birthday cake for JOHN REED, who recently celebrated his 70<sup>th</sup> birthday. Never the one to let age get in the way, John was also the chief chef, serving up sausages, hotdogs and hamburgers from the grille, and relieved for a short time by BRIAN MEARZ cooking up his marinated steak to the delight of all who tasted it.

Special thanks to all of the unnamed members who brought food, made preparations, set up, and cleaned up, for without you the day would not have been the same. -*Bruce Berger*-



**Members Get to Inspect the Roll off Roof**

## Clubhouse Report

To be presented at the meeting . . .

### Clubhouse Saturday Schedule

Oct 12	Phil Rounseville	Art Swedlow
Oct 19	Peter Psyhos	David Richardson
Oct 26	Paul Cicchetti	John Panaswich
Nov 2	Bruce Berger	Mike Hill
Nov 9	Bruce Gerhard	John Reed

## Wanted for Observatory

We are starting work on the mounts for the observatory telescopes. There is currently a need for a 4 foot long steel pipe with a rather hefty diameter of 6 – 8 inches. If anyone has this or can give us a lead on something like it please get in touch with myself or Dave Prowten. –*Mike Hill*-

## October 19, 2002 Trip...

THIS IS the last newsletter announcement for the club's third trip to the Hayden Planetarium and the Rose Center for Earth and Space in New York City, scheduled for Saturday, October 19<sup>th</sup>. Pick-up/drop-off points are in the towns of Harvard and Billerica, and at the Riverside MBTA station. The cost is \$100, covering bus, admission, show, tour, and dinner at a Mexican restaurant. Sign up with Eileen Myers [starleen@charter.net](mailto:starleen@charter.net) or 978-456-3937 or Marsha Bowman at [rmbc2114@msn.com](mailto:rmbc2114@msn.com) -*Eileen Myers*-

## Stow Astronomy Day

The Skylight Astronomical Society is having a second attempt for the evening portion of its 3<sup>rd</sup> annual '**Stow Astronomy Day**' on Friday October 11 starting at 6PM at Shelburne Farm, in Stow, MA. If Friday night is rained out, there is a second rain date of October 12<sup>th</sup>. Solar viewing will precede the evening observing starting at 4:00 pm For more info visit <http://www.leepappas.com/stowstars.html> or call Lee Pappas at 978-897-6982.

## Galileo's battle.

A NOVA presentation with noted authorities ( Owen Gingerich) . NOT TO BE MISSED Channel 2 at: 10/29 at 8 p.m. 10/31 at 12 a.m. (midnight) Channel 44 10/31 at 2 p.m. A two hour special filmed in places such as Italy and historical locations. Battle for the Heavens. - *Anna Hillier- Historian*.

## FOR SALE . . .

### Celestron 80EQ-WA Short Tube, Rich Field Refractor - Excellent Condition

CG2 (EQ1) equatorial moun has TUBE RINGS for best mounting; allows rotation of optical tube.

#### PLUS THE FOLLOWING ACCESSORIES

- EQ1 RA Clock Drive with hand controller (Orion)
- Full Aperture Solar Filter (Orion)
- Adapter plate to optionally mount scope to standard photo tripod
- Shorty 2X Barlow
- 25 mm Celestron SMA eyepiece
- 6x30 Finder Scope on Dovetail bracket
- Padded carrying case for optical tube, mount and tripod (Orion)
- Accessory tray.

**Sale Price \$340** - package would cost \$530 new

Contact: [Michael Jasper \[Jasper@mpi.com\]](mailto:Michael.Jasper@mpi.com)

## Atomic Clocks

A few NEW digital atomic clocks with moon phase, indoor temperature, alarm function and with a large 2 inch LCD time display, which receive signals from atomic clock Fort Collins Colorado and correct itself, are still available. I will bring them to our next meeting. Price \$ 40.00. *Vladimir Vudler*

## NEED HELP With Solar Filter . . .

I purchased one of the early Coronado H-alpha filters and I am having some difficulty. I am looking for someone else with a Coronado filter of any type who would be willing to help me do a side by side comparison test. I can be reached at [tcaldierwood@alum.mit.edu](mailto:tcaldierwood@alum.mit.edu) or at 781-643-6014 in the evenings. *Tom Calderwood*

## Star Parties:

### Marlborough Middle School

November 12 @ 6:00pm - Rain Date is November 13<sup>th</sup>

This has always had a good turnout with 200+ children. If you live in the area, we could use your help. For more information contract Steve Sargent at [sargecs222@aol.com](mailto:sargecs222@aol.com) or call (508) 485-0741

## Other Events

SKYSCRAPERS Inc is holding its Astro Assembly on the weekend of October 4-5, 2002. For more information visit their website at [www.theskyscrapers.org](http://www.theskyscrapers.org)

MUSEUM OF SCIENCE Center for Science and Technology is hold a series of guest lectures this fall focused on the topic of AstroBiology.

