



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. 6 June 2003

This Month's Meeting...

Thursday, June 12th, 2003 at 8:00 PM

Phillips Auditorium
Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics

THIS MONTH'S SPEAKER will be Ron Dantowitz. Ron received a degree in Aeronautical Engineering in 1988, followed by a year at NASA. He took a position at the Charles Hayden Planetarium at the Boston Museum of Science, and at the BOS Gilliland Observatory Ron began developing techniques for high resolution astronomical imaging using video. The techniques he uses and the images he has achieved have been published in scientific journals, magazines, astronomy textbooks, encyclopedias, newspapers, and television programs. His special interest is in imaging orbiting satellites at high resolution through telescopes, and the video techniques he uses work as well on solar system targets. Ron's efforts have produced some of the sharpest ground-based optical images of the Moon and planets to date, with resolutions approaching 0.1 second of arc. One example of his fine work is the world's first high-resolution images of Mercury, showing impacts and maria on the planet's "unseen" hemisphere. Ron's talk will be titled "High Resolution Imaging Techniques", and will cover additional techniques that were not included in his main presentation at this year's NEAF (NorthEast Astronomy Forum).

Ron is now the director of the Clay Center Observatory at the Dexter School for Boys and Southfield School for Girls in Brookline. The Center has a state-of-the-art 25-inch telescope, which went into use in September 2002. *The Boston Globe* had a feature article describing the Center in its May 19th issue.

Please join our speaker and his wife Faith 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. **-Eileen Myers, President-**

President's Message...

May's wet weather prevented our observing the May 7th Mercury transit and the May 15th lunar eclipse. It did not ruin Ladies Deep Sky Observing Night on May 3rd. There were 12 ladies, 25 Boy Scouts and their leaders, and several club members adding up to about 44 observers that evening. The weather did not prevent solar and evening observing with the public on May 10th Astronomy Day at the Boston Museum of Science. Even a few scheduled star parties took place in May. I did catch a glimpse of an aurora on May 29th before the clouds moved in. The forecast does not look promising for Saturday, June 7th, the day of our annual club picnic, to be held from 3 PM to midnight, rain or shine. We cook our hamburgers and kielbasa on the porch barbecue anyway, so do join us. You can spend the day talking about astronomy with friends. Please bring something tasty 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. If it clears we can open the Shupmann telescope for some magnificent views.

For some armchair astronomy for rainy nights, Clubhouse Director John Reed pointed out that the Teaching Company's Great Courses Catalog for June 2003 offers a set of 12 lectures on cosmology from the Director of the NYC Hayden Planetarium. Neil deGrasse Tyson's "My Favorite Universe" video is based on a series of essays from *Natural History* magazine, and for a short time costs \$29.95 on videotape plus \$10 shipping. See www.teach12.com or call 1-800-832-2412. **-Eileen Myers-**

Annual Meeting – 2003

The June meeting includes the official annual meeting where we will vote on the officers for the Executive Board for the upcoming year.

The Slate of Officers Nominated Last Month were:

Eileen Myers – President
Bruce Berger – Vice President
Gary Jacobsen - Treasurer
Michael Hill – Secretary
Shilpa Lawande – Membership Secretary
Dan Feldkhun – Member at Large
Lew Gramer – Member at Large

May Meeting Minutes. . .

Eileen Myers opened the 759th meeting of the Amateur Telescope Makers of Boston with a short excerpt from the club's history recounting the events that led to the first meeting of the Bond Astronomy club which was the precursor to the ATMoB. This was followed by the main speaker, Dr. Martha Hazen, now retired curator of the Harvard Astronomical Photographic Plate Collection housed right here at Harvard Observatory. Dr Hazen first talked about the very early history of astronomical photography following Daquerre's work with the photographic process leading to what were then known as Daquerrotypes. The first Daquerrotype of an astronomical object was that of the moon in 1839. This process was used by Harvard Observatory between 1849-1852. The plate collection included four of these taken of the moon and 4 taken of a solar eclipse. The 1850s saw the introduction of a new photographic method using collodion plates which continued until the 1880s when this process was replaced by the standard photographic methods that most of us have been familiar with in our astronomical experiences. The collodion collection spanning the years 1857-1880 include photographs of an occultation of Spica, some of the brighter planets and a total solar eclipse.

