



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

Vol. 14, No. 5 May 2003

## This Month's Meeting...

Thursday, May 8<sup>th</sup>, 2003 at 8:00 PM

Phillips Auditorium  
Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics

THIS MONTH'S SPEAKER will be Dr. Martha Hazen, long-time Curator, now retired, of the Astronomical Photographs at the Harvard College Observatory. The collection of astronomical plates contains somewhere near half a million, taken between the mid-1880s and 1989 (with a gap between 1953-68). Dr Hazen will talk about the history of the plates, how they were made and used, how they are being used today, plans to digitize them, and more. For those who may not have noticed, the Plate Collection is located at the CfA in the room just opposite the Phillips Auditorium. Dr. Hazen will bring a sample to the meeting for us to see.

Please join us and our speaker for a pre-meeting dinner at 5:45 PM (seating is at 6PM) at the Changsho Restaurant located at 1712 Mass Ave. in our fair city, Cambridge.

## President's Message...

We have much to look forward to in May. Our Nominating Committee has completed its task of choosing a slate of officers for 2003-04. With the exception of the Office of Treasurer, it will be a re-election year with current officers running for a second term. Our current exalted and most-capable Treasurer, Mr. Bernie Volz, has indicated that that it might be time to look for someone new to handle that office. Several members stepped forward and one was selected. The announcement will be made at the May meeting.

On Saturday, May 3<sup>rd</sup> I will be coordinating a **Ladies Deep-Sky Observing Night** for the club's female members and female significant others. We will start at 6pm with a lasagna and salad dinner (a small donation will be accepted to cover the cost). There will be several telescopes set up for viewing, as well as several of our more experienced observers to help. Bring your own scope or take a peek through the others available. RSVP or questions - [starleen@charter.net](mailto:starleen@charter.net) or 978-456-3937.

There will be two exciting astronomical events: a **Transit of Mercury** (Mercury will pass between the Earth and the Sun) and a lunar eclipse (Moon passes through the shadow of the Earth). Sunrise on Wednesday, May 7<sup>th</sup> occurs around 5:34 AM with the transit already in progress. We will have missed about four hours of it. Mercury will look like a tiny, perfectly round and very black sunspot, close to the edge of the solar disk. It can be identified by how fast it will move. You will need a great observing location with an unobstructed horizon to be successful viewing it. You also must have a solar filter and use all precautions for solar observing. There will be only about an hour to observe this rare event before it ends. Try to catch the black drop effect just as Mercury exits the disk at around 6:34 AM. The dark circular image elongates and appears like a drawn-out teardrop. If you don't have a good site or the proper equipment, go on-line and search the Internet for a site that will show it in real-time.

A **Lunar Eclipse** will occur the night of Thurs-Fri, May 15-16, and this time we can observe it from start to finish. The eclipse will begin at 9:05 pm on the 15<sup>th</sup> and ends at 2:15 am on the 16<sup>th</sup> for a duration of 5 hours and 10 minutes, totality lasting 52 minutes during which it is fun to scan the Moon's surface for beautiful, colorful hues.

You can share your observing stories at our **Annual June Picnic** from 3pm until midnight on Saturday, June 7<sup>th</sup> at our clubhouse in Westford. Club members, families, and friends are invited. As always, we will supply the hamburgers and kielbasa. Please bring something tasty (with a cover of some sort) to share with others: salad, main dish, or dessert, along with a serving utensil. We will supply paper plates, plastic cutlery, and sodas. Directions to the clubhouse can be found on the back page of the newsletter. There will be solar observing, and that evening there will be a first quarter moon. The newly installed Shupmann telescope is now available for observing so come and use it! Clear skies! *-Eileen Myers, President-*

## April Meeting Minutes. . .

Our esteemed president, Eileen Myers, opened our April 10 meeting recounting more of the history of the club. The month we heard about ATMob looking for a home in the late 60's and early 70's. Temporary space was used at various spots, ending at the Nike site in Lincoln. That lasted about two years, until the fine print of the lease was read detailing that when the Government left the site, it was to return to its' natural state. Paul Valleli added to the discussion recounting how much work the ATM's had put into the Nike site, prior to being evicted.

