



## 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. 14, No. 8    October 2003

## This Month's Meeting...

Thursday, October 9, 2003 at 8:00 PM

Phillips Auditorium  
Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics

THIS MONTH'S SPEAKER will be Marc T. Daigle, President & CTO of Optical Alchemy Inc., of Maynard, MA. Mr. Daigle will give an overview of the James Webb Space Telescope (JWST) program. The JWST will be an orbiting infrared observatory that will take the place of the Hubble Space Telescope at the end of this decade. It will study the universe at the epoch of galaxy formation. It will peer through dust to view the birth of stars and planetary systems similar to our own. Scientists hope to also get a better understanding of dark matter by using JWST. Target launch date is August 2011.

Mr. Daigle is an expert on classical & emerging electro-optical technologies, optical systems engineering, optical design & analysis, photonics, detectors, FLIRS, radiometry and cost modeling. He was Senior Systems Engineer of Electro Optics at Optical Research Associates and was Product Manager of High Definition Video Systems for Sony Electronics. Mr. Daigle worked in optical engineering at Itek Optical Systems for seven years.

Please join 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.

*-Eileen Myers, President-*

## President's Message...

On Friday, September 26<sup>th</sup> Massachusetts Governor Mitt Romney visited my place of employment, Clock Tower Place Office Park, in Maynard, MA. Despite the crowd and media gathered there, I seized the moment and introduced myself as president of our club, chatting for almost a minute and a half with the Governor. My subject of choice was, of course, dark skies. I gave a quick summary of light pollution and mentioned that with the current trend in public lighting his grandchildren might not be able to view the Milky Way from anywhere in Massachusetts. What was Governor Romney's stand on this issue? "I really like dark skies", he told me. "I do have a telescope. It's a plastic one, I think. I don't know who made it." He paused and tried very hard to remember. "I don't know how to use it either. But I do like dark skies. Very much." Our governor is a millionaire venture capitalist and his hometown is Belmont. Perhaps it's time to schedule a star party for the Belmont school system and make sure that Governor Romney and the media are officially invited!

And, if schools don't mind, perhaps we should extend formal invitations to state legislators as well as the media for all of our star parties. Even if the legislators don't attend they will still know that astronomy is a happening thing in their districts. *-Eileen Myers-*



**The 61" Telescope at Oak Ridge Observatory which visitors could get an up close look at during a number of very successful Star Parties held by the ATMoB in Recent Months. See inside for details.**

## September Meeting Minutes. .

Eileen Myers opened the 762<sup>nd</sup> meeting of the Amateur Telescope Makers of Boston with a few brief comments about the dedication of the 16" telescope at Oak Ridge Observatory in Harvard, MA. to Chester Cook, an early club officer of the Boston ATMs. She included excerpts from an email about Chet Cooks work in astronomy. The main speaker was Willie Soon, a physicist at the Harvard-Smithsonian Cfa. He prefaced the talk with three statements upon which he has based his research.

1. The 20<sup>th</sup> century has been witness to the greatest historical warming trend in the Northern hemisphere.
2. The year 800-1300 was witness to what is known as the medieval warm period.
3. The period from 1640-1700 was known as the Little Ice age due to the unusually cold climate that persisted for so many years, in conjunction with a time of no sunspots on the sun for as many years.

Through the use of varied indicators that include tree rings, glaciers, coral growth and seashells from around the world, Mr. Soon is working to prove or disprove these 3 statements, especially the first one. His overall conclusions are that the data bear out that the second two are true but the first, which relates directly to all the talk about current global warming, is not. He presented a very interesting array of data from around the world and explained in great detail the mechanisms of the indicators he uses and how they are used to substantiate his claims. A very interesting talk which was followed by many very good questions from the membership. The business section of the meeting followed the talk. The officers presented their reports. This included the clubhouse report in which Paul Cicchetti informed us that much progress has been made with tree pruning and removal behind the observatory. The coming work party would consist of more tree work and the digging of the trench for drainage and power to the observatory. Bruce Berger informed us of the latest on the Mosquito Magnet repairs. Bernie Volz informed us that 2004 Calendars are now available for \$8.00. Eileen informed us of a number of recent donations: Cindy Dougherty donated a CCD Camera. Jerry and Julie Sussman donated a Celestron C-8. Paul Valleli donated a 2" Crayford eyepiece for use with the Schupman and Dick Koolish donated a wheelbarrow for up at the clubhouse. Thanks very much to all of them. Eileen also told us that there will be no New York trip this year. There may be one next year however. Two presentations of Mars pictures were then given. One by Paul Valleli and a second by Gary Walker. Both had great shots of the red planet. Mario Motta informed us of the recently discovered illness of Janet Mattie – Director of the AAVSO. He told us that she is in very good medical hands but will need our prayers, as will her husband Mike, in the coming months.