The bulk of the plate collection are glass plates taken after this time up until 1989, when CCD imaging took over. The collection includes repeated photographs covering the entire sky from both the north and southern hemisphere. The southern station was located first in Peru, and then moved to South Africa. The collection consists of about half a million plates and represent a substantial asset as they can be used to research in variable stars, nova and stellar positions with a record that spans, almost unbroken, a 100 year time frame. Unfortunately there is a gap from 1953 to 1968 due to some differences in opinion as to the value of these plates with one of the directors of the observatory. Fortunately most of the plates were spared. A push is on now, promoted by the current curator Alison Doane, to digitize all the plates to assure that the important information that they contain are never lost, and also can be made more readily available. Alison spoke to us a bit about the project and the problems that are ahead of her in undertaking this monumental task. Each plate is estimated to require 210Mbytes of storage with the entire collection requiring 130 Terrabytes. A lot of space is required for this valuable resource be in real or virtual.

The business meeting followed. Reports were given by the club officers. John Reed announced that the new barn doors are now complete and that a serious effort is now underway to pull up all the roots from the trees behind the observatory so that they will not grow back. He and Eileen talked about the very successful Ladies Night up at the observatory which was well attended. Mario Motta presented the nominating committees slate of officers for

the 2003-2004 year. Dave Siegrist presented some details about the astronomy day activities coming up and Charlie McDonald told us of a video about Annie Jump Cannon that would be nice to get for star parties if you so desire. Eileen announced the June 7th club picnic and then concluded the meeting. *-Michael Hill-*

Treasurer's Report...

For the month of April, we had \$449.89 in revenue and \$769.82 in expenses for a net loss of \$319.93 for the month.

As of April 30th, 2003 our assets were:

Checking Account - Regular \$ 13,382.67
Investments \$ 30,428.92
Total Current Assets \$ 43,811.59

Of this \$43,811.59, \$2,829.31 is in the Land Fund and \$155.00 is for clubhouse key deposits.

-Bernie Volz, Treasurer-

Membership Report...

We have 7 new members joining us in June. They are JERRY BRIERE of Wales MA, CARL UNDERWOOD of Woodstock CT, THOMAS A LUMENELLO of Westford MA, JOHN SCHIESSER of Bosborough MA, JAY NATARAJAN of Cambridge MA, PETER BENOIT of Woburn MA, and SHAWN BRYAN of Newton MA.

. -Peter Psyhos, Membership Secretary -

Clubhouse Report

Several significant activities occurred since the last work party. One was the reconstruction of the new east side door to the near barn. This door is different from the old door in that it looks like the old double door, but it is now a single wide door. It was made to look like the old double type door to keep the original appearance. The next activity was the removal of the brush roots from the West side of the new observatory by a backhoe. This task required two days to accomplish. Soon we will level off the area and plant grass seed. Another task was the evaluation of the furnace which currently not operating. It was determined that the blower motor will need to be replaced. Ed Knight is in the process of securing this. Luckily, with the warm weather approaching, it will not be needed as much. Thanks to: DAVE PROWTEN, JOHN BLOMQUIST, ART SWEDLOW, JOHN REED, SAI VALLABHA, ANNA HILLIER, ED KNIGHT, DAN FELDKHUN, STEVE CLOUGHERTY, AND DAVE SIEGRIST.

Clubhouse Saturday Schedule

June 7	Club Picnic On duty: Paul Cicchetti and John Reed	
June 14	John Small	Gary Walker
June 21	Eric Johansson	Dave Richardson
June 28	Bruce Berger	Mike Hill

Astronomy Day - 2003

Astronomy Day 2003 has come and gone, and a wonderful time was had by all, as far as I could tell. We had a number of solar scopes setup, Eileen Myers, John Blomquist, John Reed, Phil Rounsville, Dave Kelly, Paul and Vincent Cicchetti and others whom I either did not see, or forgot...sorry

Of special mention was a guest appearance by Rich Nugent who spent the day with us. It is always great to see friends who have been temporarily missing. I spent the day downstairs grinding, and was helped greatly through the day by Joseph Rothchild, Fran Carnes, Dick Koolish, Alex Vanderburgh, Virginia Renham, Anna Hiller and a host of others.

The grinding went well, and we have already had four new mirrors started at the clubhouse as a result of folks coming by and talking with us.

After a fun dinner at Pappa-Razzi we returned to the roof for the star party. More accurately it was a Moon-Saturn-Jupiter party since those were about the only objects visible. John Reed did try to locate M13 at one point in the evening, and had trouble even finding Hercules. The Museum of Science hosts a number of Girl Scout troops for sleepovers, and we had a steady stream of folks up for their first views ever of planets. Great fun.