Next Cathy Clemmons, the Project Astro coordinator in our area, presented information about NESSI, the New England Space Science Initiative. NESSI is a NASA initiative dedicated to fostering collaboration among space scientists and educators throughout the nsix state New England Region. It is different from Project Astro in that it aims beyond the Middle School audience, to work with educators at any level. For more information see the NESSI page at the Museum of Science website ([www.mos.org](http://www.mos.org)).

Our main speaker for the evening was Joe Caruso of the Oak Ridge Observatory in Harvard, Ma. Joe gave a very informative and entertaining presentation about the geologic history of the moon. Joe first talked about the eras of moon examination:

- no optical enhancement: for many years man looked naked eye at the moon, and incorporated it into their mythology
- telescope: Galileo ushered in the second era when he noted the moon was another planet, similar to earth
- space craft and man: the Ranger program was one of the first satellite programs of the 60's whose intent was to map the moon. It was very successful, in allowing planning for mans first landing and exploration there in 1969.

Joe went on to discuss the origin of the moon. Several theories were presented briefly, and dismissed for various reasons. Joe believes the earth was hit by another 'mass' while it was still molten, and a large blob of molten matter was knocked off. For evidence Joe pointed out that although the moon is 1/4 the earths size, it has a much smaller percentage of the earths mass. This would indicate it was less dense molten matter floating on the surface of the earth which was ejected to form the moon. Joe then presented a geological history of the moon, identified by various geographical features of the moon formed during 6 specific eras. He showed a variety of images of the moon illustrating the order of the events. Throughout the discussion Joe inserted many interesting anecdotes about the moon...too many to recount here. His enthusiasm and

knowledge made for a very interesting and much appreciated presentation.

### Business Meeting Highlights:

- Bernie reported on the state of the bank account
- Several new members were announced, and welcomed
- Clubhouse reported not much activity over the winter. The Shupmann telescope is operational in the observatory, and offering stunning views of the planets.
- Steve C. reported on the few nights of observing we have had. Though not many in quantity, they have been excellent in quality.
- Nominating committee: Mario Motta, Peter Bealo, and Gary Jacobson were elected the nominating committee. Any member who is interested in serving the club as an officer should contact them.
- Paul C. remarked that the club house was not being kept as clean as is might, and urged the Thursday night grinding crew to do a better job.
- Dave S. spoke concerning the upcoming Astronomy Day activities at the Museum of Science. All members of any ability are welcome to join us as we present astronomy to thousands of folks throughout the day. Astronomy Day is May 10. Contact Dave Siegrist for more information.
- Mario Motta has received the Las Cumbres Award from the Astronomical Society of the Pacific. The ASP is one of the largest and oldest Astronomical groups in the world, and this award is a great honor to Mario for all the volunteer work he does. Mario graciously pointed out there was a whole host of folks working with him who also deserved the award.

President Myers adjourned the meeting for a time of socializing among members. *-Dave Siegrist - Stand in Secretary for Mike Hill, who was on vacation (Great Job Dave - Thank You)*

## Treasurer's Report...

For the month of March, we had \$1.77 in revenue and \$165.24 in expenses for a net loss of \$163.47 for the month.

As of March 31st, 2003 our assets were:

Checking Account - Regular \$ 13,677.60  
Investments \$ 30,428.92  
Total Current Assets \$ 44,106.52

Of this \$44,269.99, \$2,804.31 is in the Land Fund and \$155.00 is for clubhouse key deposits. *- Bernie Volz -*

## Membership Report...

We have a number of new members this month. Please join me in welcoming ELSE McINERNEY of Hudson NH, DAVID and KRISTINA ICKES of Brentwood NH, NUNO SANTOS of Billerica MA, JOHN BISHOP of Nashua NH, VINCENZO VITELLI of Allston MA, DAVID RONNOW of Lowell MA, JOHN SHEFF of Cambridge MA, and JASON "Chief" CERUNDOLO of Lexington MA.

-Peter Psyhos, Membership Secretary -

## Clubhouse Report

To be presented at the meeting.

