



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. 15, No. 1 January 2004

This Month's Meeting...

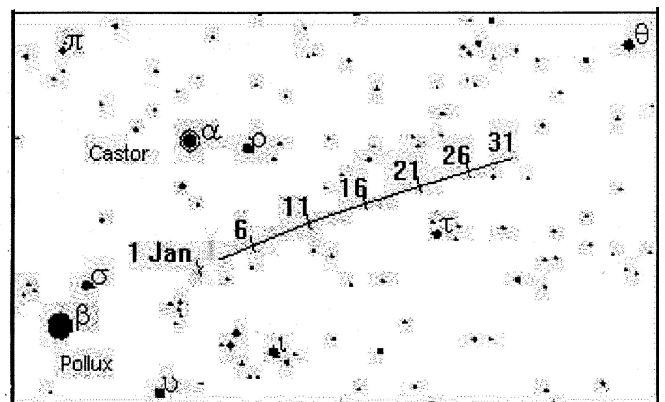
Thursday, January 8, 2004 at 8:00 PM

Phillips Auditorium
Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics

THIS MONTH'S MEETING will be a show and tell/swap meet event. If you have any goodies you want to unload then please bring them along to sell before or after the meeting. If you are looking for some astro-bargains, then bring your cash and see if someone has something you need or want. If you would like to make a short presentation about your latest project then please contact me so I can schedule you in. *-Eileen Myers, President-*

President's Message...

HAPPY NEW YEAR, EVERYONE! I am pleased to report that we have just ended a successful year, full of star parties, lectures, mirror completions, and many observing opportunities. 2003 was the year that brought Mars and auroras to everyone's attention. 2004 may become known for comets. Comet 2002 T7 (LINEAR) may become a naked-eye object this spring at magnitude 1, but will be low in the morning sky in May, near Sirius on Thursday, May 6th. Comet C/2001 Q4 (NEAT), also possibly naked eye and also near Sirius on May 6th, will be moving through a slanted path from Canis Major through the Big Dipper from May through June. Then of course on Tuesday, June 8th as the Sun rises the disk of Venus will already be transiting the disk of the Sun. It is being said that it will be discernible by the naked eye, but of course all precautions for solar observing must be taken. This should be a good time to equip those small telescopes with CCDs and video cameras. Meanwhile, to get ready, try your hand on Ceres, the first asteroid to be discovered. Italian astronomer Giuseppe Piazzi found it on January 1st, 203 years ago. Ceres reaches opposition on Friday, January 9th, and so is in the middle of its period of best visibility. Now at its brightest at mag 6.8, it is in Gemini, conveniently located 2-degrees from Castor, and should be easily visible in good binoculars. Remember that the Dawn Mission, part of NASA's Discovery Program, will launch in May 2006, and will study the two largest asteroids (minor planets), Vesta beginning in July 2010, and Ceres beginning in August 2014. *-Eileen Myers-*



Asteroid Ceres, the first asteroid to be discovered. Italian astronomer Giuseppe Piazzi found it on January 1st, 203 years ago. Ceres reaches opposition on Friday, January 9th

December Meeting Minutes. .

The December meeting of the ATM's of Boston was called to order by our esteemed President Eileen Myers. This being our holiday meeting we continued our tradition of the reading of poetry and prose by our astronomer laureates. Tal Mental began with his rendition of "Twas the Night before Christmas" by Henry Livingston. He continued with the "Cremation of Sam Magee" by Robert Service. Bob Collara quoted the "Star Splitter" by Robert Frost. Finally, Charlie McDonald recited part of the "Pale Blue Dot" by Carl Sagan. All renditions were well received and appreciated by our gathered members.

Our main speaker, David Aguilar, was next introduced. David is the director of Public Relations at CfA. His talk was entitled (broadly) why do we bother to study astronomy. David began with a discussion of answers various professional astronomers within CfA gave to that question. The consensus seemed to be they loved solving the big puzzles. They loved working on big problems with no clear or easy answers. David continued with his own personal history, and how that has shaped his love for astronomy. David showed slides of 'zillions' of scopes he has made. The scopes ranged from small refractors and reflectors he has given away to various friends and neighbors, to 20+ inch reflectors he ground and then built the split ring scope around. The array of mirrors and scopes was truly impressive.

Why did he do it, and why does he continue? Those were the messages David was most concerned with communicating with us. His motivation was the desire to continue to stretch, to continue to learn. There were still puzzles about the universe that he desired to understand. The scopes he has built were a tool to apply what he learned about math and science, as he sought to figure out those puzzles. David left us with a challenge to discover truth in its context. Not to seek knowledge for the sake of knowledge or its discovery, but rather to see it as a step in extending our vision, physical and otherwise.