Astrobiology is a new interdisciplinary science involving astronomers, biologists, chemists, geologists and physicists. NASA and the Current Science & Technology Center of the Museum of Science, Boston are hosting the following Friday evening guest presentations by scientists working on the leading edge of this emerging field. All presentations begin at 6 p.m. on the CS&T stage and are free with Exhibit Hall admission.

### OCTOBER 11

The Birth of Planets  
Ray Jayawardhana  
University of Michigan

### OCTOBER 18

Searching for Life on Extrasolar Planets  
Wesley A. Traub  
Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics

### OCTOBER 25

Comets and the Origin of Life  
F. Peter Schloerb  
University of Massachusetts, Amherst

### NOVEMBER 1

The Oceans of Europa: Potential Habitats for Life  
Nicole Spaun  
NASA Ames Research Center

### NOVEMBER 8

Extreme Microorganisms at Hydrothermal Vents:  
Models for Extraterrestrial Life?  
Andreas Teske  
University of North Carolina

### NOVEMBER 15

Space-based Search for Exoplanets  
Marc J. Kuchner  
Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics

### NOVEMBER 22

The Search for Life on Mars: What are the Odds of Success?  
Andrew Knoll  
Harvard University

## Astronomy Events Calendar

October 4-5	Astro Assembly	North Scituate RI
October 8	Cfa Monthly Author Night	<i>Robert Kirshner</i>
October 11	Stow Astronomy Day – Rain date	Stow MA. Starts at 6:00 PM
October 11	Astrobiology Lecture Series	“The Birth of Planets” Museum of Science
October 17	Cfa mothly Lecture series	Fading Stars Kelly Beatty
October 18	Astrobiology Lectrure Series	“Searching for Life on Extrasolar Planets” Mueum of Science
October 24-27	AAVSO Fall Meeting	Somerville MA
October 25, 26	IDA Fall meeting	Boston MoS
October 29	NOVA – Galileo’s Daughter	WGBH Ch 2 @ 8:00pm

## Wanted: Regional Star Party Coordinators

CHARLIE MCDONALD is looking for volunteers to act as **Regional Star Party Coordinators**. There is a minimal amount of effort required to do this so don't be scared away by the fancy title. We have had some interest already but need a few more persons interested in fostering our primary public outreach activity. Contact Charlie for details at: (781) 944-6140.

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**November *Star Fields* deadline is Saturday, November 2<sup>nd</sup>**

Please !! This is a deadline. Earlier entries are greatly appreciated.

**Email articles to Mike Hill  
at [noatak@aol.com](mailto:noatak@aol.com)**

Star Fields Editor / ATMob Secretary

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**POSTMASTER NOTE:** First Class Postage Mailed October 4, 2002

Amateur Telescope Makers of Boston, Inc.  
c/o Peter Psyhos, Membership Secretary  
85 Swanton st  
Winchester, MA 01890-2039

## FIRST CLASS

### EXECUTIVE BOARD 2002-2003

PRESIDENT:	Eileen Myers	(978) 456-3937
VICE PRES:	Bruce Berger	(978) 256-9208
SECRETARY:	Michael Hill	(508) 485-0230
MEMBERSHIP:	Peter Psyhos	(781) 721-9609
TREASURER:	Bernie Volz	(508) 881-3614
MEMBERS AT LARGE:		
	Lew Gramer	(781) 396-7822
	Dan Feldkhun	(617) 721-4992
PAST PRESIDENTS:		
2001-02	Bob Collara	(781) 275 9482
1998-00	Joseph Rothchild	(617) 964-6626
1996-98	Peter Bealo	(603) 382-7039

### COMMITTEES

CLUBHOUSE :	Paul Cicchetti	(978) 433-9215
	John Reed	(781) 861-8031
	Steve Clougherty	(781) 784-3024
HISTORIAN:	Anna Hillier	(781) 861-8338
OBSERVING:	Charlie McDonald	(781) 944-6140

## How to Find Us...

### Web Page [www.atmob.org](http://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 Month...

*To calculate Eastern Daylight Time (EDT) from Universal Time (UT) subtract 4 from UT.*

October 6 New Moon  
October 10 Mercury and Mars reach least separation – 2° 50'  
October 10 Jupiter's moon Europa partially occults to 3:18 – 3:21am EDT  
October 17 Jupiter's moon Europa partially occults to 5:38 – 5:42am EDT  
October 21 Full Moon  
October 27 Asteroid Ceres passes 13' north of  $\phi^1$  – late evening  
October 29 Last Quarter Moon