Other folks whom I remember being there and helping in various ways were

Jason "Chief" Cerundolo
Kathy Cunningham
Bruce Gerhard
D. Chase Green
Art Swedlow
Shawana Kausar
Ed Knight
Paul Manning
Ted Poulos
Peter Pyschos
Paul Valleli
Ishrat Zahid.

If I missed anyone, I apologize.

Special thanks again to Noreen Grice for organizing this and giving us the opportunity to introduce others to our hobby. - *David Siegrist* -

Telescope Making

Partially as a result of efforts at Astronomy day and also some good times up at the clubhouse we have now got four new people starting mirrors. This is good news indeed. With all this activity we may be rubbing elbows up at the clubhouse along with mirrors! Two weeks ago Glen Meurer's daughter and a friend of hers, ages 12 and 13, each started a 6" mirror. A week later new member Virginia Renham started an 8" mirror, followed by considerable interest by another person who has not quite committed but certainly was intrigued by the process as demonstrated at the Astronomy Day event. Ken Kenyon is still working at his mirror but is in the final polishing stages and Paul Sountsov is making steady progress as well. Good luck to all of these new mirror makers.



**Two of our newest mirror makers, and youngest !
Nicole Kendall and Carolyn Meurer
Both are very excited and determined to do this . . .**

Upcoming June Star Parties...

Thursday, June 19 - Lecture only (no telescopes needed) - Medford, MA - Public Library, Medford Square - 7:30pm - Expected attendance 40 - Lew Gramer

Saturday, June 21 - Tewksbury - AIR & SPACEDAY 2003 - Events begin at 10am - Livingston Recreational Field, Livingston St. - EXPECTED ATTENDANCE 6,000 - telescopes needed for solar viewing 10am-7pm and evening observing 8-10pm - Coordinator Paul Manning spacemanning@hotmail.com 978-657-7339 See www.spacemanning.net/sd2003 for an up-to-date list of the days many events. All donations and concession proceeds will be used to purchase an observatory for the Town of Tewksbury, consisting of a concrete pad, a 12' diameter fiberglass dome and a 14" diameter Schmidt-Cassegrain Meade telescope.

Star Party Thank You . . .

West Boylston Star Party

Thank you to all the folks that made it to my star party tonight in West Boylston. If not for you, the night would not be possible. I'd say we had between 100-150 folks show up and never had a long line at any scope. That makes it hard to fail. You all came through on extremely short notice. I can't tell you how much I appreciate your help. I'll be hearing about this for weeks from the kids as I see them around town, at soccer games and at the school (I substitute teach sometimes).

I still can't believe how well the skies cleared for us tonight. I had faith they'd clear somewhat, but never that nicely. I hope you all had as much fun as I did.

Here are the participants in no particular order.

Mike Hill
Ernie Ginetti
Ted Wilber
John Maher
Dennis Gagne
Brian Urquhart
Jack MulCahey and
Ishrat Zahid

Thanks guys! - *Dave Snay* -

Chelmsford Star Party

The May 9 Chelmsford Community Star Party was a raging success! The cloud gods heard our prayers and, like Moses with the Red Sea, the clouds parted to let the photons pass.

Thanks to the many members and local townspeople who brought telescopes and helped out. While public turnout was not as high as last year, everyone still had a great time. We had a clear sky with views of the first quarter moon, Jupiter (with great red spot on the central meridian), Saturn, many clusters, nebulae and galaxies, and even two very bright Iridium flares. The Mill Road soccer field is about as good a location as you can get in-town. The sky is as dark as at the clubhouse, with no intruding lights and a manicured lawn to observe from (although some commented that the dirt parking lot did have less dew).

Thanks to Kathy Cryan-Hicks and Nancy Rager, both from the Chelmsford public library who again sponsored the event, and provided pizza, drinks, cookies and red glow sticks for the astronomers! Their interest and enthusiasm in making this event possible are greatly appreciated.

ATMoB Members at the Chelmsford Star Party

Ed Knight	Howard Benjamin
Eileen Myers	Jack Drobot
Dave Ronnow	Dave Simonich
Gay Rinker	John Bishop
Bruce Berger	Tom Lumenello
Gary Jacobson	Carolyn Lumenello
Glenn Muerer	Michael Brown
John Blomquist	Joao Geada
Al Takeda	Kevin Snell
Tom Bergman	Matt Cilento
Jerry Briere	Eileen Cilento
Scott Chizzo	Kelly Beatty
Mike Boucher <i>Non-ATMoB</i>	Cheryl Beatty
Sharon Bogin <i>Non-ATMoB</i>	Johnathon Hopewell <i>Non-ATMoB</i>

I hope I did not miss anyone!