The business meeting followed our speaker. Some highlights:

- * Paul C. announced a club house committee meeting on the 20th.
- * Tal will autograph the Caldwell object book donated to the club last month. Tal did significant work in its development being the editor and proof reader.
- * A star party was announced for Jamaica Plain Jan 26.
- * A star party in Acton (400+ visitors) was announced for January.
- * Executive committee reported the clubhouse was over budget as a result of the work in improving drainage, and setting up the electric service to the observatory.
- * March 26th is the 70th anniversary of the ATMoB, and the 80th anniversary of the Bond Astronomical society. Eileen is interested in marking the anniversary with a

special event. More news will follow. The meeting was adjourned to a time of food and fellowship. - *David Siegrist* - (Standing in for Michael Hill)

Treasurer's Report...

To be presented at Meeting

Membership Report...

This month we welcome new member, GARY SALES from Framingham, MA and past member DAVE AUCOIN from Waltham, MA. As of December 2003, the total ATMoB membership count is 353. - *Shilpa Lawande, Membership Secretary* -

Clubhouse Report

At the last work party we were able to take advantage of the snow melt and move the storage shed back to its original position. This effort took a little time because it needed to be done slowly and carefully to ensure that no harm was done to the shed contents. After this was complete, we concentrated on re-plumbing the sinks and sump pump drains to divert, temporarily, the drain water through the new gravity drain; the existing outside line has frozen up due to the cold weather. It was tested and works well. Once spring comes, we will work on a permanent configuration. Thanks to Dave Prowten, Bruce Gerhard, John Blomquist, Art Swedlow, John Reed, and Sai Vallahba. The following is the Clubhouse committee schedule:

Clubhouse Saturday Schedule

January 3	Paul Cicchetti	John Reed
January 10	Eric Johanson	Art Swedlow
January 17	Dan Feldkhun	John Small
January 24	Bruce Berger	Mike Hill
January 31	Gary Jacobson	Jim Suslowicz
February 7	Joseph Rothchild	Gary Walker

New Astronomy Store for Southern New Hampshire

Greetings and Clear Skies,

I would like to announce my store called the [Astronomy-Shoppe](http://www.astronomy-shoppe.com). It will be opening in Plaistow NH in Jan 4, 2004.

I will be the new east coast dealer for Coronado instruments and will be carrying the new P.S.T telescope (Sub angstrom Hydrogen Alpha) cemax eyepieces, and MaxScope 40. Also, I will be carrying a unique line of accesories, from Right-Stuff and Farr Industries that will include, mounts, cases and other badly needed accesories. I will also have used telescopes and accessories, and will take trades/and consignments. Please feel free to contact me for futher information 978 457 1963 or 603 382 0836 or vist my website at [Http://www.astronomy-shoppe.com](http://www.astronomy-shoppe.com)
<<http://www.astronomy-shoppe.com/>>

Thank you, *Tony Costanzo*

Upcoming Star Parties...

Thurs, Jan 22 (cloud date Jan 29) – Joshua Eaton Elementary School, 365 Summer Ave., Reading – Coordinator Charlie McDonald (781) 944-6140. Telescopes needed.

Fri, Jan 23 - Eveleth Elementary School, Marblehead, Grades K-2 – Needs a coordinator. Call Charlie McDonald at (781) 944-6140 to sign up as coordinator. Telescopes needed.

Mon, Jan 26 (cloud dates rest of week) - Hennigan Elementary School, 200 Heath St., Jamaica Plain - 3 classes of 6th graders - Coordinator Howard LeVaux at evaux@theworld.com

The Star Party at the Harrington School in Chelmsford has been rescheduled for Wednesday, January 21st, with Teusday, January 27th as a cloud date. We will need 5-7 scopes, more is better of course. We will try and start the program at 6:00 PM. Expect 100 - 125 people. Other details are below. Please reply privately if you can make it.

Tues, Feb 24 (cloud dates Feb 25, 26) - Barrows Elementary School, 16 Edgemont Ave., Reading – Coordinator Charlie McDonald (781) 944-6140. Telescopes needed.

Wed, Mar 3 (cloud dates Mar 4, 8, 9, 10) – Birch Meadow Elementary School, 27 Arthur B. Lord Drive – Coordinator Charlie McDonald (781) 944-6140. Telescopes needed.

Other News...

Thanks go to Mike Mattei, who donated a 12 hp snowblower to the clubhouse.

There is no longer a dumpster located across the street from the clubhouse. Until further notice we will need to remove our trash ourselves.

**February *Star Fields* deadline
Sunday, January 31st**

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

POSTMASTER NOTE: First Class Postage Mailed January 2, 2004

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

FIRST CLASS

EXECUTIVE BOARD 2002-2003

PRESIDENT: Eileen Myers (978) 456-3937
starleen@charter.net

VICE PRES: Bruce Berger (978) 256-9208
SECRETARY: Michael Hill (508) 485-0230
MEMBERSHIP: Shilpa Lawande (603) 891-2702

TREASURER: Gary Jacobson (978) 692-4187
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

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 (EST) from Universal Time (UT) subtract 5 from UT.

January 4 Quadrantid Meteor Shower
January 7 Full Moon
January 14 Last Quarter Moon
January 17 Mercury at greatest elongation 24° West of sun
January 21 New Moon
January 24 Venus and Moon paired for a pretty sight this evening
January 29 First Quarter Moon