– *Michael Hill* -

## Treasurer's Report...

As of September 27, 2003

Checking account balance: \$15471.86

Money Market account balance: \$30769.08

Included in that is:

Clubhouse key deposits: \$155.00

Land fund: \$2984.96

During the period:

Income: \$2613.46

Expenses: 2096.94

Net gain: \$516.52

- *Gary Jacobson, Treasurer*-

## Membership Report...

This month, please welcome our new members -

JONATHAN HOPEWELL (Winchester, MA),

DAVID WALLACE (N. Chelmsford, MA),

DAVE BERNAT (Somerville, MA).

- *Shilpa Lawande, Membership Secretary* -

## Clubhouse Report

The last work party really involved two days of activity at the clubhouse. On that Saturday, we basically resurveyed the trench line in order to determine the correct depth to dig. While this was being done, the furnace was fired up to get it ready for winter; some adjustments were made. The next day involved the lion's share of the work. Using a backhoe, the trench was dug and approximately 130' of 6 inch PVC pipe was laid for the basement drainage. Thanks to the following (also included the members who helped through all the summer who I did not mention before):

Art Swedlow	Brain Maerz
Bruce Burger	Karl Goedecue
John Blomquist	Ed Knight
John Reed	Dave Prowten
Dave Segrist	Sai Vallabha
Shawn Bryan (The Man with the Backhoe!)	Bruce Gerhard

## Clubhouse Saturday Schedule

October 4	Ed Budreau	Henry Hopkinson
October 11	Mario Motta	Bernie Volz
October 18	Steve Clouherty	N+S Sonowane
October 25	Steve Mock	Lew Gramer
November 1	Rick Burrier	Brian Maerz
November 8	Gary Walker	John Reed

## Solar Eclipse Plans

I had been planning the March 29 eclipse trip through Turkey, as I had thought that western Egypt was too difficult, though it has the best weather (virtual guarantee of seeing the eclipse from that location). As some of you may know, As a member of the Mass Med Society, I have set up an astronomy interest section. The current president of the Society (a ATMOB member as well) Dr Tom Sullivan and I were speaking to A Dr Chaoui, who is married to a native Egyptian, and has family near the eclipse path! As it turns out, there is a luxury resort there, has about 100 rooms. People are now inquiring about it, however, and plans therefore need to be made. The proposed hotel is: Marsah Matrouh, is a luxury 4 star hotel 400 km west of Cairo, on the Mediterranean sea. you can see it at: [www.beausite.masr.com](http://www.beausite.masr.com)

See the message from Tom Sullivan below who has been making inquires:

"I would bet we could get 100 people or 50 rooms, (with your help of course), to put down a deposit of \$50/per room over the next 1-2 months for the eclipse of 3/29/2006. I checked flights to Cairo (450 kms from the hotel) in March 2004 and they go for about \$1100/per person RT. (Alitalia, one stop in Milan).I wonder if we could propose this as a combined MMS Astronomy MIN and ATMOB trip to get the numbers required."

In fact, we now have about 16 rooms asked for already!

I think it would be great to combine the Mass Medical Society with the ATMOB, and have a combined trip. (At least I know I will not be the only physician on the trip!) In addition, the MMS has resources to get info, we have local contacts, and they have a staff that can handle much of the work for us. (we would not have to pay for this luxury). Yes you may have some newbe's on the trip, but interested ones though.

We are exploring this actively now, but do not have final details as yet. reply to me at [mmotta@massmed.org](mailto:mmotta@massmed.org) if interested. We will likely have a basic 3-4 nights at this luxury resort, with buses to go the final 120 km to the center line. We will plan for extensions after (eg visiting pyramids and cruise down the Nile, etc.) We are working with the staff of the MMS and local agents in Egypt.

- *Mario Motta* -

## Honors Bestowed

I am honored to say that I will be receiving the "las Cumbres" award from the Astronomical Society of the Pacific on Oct. 11, in Berkely California. The announcement can be viewed at: <http://www.astrosociety.org/index.html>

Though I consider this a great honor, it really belongs to the ATMOB in general, as it is given for astronomical amateur community outreach, something we do together as a great club. I will, therefore give true credit to the ATMOB when I receive the award the night of the 11th. - *Mario Motta* -