### Clubhouse Saturday Schedule

May 10	John Panaswich	Jim Suslowicz
May 17	Mario Motta	Bernie Volz
May 24	Dan Feldkhun	Tom Wolf
May 31	Gary Jacobsen	N+S Sonawane
June 7	Paul Cicchetti	John Reed

## Star Party Thank You...

There was a carnival in Lowell on Wednesday, April 16<sup>th</sup>, but 60 people (teenagers!) knew where the better action was and came to a star party held at the Butler Middle School in Lowell. Brewster LaMacchia gave the lecture, while John Blomquist, Mike Coppotto (who works at the Butler School), Charlie McDonald, John Reed, and Chuck (please, please call so we can give you proper recognition) helped out with telescopes and with organizing the event. The school sent two official thank you letters to the club, and Ray Tahmosh (we believe a member of the local community) was so impressed with the evening and the interest shown by the students that he immediately donated his own telescope to the school. Thank you to everyone who helped make the evening such a success. -**Charlie McDonald, ATMob Star Party Coordinator**

## Upcoming Star Parties:

Friday, May 2, 9AM - Lecture only on the solar system (no telescopes needed) - Arthur D. Healey Elementary School, Somerville - Expected attendance 60-100 - Paul Manning

Saturday, May 3 - Girl Scout Camp Runnels in Pelham, NH - Rte 38, 9.5 mi N of I495, Exit 38 - Expected attendance 100 - Coordinator Gary Jacobson [GJacobso@CH2M.com](mailto:GJacobso@CH2M.com) 978-692-4187

Monday, May 5 (cloud dates May 6,7,8,9) - Major Edwards Elementary School, W. Boylston - Expected attendance 300 - Coordinator Dave Snay [dsnay@charter.net](mailto:dsnay@charter.net) 508-835-6536

Tuesday, May 6 - Lynnfield Middle School - Lecture starts at 7:30PM - Observing starts at 8:15PM - Expected attendance 300 - Coordinator Mario Motta [mmotta@massmed.org](mailto:mmotta@massmed.org) 781-334-3648, wk 978-744-3499

Friday, May 9 - Mill Rd Soccer Fields in Chelmsford - Observing starts around 7:30PM - Large crowd expected - Coordinator Bruce Berger [bruce@scopemaker.com](mailto:bruce@scopemaker.com) 978-387-4189

### Saturday, May 10 - Astronomy Day

See insert

Saturday, May 17 - Lecture only (no telescopes needed) - Bedford, MA Council On Aging - 1pm - Expected attendance 20 - Lew Gramer

Date TBD - Pelham Elementary School in Pelham, NH - Expected attendance 250 - Coordinator Siddhartha Das - [siddharthd@aol.com](mailto:siddharthd@aol.com) - Peter Bealo advisor

## Nominations for Executive Board

The following is the slate of officers selected by the Nominating Committee for the 2003-2004 year. We will be voting on these at the June meeting.

President - Eileen Myers.  
Vice-President - Bruce Berger  
Secretary - Mike Hill  
Membership Secretary - Peter Psyhos.  
Treasurer. - Gary Jacobson

Member at Large - Lew Gramer  
Member at Large - Dan Feldkhun

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**March Star Fields deadline  
Sunday, May 31<sup>st</sup>**

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

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**POSTMASTER NOTE:** First Class Postage Mailed May 2, 2003

Amateur Telescope Makers of Boston, Inc.  
c/o Peter Psyhos, Membership Secretary  
41 Fair Oaks Dr  
Lexington, MA 02421

## FIRST CLASS

### EXECUTIVE BOARD 2002-2003

PRESIDENT: Eileen Myers (978) 456-3937  
em@wellesley.net (978) 461-1466 (w)

VICE PRES: Bruce Berger (978) 256-9208  
SECRETARY: Michael Hill (508) 485-0230  
MEMBERSHIP: Peter Psyhos (781) 861-1108

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 Standard Time (EDT) from Universal Time (UT) subtract 5 from UT.*

May 6 Eta Aquarid meteor shower peaks before dawn.  
May 6 Occultation of Jupiters moon Callisto by Europa 10:36-10:41 EDT  
May 7 Mercury Transiting sun at sunrise.  
May 9 First Quarter Moon  
May 15 Full Moon. Total Lunar Eclipse – Totality from 11:14-12:06 EDT  
May 31 New Moon