Also thanks to Martha Shelton of Chelmsford, who came to the star party to donate a partially constructed 6" Cassegrain reflector in an aluminum tube, complete with secondary mirror and focuser. This was made by her husband, John Shelton. Her hope was to get it out of her garage. She assured us that her donation was approved by John in advance, and we assured her that ATMoB would be sure to complete the scope and give it a good home. Thanks again to all,

- *Bruce Berger, Gary Jacobson* -

Butler Middle School

There are two individuals who still need to be thanked for their outstanding work at the Butler Middle School star party in Lowell on April 16th: Jack Drobot, who coordinated the event, and Chuck Evens, who brought his telescope. The teachers are overwhelmed at the interest in astronomy sparked in their students due to the ATMoB star parties held there. -*Charlie McDonald, Club Star Party Coordinator*-

Star Parties Revisited

The other night I attended my first star party in a number of years and it was quite a memorable experience for me. I have done a lot of star parties in the past but for one reason or another had become rather pessimistic as to their value and importance. I think I was just tired of doing them. Feeling that it was my duty to attend at least one this year, I decided to help out with the West Boylston star party hosted by new ATMoB member Dave Snay. I felt good about attending and was indeed looking forward to helping out. I got much more than I bargained for. Once there I felt the instant camaraderie that one feels when among fellow club members. The night was going to be good even though there were broken clouds about, and the temperatures were comfortable. No heated socks required this night. I set up my scope, checked the alignments, and I was ready to go. Then the kids began to show up. I was instantly rewarded with the oohs and Ahhs of amazement as these kids looked through my scope and saw the magnificent views of the Moon and Jupiter. I listened as they called to their friends to come and see what they were seeing. I heard them talking about the facts that they had learned in school, which were many and varied. Some knew quite a bit but still were totally in awe of the real thing. One young girl looked through and her eyes widened as she saw Jupiter and its moons for the first time. "Sweet . . ." she said. I knew she was impressed. This was what it is all about. The joy that we bring the kids is immeasurable. I look at these kids and the parents they are with and wonder how many of them are soon going to be asked - "Mommy - Can I get a telescope." I wonder how many will be inspired to follow astronomy or some other science as a career. It won't be many, I'm sure, but certainly some will be affected in such a way by an experience such as this. It truly is a wonderful thing. So if you haven't helped out at a star party yet or if you've been away for a while, do consider getting involved. If you're getting tired of them from doing so many - take a break for a year or so. You'll come back refreshed and happy you did so. Star Parties are important and have a lot of value. I'm glad I got back to them and certainly plan to help out with more when and where I can.

- Michael Hill -

For Sale

I have a number of pieces that I never got around to turning into a Dobsonian and would like to sell. All is new, unused (Parks still in original packing).

Parks Optical 8" F6 Pyrex primary \$160

1:6 thickness ratio

Parks Optical 2.14" Pyrex secondary \$65
elliptical flat

Orion #13031 1.25" rack & pinion focuser \$20

Orion #04713 2.14" secondary holder \$30

Orion #04761 8" primary mirror cell \$20

Orion #08732 26mm Sirius Plossl eyepiece \$30

Orion #07084 EasyFinder (original model) \$20

Please make offer for whatever is useful to you; you pay shipping & insurance. If you take ALL of it together, I'll sell the works for \$300. Contact me via email at gallsup@whoi.edu or my work phone (leave a message if I'm not in) at 508-289-2221.

Geoff Allsup

**July *Star Fields* deadline
Sunday, June 29th**

**Email articles to Mike Hill
at noatak@aol.com**

POSTMASTER NOTE: First Class Postage Mailed June 6, 2003

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

FIRST CLASS

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OBSERVING: Charlie McDonald (781) 944-6140

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 The Month . . .

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

June 7 First quarter Moon
June 13 Asteroid 12 Victoria (mag 8.8) is 17' north of Eta Ophiuchi
June 14 Full Moon
June 21 Last quarter Moon
June 22 Uranus 3° North of Mars
June 28 Latest Sunset
June 29 New Moon