## Star Party Thank You's...

Mars Craze continued at the Oak Ridge Observatory at a Mars Party on Sept. 8<sup>th</sup> for the residents of the town of Harvard (although there were folks from all over MA). A group of extraordinary club members set up their scopes and tirelessly spoke with the public: Bruce Berger, John Blomquist, Bobby Cohen, Jack Drobot, Mike and his daughter Rachel Fitterman, Joseph Rothchild, Dave Snay, Art Swedlow, and Al Takeda. (If we missed your name please let us know.) Marsha Bowman heroically spoke to the driver of every car, determining who needed to park closer to the telescopes and who should park farther down the road. Marsha estimated the crowd at over 1,000. Karen Funkenstein directed traffic along the road to ensure that drivers would not take a wrong turn in the dark. Bobby Cohen's nephew Michael Lawrence and one of Michael's friends helped park cars down by the radio telescope. Oak Ridge Observatory's Dr. Robert Stefanik gave tours of the 61", Joe Zajac ran the 16" Cassegrain and Joe Caruso set up his own refractor. Eileen Myers ran the observatory's 6.5" Clark Refractor. Two town organizations have already contacted me about running another observing night as soon as I can arrange one. Another ATMOB success story! -*Eileen Myers*-

Tewksbury High School has a newly established astronomy elective for seniors, with 30-40 students enrolled. John Blomquist, Paul Manning, Charlie McDonald and John Reed ran a special introduction to using a telescope session for the students. It was "first light" for the group as a class and they are off to a good start. -*Charlie McDonald*-

# Upcoming Star Parties

## Marlborough Middle School

There will be a star party at Marlborough Middle school on Wednesday October 1<sup>st</sup> with a rain date set for the 2<sup>nd</sup>.

Please join us if you can. The middle school is near downtown Marlborough at the intersection of Bolton St which is Route 85 and Union Street. Look for Thresher Drive off of Union street. This is the road into the middle school. We will be there at 6:00 to setup. Contact Mike Hill at noatak@aol.com

## Lynnfield Middle School

There will be a star party at the Lynnfield high school on Oct 21 at 6:45. Rain date is Oct 23. This is for the middle school 5th graders, and expect 250-300 to attend. Note a location change from past years, as the middle school has construction going on, so it will be at the high school.

Thank you, Mario Motta

## Groton School System

Iva Gardner, third grade teacher in the Groton school system, will be holding a star party at the observatory of Erik Piip in Groton on Wednesday, October 1<sup>st</sup>. Glen Chaple and Eileen Myers will be helping. If one or two more members would like to help out contact Eileen Myers at [starleen@charter.net](mailto:starleen@charter.net)

## Clark Middle School

Help is needed with a star party in Lexington, MA at the Clark Middle School (near Route 2 and 128) on October 22nd (rain dates on the 23<sup>rd</sup> and 29th). This is the first year they are teaching astronomy to the 6th graders and we have been trying to help them locate interesting materials, get a telescope up and running, and provide enough astronomy buffs and telescopes for their star party. The lead teachers spent a lot of time this summer trying to locate an astronomy group that did star parties - even calling the Chamber of Commerce! He finally found ATMOB on the web (and someone in his town - Peter). We told him that education is one of the primary goals of the club and have invited him to visit the clubhouse in Westford (his hometown!). We hope this star party will be an opportunity for many more folks to hear about ATMOB and find opportunities to enjoy their interest in astronomy.

All 125 kids in 6th grade are invited on the 22nd, WITH their families, so there could be 200 - 300 people! We need LOTS of help. The location next to the school is big open field with minimal nearby light pollution. By late October the bugs should be gone and there will be a relatively moonless sky that night, so the viewing should be excellent if the weather cooperates.

We are setting up a website with directions and other info, and will send the URL in the near future. Please send an e-mail if you have an interest, and let us know if you can make it.

## Other News...

ABOUT 125 club members, family and friends attended the club picnic on Sept. 6<sup>th</sup>. Thanks go to Chef John Reed and to Eileen Myers for once again organizing the event. Thanks go to Art Swedlow for doing an excellent cleaning job on the clubhouse.

DR. JANET MATTEI, Director of the American Association of Variable Star Observers (AAVSO), was recently diagnosed with acute leukemia. She has received chemotherapy is now battling the disease. ATMOB member Mario Motta, MD is a close friend and has been sending periodic updates to atmob-announce. Our prayers go out to Janet and her husband Mike for a quick and complete recovery. We have been requested to not send flowers at this time.

NEW CLUB POLO SHIRTS are ready. They are good quality, all cotton John Ashford short sleeve polo shirts with a pocket and have the club logo from our website embroidered above the pocket. There are many different sizes and colors. They will be available to purchase at the October meeting at \$25 each.

AL NAGLER IS COMING TO BOSTON TELESCOPE on Saturday, October 25<sup>th</sup> for Tele Vue Day. Al Nagler, founder and owner of Tele Vue Optics will be at the store to answer questions, give advice and make a special product announcement. All Tele Vue products will be on sale (cash or check for sale prices). Boston Telescope is located in West Newton Sq. at 26 Border St. (617) 244-9901.

FROM THE BOSTON MUSEUM OF SCIENCE WEBSITE: Lecture on String Theory on Saturday October 25, 2003 1:30 PM - "The key to unlocking the universe may be within our grasp-in the form of tiny strings and eleven dimensions. It may sound like science fiction, but these strings and dimensions form the basis of a new realm of physics called string theory, which claims to explain all the laws of the universe in a single equation, a feat that even Einstein could not conquer. But, as world-renowned physicist Brian Greene (Prof. of Physics and of Mathematics, Columbia University) will explain, we may be on the verge of finding this 'holy grail' of modern physics. Based on his book and upcoming NOVA documentary, The Elegant Universe, Dr. Greene will guide us through this strange world of parallel universes and extra dimensions. Speakers include Brian Greene, Ph.D.). This is a free event held in Cahners Theater. Seating will be first-come, first-serve. Tickets will be available starting at 12:30 PM at the front lobby. Overflow seating available (with a live video feed) in Wright Theater Overflow. For more information, call (617) 589-0419. MOS lectures are now archived. See [lectures archives page](#) for access to audio or video footage.

Mugar Omni Theater - Space Station - Opens October 4, 2003 "...blast off from Florida's Kennedy Space Center, cruise through the atmosphere, and get a sense for life at zero gravity aboard the ISS. Surrounded by a stunning celestial panorama, witness the perils and triumphs of a 16-nation quest to build and inhabit this unprecedented cosmic outpost."

Charles Hayden Planetarium – "Featuring stunning images taken by the Hubble Space Telescope, *Mysteries of the Milky Way* takes you on a visual tour to investigate the incredible discoveries and unexplained marvels that occupy the large spiral star system we call home. From the luminous bulge of ancient stars surrounding the galactic center to the dark halo encompassing the outer limits of the galaxy, the journey will bring you to the heart of questions puzzling astronomers today. "

The Light House – "An exhibit illuminating optics, color, and the nature of light. Play with fascinating visual effects to figure out how light and color behave."

ASTROASSEMBLY 2003 will be held on October 3<sup>rd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> at the Seagrave Memorial Observatory in North Scituate, RI. The Friday evening program will have several short talks followed by door prizes and observing. The Saturday program consists of the following talks: "A Rapid, Accurate Method of Determining the Distance to Near-Earth Asteroids" Lisa Glukhovsky; "Lowell Observatory and Mars", Dr. Peter Boyce; "Canals and Craters: Mars and the Limits of Telescopic Vision", Tom Dobbins; "The Art of Seeing: Drawing at the Telescope", Greg Mort; and "Shooting the Moon: The Great Debate about Impact vs. Volcanic Origin for Lunar Craters, Dr. Peter Schultz. The evening feature speaker will be Dr. John Mustard (Brown University) speaking on "Planetary Exploration: The Latest on the NASA Missions". There will be an antique and vintage telescope display by members of the Antique Telescope Society and an astrophotography exhibit, as well as solar observing throughout the day. Telescope making and astrophotography contest, raffle prizes and contest prizes. Registration is \$15 and the buffet dinner costs \$17. Several ATMoB members attend every year. For more information or to join a carpool contact Eileen Myers at 978-456-3937 or at [starleen@charter.net](mailto:starleen@charter.net)

THE CLUB WOULD LIKE TO THANK Jerry and Julie Sussman for his donation of a Celestron C8 (vintage 1985) and for the set of NASA's Magellan Mosaic Image Data "Mission To Venus" on CD-ROM.

THE CLUB WOULD LIKE TO THANK Paul Valleli for his donation of a Crayford focuser for the Shupmann.

THE CLUB WOULD LIKE TO THANK Cindy Dougherty for the donation of Ed's Cookbook CCD camera.

## For Sale

For Sale: one set of extendable aluminum tripod legs from a mid-1980's vintage Vixen Super Polaris mount. \$50 or best offer. Call Jim Kile at work 781-862-7020

or e-mail [jkile@rri-usa.org](mailto:jkile@rri-usa.org)

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

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

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**POSTMASTER NOTE:** First Class Postage Mailed October 3, 2003

Amateur Telescope Makers of Boston, Inc.  
c/o Shilpa Lawande, Membership Secretary  
13 Royal Crest Dr., #12  
Nashua, NH 03060

## FIRST CLASS

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## 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 The Month . . .

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

October 7 Mars is 3.6° Southeast of Uranus  
October 10 Full Moon  
October 18 Last quarter moon  
October 21 Orionid Meteor shower  
October 21  $\alpha$  Librae (mag 2.8) 10' north of Venus  
October 25 New Moon  
October 31 First quarter moon